



33
DAYS *to*
EUCHARISTIC
GLORY



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ISBN: 978-1-63582-532-9 (softcover)
ISBN: 978-1-63582-513-8 (hardcover)
ISBN: 978-1-63582-525-1 (eBook)
Audiobook available from Audible.

33 DAYS to EUCHARISTIC GLORY
may be purchased for groups large and small.
For information, please call or email:
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Designed by Todd Detering

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

FIRST EDITION

Printed in the United States of America

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INTRODUCTION

The Eucharist
is the
Answer

"I HAVE A DREAM. . ."

These are among the most quoted words in the English language outside of the Bible. They are the words of Martin Luther King Jr. If he had stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on that hot summer's day in 1963 and said, "I have a plan," would the speech have become one of the most memorable speeches of all time? I don't think so.

The ability to dream is uniquely human and an extraordinary gift. This God-given ability to look into the future and imagine something better, then return to the present and work to bring about that better future, is remarkable. And yet, sadly, it is massively underemployed in most people's lives.

Think on it for a moment. When was the last time you used your God-given ability to chase down a personal dream? When was the last time, together as Catholics, we had a common dream and pursued it with relentless passion?

I believe it is time we all started dreaming again. I realize the first response of many will be to tell us why it won't work before we have even begun. But it is time to move beyond this defeatism and dream again as Catholics. Where are the possibility thinkers of our age? Will you be one? This is a time for Catholics to start dreaming, to envision bold possibilities, and to work together in collaboration with God to make those dreams a reality.

So, let me tell you a little about my dream, and then perhaps it can become our dream.

I have a dream that the whole world would be consecrated to the Eucharist.

One person at a time,
one marriage at a time,
one family at a time,
one neighborhood at a time,
one parish at a time,
one diocese at a time,
one country at a time.

The whole world consecrated to Jesus in the Eucharist.

Join me in this dream and together we can do something bold and visionary. It is a bold dream. But isn't that what is needed? "Be bold and mighty forces will come to your aid," was Goethe's insight. Those mighty forces are Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and all their angels and saints. Isn't it time Catholics did something bold?

It is my fervent hope that my dream will help fuel your dreams and together as Catholics we will become a people of possibility again.

WHAT IS CONSECRATION?

Consecration is to devote yourself to God and make yourself 100 percent available to carry out His will on this earth. It is an act of unconditional surrender to God. Through the act of consecration, we dedicate ourselves abundantly, wholeheartedly, and completely to the will of God, surrender our distractions and selfishness, and promise to faithfully respond to God's grace in our lives.

In the Book of Exodus, after the incident with the golden calf, Moses realized that the people had lost their way, and so he called them together and said, "Consecrate yourselves today to the Lord. . . that He may bestow upon you a blessing this day." (Exodus 32:29)

In the First Book of Chronicles, after God chose his son Solomon to lead, David gave everything he had over to God and the people of Israel. And then he asked, “Who else among you will contribute generously and consecrate themselves to the Lord this day?” (1 Chronicles 29:5)

In the Book of Joshua, God’s chosen people entered the Promised Land after wandering in the desert for forty years. Joshua asked the priests to carry the Ark of the Covenant before the people and said, “Consecrate yourselves to the Lord, for tomorrow He will do wonders among you.” (Joshua 3:5) For the Jewish people, the Ark of the Covenant was God’s dwelling place on earth, God’s presence among them.

The Eucharist is God dwelling among us. And so, today I say to you, with Moses, David, and Joshua:

“Consecrate yourselves today to the Lord . . . that He may bestow upon you a blessing this day.”

“Who else among you will contribute generously and consecrate themselves to the Lord this day?”

“Consecrate yourselves to the Lord, for tomorrow He will do wonders among you.”

33 Days to Eucharistic Glory is the first ever guide to Eucharistic Consecration. Catholics have consecrated themselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to Saint Joseph, Saint Raphael, Saint Michael the Archangel, Saint Anne, the Holy Spirit, the Miraculous Medal, Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Mediatrix of All Grace, Our Lady of Fatima, Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Czestochowa, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Our Lady of Sorrows, and to the Holy Trinity.

I believe it is time we consecrated ourselves to Jesus in the Eucharist—it is time for a Eucharistic Consecration.

