

# 21 WAYS TO WORSHIP

## A Guide to Eucharistic Adoration

Vinny Flynn

1. What does the author mean when he says that we should take off our “shoes” in prayer? Shoes could refer to anything that is not of God or that might prevent us from being completely attentive to God. It could be any darkness that keeps us from grasping the light. There are many things in our lives, and it can be different things each day: unconfessed sins or leftover attachments to sin, inordinate desires and attachments, grudges, unforgiveness, hurts, resentments, bitterness, negative thoughts, attitudes, feelings, preoccupations, fears, anxieties—and so on. (*21 Ways to Worship*, 6)

***What are my “shoes,” the problems that are keeping me from living a life in full communion with God? What is distracting me from his peaceful presence? How can I leave these things behind me when I pray?***

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2. Evil spirits try to confuse us, influence us, exhaust us, and draw us away from God in all sorts of ways. In most situations, it's not a matter of an evil spirit taking control of us; it's more comparable to being surrounded by a swarm of mosquitoes that irritate and distract us so that we can't function as well. (*21 Ways to Worship*, 12)

***How do I find myself distracted and confused in my everyday life by “the world, the flesh, and the devil”? What steps can I take toward God's freedom? Who is really the king of my heart?***

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3. Pope St. John Paul II said repeatedly throughout his encyclical *Rich in Mercy*, that Jesus came to show us that God is a “Father who is rich in mercy,” a Father who just wants to love us, to bless us, and to bestow himself upon us. (*21 Ways to Worship*, 21)

***What does it mean to be a child of God? What does God want me to understand about his fatherly character? How have I seen God’s fatherhood in my life?***

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4. One of the mistakes that many of us make is to become overly formal in our prayer lives. Our Catholic tradition provides us with many beautiful prayers that are very meaningful and which should be incorporated into our prayer, but using formal prayers exclusively, especially in Adoration, can make it harder for us to develop a deep, personal relationship with God. (*21 Ways to Worship*, 25)

***Is anything getting in the way of my relationship with God? What will help me remember that God is my loving friend and father? Who are my best role models for relating to God in a “deep, personal relationship”?***

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5. A great suggestion for starting journal entries—and our day—is to thank God! Open the journal and, with mind and heart focused on the reality that Jesus is right there with you, write: “Thank You, Jesus, for...” or “Thank You, Jesus, that...” Finish the statement by listing at least five people, situations, events, or things for which you are grateful. (*21 Ways to Worship*, 35)

***What are the five things that I am most grateful for at this moment? How can I cultivate a habit of gratitude, in writing or otherwise? What will remind me to be thankful?***

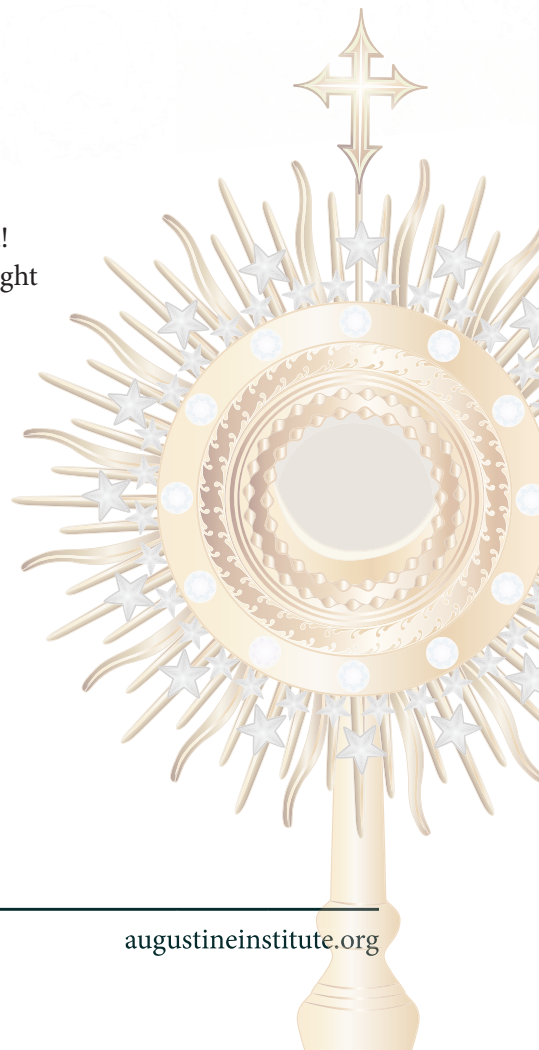
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6. When a “slide” comes in our time of prayer—a thought, a worry, a memory, a concern, or a problem—don’t try to resist it, don’t dwell on it. Just acknowledge it for a moment, and then give it to God and let it go. (21 Ways to Worship, 42)

***What are the “slides” in my mental “slideshow”? How can I foster an attitude of not chafing at distractions, but rather allowing them to lead me into prayer? Is there anything keeping me from realizing that God cares about every small detail in my life?***

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7. How do we pray using photos? “Prayer,” wrote St. Therese, “is a surge of the heart.” Just look at the pictures, one by one, and let your heart surge to God for each person. A photo captures much of the essence of a person. As we gaze at each photo, the person it represents becomes present to us, complete with personality traits, strengths, weaknesses, memories, conversations, needs, etc. (21 Ways to Worship, 47)

***How do I make my prayers specific to each person? What does it mean for prayer to be “a surge of the heart”? What is a good way to remind myself to pray for particular people in my life?***

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8. Just be human. Be who you are. Be human with God, and be human with the other people in Adoration. (21 Ways to Worship, 52)

***Do I expect too much from myself in adoration, expecting myself to be “superhuman”? How can I treat God as my father and friend in the Eucharist? Do I remember how much Christ can do in my soul if I simply dwell with him?***

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9. In his teachings on how we need to “sit in the school of Mary” to learn from her about the Eucharist, Pope St. John Paul II explained that there is “a profound analogy” between Mary’s Fiat and the Amen we say when we receive the Eucharist. He urged us to follow her example and let our Amen be a Fiat. (21 Ways to Worship, 57–58)

***How is my Amen when receiving the Eucharist analogous to Mary’s Fiat? How can I conform myself to Mary’s example and respond with a Fiat of ever-greater love?***

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10. The author relates the saying from more than one priest that hearing some confessions is “like being stoned to death with popcorn.” Sometimes the penitent talks about too many things and with too many details that don’t really matter. So, in our prayer lives, we should “hold the popcorn.” We don’t have to do all the talking. Like any conversation, we don’t learn if all we do is talk. If we want to grow in our relationship with God, we have to stop and listen. (*21 Ways to Worship*, 63)

***What are some unnecessary things that I too often bring to my prayer? How can I let go of these details and listen to God in silence? Am I afraid of silence?***

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11. Many people find that when they try the Liturgy of the Hours, they quickly grow to love it, especially because they are joining their prayer to that of the entire Church. The Liturgy of the Hours is prayed every day by priests, religious, and lay faithful all over the world. When you enter into the universal prayer of the Church, you find that it is filled with beautiful Scripture, Wisdom, and inspiring readings from the saints. (*21 Ways to Worship*, 70)

***How could the Liturgy of the Hours enrich my prayer life? Is there a particular hour (Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Night Prayer) that would be particularly appropriate to my current situation? What are some little ways that I can pray in union with the universal Church?***

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12. God is love and, in God, love is not a noun—it’s a verb. Love is what God does, all the time. Just like the sun that is always shining, God is always loving us, always pouring his love upon us. We can’t change that, and our sin doesn’t change that. Nothing has the power to change God! He is always loving us, even when we sin. That’s simply what he does. (*21 Ways to Worship*, 74)

***Have I been forgetting that nothing I do can change God’s love for me? What are little ways I can remind myself of this reality?***

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13. It's okay to cry out to God. When we go to Adoration, it's important to come before the Lord as we are, in this present moment. If we're in need, then we should come with our needs. If we're in distress, then we should come with our distresses. If we feel like crying, then cry. No words are necessary. We should be real with God and not hide our needs, our distresses, or our pain from him. (*21 Ways to Worship*, 80)

***What do I need from God? How can I learn to approach Adoration bringing all my sorrow, distresses, and needs to God for healing?***

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14. If we're alone in Adoration and like to sing, it's okay to sing to God. There's nothing irreverent about singing in front of the Eucharist. And it's very personal. In fact, it's virtually impossible for it not to be personal. Here we are, alone with God, singing to him. (*21 Ways to Worship*, 83)

***How can I bring all of myself to Adoration? How can I spontaneously express my love for God and my joy in his presence?***

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15. There is no time with God. He is not limited by time and space as we are. We can only see things sequentially. We only know as much of the past as we can remember; we only discover the present, moment by moment; and we can only imagine the future. Not so with God. He lives in the eternal now. For him, past, present, and future are all one. He sees it all now. (*21 Ways to Worship*, 91)

***Am I fully present in the moment when I come to adoration? How can I comfort Christ on the Cross in my time of adoration? What do I wish I had prayed for long ago that I can bring to God now, since it's never too late?***

