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The devotion to the Blessed Sacrament

*Pastoral Letter of Monsignor Bishop of Piacenza
for the Holy Lent of the year 1902
(Abstracts)*

1- Man, dear brothers and children, finds life in what he loves, and loves only what he knows.

So, do you want Jesus in the Sacrament to become your only treasure? Try to know him, with a solid and profound education. *(Ongoing formation and updating in theology.)*

2- Whoever believes in the Eucharist believes, it can be said, to all the Christian truths.

- The ineffable Trinity of persons
- Believes in the absolute unity of the divine being.
- Believes the incarnation of the Word,
- He believes in His immolation for us,
- Believes His glorious soul and ascension into heaven,
- Believes the divine motherhood of the Virgin,
- The created the mission of the Holy Spirit on the apostles with Maria congregated in the cenacle,
- Believes the divine institution of the Church, its indefectibility
- and the necessity of being alive members to get the eternal life.

3- This is the masterpiece of God's mind and heart,

- The center of our religion
- The point of contact where the finite and the infinite, nature and grace come together in the ineffable embrace of truth and love by essence.
- At the foot of our altars we find Golgotha, where we cry embracing the cross.
- And Tabor where we build tabernacles to drink from heavenly peace.

- There it takes place the agony of Gethsemane, and the morning of the resurrection,
- The mystical death and the source of life.

4- Talk therefore of the real presence, of the miracle of the transubstantiation, of the reasons why the eucharist was instituted, and of the way in which you find Christ as immortal, impassible and glorious Lord, king of kings, sovereign of all.

It is true, **no created intellect**, not even the Angelic, will ever come to **comprehend** these miracles of divine wisdom, power and goodness with natural forces alone.

5- Be aware, however, that abstract, speculative instruction, although excellent, **is not enough by itself: it must be accompanied by practice.**

- Well, you must teach them to distinguish the different parts of the sacred Liturgy; **let them in any way penetrate the spirit of the sacred liturgy.** Especially in educating the youngsters, studied to raise them to the practical love of the most august sacrament, accustoming them to being recollected and devoted in church, understood by the sanctity of the place and by the majesty of the one who lives there.
- In any case, make sure, especially during the Lenten season, to bring them to know her better, so that she becomes the sweetest nourishment of your intellect, the dearest delight of your heart, the surest guide of your pilgrimage and it can be said of you that truly you want to live the Christian life, the Eucharistic life.

Although it is not enough for us travelers to know Jesus, veiled under the sacramental species: it is nevertheless necessary that **we love him** and like the members of paradise, we sing to him a perennial hymn of worship and praise.

6- The Eucharistic daily visit

An effective means to stabilize and develop the devotion to Jesus in the sacrament, you will find first of all in **the pious practice of daily visits to him**, a prisoner of love in our tabernacles. This is surely a true testimony of the sincere love of the people for the divine Eucharist.

- At the foot of the altar the soul forgets the world, the miseries of life, since where Jesus is there is no longer pain, but joy even among the most bitter tribulations. That this is the place in which the faithful, in the secret of his heart, listen to mysterious and sweet voices, and from which he departs with the live desire of return; With that holy desire that always

brings him back where he finds all goodness in him, and where the treasure of supernatural forces is.

All, therefore, let us surrender this daily praise to the divine Eucharist.

I recommend to **children**, for Jesus to start them on the path of virtue; I recommend it to **young people**, because Jesus God provides the strength to resist the spells and the seductions of vice; I recommend to those who are on **the decline of life**, that Jesus help them to look serene in the face of death.

No one should fear approaching him because he is like a teacher, a father, a spouse, a friend, to spread graces and blessings over all: *"Come to me, all of you who suffer and are burdened and I will restore you"*.

- 7- In some parishes of the diocese, I say it with pride, the **association for the worship of the tabernacle of the Most Holy Sacrament** is already established: I love to see it arise even in all others. Where the population is large, it will be easily managed. If the parish has few inhabitants, and it is not possible to establish the daily worship, can it not be served at least two or three days a week, especially on the Eve of the feast days?
- 8- But, dearest ones, if it is extremely dear to stay before Jesus during the day, **it is also beautiful to watch at his feet in the silence of the calm of the night**. See for yourself that you understand the importance of this nocturnal adoration, to establish it in your parishes, and to practice it at least once a year.
- 9- **Another** thing is extremely dear to me, and it is that you all venerable brothers, **enroll in the pious society of priests**, established in our diocese, **for perpetual adoration**. If all the faithful must render to Jesus love for love, and make reparation for the outrages that the impious and bad Christians inflict upon them, **you in a very special way must shed tears in his presence**, and interpose yourselves between the altar and sinners, as ministers of peace and forgiveness. You especially must live the Eucharistic life and make it your delight to live near the tabernacle, where you will draw the strength to sacrifice yourselves and die with Jesus for the glory of God and the good of souls. **This is the only ideal of the true priest**.
- 10- And what shall I tell you then, dearly beloved brothers and children, of **adoration and exposure both perpetually and for forty-eight hours**? Therefore, unite yourselves in a **holy league** around Jesus, divine sacrifice, in a spirit of faith, of reparation, of love. Joined to him, you will all feel like brothers, all bound by a pact: to mutual love, and to procure each other's good. From here will be born that **orderly harmony**, which will put in com-

mon joys as well as sorrows, smiles and tears, and will spread the balm of resignation and Christian hope everywhere.