THE INCREDIBLE JOURNEY BEFORE YOU

You are about to embark on an incredible journey. This isn't just another book. It is an invitation to participate in a sacred journey—a spiritual pilgrimage. It's a guide that will lead you to the essence of what it means to be Catholic . . . and it will change your life in the most marvelous of ways.

Eucharistic Consecration will take your spiritual life to unimaginable new levels, but it will also energize the way you participate in relationships; ignite a new curiosity about yourself and others; transform the way you think about money and things; re-focus your professional life; liberate you from many of your fears, doubts, and anxieties; make you aware of the hopes and dreams God has placed in your heart; and breathe new life into your appreciation for the genius of Catholicism.

Along the way you will meet many people who desperately need what you are holding in your hands right now. I hope you will share it with them. By sharing this Eucharistic way with them, you will become a Eucharistic Missionary, preparing their hearts for Jesus to enter and transform their lives.

CRISIS OF FAITH

The Catholic Church in America has been in crisis for decades. This is an uncomfortable truth, but one that will not change unless we face it.

Modern Catholics are experiencing a crisis of faith. Materialism and secularism have been eroding the faith of Catholics for decades. The result is most starkly recognized in the research that shows only 31 percent of Catholics in the United States believe Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist. Here are a few more

statistics that reveal the depth and breadth of this crisis:

- More than fifty million Catholics in the United States have stopped practicing their faith over the past thirty years.
- More than half of all American adults raised Catholic (52 percent) have now left the Church. Only 8 percent say returning to the Catholic Church is something they could imagine doing.
- We have closed a Catholic parish in the United States every three days for the past thirty-five years.
- We have closed a Catholic school in the United States every four days for the past twenty-five years.
- Over the past fifty years we have lost a Catholic priest from active service every day in the United States due to retirement, death, men who have left the priesthood voluntarily or those who have been removed.
- In 1973 there were 58,000 priests in the United States, the average age was thirty-five, and only 10 percent were over the age of sixty-five. Today there are 37,000 priests in the United States, the average age is sixty-four, and 40 percent are over the age of sixty-five.
- 3,500 parishes in the United States are now without a resident priest.

These numbers are real, but statistics are cold. Behind each of these vast numbers is a human being, and a soul, and a family, often a marriage, and more often than that, parents who suffer wondering why their child no longer goes to Mass and what went wrong along the way.

We have all been impacted personally by these statistics. But there is another aspect for us to keep in mind as we chart a path forward. I tried to capture it more than twenty years ago, in the opening line of the first edition of *Rediscover Catholicism*: “The Church (like so many other things in life) is not so much

something we inherit from generations past, or take over from our predecessors, as it is something on loan to us from future generations.”

The Catholic Church is on loan to us from future generations. The negative trends above are only part of the picture. Wherever the Catholic faith is authentically lived out, the genius of Catholicism still has the power to attract people of all ages and help them make sense of life.

In 2014 in the United States there were 708,979 infant baptisms, 44,544 adult baptisms, and 70,117 adults received into Full Communion. Even more encouraging is the data which shows that 43 percent of people who consider themselves cultural-Catholics (Catholic but not practicing) say they can imagine returning to the Catholic Church in the future.

We need to forge the kind of future that will bring them back.

It is easy to be critical, and it is even easier to become overwhelmed by the challenges we face. But we all have some responsibility here, and we all have a role to play in renewing the Church in our place and time. In order to reflect upon our role and responsibility, I invite you to reflect upon this question: There are 1.2 billion Catholics on the planet: What would the Catholic Church be like if we multiplied your life by 1.2 billion?

Catholicism has not lost its power to transform lives. Yet, people are abandoning Catholicism at an alarming rate in Europe and the United States, and this is not a new trend. And so, I raise the question: What are we going to do about it?

The key to answering that question is one piece of data that is more significant than all the data we have reflected upon collectively so far.

(Sources: Pew Research Center, USCCB, CARA, The Dynamic Catholic Institute, and U.S. Census Bureau. Where data is not current year, the year shown is the latest data available).

THOSE WHO BELIEVE DON'T LEAVE

What is the difference between the people who have left the Catholic Church over the past thirty years and those who have stayed? I believe the answer to this question holds the key to re-energizing the Catholic Church.

It would be easy to escape into the complexity of this issue and say there are many differences. We have spent the last thirty years lost down that rabbit hole. It is true. There are many differences between these two groups, but it is equally true, more so in fact, that one difference marks the essential difference between the fifty million people who have left the Catholic Church over the past thirty years and those who have stayed.

