

Information Regarding

ADORATION OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT



ARCHDIOCESE OF PORTLAND IN OREGON
OFFICE OF DIVINE WORSHIP

No one can fail to see that the divine Eucharist bestows an incomparable dignity upon the Christian people. For it is not just while the Sacrifice is being offered and the Sacrament is being confected, but also after the Sacrifice has been offered and the Sacrament confected - while the Eucharist is reserved in churches or oratories - that Christ is truly Emmanuel, which means "God with us." For He is in the midst of us day and night; He dwells in us with the fullness of grace and of truth. He raises the level of morals, fosters virtue, comforts the sorrowful, strengthens the weak and stirs up all those who draw near to Him to imitate Him, so that they may learn from His example to be meek and humble of heart, and to seek not their own interests but those of God. Anyone who has a special devotion to the sacred Eucharist and who tries to repay Christ's infinite love for us with an eager and unselfish love of His own, will experience and fully understand - and this will bring great delight and benefit to his soul - just how precious is a life hidden with Christ in God and just how worthwhile it is to carry on a conversation with Christ, for there is nothing more consoling here on earth, nothing more efficacious for progress along the paths of holiness.

Pope St. Paul VI – *Mysterium Fidei*

**Cover: Icon of the Ascension, Notre Dame Institute, Jerusalem,
Photograph by Lawrence Lew, OP.**

ABBREVIATIONS

ADP	Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon.
BCL	USCCB, Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy (now Committee on Divine Worship).
BCLN	BCL <i>Newsletter</i> , various dates (succeeded by CDWN).
CIC	<i>Codex Iuris Canonici</i> (Code of Canon Law), 1917 or 1983 (when the year is not specified, reference is to 1983 CIC).
CDW	USCCB, Committee on Divine Worship.
CDWDS	Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments.
DS	Denzinger-Schönmetzer, <i>Enchiridion Symbolorum</i> , editio XXXVI, 1976.
EE	Pope St. John Paul II, Encyclical, <i>Ecclesia de Eucharistia</i> , 2003
EM	SCR, Instruction <i>Eucharisticum Mysterium</i> , 1967.
GIRM	General Instruction of the Roman Missal , 2002 (US English edition 2011).
HCWEOM	Roman Ritual, Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass , 1973.
LG	Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution <i>Lumen gentium</i> , 1964.
MI	Apostolic Penitentiary, <i>Manual of Indulgences</i> , 2006.
MF	Pope St. Paul VI, Encyclical <i>Mysterium fidei</i> , 1965.
NDRHC	USCCB, Norms on the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds , 2001.
PO	Second Vatican Council, Decree <i>Presbyterorum ordinis</i> , 1965.
RMHE	ADP, <i>Liturgical Norms: Reservation of the Most Holy Eucharist</i> , 2018
RS	CDWDS, Instruction <i>Redemptionis Sacramentum</i> , 2004.
SC	Second Vatican Council, Constitution <i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> , 1963.
SCDW	Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship.
SCR	Sacred Congregation for Rites.
SCSE	Pope Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation <i>Sacramentum caritatis</i> (<i>Sanctissima Eucharistia</i>), 2007.
USCCB	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (formerly NCCB/USCC).

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ADORATION OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT

1. The Office of Divine Worship of the Archdiocese of Portland has been approached in recent times to provide some clear direction to parishes wishing to implement Eucharistic Adoration, either perpetual or partial. Therefore, this document is intended to provide parishes with the necessary information, not necessarily at a practical level, as this can be found easily from the various associations which promote Adoration, but at the level of doctrine, tradition and current legislation regarding the worship of the Holy Eucharist outside Mass. In recent years, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have issued various observations regarding Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, some of which are quoted in this document; it is recommended that those leading parish Adoration programs familiarize themselves with these documents.

Chapter 5 of the Archdiocesan Liturgical Handbook, entitled *The Reservation and Veneration of the Blessed Sacrament*, is also included in this document.

