

Things to Consider

- ▶ You may be thinking 'Where do I start?' Having the desire to include adoration in your prayer-time with God is the first necessary step. If adoration is not part of your time of prayer, then no doubt as you begin, there will be times when you will forget. God can cope with it! Make a note or use something else as a reminder to include adoration. Like falling in love and getting to know the other person, it takes time to learn the art of loving. Patience! So, where do you start?
- ▶ Can you remember a time when you felt caught up in adoration, 'lost in wonder, love and praise'? What was the trigger that caused it? Enter into that moment again.
- ▶ Are you someone drawn immediately to the words of Scripture or maybe the natural world speaks more eloquently to you about the glory of God (Psalm 19.1). Perhaps poetry, literature or hymns speak to you. Maybe they all fill your heart with adoration. We are all different and respond differently.
- ▶ Our Bible is a rich resource with adoration filling its pages. Think of the four living creatures as they hover around God's throne in the vision that St John the Divine describes in Revelation? (4.8, 11) Then too we also have the shepherds and magi adoring the Christ Child.
- ▶ The Psalms are filled with the adoration of God. To get you started, try looking at Psalms 19, 29, 33, 34, 89, 93, 100, 117, 148. This is merely 'scratching the surface'. Why not explore the rest of the Psalter. In fact, why not look for other examples throughout your Bible, for there are many.
- ▶ There is also the Eucharist when we receive Christ's Body and Blood. Having received it can offer a wonderful moment of silent adoration before the communal thanksgiving we all offer. Adoration need not be wordy or even using flowery language. There is also the silent adoration of awe. And using an appropriate hymn of adoration may also be helpful. What about 'Let all mortal flesh keep silent'? Explore the pages of your hymn book.
- ▶ What about the natural world that surrounds you? Has there been an occasion when you felt overwhelmed by the beauty you saw and as a result found your heart filling with praise of God? In your mind and heart can you relive moments such as these and allow them to become moments of adoration. A great work of art may deeply move you or perhaps there was the birth of your child? What so touches your heart that can draw you to God in wonder and awe?
- ▶ Adoration is a very natural and powerful response to the awe we experience in God's presence, or when we see His glory reflected in creation. Include adoration in your time of prayer and those other spontaneous moments in life when you feel the desire of adoration welling up within your heart. AtG/B8/MBH

Attending to God

'Adoration'



If you were to ask people what prayer means to them, I think that many would see it in terms of asking God to meet theirs or other's needs. And certainly intercession and petition are important in prayer, but in truth it is more than this; a much richer story.

You may have seen the acronym ACTS used to describe the elements of prayer – **A**doration, **C**onfession, **T**hanksgiving, **S**upplication. In this and following brochures I will explore each of these, beginning with Adoration. If we are seriously going to *Attend to God*, then we need to take each of these elements as part of our relationship with God.

I remember the film *Bedazzled* starring Peter Cook and Dudley Moore, where in answer to a question as to why he chose to leave heaven, Peter Cook as the devil, jumped up and sat on a public letter box and asked Dudley Moore to run round it all day singing *Holy, Holy, Holy* and see if he did not get bored by it!

Such an attitude, funny as it may be, does a great disservice both to God and us and misses the point. So, why is adoration both important and necessary?

In their book *Being a priest today: Exploring priestly identity*, Cocksworth and Brown tell how Brown was at a conference and speaking to a German Lutheran theologian. She said she thought that the hymn of praise to God, the *Gloria in Excelsis*, could at times be dispensed with in the Eucharist. The theologian swiftly replied that he completely disagreed: 'When we have given glory to God, then we cannot give glory to the Fuhrer.'

This is a telling point and I want to connect this with that incident in the film I mentioned and relate it to the present day.

We humans are made for worship and if we do not worship God then we will worship something else. It is one of the realities of life. In our modern Western world many have turned away from God, and materialism has not simply become our focus, but that which we worship. It has become an end in itself.

This explains the extraordinary narcissism of our age, with the 'selfie' photo, and also much of Facebook simply being the latest expression of this. In so many ways we now worship self. This is the logical conclusion: if we do not worship God then we will eventually come to worship self. It can never satisfy our deepest longing.

At its worst we can end up with the adoration shown to the Fuhrer and all the consequences that flow from that. It is the most telling example of why God alone is worthy of our adoration.

The truth is God does not need our adoration, but we do need to give it. Apart from anything else, it leads to a necessary humility. It recognises that we are not masters of our own destiny. As Richard Foster says, 'Adoration is the spontaneous yearning of the heart to worship, honour, magnify and bless God'.

It also follows that there must be the closest possible link between God and ourselves if we are made this way. As Augustine said, 'Our hearts are restless until they rest in you O Lord'. This speaks of a relationship of intimacy and of love; a relationship of thankfulness, gratitude and yes, adoration. God clearly wants to be in relationship with us.

If we take that seriously then we can never be bored. Yes, there will be times when we don't feel 'up to the mark', but is this not also true of our other relationships? It only becomes problematic when we reduce everything to *feelings*. No-one always *feels* in the mood. What place do commitment, faithfulness, integrity and the like, have in your life? And all this must be balanced with those who are more 'head than heart' in their personality. Adoration will have a different expression with them than for someone who is a 'heart' person.

Adoration springs from the heart but should not be reduced to being a response to our feelings even though this, at times, will be the case; and rightly so.

In our Western society the heart is seen as being the centre of the person. A book I read cited *The HeartMath Solution* where Childre, Martin and Beech tell us that the heart contains 40,000 neurons – the same number as in the brain itself. Also mentioned was Pearsall's book, *The Heart's Code* that tells us that although the brain may contain more cellular connections than there are stars in the Milky Way, the heart has been measured at being 5000 times more electromagnetically powerful than the brain. The heart generates the strongest electromagnetic field produced by the body and this field becomes measurably more coherent to the degree that a person embraces a loving, caring state.

So for your sake and God's sake, give adoration a central place in your prayer. Allow your heart to swell to overflowing in adoration for your Creator and Saviour, and the One who is transforming you in His Love, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.