

HOURS OF ENCOUNTER

Confirmation Program

St. John the Baptist – Excelsior, MN



If you wish, begin with this prayer:

My Lord Jesus Christ,

I believe that You are really here in this Sacrament.

I thank You, Jesus my Divine Redeemer for coming upon the earth for my sake

and for instituting the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist in order to remain with us until the end of the world.

I lay before you right now all my doubts and discouragements.

I lay before you every burden and stress that I am feeling.

I lay before you my thoughts, feelings, and desires.

I trust You, Jesus, to take care of every detail of my life.

Give me the freedom to gaze upon You, sit with You, learn from You, and most importantly, to love You deeper.

Amen.

5 WAYS TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN ADORATION

Taken from *A Beginners Guide to Adoration* by Caitlin Sica, writer for Lifeteen

Have you ever gone to adoration? Have you tried, but felt defeated like I first did, and occasionally still do? Here's a list of 5 ways to be successful in adoration:

1. BE PATIENT

I was recently talking with a group of friends about their experiences of adoration. A lot of them expressed the same frustration—that sometimes, time seems to stand still, 5 minutes seem eternal. Have you ever been out of shape and tried to go for a one mile run. Suddenly, 5 minutes into the run, you're huffing and puffing and you realize you've only gone one block. Rather than focusing on the success — you just ran for the first time in months!! — we tend to focus on the defeat. Adoration can be a bit of a work out... for your soul. So set yourself up for success. If it's been awhile, or your first time, 5 minutes of sitting with Jesus is a good goal. Slowly increase your time—you'll be amazed at how God increases your capacity to be with Him!

2. BRING SCRIPTURE

Reading scripture is always a good thing, but is especially helpful and meditative during adoration. There are many prayer books and apps that contain daily scripture readings. I particularly like reading the Psalms and reflecting on a verse that speaks to me on that given day. As I read scripture I ask myself: How is this scripture speaking to my heart? What changes is God asking me to take? How will I go about making those changes? I make this part of my prayer.

3. PRAY THE ROSARY

The rosary is a beautiful prayer, one that many saints have prayed. St. Louis de Montfort said “When the Holy Rosary is said well, it gives Jesus and Mary more glory and is more meritorious than any other prayer.” What better way to give Jesus and Mary glory than to pray the rosary in front of the Blessed Sacrament? There are many guides and apps you can print/download to help guide you through this form of prayer.

4. LISTEN TO PRAISE AND WORSHIP MUSIC

When I'm the only one in the Church or chapel, I love to start adoration by listening to praise and worship music. “Restless” and “I Shall Not Want” by Audrey Assad, “Lay it Down” and “Lord, I Need You” by Matt Maher, are just a few of my favorite songs to listen to during adoration. The music and the lyrics help me quiet myself and turn my thoughts to God.

5. BE OKAY WITH SILENCE

It's so easy to go a whole day without silence. We get in the car and turn on the radio, we have our phones, with days worth of music, in our pockets, and at the end of the day there's Netflix. Even if we are in a quiet environment, we are usually accustomed to checking our phones—for a text, the latest Facebook drama, the trending hashtag on Twitter, the newest picture on Instagram, the list goes on.

Don't get me wrong, I fall prey to every one of those habits. Which is why, when I'm sitting in adoration, I can find it difficult to focus. I've become so accustomed to the business of the world, that being truly still, truly silent, can seem uncomfortable, foreign. But that discomfort is ok, good even. In Audrey Assad's “Restless” she sings “And I'm restless, I'm restless, ‘Til I rest in You.” I find this sentiment to be so true when I am in adoration. Sure, the first few minutes I am restless as I begin to wind down. But eventually, I am filled with insurmountable peace. Allow yourself to sit in silence and to just be with Jesus.

In an apparition to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, Jesus spoke these beautiful words: "I have a burning thirst to be honored by men in the Blessed Sacrament." Go to adoration, even if it's just for 5 minutes. Jesus desires to be with you, to have you gaze upon Him, as He so lovingly gazes upon you.

THE FATHER'S HOUSE MEDITATION

Taken from The Fellowship of Catholic University Students

Picture yourself on a road. It is dusty and your feet are bare. On the road is littered items representing your past woundedness. It may be broken bottles, old pictures, etc. Your feet are raw or cut open from treading barefoot on the littered path. You look up from the path to see that you are at a fork in the road. Down one path you can continue on the same littered road. It stretches into the horizon; a distance you can measure. The other side leads to your Father's house.