Introduction

2. The Most Holy Eucharist, “stands at the center of the Church’s life,”¹ since it truly “contains the Church’s entire spiritual wealth: Christ Himself, our Passover and Living Bread.”² “The Church has received the Eucharist from Christ her Lord not as one gift - however precious - among so many others, but as the gift *par excellence*, for it is the gift of Himself, of His person in His sacred humanity, as well as the gift of His saving work.”³ That surpassing gift of the Eucharist is where the Church draws her life, the dynamic force of all her activity and her whole sense of purpose and direction. As the Second Vatican Council proclaimed, the Eucharistic sacrifice is “the source and summit of the Christian life.”⁴
3. From the earliest times, the Holy Eucharist has been reserved after the celebration of Holy Mass to be taken to those who cannot be present, primarily to those who are sick or homebound. A joyous consequence of the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament is the ability to venerate this most august Sacrament in the practice of Eucharistic Adoration.
4. We can recall that the Blessed Sacrament is traditionally reserved only under the species of bread, in the form of the sacred host, a practice laid down in our own day by the law of the Church and expressed in the liturgical books. Only as exceptions in certain defined

¹ EE 3.

² PO 5.

³ EE 11.

⁴ LG 11.

cases is the priest permitted to reserve the Blessed Sacrament under the species of wine, as the Precious Blood of Our Lord. He is allowed to do this solely for the purpose of bringing Holy Communion to a sick person who cannot receive even a fragment of the sacred host.

5. All Catholics know that the constant teaching of the Church is that in the Blessed Sacrament, the Savior is present, truly, really and substantially in His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity.⁵
6. The Eucharistic Sacrifice is the source and summit of the whole Christian life. Therefore devotion, both private and public, toward the Eucharist even outside Mass that conforms to the norms laid down by lawful authority is strongly advocated.⁶
7. There should be no doubt in anyone's mind "that all the faithful ought to show to this most holy Sacrament the worship which is due to the true God, as has always been the custom of the Catholic Church. Nor is it to be adored any the less because it was instituted by Christ to be eaten."⁷ For even in the reserved Sacrament He is to be adored because He is substantially present there through that conversion of bread and wine which, as the Council of Trent tells us, is most aptly named *transubstantiation*.
8. The mystery of the Eucharist should therefore be considered in all its fullness, not only in the celebration of Mass but also in devotion to the sacred species which remain after Mass and are reserved to extend the grace of the sacrifice.⁸
9. When the faithful adore Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament, they should remember that this presence derives from the sacrifice and has as its purpose both sacramental and spiritual communion.
10. To be clear, we should have in mind the meaning of some terms used in these matters. The first is "reservation," which means the keeping of the Blessed Sacrament after Mass in the tabernacle. This not only facilitates Holy Communion for the sick, but also ensures that enough hosts are on hand for other pastoral purposes, to facilitate the distribution of Holy Communion at Mass and in some rare circumstances outside Mass, and to allow the faithful, as remarked elsewhere, to remain in the living presence of our Blessed Lord and to express their prayer to Him in a more direct way.

⁵Council of Trent (1551): DS 1651.

⁶ HCWEOM 79.

⁷ Council of Trent, Session XIII, Decree on the Eucharist, Chap. V.

⁸ EM 3g.

11. The term Eucharistic Adoration refers to the prayer of individual Catholics and constituted or casually assembled groups in the presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and directed to Him.
12. Such prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament mostly takes place when the tabernacle is closed and securely locked, because as we see in the Scriptures, the presence of Jesus is not limited by locked doors, and for reasons of respect and necessary security against any risk of profanation. This is already a true form of Eucharistic Adoration.
13. In certain circumstances, according to the decisions of the diocesan bishop, it is traditional to allow religious communities, parishes, seminaries and other groups or associations of the faithful recognized by the bishop or by the Holy See to adore our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament exposed. This means that the Blessed Sacrament, in the form of one or more sacred hosts, is taken out of the tabernacle and placed on the altar in a vessel, which may be a ciborium or a monstrance. There are rules and traditions as to how this is done, and these involve some degree of solemnity, so as to honor Our Lord in an appropriate way, to guarantee respect and also to ensure security. The various forms of this practice are known as Eucharistic Exposition and the prayer of the faithful before the Blessed Sacrament exposed is another form of Eucharistic Adoration.
14. Therefore, the devotion prompting the faithful to visit the Blessed Sacrament draws them into an ever deeper share in the paschal mystery. This leads them to respond gratefully to the gift of Him who through His humanity constantly pours divine life into the members of His Body. Abiding with Christ the Lord, they enjoy His intimate friendship and pour out their hearts before Him for themselves and for those dear to them and they pray for the peace and salvation of the world. Offering their entire lives with Christ to the Father in the Holy Spirit, they derive from this sublime colloquy an increase of faith, hope, and charity. Thus, they foster those right dispositions that enable them with due devotion to celebrate the memorial of the Lord and receive frequently the bread given us by the Father.⁹