Unite and organize yourselves in an association of worshipers for the different hours of the day so that the divine Eucharist is never abandoned by you. Thus, thanks to perpetual adoration, even among us, from one corner to the other of our diocese, the sweet canticle will echo perennially to him who is seated on the throne; and to the lamb blessing, honor and glory forever.

- 11- However, the hymn of our adoration must not be contained within the narrow walls of the temple: it matters that **it resounds outside as well** (*PROCESSIONS*). As the people of Israel carried the ark of the covenant around, so we must celebrate great feasts and carry our Lord in triumph through the streets of the city and the countryside, through the towns and villages, veiled under the sacramental species. It is in these solemn moments that we profess our faith before heaven and earth, angels, and men, as once upon a time the disciples, who followed Jesus through the streets of Jerusalem, professed it against hatred and the derision of his enemies. I beg, dearly beloved, take care that in your parishes, the solemnities and **processions of the Blessed Sacrament**, especially that of **Corpus Domini**, on its **octave and third Sunday of each month**, are devout and decorous.

The streets along which the divine host will be transported must be clean and possibly sprinkled with flowers and other fragrant herbs, the walls of houses decorated with drapes and sacred images. In our synod, since it is precisely the feast and the procession of Corpus Domini, we also speak in a precise and preceptive way of the **way to celebrate the octave**. We no longer think about this and generally it went unnoticed. Study especially in this holy octave to do what is yours, to compensate the sacramental God for the indifference and coldness of men.

Jesus in the sacrament **blesses his people**. If the blessing of the parents is a pledge of prosperity, if the blessing of the patriarchs gave the dew of heaven and the abundance of the earth, what should we not hope for from that of our Father, Pontiff, and Savior in whom are enclosed all the treasures of wisdom and of God's goodness.

- 12- A great means to secure the appropriate splendor of the acts of Christian worship are the **confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament**, if skillfully organized and directed with every solicitude. Let parish priests therefore cherish them as the apple of their eye. The confreres and the sisters are to **meet each month**, giving each one a brief **discussion** separately about their duties and their regulations.

- 13- In our synod, after the exposition of what pertains to private and public Eucharistic worship, we come to speak of the **first and last communion**, of **paschal communion** and of **frequent communion**; acts from which devotion and Eucharistic life properly derive their origin and vigor.

What will I tell you about **first communion**? This feast, dearly beloved, is to be celebrated with the **greatest possible solemnity** and according to the method outlined by the synod. None of the prescribed ceremonies are omitted so to produce indelible impressions on the pure souls of children; they will excite our populations to pity and the repentance of misguided souls.

But that God who gladdens the morning of our life, gives us the first communion, is still the **sweetest hope of our last days**. When they have declined like the shadow, He himself, Jesus, will come to visit us on the bed of pain to give us the last kiss from God and to feed us with the bread that will help us to climb the holy mountain of the Lord.

None of you therefore, dearly beloved, have to die deprived of the sweet viaticum for the dying, which possibly, all Christians must receive and by divine right.

Let Him be brought **to the sick** as soon as their illness becomes serious and dangerous; do not expect, either for human considerations or for other reasons, that the sick person will be in certain and imminent danger of death.

Furthermore, **Easter communion** should not require special recommendations. Be careful to approach, all of you, dearly beloved sons, and with the due dispositions to the Eucharistic table at least during the Easter season, and this in your parishes, as the ecclesiastical precept orders.

- 14- **But Eucharistic devotion demands much more.** It requires that in each parish, a considerable number of people communicate themselves of humility of hope of love, before receiving it in your bosom; and after receiving it, spend a long time with him, thanking him for so much benefit.

There is more. As the Eucharist is an extension of the Incarnation, so too is the sacrifice of Golgotha. In truth, this was offered once, in a few hours, in Jerusalem, while **this other is offered at every moment of the day and in all corners of the earth**. During the sleep of our hemisphere the other watches over and other brothers pray for us; other priests hold the Eucharistic victim suspended between heaven and earth, from which the blood of Christ flows, like a mysterious torrent of life, which runs through the universe from one end to the other.

Go even further. The mass is not only the daily redemption, it is the health of the world, but also the nourishment of true and solid piety and the furnace which ignites **the supernatural life of the Church**. Following the great bishop

of Antioch, let us listen to Saint Ignatius: “Is it not that starting from the altar many virgins and many ministers of the sanctuary are still going into mission, who abandoning their father and family, shut themselves up in hospitals, to die there victims of their heroism; or else they go to wear themselves out under the scorching rays of the sun in Africa, in China, in the forests of America and in the midst of the anthropophagous animals of Oceania, to perhaps be decapitated, strangled, or burned over a slow flame?”; or for what Cyril of Jerusalem says, who affirms that the peace of the church, the tranquility of the world, the prosperity of kings, the courage of fighters, the **union of families**, the healing of the sick, the comfort of the afflicted, the assistance to all those who need help: let all this come from the host, on which we pray during the time of mass.

