

May 28,1989 - TODAY'S CATHOLIC

By Edward Dahm

Seventy-one years ago, the angel at Fatima and three shepherd children lay prostrate on the ground while a chalice and host was suspended above them in midair. 'The angel asked them to pray with him and express their adoration with this prayer : "My God, I believe. I adore. I hope and I love you I ask pardon of you for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love you."

The scene at Fatima is being replayed in hundreds of parishes around the world in the form of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The story of Fatima and the work of Father Martin Lucia, CC.SS., led our parish, St. Jude in Fort Wayne, to start a Perpetual Adoration Chapel three and a half years ago. Hour by hour, members of our parish have spent 90,000 hours in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel. The host is constantly exposed in a beautiful monstrance.

Since establishing Perpetual Adoration, our church has experienced a renewed sense of cooperation and commitment. More than 550 members of our parish's 1,800 families spend an hour or more a week in our small, unpretentious Perpetual Adoration Chapel. Its quiet, peaceful atmosphere is so conducive to prayer that it sometimes draws 10 people at a time. In the wee hours of the morning, there may be only one person. Some parishioners substitute for those who are ill and cannot make their appointed hours. A Wall Street Journal "market place" article on May 5, 1989 said "Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co. has just unleashed a new competitive weapon on the world: Quiet." There is no better place than before the real presence of Jesus in our chapel.

A parishioner who had been away from our church for six years wrote, "My faith was weak and my belief shaking, but I started to make my weekly Holy Hours. Several times I wished I didn't have to go, but in the presence of the Lord I was filled with

peace. It became easy to put God first. Gradually, Christ's love for me in the Eucharist became so real that I didn't want to stay away from any of the Sacraments. Perpetual Adoration has been the greatest blessing to come into my life for a long time. I have a true sense of the Church community and I feel a part of the parish family." Another said, "If we Catholics could really appreciate what the Blessed Sacrament is, the Chapel would be packed day and night. Jesus waits patiently for our visits – imagine, the King of Kings waits for our visits. My time at the Chapel is very special to me. Thank you St. Jude." Another parishioner reflected on the drugs, get-away vacations and treatment centers used to relieve stress in our lives. "I have solved the stress problem in my life by going to the Perpetual Adoration Chapel and just sitting in the presence of our Eucharistic Lord. I can just feel the stress drain away. I go on a weekly basis on an assigned time and day, but when there is added stress in my life, I go more often. Because the Chapel is open 24 hours, time is no problem. If you are experiencing a sleepless night, our Lord is waiting and ready to comfort you. If you are feeling unbearable stress, sign up for St. Jude's own 'stress management' program. You will love it and so will Our Lord. He is waiting patiently for your visit." Spending a Holy Hour at day's end with Christ is a staple in the lives of Mother Teresa and her Sisters. She said, "All of us know that unless we believe and can see Jesus in the appearance of bread on the altar, we will not be able to see Him in the distressing disguise of the poor."

Father Lucia travels around the world helping parishes set up Perpetual Adoration Chapels. He spoke at all our Masses one weekend and, after talking about the importance of the Eucharist and Perpetual Adoration, Father Lucia invited everyone interested to sign up for an hour. Many signed up at that time and others signed up during the next few weeks. We were very impressed with the great number of people who signed up after his presentations.

Father Lucia wrote, “When God finds a pastor who puts no limits to the glory given to His Son Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, He puts no limit on the outpouring of graces that He bestows upon that specific parish.” Perpetual Adoration puts our Catholic faith into practice, Father Lucia believes. “it is truly witnessing to our faith that Jesus is really present in the Eucharistic Perpetual Adoration is appreciation on our part for the total gift of Christ’s presence among us, and it “presses to Him that he is truly welcomed and loved by us. When one person goes before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, that one person represents all humanity. All humanity is blessed and enriched because of the faith of that one person.”

At St Jude’s, we remodeled the chapel in our Sisters’ convent into the Perpetual Adoration Chapel which is adjacent to a library and a restroom. The chapel has an outside entrance. It is open 24 hours a day all year long for members of our parish and others to pray with Our Lord. Father Bill Schooler, pastor, explained, “because we are directly across the street from Parkview Hospital, many people call and ask if they can pray in the church after it is locked. We can tell them that the Chapel is open 24 hours a day. There are many times when Catholics who have family members in Parkview find themselves in our Chapel.

“I have also been touched by the dedication of so many of our parishioners. The 90,000 hours show their faithfulness. The coordinators have put a great deal of effort into making sure that their assigned hour is filled throughout the week. In a society which promotes a rat-race pace, these people demonstrate a unique willingness to allow God the time and space to speak to them in the silence of their hearts. With the help of Sister Helen Cornelia and Betty Niedermeyer, solid reflective reading materials are always available,” Father Schooler said.

The prayer that the angel at Fatima taught the shepherds during the third apparition is distributed to all who enter. “Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I adore You profoundly, and I offer You the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges and indifference with which He Himself is offended. And, through the infinite merits of The most Sacred Heart, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of You the conversion of poor sinners.”

Become on fire with a love for the Eucharist and watch your life grow for Him. Just say, “Yes, Lord, I want to help spread Perpetual Adoration in my parish and diocese.”