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A Masculine Love of our Eucharistic Lord

I. Introduction

- A. Eucharistic adoration is difficult sometimes for men, who can be lost in front of our Lord.
- B. Men do poorly at listening — and listening is the first action in prayer, not speaking. We don't pray, "Listen, Lord, for your servant is speaking," but "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."
- C. Men are normally people of action. Many of us let our actions speak more loudly than our words. St. Joseph didn't even say a word in Sacred Scripture. For that reason, prayer and Eucharistic adoration can sometimes be difficult. Peter had difficulty during the transfiguration. He wanted to be "doing" something, building three booths, but the Father just wanted him to be quiet and "Listen" to his beloved Son.
- D. Men are not very receptive — Take the example in Genesis with Adam before the Lord in the state of grace. The Lord knew that it was not good for him to be alone. He was unable to love the Lord, who was too high for him, or animals, who were too below. He created Eve as a means to help teach him what love is so that he could take that analogy of human love and apply it to his relationship with the Lord.
 - 1. Women teach us receptivity — hence the Blessed Virgin Mary is the model for the Church.
 - 2. We need to learn from her how to be receptive to the Lord.
 - 3. We need to learn, too, from the analogy of human love how to relate to God. We need to make sacrifices for the Lord. We need to give ourselves to him. Love is often spelled "TIME."
 - 4. Womanly receptivity teaches us that it's not so much what we do for God in prayer, but what he does for us.
 - 5. In the Eucharist, Jesus, the Bridegroom, gives us himself. The marriage between Bridegroom and Bride is consummated. But we need to learn how to relate to him as Bride, how to receive him within. Our soul has always been considered grammatically feminine for a reason.
- E. How do we relate to the Lord in prayer as men, if prayer is, in some ways, a feminine activity, an active receptivity? We can't let go of the fact that we are anthropologically persons of action, who receive by giving, who wish to let actions speak louder than words.
- F. This is a great mystery.

II. Ten tips:

- A. Study what the Lord did with his first apostles.
 - 1. Before he gave them the Eucharist, he washed their feet.
 - a. Peter didn't want to allow him to do so, but unless he did, he would have no part in him. Experience our need to be washed by the Lord first, which means a great love for the sacrament of washing, which precedes the sacrament of the Eucharist.
 - b. We need to pray with purity of heart, so that we can see God.
 - c. Reconciliation with others. Gift at the altar.
 - 2. In Gethsemane, Jesus asked Peter, James and John to stay with him and pray alongside of him.
 - a. They failed him on that occasion. Jesus asked them to be in solidarity with his prayer to the father, lest they fall into temptation. That's a crucially important part of our prayer. For priests, especially when we pray the breviary and pray the Mass, we mysteriously are caught, in persona Christi, into the prayer of the Lord Jesus. The more we pray through, with and in him, the more manly we become.