- 15- Then ensure that in your parish an **association of the faithful** arises, (already existing in some places of the diocese) which has committed to participate, if possible, **every day at Holy Mass**. It cannot be said of the goods that you will reap from it. From the mystery of faith, the awakening of that faith will come in individuals and families.

Then it is never enough to say of the **diligence** that you especially, venerable brothers, must pay towards the things needed for the sacrifice of the table: the Eucharistic bread, the wine, the Eucharistic garments and vessels, the sacred cloths, in short, venerable brothers, if you really desire to recall keep Eucharistic devotion alive in your parishes, **show by the facts** that you are the **first to have it deeply rooted in your heart**; both in your interior and exterior devotion and proceed from a lively faith with a sincere love for Jesus, the Divine Host.

Piacenza from the bishop's palace, 29 January 1902 + Gio Battista bishop.



The word – The wound (160)

I, who am here before you, I am the Word. No book, however, beautifully written, can speak to your heart as I do, for I am eternal Wisdom, infinite of Love, and uncreated Beauty **in dialogue with your soul.** My words are not like the words of man, My words surpass, even the words of my saints, though I often speak through them, and continue to touch souls through their writings. **My words are like arrows of fire shut into the heart and wounding it so as to inflame it and heal it with Divine love.**

Make yourself vulnerable to my words. Allow me to speak to you in such a way as to wound you with **the piercing of divine love.** When you come **before me** and wait upon me in **silence**, you are, in fact, allowing Me, when I choose, and in the way I choose to wound you with an interior word, and to set you on fire with a communication of divine love. **Expect me** then to *speak* to you, to *console* you, and to *enlighten* you, but also to *wound* you. Unless I wound you in this way, you will be incapable of withstanding the attacks of the enemy, and of bearing witness to me in the mist of darkness and tribulation. In the spiritual battle that is to come, only those wounded by Me will emerge victorious. Those who keep watch before My Eucharistic Face will be among the first to be so wounded.

I have called you to adoration, because I desire to wound you **not once**, but again, and again, **until your whole being is wounded**, and so *purified* and *set ablaze* with the fire of my love. Would that your soul were wounded as many times as I was wounded in my body for the love of you in the combat of My own most bitter passion! **Allow me, then to pierce you through and through until wounded by divine love, you are holy, sanctified, and may fit for my purposes and designs.** This I desire not only for you, but for all My priests. I would wound each o with My burning love so as to purify the whole priestly order in My beloved Church and present it to the eyes of the world as a victimial priesthood made holy in the holocaust of divine love.

Until my bishops am I priest allow me to wound them with the fiery arrows of my divine love, their own wounds -wounds of sin- will continue to fester, and to spray a filthy infection of corruption and of impurity in the Church. **Let each one bag me to wound him**, for in wounding My beloved priest I will heal them, and then healing them. I will sanctify them, and then sanctifying them, I will offer glory to my Father, and fill the whole world with the radiance of My own Face, and the love of My own heart.

This, in truth, is who you are; a sinner held fast in the embrace of my divine friendship. When I withdraw from you this grace of conversation with Me for a time, it is so that you will not mistake it for the product of your own imagining, and also so that you will not grow accustomed to My words, and so little by little, fail to take them to heart, and to treasure them.

I speak to you so that you might share my words, when the occasion arises to do so. Share my words humbly with no thought for yourself. **Remain hidden in me: I will hide you from the observation of men in the secret of My Face.** I will prepare for you a secret place deep *within the sanctuary of my purest side.* There you can go to remain hidden and silent, sharing my words freely, and without the fear of being noticed or praised. **Ask me to hide you in my wounds. There is a place for you in each of my five wounds.** Each of them represents a refuge against the *Temptations*, that threaten you and the traps set by the devil, who would ensnare you and rejoice to see you fall.

The wound of my right hand is your refuge from sense of *disobedience and self will.*

The wound of my left hand is your refuge from sins of *selfishness*; from directing all things to yourself and grasping the attention of others.

The Wound of my right foot is your refuge from sins of inconstancy; when you are tempted to be inconsistent and waiver in your resolution to love Me above all things and to place Me first in your affections and your desires.

The Wound of my left foot is your refuge against the sins of sloth and of spiritual lethargy. Take refuge there when you are tempted to give up the struggle and to consent to despair and discouragement.

My side is your refuge from every false love, and **every fleshly deceit**, promising sweetness, but giving bitterness and death instead. **Take refuge in my pierced side when you are tempted to look for love in any creature. I have created you for my love, and my love alone can satisfy the desires of your heart.** Enter than the wound of my side and penetrating even into My Heart **drink deeply of the springs of love** that will refresh and delight your soul, and wash you in preparation for the **wedding of your soul with Me**, for I am the Bridegroom of your soul, your Savior from all of that would defile you, and your God who is who is love and mercy now and to the ages of ages.

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