The Second Vatican Council

15. Although the Second Vatican Council document on the Sacred Liturgy did not explicitly mention the practice of Eucharistic Adoration, Pope St. Paul VI in his encyclical letter, *Mysterium Fidei*, in 1965 exhorted the world's bishops to foster eucharistic devotion. "And so We beseech you, Venerable Brothers, to take this faith, which means nothing less than maintaining complete fidelity to the words of Christ and the Apostles, and preserve it in its purity and integrity among the people entrusted to your care and vigilance, with all false and pernicious opinions being completely rejected; and We beseech you to foster

⁹ EM 50.

devotion to the Eucharist, which should be the focal point and goal of all other forms of devotion.”¹⁰

16. Pope St. Paul VI affirms that “[T]he Catholic Church has held firm to this belief in the presence of Christ’s Body and Blood in the Eucharist not only in her teaching but in her life as well, since she has at all times paid this great Sacrament the worship known as ‘*latria*,’ which may be given to God alone.”¹¹
17. The worship of the Most Holy Eucharist outside Mass was reaffirmed by the documents of the liturgy that were issued subsequent to the Second Vatican Council. The revised Roman Ritual contains the book *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, issued in 1973 by the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship. Along with the rites and prayers, this book contains the most recent regulations for the veneration of the Blessed Sacrament. In setting out the reasons for eucharistic devotion it states: “Prayer before Christ the Lord sacramentally present extends the union with Christ that the faithful have reached in communion. It renews the covenant that in turn moves them to maintain by the way they live what they have received through faith and the sacrament.”¹²
18. In the years subsequent to the Second Vatican Council the devotion of Eucharistic Adoration has seen a welcome increase with many parishes offering at least some Eucharistic Adoration each week and even Perpetual Adoration. Perpetual Adoration is often associated with religious communities, but the Congregation for Divine Worship clarified in 1986 that “When all conditions are observed the bishop can grant permission for a pious association to have Perpetual Exposition.” It should be remarked here that the expression “pious association” does not refer simply to any devout group of the faithful, but to a body defined in Church law which has received formal approval from the bishop or the Holy See.

Unites States Conference of Catholic Bishops

19. Over the past several years a number of questions have been raised regarding the practice of Perpetual Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. In 1995 the United States Bishops Conference asked the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy to resolve some issues and concerns regarding Perpetual Adoration. The Liturgy Committee discussed the issues raised several times and decided to submit a series of questions regarding Perpetual Exposition to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. This committee submitted five questions to the Congregation, which are below with their responses. As these responses indicate, those who are responsible for Perpetual

¹⁰ MF 64.

¹¹ Ibid. 55.

¹² HCWEOM 81.

Exposition should carefully familiarize themselves with the norms contained in nos. 82-100 of *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*.

QUESTION 1: Should Perpetual Adoration or Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament take place in parishes?

RESPONSE: The Roman Ritual: *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* (HCWEOM), no. 90, states that, according to their constitutions and regulations, some religious communities and other pious groups have the practice of Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration or Adoration over extended periods of time. If by “Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration” is meant prayer before the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, this involves no special permission. However, if by “Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration” is meant adoration of the Blessed Sacrament exposed in the ciborium or monstrance, the permission of the local Ordinary is required.

Perpetual Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is a devotion and practice which is permitted to those religious communities that have it as an integral part of their communal life and to pious associations of the laity which have received official recognition.

If a pious association of the laity, which has Perpetual Exposition as a part of its constitution, is established within a parish, the activity of that association should be seen as separate from that of the parish, although all members of the parish are free to participate in it.

QUESTION 2: May Perpetual Exposition take place in the parish church?

RESPONSE: Because Perpetual Exposition is a devotional practice of a religious community or a pious association, it should normally take place in a chapel of that religious community or association. If for some good reason Perpetual Exposition must take place in a parish church, it should be in a chapel distinct from the body of the church so as not to interfere with the normal activities of the parish or its daily liturgical celebrations.

