



LITURGICAL NORMS

RESERVATION OF THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST

Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament

- 1.1 The Holy Eucharist must be reserved in the cathedral church or its equivalent, in every parish church, and in a church or oratory connected to the house of a religious institute or society of apostolic life.¹
- 1.2 The Eucharist can be reserved in the chapels of bishops and, with the permission of the local ordinary, in other churches, oratories, and chapels.²
- 1.3 In sacred places where the Eucharist is reserved, there must always be someone responsible for it and, insofar as possible, a priest is to celebrate Mass there at least twice a month.³
- 1.4 Apart from the prescriptions of canon 934 § 1, it is forbidden to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in a place that is not subject in a secure way to the authority of the diocesan Bishop, or where there is a danger of profanation. Where such is the case, the diocesan Bishop should immediately revoke any permission for reservation of the Eucharist that may already have been granted.⁴
- 1.5 No one may carry the Most Holy Eucharist to his or her home, or to any other place contrary to the norm of law. It should also be borne in mind that removing or retaining the consecrated species for a sacrilegious purpose or casting them away are *graviora delicta*, the absolution of which is reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.⁵
- 1.6 In places where the Holy Eucharist is reserved, consecrated hosts in a quantity sufficient for the needs of the faithful are to be kept in a ciborium or pyx within

¹ CIC can. 934 §1 1°.

² CIC can. 934 §1 2°.

³ CIC can. 934 §2.

⁴ RS 131

⁵ RS 132

- a tabernacle; they are to be renewed frequently and the older hosts consumed properly.⁶
- 1.7 The Precious Blood may not be reserved except for giving Holy Communion to one who is sick and is unable to receive the host.⁷
- 1.8 Unless there is a grave reason to the contrary, the church in which the Eucharist is reserved is to be open to the faithful for at least some hours every day so that they can pray before the Blessed Sacrament.⁸

Tabernacle

- 2.1 In accordance with the structure of each church and legitimate local customs, the Blessed Sacrament should be reserved in a tabernacle in a part of the church that is truly noble, prominent, readily visible, beautifully decorated, and suitable for prayer.⁹
- 2.2 The Holy Eucharist is to be reserved habitually in only one tabernacle of a church or oratory.¹⁰
- 2.3 The one tabernacle is to be immovable, be made of solid and inviolable material that is not transparent, and be locked in such a way that the danger of profanation is prevented to the greatest extent possible.¹¹
- 2.4 The person responsible for the church or oratory is to take care that the key of the tabernacle in which the Holy Eucharist is reserved is safeguarded most diligently.¹²
- 2.5 It is appropriate that, before the tabernacle is put into liturgical use, it be blessed according to the rite described in the Book of Blessings.¹³

⁶ CIC can. 939.

⁷ CDWDS, Response, April 2007; also BCLN September-October 2007.

⁸ CIC can. 937.

⁹ GIRM 314, citing EUM 54; IO 95. See also CIC can. 938 §2. AS 156: "The Bishop should see to it that the Blessed Sacrament chapel or the tabernacle are of the greatest dignity and are so positioned as to be immediately visible."

¹⁰ CIC can. 938 §1.

¹¹ GIRM 314, citing EM 52; IO 95; SCS, Instruction *Nullo unquam tempore*, 28 May 1938, 4; HCWEOM 10-11; CIC can. 938 §3.

¹² CIC can. 938 §5.

¹³ GIRM 314, citing BB, Order for a Blessing on the Occasion of the Installation of a New Tabernacle, 919-929.

- 2.6 It is more in keeping with the meaning of the sign that the tabernacle in which the Holy Eucharist is reserved not be on an altar on which Mass is celebrated *versus populum*.¹⁴
- 2.7 Consequently, it is preferable that the tabernacle be located, according to the judgment of the Archbishop, in the center of the sanctuary, apart from the altar of celebration, in a form and place of great dignity, not excluding on an old altar no longer used for celebration.¹⁵
- 2.8 In accordance with traditional custom, near the tabernacle a special lamp, fueled by oil or wax, should be kept alight to indicate and honor the presence of Christ. Electric lights must not be used for this purpose.¹⁶
- 2.9 For a grave cause, it is permitted to reserve the Holy Eucharist in some other fitting and more secure place, especially at night.¹⁷

Practical Considerations

- 3.1 The reservation of the Blessed Sacrament outside of a parish and its mission(s) requires the permission of the Archbishop through the Office of Divine Worship.
- 3.2 Any place outside of an established parish and its associated mission(s) where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved must be registered with the Office of Divine Worship. Details regarding the access to the Blessed Sacrament and its safeguard must be submitted for approval.
- 3.3 Each vicariate should maintain a list of such places and the name of the priest responsible for the care of the Holy Eucharist in that place.
- 3.4 The Blessed Sacrament should not be reserved in hospitals, nursing homes or other institutions without a full-time catholic presence.

¹⁴ Cf. GIRM 315, citing EUM 55.

¹⁵ GIRM 315a, citing GIRM 303.

¹⁶ GIRM 316, cf. CIC can. 940; EUM 57; HCWEOM, 11; BCLN December 1982. It is not required that the vigil light for the tabernacle be a candle, though this is very common; but if it is a candle, it must be made of wax. If a candle is not used for the vigil light, a lamp fueled by oil or wax should be used. A lamp that is made to look like a candle could also be used for this purpose, but not in place of the true candles used on or around the altar.

¹⁷ CIC can. 938 §4.

- 3.5 Catholic schools which have an archdiocesan priest chaplain may reserve the Blessed Sacrament, others must seek the permission of the Archbishop in light of the above norms.
- 3.6 Permission to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in any institutions outside of a parish is to be reviewed annually by the Office of Divine Worship.
- 3.7 Any irregularities regarding the reservation of the Holy Eucharist should be brought to the attention of the local Vicar and/or the Office of Divine Worship.