- b. Jesus tells us to pray to the Father in his name, which means to be able to ask for what Jesus would ask for. **John 14:13** I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.”
3. Jesus himself used often to go away to a quiet place to pray, free of distractions. Men are prone to distractions, because we find it hard to sit still. Jesus would make a pilgrimage to a destination, which would get his body involved in prayer. Like he did in the desert. Like he did during evenings. Like he did in boats. He would draw his apostles along with him. It is good for us, as well, to get out, to go someplace with the Lord.
4. Jesus fasted. We, too, need to unite prayer to fasting.
 - a. Jesus always linked prayer and fasting. See his example of being 40 days in the desert. He also told us that some demons were expunged only by prayer and fasting. In order for him to be able to give himself in prayer, he needed to have himself. He needed to be able to control his appetites, rather than let them control him. He gained this self-mastery according to the flesh by fasting. We have a lot to learn here too. It can make us hunger much more for every word that comes from the mouth of God.
 - b. This type of fasting can also be a fasting from comfort, which is why kneeling is so important. We see in the Garden that Jesus knelt down on the ground to pray (Lk 22:41).
 - c. This is also a sign of giving one’s body over to the Lord as part of the mutual exchange of persons in the transformative union of prayer. We receive the Lord’s gift of himself and respond with the gift of our bodies, the oblation of our bodies.
5. We need to pray with humility, allowing God to feed us.
 - a. In order for us to be receptive, to be filled with God, we need to be emptied.
 - b. The great multiplication of the loaves and fishes, which Jesus used as the launching pad for the discourse about our need to eat his flesh and drink his blood, came only after they were hungry.
 - c. This is hard for men, to recognize that we’re not sufficient of ourselves.
 - d. We’ve got to let ourselves be “overpowered” by God, not to resist him, so that he can strengthen us in weakness. We need to go through the painful “crucifixion” of ourselves with courage so that his life can reign in us, as St. Paul realized.
 - e. That’s the particularly masculine angle. We, like Thomas, need to go up to die with Jesus, to embrace his cross, which is to embrace the means of his death and ours, and be united to him on the Cross.
 - f. This leads to the next two points.
6. We need to pray with abandonment.
 - a. It will be a sacrifice for us to admit that we need another. It may be a sacrifice for us to say that Jesus is more important than the Steelers on fall Sundays, or even on Sundays in January. We may need to say that Jesus is more important than our sleep. That Jesus is more important than our family.
 - b. To admit that we need Jesus more than anything else in our life. That he is the pearl of great price worth selling everything else in our lives to obtain.
 - c. “Seek first the kingdom of heaven and everything else will be given to you besides.”
 - d. This is the risk, the gamble, for which men are particularly good.
 - e. Story of Sudanese priest in Fall River. They would risk their lives to attend Mass.
 - f. Other Africans, in Abitene, who said in 304 when asked to renounce their faith and not attend Mass, “Sine Dominico non possumus!” (We cannot live without Sunday.)
7. We need to pray with faith
 - a. St. Peter in John 6. “Lord, to whom shall we go?”
 - b. Centurion, confident in Jesus’ power, even at a distance.
 - c. Peter of Prague and the Basilian priest in Lanciano. Both had lost faith. But had faith restored in Eucharistic miracles.

- d. We cannot be scandalized in Jesus, by his kenosis, but go to him who has the words of eternal life. We shouldn't be looking for another, someone who fits better into our own categories.
 - e. The masculine aspect of this is to "go to the Lord," to stay with him as he moves us on an adventure of faith. We can't stay still. He's moving up hill. If we're not going up hill with him, then we're sliding downhill.
8. We need to pray with a faith that works itself through love.
 - a. Our faith shows itself in deeds. That's the particularly masculine aspect of it. Type of genuflection we make — manly or wimpy?
 - b. Eg of the Muslim in Peter Kreeft's class. (If we really believed God was present we would show it by our genuflection.)
 - c. If we really believe that it's Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and we love him, then we will show up to adore him, then we will want to receive him every day.
 - d. This is the insight I had as a freshman in college. I've never missed Mass since, over 20 years ago.
 9. We need to pray with perseverance
 - a. We need to finish the race, to fight the good fight, to keep the faith.
 - b. Perseverance both shows our faith and increases our faith.
 - i. St. Paul said the choice for us at any moment is to perseverance or to denial (2 Tim 2).
 - c. Jesus shows us this perseverance in the Garden. He prayed repeatedly for the cup to pass from him.
 - d. Jesus praised perseverance, but normally praised enduring women (like the importune woman in Lk 18 banging on the judge's door all night, or the Syro-phoenician woman, who didn't accept Jesus' seeming first no for an answer), because many times men give up, we're cowards, we don't have the courage to keep seeking when there's not immediate gratification.
 - e. Like Jesus, we need to get up each time we fall, we need to say that despite ourselves, we will remain confident in the Lord, working our way with him to the end.
 - f. Tomorrow's Gospel: "He who endures to the end will be saved." We need to endure in prayer, because, as the Catechism teaches us, we live as we pray and we pray as we live.
 - g. It's not the one who calls out "Lord, lord," but the one who does the will of the heavenly Father."
 10. Jesus prayed to the Father as a Son. He always starts off his prayers directly to the Father. "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth." "Father, glorify your son!" "Father, I thank you for having heard me." "Father, let this cup pass from me." "Father, forgive them." "Father, into your hands, I commend my spirit."
 - a. He was the image of the invisible God. The more he turned to his father, the more, we can say, like his Father he became.
 - b. We've been made in the image and likeness of God.
 - c. When we asked him to pray, he taught us to pray directly to the Father. He taught us to seek his will, to become one in love with the Father means to unite ourselves to his will.
 - d. Holy Spirit helps us to do this, to cry out "Abba, Father!"