When Mass is celebrated in a chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, the Eucharist must be replaced in the tabernacle before the celebration of Mass begins.

QUESTION 3: May Perpetual Exposition take place twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year?

RESPONSE: Groups authorized to have Perpetual Exposition are bound to follow all the liturgical norms given in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, nos. 82-100. Under no circumstances may Perpetual Exposition take place during the Easter Triduum. There should always be a sufficient number of people present for Eucharistic Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament exposed (see HCWEOM, no. 88). Every effort should be made to ensure that there should be at least two people present.

There must absolutely never be periods when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed and there is no one present for Adoration. It may prove necessary to expose the Blessed Sacrament for Adoration only at stated times when members of the faithful are present.

QUESTION 4: Who is responsible for overseeing Perpetual Exposition?

RESPONSE: The local Ordinary has the responsibility for the regulation of Perpetual Exposition. He determines when it is permissible and establishes the regulations to be followed in regard to Perpetual Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. He normally entrusts the superior or chaplain of religious communities or the local pastor or chaplain, in the case of pious associations, with the responsibility of seeing that the liturgical norms and his regulations are followed.

QUESTION 5: Must the local bishop permit Perpetual Exposition?

RESPONSE: The bishop is responsible for all matters pertaining to the right ordering of the celebration of the Eucharist and Adoration and devotion to the Eucharist outside Mass. It is his duty to promote and guide the liturgical life of the diocese. Consequently, he alone determines the pastoral appropriateness of Perpetual Exposition in his diocese and accordingly may permit it or not and may limit the number of places where it takes place.

Adoration and Exposition

20. The distinction between Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle and the Blessed Sacrament exposed in the monstrance or ciborium must be clearly made at this point.
21. As seen in the Congregation's response above, the Adoration that takes place before the tabernacle needs no special permission and can be freely practiced at any time outside Mass when the church or the Blessed Sacrament chapel is open. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance or the ciborium has regulations that need to be observed.¹³ These regulations can be found in the part of the Roman Ritual entitled, *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* mentioned above.

Regulations for Exposition of the Holy Eucharist

22. In such Exposition of the Holy Eucharist care must be taken that everything clearly brings out the meaning of eucharistic worship in its correlation with the Mass. There must be nothing about the appointments used for Exposition that could in any way obscure

¹³ CIC, can. 941 §1.

Christ's intention of instituting the Eucharist above all to be near us to feed, to heal, and to comfort us.¹⁴

23. During the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the celebration of Mass in the body of the Church is prohibited.¹⁵
24. If Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament goes on for a day or for several successive days, it should be interrupted during the celebration of Mass, unless that Mass is celebrated in a chapel separate from the area of Exposition and at least some of the faithful remain in Adoration.¹⁶
25. Genuflection in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, whether reserved in the tabernacle or exposed for public Adoration, is on one knee.¹⁷
26. For Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance, four to six candles are lighted, as at Mass, and the priest or deacon uses incense. For Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the ciborium, at least two candles should be lighted and the priest or deacon may use incense if appropriate.¹⁸

Lengthy Exposition

27. In churches where the Eucharist is regularly reserved, it is recommended that solemn Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for an extended period of time should take place once a year, even though this period is not strictly continuous. In this way the local community may adore and meditate on this mystery more deeply. Exposition arranged in this way, however, may take place, only with the consent of the local Ordinary, and only if there is assurance of the participation of a reasonable number of the faithful.¹⁹
28. For any serious and general need, the local Ordinary has the authority to order prayer before the Blessed Sacrament exposed for a more extended period of time in those churches to which the faithful come in large numbers.²⁰
29. It is highly recommended that at least in the cities and the larger towns the diocesan bishop should designate a church building for Perpetual Adoration; in it, however, Holy

¹⁴ HCWEOM 82.

¹⁵ Ibid. 83.

¹⁶ Ibid. 83.

¹⁷ Ibid. 84.

¹⁸ Ibid. 85.

¹⁹ Ibid. 86.

²⁰ Ibid. 87.