What is the one thing? What is this essential difference?

Those who believe don't leave. Believe what? Believe that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist.

Those who believe this single truth may feel like they are not being fed, they may disagree with the way their priest is doing things, they may not like the direction the music is moving in, they may have different liturgical preferences, they may get divorced, and they may feel unseen and unwelcome in their parish community. And yet, despite all these things that have led millions of people to leave, they stay. Why? They believe Jesus Christ is truly present in the Eucharist and they know that only the Catholic Church can offer this gift to them. They might be able to go down the road and experience better preaching and more dynamic music, but they are simply not willing to give up the Eucharist in exchange for that. Why? Because it's a bad deal. But you have to know and believe that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist to understand how bad a deal it is to give that up for what is trivial by comparison.

Those who believe don't leave. This one piece of data is

more significant than all the other data combined.

Those who believe don't leave. This single truth holds the power to change everything.

The most effective way to slow and halt the exodus the Catholic Church is experiencing in the United States is to lead people to believe in the True Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. And the most effective way to bring people back to the Catholic Church will be by leading them to believe that Jesus is present in the Eucharist. And the most effective way to attract people to Catholicism who have never even considered becoming Catholic is by facilitating for them powerful encounters with Jesus Christ who lives among us today in the Eucharist.

We all know plenty of people who have left the Church, and even more who have simply stopped practicing the faith. But how many people do you know who have left the Catholic Church who believe in the True Presence? None I suspect. I don't know any. And herein lies the answer. If we yearn to re-energize the Catholic Church in America, if we want to bring our friends and family home, if we want to spare future generations the pain and confusion that comes from leaving the Church—the Eucharist is the answer. Specifically, powerful encounters that inspire belief in the True Presence of Jesus Christ—Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity—in the Eucharist.

This is the one thing: the Eucharist. Jesus present in our tabernacles and monstrances, Jesus waiting to give Himself to us in Communion during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Those who believe don't leave. It's the one simple beautiful truth that will change everything.

WHAT MAKES CATHOLICISM UNIQUE?

There are 45,000 different denominations of Christianity in the world. What is the one thing that makes the Catholic Church unique?

“It’s not just one thing,” some people will argue, “Many things make Catholicism unique.” They are right. But what one thing differentiates Catholicism more than anything else? What is the principal differentiator between the Catholic Church and the churches on every other street corner?

The Eucharist. Jesus Christ—the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Alpha and the Omega—truly present—Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity—in the Eucharist. He is the difference.

“Transforming people one at a time is at the heart of God’s plan for the world.” This is the opening line of *The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic*. It is also the key to solving the problems we face as a Church today. God doesn’t transform parishes, businesses, schools, or countries. God transforms people, and He does it one at a time. He then collaborates with those He has transformed to continue the process. The outcome of these individual transformations is that marriages, families, parishes, businesses, communities, schools, and countries are transformed. But God’s primary purpose is never the transformation of an organization or even a group of people. Our God is a deeply personal God, and He takes a deeply personal interest in each person.

Over the next thirty-three days I believe you will become well and truly convinced that a renewed relationship with Jesus in the Eucharist can be transformational.

Re-energizing the Catholic Church in America will be achieved not by finding an idea or program that transforms thousands of people at a time. It will be achieved one person at a time.

THE EUCHARIST IS THE ANSWER

For twenty-five years, between 1993 and 2018, I traveled hundreds of days each year visiting parishes and speaking at conferences around the world. During that time, I visited more than 3,000 Catholic parishes in the United States to speak.

From my earliest days on the road, I recognized a pattern, a phenomenon—an observable fact—that demonstrated new life could be breathed into parishes and explained how it was happening. That phenomenon was Perpetual Adoration Chapels. It wasn't just an idea. It was living and breathing. It had been implemented in lots of communities and was bearing abundant fruit.

There is something powerful about giving people a quiet place to spend time with God. These peaceful places of refuge from the busyness of life and noise of the world were a soothing balm for parishioners' souls. They provided a place to reestablish priorities. It was somewhere to focus on what matters most in a world driven mad with distractions. A place simply to be with Jesus.

Did I notice other initiatives having powerful renewal effects in parishes? Yes, another trend I noticed was the outsized impact Christ Renews His Parish was having on parish renewal. But nothing was more powerful than the impact I saw Perpetual Adoration Chapels having on parishes.