You have a decision: continue on the path and see where it leads or come into your Father's house.

Hear the words of Jesus, exhorting you forward: "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God...In my Father's house are many rooms... And I have prepared a place for you..." (cf. John 14:1-4).

Allow yourself to at least go to investigate the house. Picture the front yard and the front door. Allow your feet to stray off the dusty, broken road and feel the cool, soft grass as you approach the house. What are you feeling as you get closer to the door and your Father behind the door? Do you feel excitement, joy, anxiety, unworthiness, trepidation?

Take time to call to mind and heart what it is you are feeling as you approach the door. If it is joy and excitement, allow yourself to open the door and enter. If you are feeling anxiety or an inability to enter and dwell with your Father, begin to knock and cry out for the Father to come to you and open the door Himself. Spend some minutes contemplating this scene and crying out to the Father.

Once you are inside the house, imagine your Heavenly Father running to you on the threshold of the door, as soon as it is opened. How is He appearing to you in this scene? Allow Him to embrace you, to tend to your worn and blistered feet. You may appear as a child and sit on His lap and let Him lovingly gaze at you. You may sit at the dining room table and catch up.

However this scene unfolds, allow yourself time to just be with the Father. Let Him speak to you or just be with Him without speaking, letting His love wash over you. Hang and dwell on His words and meditate on how your heart is moving in response to Him. Let Him show you how He's been pursuing you along the path,

bringing you to this moment. He hasn't been passively sitting behind this door, but He's been leading you and reaching out-- even when you've rejected His aid.

Remain in His presence as long as you are able.

EXPLOSIVE GOSPEL

The Gospel must EXPLODE in our personal and community life. It is a word capable of revolutionizing our way of feeling and thinking, living the faith and immersing ourselves in the reality where God has placed us. The goal is a meditation that leads to interiorization and the incarnation of God's Word into our daily life.

Read this Gospel passage SLOWLY 3 times. The first time imagine how God looks upon you with a deep love. What sticks out to you? The second time, ask God to reveal to you where you have rejected His love. What sticks out to you? The final time, ask God to show you how He wants you to share what you've just learned. What sticks out to you?

Luke 5:1-11

While the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennes'aret. And he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zeb'edee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

1) A gaze of love – Meditation and Contemplation

This is the moment to contemplate and meditate on the text. We do this in order to gather the maximum love that God, through His Word, wants to give us. Look with love at the Word and the Word will look back at you with love!

Ask God to reveal to you how He looks upon you with His infinite love.

2) A gaze of judgment and truth

We are confronted by the Word not only in love because this love enlightens us as to where we must grow or where there may be contradictions in our lives personally or in the community.

Ask God to reveal to you where you have rejected His love and are living alone in sin. How does God want you to receive His mercy and forgiveness?

3) An apostolic response

We are invited in the third moment to future apostolic action. It is where we are invited to make a commitment to become prophets of the Gospel that revolutionizes our lives.

Ask God, "How are You inviting me to witness Your love to others? How do you want me to share with others what I have received from You?"

HOW TO PRAY WITH SCRIPTURE

(Lectio Divina)

1. Lectio

Lectio simply means 'read.' Start somewhere familiar, like one of the Gospels, and read a section. Before you start, ask the Holy Spirit, the author of Sacred Scripture, to come open your heart and to guide your mind. When you begin reading, read through the passage slowly and attentively. When you finish, read through the passage again and take notice of any words that stand out to you as you read.

2. Meditatio

In the meditatio (meditation) step, allow yourself to enter into the passage you just read. Perhaps you are one of the disciples or simply someone in the crowd. Use your imagination and bring the scene to life.

Also think about the words that stuck out as you read and wrestle with why they were highlighted as you read.

3. Oratio

At this point, you move from the head and go to the heart. In the oratio phase, you turn over everything that was in meditatio to God in prayer. Ask him why the words stuck out, why the passage unfolded like it did in your meditation. Be sure to also listen to what the Lord has to say to you because He wants to speak to you.

4. Contemplatio

The last thing to do is contemplation. Essentially, it's time to take it all in. Rest in what God has spoken to you in His Word. Simply just sit and be with the God who loves you.