Mass should be celebrated frequently, even daily if possible, while the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament should rigorously be interrupted while Mass is being celebrated.²¹

30. Where there cannot be uninterrupted Exposition because there is not a sufficient number of worshipers, it is permissible to replace the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle at fixed hours that are announced ahead of time. But this may not be done more than twice a day, for example, at midday and at night.²²
31. The following form of simple reposition may be observed: the priest or deacon, vested in an alb, or a surplice over a cassock, and a stole, replaces the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle in the usual way, after a brief period of Adoration and a prayer said with those present. The Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament may take place again, in the same manner and at a scheduled time.²³

Brief Period of Exposition

32. Shorter periods of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament are to be arranged in such a way that the blessing with the Eucharist is preceded by a reasonable time for readings of the word of God, songs, prayers, and a period for silent prayer. Exposition merely for the purpose of giving benediction is prohibited.²⁴

Minister of Exposition

33. The ordinary minister for Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is a priest or deacon. At the end of the period of Adoration, before the reposition, he blesses the congregation with the Blessed Sacrament.
34. In the absence of a priest or deacon or if they are lawfully impeded, the following persons may, upon appointment by the local Ordinary, be authorized to publicly expose and later repose the Eucharist for the Adoration of the faithful: an acolyte or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion; a member of a religious community or of a pious association of laymen or laywomen which is devoted to Eucharistic Adoration.
35. An authorized lay minister may open the tabernacle and also, as required, place the ciborium on the altar or place the host in the monstrance. At the end of the period of Adoration, the minister replaces the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. It is not lawful, however, for an authorized lay minister to give the blessing with the Blessed Sacrament.²⁵

²¹ RS 140.

²² HCWEOM 88.

²³ Ibid. 88.

²⁴ Ibid. 89.

²⁵ Ibid. 91.

36. A priest or deacon who presides at Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament should vest in an alb, or a surplice over a cassock, and a stole. Other ministers should wear either the liturgical vesture that is used in the region or the vesture that is befitting this ministry and is approved by the Ordinary.
37. The priest or deacon should wear a white cope and humeral veil to give the blessing at the end of Adoration, when Exposition takes place with the monstrance; in the case of Exposition with the ciborium, he should put on at least the humeral veil.²⁶

Some Considerations

38. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal states: “In no way should any of the other things be forgotten which are prescribed by law concerning the reservation of the Most Holy Eucharist”,²⁷ referencing the 1938 document issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments, *Nullo umquam tempore*. In that document the legislation is clearly stated that a tabernacle, which is immovable and thoroughly closed may be constructed only of wood, marble or metal.
39. The practice of the Blessed Sacrament being exposed in a glass tabernacle is to be avoided. In a reply given in 1971, the Congregation for Divine Worship reaffirmed this principle, stating: “The Church regulates with specific legislation the Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament and would be opposed to continuous Exposition in some fashion in a glass tabernacle.”²⁸
40. The general law regarding the tabernacle is that it 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.²⁹
41. Moreover, the practice whereby a member of the lay faithful either simply opens the tabernacle door or removes a veil over a glass tabernacle to begin and end a period of Eucharistic Exposition is not lawful and is not found in the Church’s authentic liturgical books. When a priest or deacon cannot be present and the Archbishop has not authorized any other arrangements for Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Eucharistic Adoration must take place in the traditional manner, with the tabernacle door locked.
42. If in a given parish there is an insufficient number of faithful who are able to commit themselves to participating so as to realize Perpetual Adoration in the form of prolonged Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, then the pastor may, if appropriate, arrange for

²⁶ HCWEOM 92.

²⁷ GIRM 317.

²⁸ *Notitiae* 68, December 1971.

²⁹ GIRM 314; cf. EM 52; IO 95; SCS, Instruction *Nullo umquam tempore*, 28 May 1938, 4; HCWEOM 10-11; CIC, can. 938 §3; RMHE 2.3.

periods of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament to alternate with periods of Adoration without Exposition, allowing also for some periods where no communal Adoration is scheduled. For prolonged Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament to take place, an absolute requirement is that a sufficient number of the faithful are able to guarantee their presence at all times and that the security of the building is reasonably ensured.

Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy

43. In the publication *Thirty-One Questions on Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament*, the USCCB Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy (BCL) raises the following questions:

QUESTION: *Couldn't the Eucharist be exposed always by building tabernacle of glass or tabernacles with small windows to see inside?*

RESPONSE: *No. The holy Eucharist is to be reserved in a solid tabernacle. It must be opaque and unbreakable.*³⁰

QUESTION: *In those places where Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament take place, scheduling is often a great challenge. If a person misses an assigned hour for Adoration of the exposed Sacrament, can a door or a drape be erected so that the exposed Sacrament can be temporarily closed off from public view?*

RESPONSE: *No. The use of drapes or doors to shield the monstrance even for a short period of time, is not the required reposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The Blessed Sacrament may never be left alone when exposed for prayer and Adoration. "Every effort should be made to ensure that there should be at least two people present. There must absolutely never be periods when the Blessed is exposed and there is no one present for adoration....". If a period of uninterrupted Adoration is not possible, because of too few worshipers, the Blessed Sacrament may be replaced in the tabernacle during periods which have been scheduled and announced beforehand. This reposition may not take place more often than twice during the day, for example, about noon and at night."*³¹

QUESTION: *In order to enhance security, may the Blessed Sacrament be exposed behind a glass window?*

RESPONSE: *No. The Blessed Sacrament may be exposed in either a monstrance or ciborium and is usually placed on the altar for Adoration. The Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament behind a glass window is not the "Exposition" envisioned by the rite. Such arrangements often result in the appearance of a 'glass tabernacle,' which is forbidden."*³²

³⁰ *Thirty-One Questions on Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament*, 8, USCCB, BCL 2004.

³¹ *Thirty-One Questions on Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament*, 24, USCCB, BCL 2004; Cf. HCWEOM 88.

³² *Ibid* 25.

44. It should be clear then, that if the Blessed Sacrament is exposed for any period of time, it must be done so according to the Church's current regulations and following the expectations envisioned by the various documents on this matter.
45. Parishes should clearly teach that both types of Adoration, exposed and reposed, are equally efficacious, however the Blessed Sacrament exposed requires a more solemn liturgical rite.

Adoration during the Celebration of Holy Mass

46. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is prohibited in the same place where Holy Mass is being celebrated. Indeed, if Exposition goes on for an extended period of time it should be interrupted during the celebration of Holy Mass, unless that Mass is celebrated in a chapel separate from the area of Exposition.³³ If an adoration chapel is within the church building it would seem in the spirit of the law that Adoration is suspended so that all the faithful can participate in Holy Mass.

³³ Cf. HCWEOM 83.

In Summary

47. The worship of the Eucharist outside Mass is of inestimable value for the life of the Church. This worship is strictly linked to the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The presence of Christ under the sacred species reserved after Mass - a presence which lasts as long as the species of bread and of wine remain - derives from the celebration of the sacrifice and is directed towards communion, both sacramental and spiritual. It is the responsibility of pastors to encourage, also by their personal witness, the practice of Eucharistic Adoration and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in particular, as well as prayer of adoration before Christ present under the Eucharistic species.³⁴
48. Pastors should see that, unless a serious reason stands in the way, churches where the Holy Eucharist is reserved, are open every day for at least several hours at a convenient time, so that the faithful may easily pray in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.³⁵
49. A distinction must be made between Perpetual Adoration and Perpetual Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.
50. Exposition of the Most Holy Eucharist must always be carried out in accordance with the prescriptions of the approved liturgical books.³⁶
51. In closing let us hear from Pope Benedict XVI in his Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis*: "I heartily recommend to the Church's pastors and to the People of God the practice of Eucharistic Adoration, both individually and in community. Great benefit would ensue from a suitable catechesis explaining the importance of this act of worship, which enables the faithful to experience the liturgical celebration more fully and more fruitfully."³⁷

³⁴ EE 25.

³⁵ HCWEOM 8, Cf. CIC 934-944.

³⁶ Ibid. 109.

³⁷ SCSE 67.

ARCHDIOCESAN LITURGICAL HANDBOOK

CHAPTER 5 - RESERVATION AND VENERATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

- 5.1.1 The celebration of the Eucharist in the Sacrifice of the Mass is truly the origin and end of the worship given to the Eucharist outside the Mass. Furthermore, the sacred species are reserved after Mass principally so that the faithful who cannot be present at Mass, above all the sick and those advanced in age, may be united by sacramental Communion to Christ and His Sacrifice which is offered in the Mass.³⁸
- 5.1.2 In addition, this reservation also permits the practice of adoring this great Sacrament and offering it the worship due to God. Accordingly, forms of adoration that are not only private but also public and communitarian in nature, as established or approved by the Church herself, must be greatly promoted.³⁹
- 5.1.3 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.⁴⁰
- 5.1.4 The Eucharist can be reserved in the chapels of bishops and, with the permission of the local ordinary, in other churches, oratories, and chapels.⁴¹
- 5.1.5 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.⁴²
- 5.1.6 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.⁴³

³⁸ SCDW, Decree, *Eucharistiae sacramentum*, 21 June 1973: AAS 65 (1973) 610

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ CIC, can. 934 §1 1°; RMHE 1.1.

