Columns
Spirituality



The Eucharist is displayed for veneration at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Crosse, Wisconsin, while the Marian Route of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage stopped at the shrine June 8, 2024. (OSV News/Courtesy Diocese of La Crosse)



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Editor's note: *In preparation for the National Eucharistic Congress July 17-21, Global Sisters Report is republishing this column on the importance of the Eucharist.*

During this past Lent, my parish of Holy Angels in Woodbury, New Jersey, held a three-day mission given by three Dominican priests. Each day began with 9 a.m. Mass, followed by exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and a talk given by one of the Dominicans. The other two heard confessions simultaneously. The first day theme of "The Providence of God," and the second day of "The Indwelling of God," set the tone for the third day, "Eucharistic Healing Service."

That morning, the priest gave a brief homily explaining the difference between a healing and a cure. He then read the passage from Matthew 9:20-22 regarding the woman who was cured by touching the hem of Jesus' garment.

The priest explained that he and one of the other Dominican priests would first anoint each person with blessed oil from the Shrine of St. Joseph in Canada while the other stood before each person holding the monstrance. He invited each one to grasp the humeral veil as though grasping Jesus' garment, praying silently for personal intentions.

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Three chairs and three kneelers were placed across the front of the altar, and one by one, each person came up and either knelt or sat to await the anointing with oil and the visit of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. To provide a reflective, meditative and prayerful environment, prayers were offered for the needs of the world, followed by periods of silence and the singing of hymns.

As the two priests stopped in front of me, I knelt in awe as one anointed me with the healing oil of St. Joseph, and the other stood over me with the monstrance. As I grasped the humeral veil and prayed silently from my heart, I felt motionless, overcome by the presence and power of the Lord in the Eucharist. Grasping the humeral veil, I experienced a profound moment of personal and intimate contact with Jesus. It was as though I and the congregation were transported back in time to

the days of his ministry as he walked among the crowd healing hearts and curing illnesses.

During the entire healing service, I joined the congregation in communal prayer, reflective silence and meditative music. I had no concept of time but was held in the moment in total unity and oneness with the Eucharist and all present in the church. Jesus was truly walking in our midst and Eucharistic power was indeed going out from him.

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Jesuit Fr. Jean-Pierre Medaille, the founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph, wrote his eucharistic letter to the budding community urging it to model itself on the virtues of Jesus in the Eucharist. He advised that it is the Eucharist that enables us to become one with God, ourselves and our neighbors. I experienced this profound oneness with God and all creation and felt confident that I had been blessed with many graces as I touched the hem of his garment.

Several weeks have passed but the experience becomes present every time I savor its memory. Can I name the graces of that encounter? Yes, there have been many, and I think the most significant and overarching one is the reality that everyone is a uniquely unrepeatable expression of God and warrants my love and respect.

Everyone and everything are part of the great dance that goes on at the heart of all creation. What I do and how I live does have a positive or negative impact on the world. It is difficult to live this belief daily, but with the help and power of the Eucharist it is possible.