

# To Adore is to Forgive

By Father Barnabas Hughes

A few months before his death, and at the urging of friars, St. Francis composed his last will and testament. In it he wrote, “And the Lord gave me such a faith in the churches that in a simple way we would thus pray and say, ‘We adore you, Lord Jesus Christ here and in all your churches in the world. And we bless you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.’” The only churches that St. Francis knew about were those of the western and eastern Catholic faith. Furthermore, he knew that the Blessed Sacrament was not reserved in every one of them. Yet he had a sense of the presence of Christ in each little church. So he wished to adore Jesus there.

Regardless of how anyone wishes to interpret “in all your churches,” today’s Christian must meet head on what Jesus told the apostles at the Last Supper. The Evangelist John reported these words in Chapter 14: “If anyone loves me that one will keep my word and be loved by my Father. We will come and make our abode with that person.” (Of course where Father and Son are, there you will find the Holy Spirit.) Jesus is dwelling within every person who tries



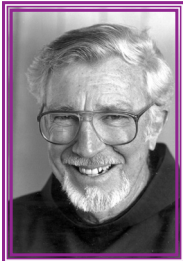
to love him. This indwelling is only intensified when a person receives the Eucharist. So very rightly, at any time and place a person can adore Jesus within one's self.

### But what's "to forgive?"

Further, we can adore Jesus within other persons. One has only to focus upon the other person.

This form of adoration is particularly important with those who have offended us. Most of the people with whom I associate are Christians and Jews. (I am not about to exclude Jews from this because they are still God's chosen people, and if God dwells with them, then Jesus is there too.) If anyone has offended us, then we are cautioned to forgive. But what's "to forgive?"

Forgiveness consists in two things: first, for me to release the other from blame and then to reject the resentment that the injustice created within me. To bring myself to adore God within another person, to speak to Jesus "We adore you, Lord Jesus Christ" abiding within someone who has offended me, cools the heat of anger and dissipates resentment. Only when I have let loose of my resentment and all the baggage it carries can I truly say, "I have forgiven."



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