THE ROSARY

The Rosary is often viewed as one of the most boring prayers in our faith. However, when it is prayed the way Mary intended it, it comes alive and we encounter the life of Christ in a new way – every time.

Here are the basics:

APOSTLES CREED // I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord: Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

OUR FATHER // Our Father, Who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

HAIL MARY // Hail Mary full of Grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus. Holy Mary Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death Amen.

GLORY BE // Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

FATIMA PRAYER // O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those most in need of Thy mercy. Amen.

HAIL HOLY QUEEN // Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O merciful, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary! Amen.



Each set of ten beads gives you a period of time to meditate on some part of Jesus' life. There are 4 different "sets" called Mysteries: the Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious, and Luminous. As you pray the rosary, meditate & imagine what it would have been like for Mary, Joseph, the Apostles, or Jesus during that time. Here are the mysteries:

PRAY ON MONDAY & SATURDAY: JOYFUL

PRAY ON SUNDAY & WEDNESDAY: GLORIOUS

- 1) Resurrection
 - 2) Ascension
 - 3) Decscent of the Holy Spirit
 - 4) Assumption of Mary
 - 5) Coronation of Mary
- 1) Annunciation
 - 2) Visitation
 - 3) Nativity
 - 4) Presentation
 - 5) Finding of Child Jesus

PRAY ON TUESDAY & FRIDAY: SORROWFUL

- 1) Agony in the Garden
- 2) Scourging at the Pillar
- 3) Crowning of Thorns
- 4) Carrying of the Cross
- 5) Crucifixion

PRAY ON THURSDAY: LUMINOUS

- 1) Baptism
- 2) Wedding Feast at Cana
- 3) Proclamation of the Kingdom
- 4) Transfiguration
- 5) Institution of the Eucharist



PRAYING WITH ART

Often our prayer is internal, and the Lord speaks to our hearts in silence. Another way to pray is by contemplating a piece of art. “Spiritual directors call meditating on a picture “Visio Divina.” Applied to a Bible passage, it’s an imaginative and refreshing form of Scripture meditation that helps us to enter into the narrative of Scripture and bring ourselves to Jesus. It’s similar to Lectio Divina, but instead of quietly listening to God through words we use a picture.”

This piece is called *The Storm on the Sea of Galilee*, by Rembrandt. Read the passage slowly and prayerfully.

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” And leaving the crowd, they took him with them, just as he was, in the boat. And other boats were with him. And a great storm of wind arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care if we perish?” And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?” And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?” - Mark 4:35-41

What is one word or phrase that you’re especially drawn to? Remain in quiet prayer to absorb this word from God.

What do you notice? What part of the painting or character in it does God especially draw your attention to? Quietly pray and reflect on this for a couple of minutes.

In addition to the twelve disciples who accompanied Jesus in the boat there is a *thirteenth person* sailing in the boat. *Who is that?*

In Rembrandt’s painting each of the people with Jesus in the boat has their own reaction to the storm. It’s something like the different roles that people play in a family, church, or other group. (Sometimes, particularly under stress, people’s roles and reactions may be very dysfunctional!) Which person do you most identify with?

Now, bring your storm into the Gospel story. Some storms that we experience, like this one on the Sea of Galilee are dangerous. Other are storms of stress or not knowing what to do. Your storm might be a difficulty in your family, school, or work. Or something personal that you’re struggling with. How are you dealing with your personal storm? Which character in Rembrandt’s painting do you identify with? Pray quietly about this...

Look closely at Jesus. Freezing rain is pelting down on him, waves are swamping the boat, winds are whipping against him and tossing the boat around violently. Yet, *Jesus is sleeping!* Surely he is not unaware of the dangerous storm. Nor is he faking to be asleep. He must be napping. *Certainly, he is at peace.* Notice, that the light of God is not just coming from the heavens *it’s also glowing from Jesus’s body!* Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God! He is the Light of the World and the Prince of Peace! The disciple kneeling at Jesus’ feet sees Jesus’ light! Perhaps the disciple at the tiller is also drawn to Jesus’ light.

By the way, did you see the symbol of the cross of Christ right in the middle of Rembrandt's painting?

What is the Lord's *personal invitation* for you in the midst of your storm? Pray quietly about this...