But it isn't enough just to build an Adoration Chapel. The introduction of an Adoration Chapel into a parish was more successful in some places than in others. Why?

Those parishes that were most positively impacted by an Adoration Chapel were those that had an active ministry surrounding it. Those standout parishes were dedicated to inviting and encouraging new people to participate every month. They tried to get everyone in the parish involved in some way, rather than having the same few people who do everything in the parish sign

up for the time slots and then putting it on autopilot.

I have seen so many lives transformed by Perpetual Adoration Chapels. Those people then engage in their marriage, family, work, and parish on a whole new level as a result, continuing the ripple effect of Christ's presence in the world.

We shouldn't be surprised. It shouldn't be a grand revelation. It should be obvious. Give people the chance to spend time in the presence of Jesus and their lives will be changed.

It's simple. It's beautiful. And it works. Give people the chance to spend time in the presence of Jesus and their lives will be changed.

All those years I spent on the road I saw more proof of this phenomenon at youth gatherings. Get 1,000 young people together, 2,000, 5,000. Turn the lights off, light some candles, and set Jesus in the monstrance in an elevated place in the middle of those young people. There is complete silence. Their souls cherish the silence to reflect upon their lives. And one experience like that can convince a person to make time for quiet prayer and reflection every day for the rest of their lives.

We need to create more unique opportunities for people to encounter Jesus.

Do the same thing at World Youth Day in Denver, Manila, Sydney, Paris, Rome, Madrid, Rio de Janeiro, Krakow, Lisbon—with hundreds of thousands of young people, and the impact is overwhelming. Five million young people gathered for World Youth Day in Luneta Park in Manila, Philippines, leading Guinness World Records to recognize it as the largest crowd for a live event in human history. Five million people in contemplative silence amidst a world gone mad. It was awe-inspiring.

Many people encounter Jesus for the first time in their lives in Adoration. This is where they have their first deeply personal experience of Jesus. They may have heard about Jesus their whole

lives, they may have been receiving Jesus in the Eucharist every Sunday, but there is something about the experience of Jesus in Adoration that leads people to know Him. This shift from knowing about Jesus to knowing Jesus changes everything.

And once they are awakened in this way, the Holy Spirit leads them to live their faith and participate in all types of ministries. This is where we begin to see the differences between highly engaged Catholics and disengaged Catholics. The more disengaged a Catholic is, the more they treat the faith like a consumer. More engaged Catholics take on the heart and mind of a disciple, constantly looking for ways to share the joy they have found with everyone who crosses their path in life.

I have become convinced that the renewal of the Catholic Church will be a Eucharistic renewal, or there will be no renewal at all. There is simply no other way.

The world has many problems. The Church has many problems. You have many. I have many. Is it possible that the Eucharist is the answer to all our problems? Could it be so gloriously simple? Let's find out together.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Over the next thirty-three days you are going to take a spiritual pilgrimage. Some people go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Fatima, Lourdes, Santiago de Compostela or Rome. I hope you can join us one day on one of our amazing pilgrimages to these places. But this spiritual pilgrimage you can make in the comfort of your favorite chair. And yet, it will be the longest journey you ever make without moving an inch.

A pilgrimage is a sacred journey with a specific intention. Our journey will be an inner journey, and our specific intention is Eucharistic Consecration.

This book is intended as a handbook for your spiritual pilgrimage. The readings, prayers, and other resources are arranged day-by-day and under a weekly theme. This is a time of preparation for the profound experience of Eucharistic Consecration. The reflections are designed to be deeply spiritual and intensely practical.

This preparation will require about fifteen minutes each day. Here is a step-by-step guide to each day:

1. Find a quiet place.
2. Read the reflection.
3. Ponder the one idea that struck you most from the reading for a few minutes.
4. Pray the Spiritual Communion.
5. Look for opportunities to adopt the virtue of the day amidst your daily activities.
6. Have a great day!

The journey will last thirty-three days. Four weeks and five days. Each week is arranged around a theme and designed to prepare you for your consecration on day thirty-three, but also to educate and inspire you about the extraordinary power of the Eucharist.

