

## Renewing our Love of the Eucharist this Advent



**“There is Jesus”**

**Advent Reflection for Friday, December 10**

**By Rev. Msgr. Joseph Reilly**

I first encountered Blessed Charles de Foucauld while in the major seminary. We were invited to participate in Jesus Caritas groups among our brother seminarians. These were monthly fraternal gatherings for prayer, scripture reading, and sharing of life. I found these times both encouraging and inspiring.

Indeed, the life and the death of soon-to-be Saint Charles de Foucauld is most inspiring. Growing up in a Christian family, Charles lost his parents at an early age and subsequently lost his faith. At 20 years old, he inherited all of his grandfather’s wealth and began to enjoy life’s pleasures to the highest degree, only to find that they left him hungry, bored, and unsatisfied. After serving in the military and returning to Paris, Charles began to keep company with some “highly virtuous and highly Christian” people who would bring him to the Catholic Church with the help of God’s grace. Seeing God’s hand intervening in his life, he wrote: “All this was your work, my God, your work alone ... How good you have been! How happy I am!” He could no longer live for himself – only for God. His heart had been set aflame with God’s love.

Blessed Charles joined the Trappists and remained for seven years before going to the Holy Land as a hermit, and later, he was inspired to live the “hidden life of Jesus of Nazareth” in the desert, living in solitude and witnessing to the presence of Jesus. There he lived as the only priest – the only Christian – among the Tuareg people. There he would be a witness of Jesus-Love, even as he was killed.

In one of his diaries, he writes: “Since Jesus is always with us in the Holy Eucharist, we are always with Him, and we keep Him company at the feet of the tabernacle; God is there, so what will we go to seek elsewhere? All the rest, images, relics, pilgrimages, and books, are all worthy of great veneration, but in the Holy Eucharist, there is Jesus, there is all Jesus!”

As we go deeper into these Advent days and the cold and darkness become more intense, perhaps we could look within and ask ourselves whose company we are keeping during this time? Love demands presence. We know and accept this truth with family and friends. We want to spend time with those whom we love, simply to be with them. So, too, with Jesus. Why don’t you make a commitment today to spend some time with the Lord in the Eucharist? He is longing for your company.

Saint John Paul II captures Blessed Charles de Foucauld’s spirit: “He invites all the faithful to draw from the contemplation of Christ ... new strength to nourish their spiritual life and to proclaim the gospel to the people of our time.”