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Pray The Lord's Prayer. Pray it on loop until you mean it. Elaborate as you pray.
- Pray the Psalms. Read a few and highlight phrases you want to repeat to God. When you're done picking out phrases, read the highlighted passages in praise to God. Personalize them.
- Pray for your family. Begin closest to you and work your way out. Don't just say their names. Think about what they need, what God's vision for them might be. Pray until you can't think of another family member.
- Pray your goals. Make a list and pray over it, asking God to grow, stretch and challenge you in these directions. Be sure to make at least some of the goals spiritual maturity markers.
- Pray your favorite passage of scripture. Read it and either ask God to do what He's promised to do or thank Him for the blessing communicated there.
- Make a list of people you don't like. Pray for God to bless them. Don't be passive aggressive.
- Be totally silent for three minutes. Don't talk and don't talk to yourself. Try to still your thoughts. At the end of that three minutes ask God what you should pray for. Listen and pray for whatever pops into your head.
- Write your prayers. This is great if you can't keep your thoughts focused and often end up wandering. Start like you're writing a letter: "Dear God..."
- Pray the fruits of the Spirit, that God would fill you with His Spirit and grow in you love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Pray it for your family & friends.
- Pray for Fr. Carlson. Pray that he wouldn't be led into temptation. Pray that he would have eyes to see. Pray for his heart.
- Pray your questions. Make a list of things you wonder. Ask God to show you answers.
- Channel your anger. Make a list of things you're angry about and pray it. Ask God to help you see things you're not seeing—to give you humility, patience and perspective. Ask Him to calm your spirit and lead you into peace.
- Pray for the president. Pray with hope, believing the best about who he is as a man. Ask God to work through him and guide him. Pray for congressmen and senators and mayors and city councilmen and women while you're at it.
- Pray your talents. Make a list of what you're good at and ask God to use those talents for His glory.
- Pray your weaknesses. Make a list of what you're bad at and pray that God would be glorified in those spots. Ask God to help you grow where you should grow and accept what you should accept.
- Pray over your broken relationships—for forgiveness to flow.
- Think of something you really don't want to pray about. Pray about that.

WHEN YOU ARE ...

Afraid	_____	Psalms 34:4-10	_____	Matthew 10:26-33
Anxious	_____	Psalms 46	_____	Matthew 6:25-34 _____ Philippians 4:4-7
Backsliding	_____	Psalms 51	_____	1 John 1:4-9
Bereaved	_____	Matthew 5:4	_____	2 Corinthians 1:34
Bitter or Critical	_____	1 Corinthians 13		
Conscious of Sin	_____	Proverbs 28:13		
Defeated	_____	Romans 8:31-39		
Depressed	_____	Psalms 34		
Disaster Threatening	_____	Psalms 91	_____	Luke 8:22-25
Discouraged	_____	Psalms 23	_____	2 Corinthians 4:7-18 _____ Philippians 4:4-7
Feeling Doubtful	_____	Matthew 8:26	_____	Hebrews 11
Facing a Crisis	_____	Psalms 121	_____	Matthew 6:25-34 _____ Hebrews 4:16
Faith Fails	_____	Psalms 42:5	_____	Hebrews 11
Friends Fail	_____	Psalms 41:9-13	_____	Romans 12:14-21 _____ 2 Timothy 4:16-18
Leaving Home	_____	Psalms 121	_____	Matthew 10:16-20
Lonely	_____	Psalms 23	_____	Hebrews 13:5-6
Needing God's Protection	_____	Psalms 27:1-6	_____	Psalms 91 _____ Philippians 4:19
Needing Guidance	_____	Psalms 32:8	_____	Proverbs 3:5-6
Needing Peace	_____	John 14:1-4	_____	Rom 5:1-5 _____ Philippians 4:6-7
Needing Rules for Living	_____	Romans 12		
Overcome	_____	Psalms 6	_____	Romans 8:31-39 _____ 1 John 1:4-9
Prayerful	_____	Psalms 4, 42	_____	Luke 11:1-13 _____ John 17
Protected	_____	Psalms 18:1-3	_____	Psalms 34:7
Sick or in Pain	_____	Psalms 38	_____	Rom 5:3-5 _____ 1 Pet 4:12-19
Sorrowful	_____	Psalms 51	_____	John 14 _____ 2 Corinthians 1:3-7
Tempted	_____	Psalms 1	_____	Matthew 26:41 _____ Philippians 4:8



