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Week One: | The Eucharist and the Pilgrim |
| Week Two: | The Eucharist and the Saints |
| Week Three: | The Eucharist and You |
| Week Four: | The Eucharist and History |
| The Final Days: | The Moment of Surrender |

If you miss a day, don't get discouraged, and don't quit. Every evil force in the universe wants you to do that. You will feel the pull of those evil spirits at times. And the pull of those evil spirits will be tempting you to abandon this pilgrimage. Don't. See those

temptations for what they are: proof that what you are doing is a powerful spiritual exercise that is going to bear abundant fruit in your life and for the world.

If you miss a day, or two days, or even five days, do not give in to discouragement. Discouragement doesn't come from God.

If you miss days, simply read the days you missed, and keep moving forward. You will be tempted to abandon this journey or tempted to go back and start again. Don't. This again is just the pull of evil spirits that do not want you to complete this consecration.

If you started praying the rosary and started over each time you got distracted, you would never finish a single rosary.

Stay the course. Don't give in to distraction or discouragement. No matter what, thirty-three days after you start: Consecrate yourself to Jesus in the Eucharist. Day 33 lays out clearly how to complete the Act of Consecration.

All that's left to do now is select a start date. You can start your spiritual pilgrimage any day you wish. It is, however, tradition to begin on a date that leads you to complete the consecration on a feast day. With that in mind, you will find a chart at the end of this section of with some options for starting your journey. More options are available at the website Eucharist.us.

But keep in mind that the Church honors at least one saint or solemnity every day of the year. Some people like to conclude on the feast day of their favorite saint or the saint they were named after. And if you wish to start today, it is just a matter of calculating which feast day will be your day of consecration. I do think it is good to know before you begin, so call on that saint's intercession along the way, especially during moments of difficulty and discouragement.

LET THE PILGRIMAGE BEGIN

As you set off on your pilgrimage, let me share a short story. Many years ago, I met a Muslim man. We were working together on a project, and we came to know each other. I asked him questions about his faith, and he asked me questions about Christianity and Catholicism. This went on for over two years until the project was finished. Throughout this time, there was one question I wanted to ask him but had held back.

On the last day of the project there was a little downtime in the afternoon and Providence opened a door.

“Can I ask you one more question about your faith?” I began.

“Sure. Anything,” he replied.

“We have spoken about Catholic belief surrounding the Eucharist. So, I was wondering, if you believed you could consume Allah under the guise of bread, what would you be willing to do in order to receive such bread?”

He looked at me for a long time. It might have been five minutes. It felt like an hour. At first, I thought I may have offended him in some way. But he was a man of deep thought and it became clear he was seriously considering my question.

Then a look came over his face, he cleared his throat, and he said, “If I believed as you described, I would crawl naked over red-hot broken glass to receive such bread.”

Quite a contrast to how disrespected the Eucharist is by so many Catholics today.

Over the next thirty-three days I will be praying and fasting for you. I pray it will be a profound and deeply mystical journey. May the Eucharistic Glory of Jesus Christ find a home deep in your soul and remain with you forever.

Jesus waits for you in the Eucharist, in our tabernacles and monstrances, and on the altar at every Mass. His message to you

is unmistakable. In a world where so many people feel unseen, unheard, and unworthy, Jesus generously proclaims: *I see you. I hear you. I know you. You are worthy. I am with you. I care. I am yours. You are Mine.* And this is His invitation: “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28)

Go to Him. Seek out time in His presence. Allow His presence to transform you in ways unimaginable.

Matthew Kelly

2024

| BEGIN PREPARATION | FEAST OF JESUS | CONSECRATION/ FEAST DAY |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| January 1 | The Presentation of the Lord | February 2 |
| February 21 | Palm Sunday | March 24 |
| February 26 | Good Friday | March 29 |
| February 28 | Easter | March 31 |
| March 6 | Divine Mercy Sunday | April 7 |
| April 10 | The Ascension of the Lord | May 12 |
| April 24 | Trinity Sunday | May 26 |
| May 1 | Corpus Christi | June 2 |
| May 6 | Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus | June 7 |
| July 5 | The Transfiguration of the Lord | August 6 |
| August 13 | The Exaltation of the Holy Cross | September 14 |
| October 23 | Solemnity of Christ the King | November 24 |
| November 23 | Christmas | December 25 |
| November 27 | The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph | December 29 |
| December 4, 2024 | The Epiphany of the Lord | January 5, 2025 |
| December 11, 2024 | The Baptism of the Lord | January 12, 2025 |