

Fr. Carter's April 10 Interview about Eucharistic Adoration with Bill Brewer, Editor of the East Tennessee Catholic April 26, 2020

I was just recently asked by Bill Brewer, Editor of the East Tennessee Catholic, about the Eucharist procession and blessing of homes that I did during the coronavirus pandemic. I thought I would just share with you my answers in full here, knowing that most of them will not be used in the article.

Please describe in detail your efforts in going home to home to bless parishioners. Who exactly are you visiting?

The idea first came from a family who was desiring Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, though they were on a strict quarantine at home due to health issues. I offered to come to their driveway, set up Adoration, and have them come to confession one-by-one while I stayed in my car. With the success of that first visit, I called parishioners in a particular neighborhood and made my rounds through it, visiting house-to-house in the same way, and it was very well-received. After so many visits to our English-speaking households, I asked Sister Imelda if we could do something similar in the Hispanic community. She of course was excited about that and started making plans. If there is anything I have learned about my ministry in the Hispanic community, it's always *go big* or *go home*. And so as soon as we started planning, it became much bigger than I had first anticipated. Our first run only got the tip of the iceberg of the families that were interested in a visit. We did that on Monday of Holy Week. Because it was so well-received, we planned a second run on Wednesday of Holy Week, and that is the one that got all the news coverage.

Who accompanies you?

The first time I went out, I was by myself. But by the second time that I went out, the priests of the house, Fr. Blatchford and Fr. Iurochkin, were eager to help out. When we did it with the Hispanic community, Sister Imelda and Guadalupe Morales, our Hispanic Ministry representative on the Parish Pastoral Council, as well as two members of the Visión Católica TV International apostolate, led and documented the procession via Facebook Live.

What is involved? Holy water? the Eucharist? Prayers and blessings (if so, which ones)? A monstrance? etc.

At each stop, the family comes out on their front porch. We set up a small table and a crucifix and place the monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament on the table. We then sing a song to the Blessed Sacrament and incense it. I then lead the family in praying the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be, and then as I give Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament, they make a spiritual communion. Many families chose to set out a table with flowers, crosses, images of Our Lady, etc., to give honor to the Lord's visit to their house.

Does it involve safe distances or are you able to get closer?

In each interaction, we strove to maintain at least the recommended six-foot distance, to maintain social distancing.

Do you go into homes or just on the outside?

We avoided going into homes and did all interactions outside.

Why are you doing this and how did you come up with the idea?

The inspiration came from the desire of the people to be near our Eucharistic Lord. But it made sense - if the people can't come to Jesus, then Jesus needs to come to the people. I got the sense while we were going through the streets from house to house, bringing Jesus to the families, that this was very much like the Biblical accounts of Jesus going from town to town, and the people heard about Jesus' visit, and came out to see Him. I think, in particular, of the story of Zacchaeus, who had heard that Jesus was passing through his town of Jericho and climbed up the sycamore tree, and it was this act of faith that led to his salvation. What I have seen in doing this mobile Adoration is that many people desire to see Jesus, and these acts of faith are salvific.

What kind of response are you getting?

Since the Facebook Live posts and the article appeared, I have received many requests from families wanting a similar visit. I plan on doing that next week, maybe not on as grand a scale, but it seems this coronavirus has given us a new way of bringing the faith alive for people and allowing the Holy Spirit to inspire people in their love of God. It's a way of connecting us to our sacramental faith even at a time when we can't publicly celebrate the sacraments.

