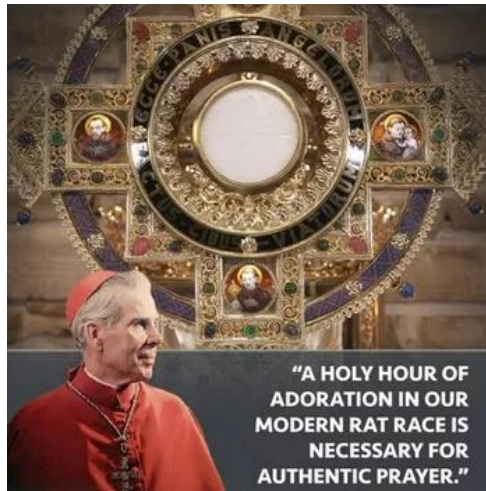


## ARCHBISHOP FULTON SHEEN, HIS HOLY HOUR AND “LITTLE LI”



A few months before his death, Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen was interviewed on national television. One of the questions was: "Bishop Sheen, you have inspired millions of people all over the world. Who inspired you to make a Holy Hour every day?"

Bishop Sheen responded that it was not a Pope, a cardinal, another bishop, or even a priest or a nun. It was a little Chinese girl of eleven years of age.

He explained that when the Communists took over China, they imprisoned a priest in his own rectory near the Church. After they locked him up in his own house, the priest was horrified to look out of his window and see the Communists proceed into the Church, where they went into the sanctuary and broke into the tabernacle.

In an act of hateful desecration, they took the ciborium and threw it on the floor with all of the Sacred Hosts spilling out. The priest knew exactly how many Hosts were in the ciborium: thirty-two. When the Communists left, they either did not notice, or didn't pay any attention to a small girl praying in the back of the Church who saw everything that had happened.

That night the little girl came back. Slipping past the guard at the priest's house, she went inside the Church. There she made a holy hour of prayer, an act of love to make up for the act of hatred. After her holy hour she went into the sanctuary, knelt down, bent over and with her tongue received Jesus in Holy Communion. The little girl continued to come back each night to make her holy hour and receive Jesus in Holy Communion on her tongue.

On the thirty-second night, after she had consumed the last and thirty-second host, she accidentally made a noise and woke the guard who was sleeping. He ran after her, caught her, and beat her to death with the butt of his rifle. This act of heroic martyrdom was witnessed by the priest as he watched grief-stricken from his bedroom window.

When Bishop Sheen heard the story he was so inspired that he promised God he would make a holy hour of prayer before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament every day of his life. If this frail, little child could give testimony and witness to the world concerning the real and wonderful Presence of her Savior in the Blessed Sacrament, then the Bishop was absolutely bound by all that was right and true, to do the same. His sole desire from then on

was to bring the world to the burning Heart of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. The little girl martyr of the Eucharist, “Little Li, showed the Bishop what true courage and zeal really are; how faith can overcome all fear, and how true love for Jesus in the Eucharist must transcend life itself.

What is hidden in the Sacred Host is the glory of His love. The sun in the sky is symbolic of the Son of God in the Blessed Sacrament. This is why most monstrances are in the form of a sunburst. As the sun is the natural source of all energy, the Blessed Sacrament is the supernatural source of all grace and love. The Blessed Sacrament is JESUS, the Light of the world.

Sources:

Office of Divine Worship, Diocese of St. Louis, e-newsletter, February 2023

<https://www.journeywithus.asia/corpus-christi-venerable-fulton-sheen-and-little-li-the-martyred-chinese-girl/>

Sheen's autobiography "Treasures in Clay"

<https://aleteia.org/2022/03/31/how-a-little-girls-eucharistic-faith-inspired-fulton-sheen/>

<https://www.myfirstholychommunion.com/portfolio-view/little-li/>

### **An excerpt from [Treasures in Clay - The Autobiography of Fulton J. Sheen](#)**

*“I resolved also to spend a continuous Holy Hour every day in the presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament...The Holy Hour. Is it difficult?*

*Sometimes it seemed to be hard; it might mean having to forego a special engagement, or rise an hour earlier, but on the whole it has never been a burden, only a joy....*

*The purpose of the Holy Hour is to encourage a deep personal encounter with Christ. The holy and glorious God is constantly inviting us to come to Him, to hold converse with Him, to ask for such things as we need and to experience what a blessing there is in fellowship with Him...*

*I have found that it takes some time to catch fire in prayer. This has been one of the advantages of the daily hour. It is not so brief as to prevent the soul from collecting itself and shaking off the multitudinous distractions of the world.*

*Sitting before the Presence is like a body exposing itself before the sun to absorb its rays. Silence in the Hour is a tete-a-tete with the Lord.*

*In those moments one does not so much pour out written prayers, but listening takes its place. We do not say: ‘Listen, Lord, for Thy servant speaks’, but ‘Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.’”*

### **The Holy Hour**

*“Neither theological knowledge nor social action alone is enough to keep us in love with Christ unless both are proceeded by a personal encounter with Him. Theological insights are gained not only from between two covers of a book, but from two bent knees before an altar. The Holy Hour becomes like an oxygen tank to revive the breath of the Holy Spirit in the midst of the foul and fetid atmosphere of the world.”*

– Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen