

Revolve Around Jesus

By Pat Keady

Adoration = to adore, be transfixed upon

One of the things I love to do is go outside in the middle of the night, look up at the sky, and just try to fathom the miracle that sinks into my eyes. The starry host displayed in all their dazzling brightness, multitude and succinctness can be overpowering – if you stop there long enough to let it. It's like that with any work of Art really; a quick glance while you're putting the bins out just fails to have the same effect. You need to actually STOP – soak in the picture – and feel the difference it makes to your soul while you stand there and let God's Spirit do His thing.

It's not very different to looking upon the face of God. A little while ago I wrote a song called 'Revolve Around You'. It goes:

“My world revolves around You, like the earth around the sun
The stars above the heavens for all the things You've done
My heart has known Your mercy, for You've forgiven me
My soul can feel You calling, now all I want to do
Is revolve around You... is revolve around You.
Come Centre of my Universe! Fill me where there is emptiness
Come, Saviour of this satellite! Draw me into Your holy light...”

ADORATION is that place of privilege where we small human beings get to 'look upon the face of God', just like that starry sky, and let the Holy Spirit move in our souls as He wants. At that point it's not so much about what we do, but about what we let *God do in us*.

For Catholics, the possibility of looking into the face of God goes far beyond singing songs, closing eyes or lifting our hands in prayer. The gift of *adoration* reaches a climax in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

What does it mean to “adore the Blessed Sacrament”? If a Protestant or unchurched friend were to hear about or see this thing called 'Eucharistic Adoration', Catholics could easily be mistaken for 'worshipping a piece of bread in a gold thingy'! I know that was my reaction when I first saw it happen. I was with a group in a small church just singing some songs, when suddenly everyone dropped down on their knees (I'm thinking 'what? where was the signal?') and in through a side door came someone carrying a 'gold thingy' in their hands with something white in the middle of it. My friends eyes seemed to moisten & fasten upon this object with a look of... *was that worship?* 'Oh no' I clicked, '*These guys are Catholic – I'd forgotten! They really believe that little piece of bread is Jesus Himself walking through the door!*'

I sort of stood out being the only one in the whole first half of the church still standing so I slipped into my seat & watched the proceedings with virgin eyes. I literally had never seen this before in my life. I was curious and intrigued. Everyone basically knelt still for half an hour in total silence and looked...and looked... and looked...at the piece of bread in the gold thingy! (I later found out the name for the thingy was a

‘monstrance’ - not a highly attractive name I thought - but then these Catholics did lots of strange things). I was amazed that their minds could think of something to think *about* for so long! That was my first introduction to what I have since experienced myself to be a mind-blowingly bizarre yet undeniably simple and powerful encounter with Heaven on earth.

The important thing I have learned about adoration is, contrary to my first outsider’s reaction, **adoration is NOT about ‘adoring the Eucharist’: it’s about adoring JESUS.** It’s about ‘revolving around *Him*’, like a planet being drawn into His orbit, like a rebel satellite being irresistibly drawn back to His love. That’s what makes all the difference. It’s all about Jesus.

My problem back then was simply that I didn’t yet have the faith to understand this awesome mystery. The name ‘Emmanuel’ means “God With Us”. How amazing it is that Jesus has never really left us! Through the Gift of the Spirit, and especially in the Eucharist, the words of Jesus are fulfilled every day all around the world: “*Truly, I am with you to the end of the age*”.

Contrary to Catholic cultural doomsdayers, the devotion of Eucharistic Adoration is undergoing a resurgence. This is happening especially among young people, particularly evident at the World Youth Days. I think the reason is simply and purely because *something really is going on there. Jesus really is present!* This is not just a nice idea or a comforting thought, but an awesome reality.

When we grasp this reality we can move through worship - beyond worship - into the ‘transfixion of adoration’. Stuck there, beneath the wide sky of God’s majesty, with open mouths we can let the dazzling light of the face of Christ pour through our eyes and sink into our souls – for no rational reason other than the fact that He loves to do so.