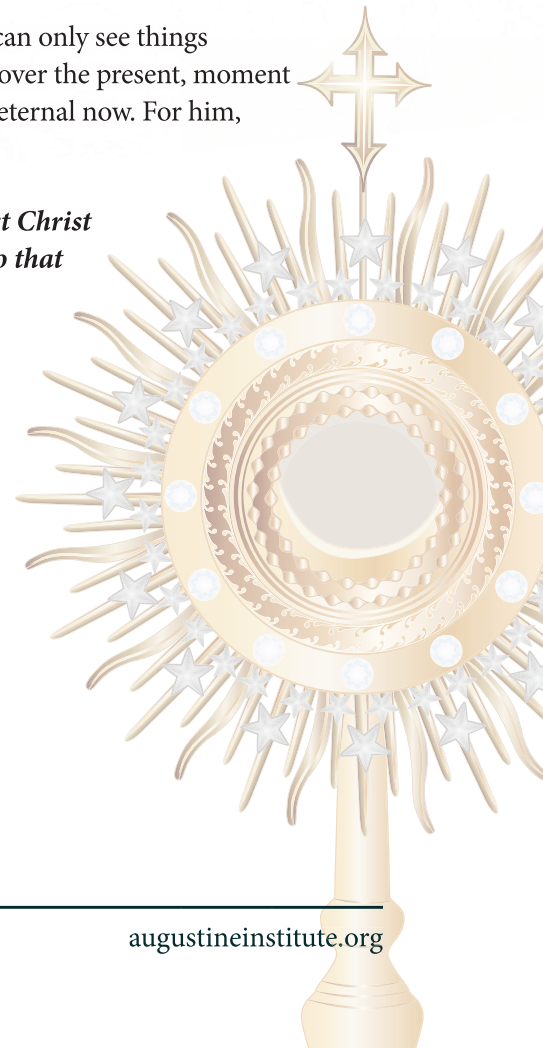
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16. There's something so comforting, so healing about the image of entering into the Tabernacle—to leave the turmoil of the world behind and lay aside all the problems, worries, and burdens of the day. Entering the quiet peacefulness of the sanctuary, we can feel the door shut out everything else, leaving us safe and secure in the Eucharistic embrace of God. (*21 Ways to Worship*, 99)

***How can I dwell with Christ in the Tabernacle throughout my day? How can I rest with him, safe in the Tabernacle, when my life is at its most difficult?***

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17. Negative thoughts can make their way into our hearts, and too often they just sit inside us and fester, eating away at us. What does all this really come down to? Unforgiveness. All of these negative thoughts, words, feelings, and judgments are really forms of unforgiveness, and we need to get rid of them so that we can come closer to God and to the other people in our lives. (*21 Ways to Worship*, 106)

***How can I “repent, revoke, and replace” all of my failures at forgiveness? Whom do I still need to forgive? How can I pray for these people in particular?***

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18. The author's confessor once gave him an easy-to-remember prayer. You simply say to the Lord: “I can't. You can. I think I'll let you.” Memorize this! It won't take long, and it will be well worth the time. Such a powerful little phrase! Such a great reminder: “Oh, yeah. I'm not God; you are!” (*21 Ways to Worship*, 112)

***Do I ever subconsciously forget that I'm not God? What do I need to let God do for me? What is in my life that I can't control but have been struggling to entrust to God?***

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19. In our prayer, we should offer our time to God for whatever he wants. Our prayer is a prayer of presence, of being with God, not for ourselves, but for him; and he can use our self-offering as prayer for whatever or whomever he chooses. The Christian agenda is to come to want what God wants. (*21 Ways to Worship*, 119)

***What does God want me to pray for? How can I practice offering myself to God wholeheartedly and completely, so that he can use me for whatever he wants?***

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20. Like Fr. Hal Cohen, many of us come to realize that no matter how many graces we receive, God always has more to give, and he wants to give it. He just waits for us to ask. (*21 Ways to Worship*, 121)

***What is God generously offering that I'm too afraid to ask for? Do I stay back out of a sense of unworthiness? How can I overcome my fear and accept God's gifts with delighted gratitude?***

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21. As we gaze upon the Eucharist in the Adoration chapel, we can pray a prayer of immersion, imagining ourselves standing under the fountain of love streaming from the Host, standing with Mary at the foot of the Cross, allowing the blood and water to shower upon us, cleansing, purifying, forgiving, healing, and restoring us. If we're praying for others, we can mentally immerse them in that endless fountain as well. (*21 Ways to Worship*, 126-127)

***How do I envision my encounter with Christ in the Eucharist, especially at Adoration? How can I help myself remember his overwhelming grace and love?***

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