⁴¹ CIC, can. 934 §1 2°; RMHE1.2.

⁴² CIC, can. 934 §2; RMHE 1.3.

⁴³ RS 131; RMHE 1.4.

- 5.1.7 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 a tabernacle; they are to be renewed frequently and the older hosts consumed properly.⁴⁴
- 5.1.8 The Precious Blood may not be reserved except for giving Holy Communion to one who is sick and is unable to receive the host. The Precious Blood cannot be exposed for Eucharistic Adoration.⁴⁵
- 5.1.9 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 most serious crimes)*, the absolution of which is reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.⁴⁶
- 5.1.10 A priest or deacon, or an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion who takes the Most Holy Eucharist when an ordained minister is absent or impeded in order to administer it as Communion for a sick person, should go insofar as possible directly from the place where the Sacrament is reserved to the sick person's home, leaving aside any profane business so that any danger of profanation may be avoided and the greatest reverence for the Body of Christ may be ensured. Furthermore, the Rite for the administration of Communion to the sick, as prescribed in the Roman Ritual, is always to be used.⁴⁷

B. PARTICULAR ARCHDIOCESAN NORMS

- 5.2.1 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 current Archdiocesan norms.⁴⁸
- 5.2.2 The Blessed Sacrament should not be reserved in hospitals, nursing homes or other institutions without a full-time Catholic presence.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ CIC, can. 939; RMHE 1.6.

⁴⁵ NDRHC 54; cf. PCS, 74; CDWDS, Response, April 2007; also BCLN September-October 2007; RMHE 1.7.

⁴⁶ RS 132; RMHE 1.5.

⁴⁷ HCWEOM, 26-78.

⁴⁸ RMHE 3.5.

⁴⁹ RMHE 3.4.

- 5.2.3 The reservation of the Blessed Sacrament outside a parish and its mission(s) requires the permission of the Archbishop through the Office of Divine Worship.⁵⁰
- 5.2.4 Any place outside 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.⁵¹
- 5.2.5 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.⁵²
- 5.2.6 Permission to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in any institutions outside a parish is to be reviewed annually by the Office of Divine Worship.⁵³
- 5.2.7 Any irregularities regarding the reservation of the Holy Eucharist should be brought to the attention of the local Vicar Forane and/or the Office of Divine Worship.⁵⁴

C. TABERNACLE

- 5.3.1 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. Responsibility for ensuring these conditions are met lies with the Archbishop.⁵⁵
- 5.3.2 The correct positioning of the tabernacle contributes to the recognition of Christ's real presence in the Blessed Sacrament. Therefore, the place where the Eucharistic species are reserved, marked by a sanctuary lamp, should be readily visible to everyone entering the church.⁵⁶
- 5.3.3 The Holy Eucharist is to be reserved habitually in only one tabernacle of a church or oratory.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ RMHE 3.1.

⁵¹ RMHE 3.2.

⁵² RMHE 3.3.

⁵³ RMHE 3.6.

⁵⁴ RMHE 3.7.

⁵⁵ GIRM 314; cf. EM 54; IO 95; also CIC, can. 938 §2; RMHE 2.1 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."

⁵⁶ SCSE 69.

⁵⁷ CIC, can. 938 §1; RMHE 2.2.

- 5.3.4 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.⁵⁸
- 5.3.5 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.⁵⁹
- 5.3.6 For a grave cause, it is permitted to reserve the Holy Eucharist in some other fitting and more secure place, especially at night.⁶⁰
- 5.3.7 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.⁶¹
- 5.3.8 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* (*toward the people*).⁶²
- 5.3.9 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.⁶³
- 5.3.10 In accordance with traditional practice, near the tabernacle should be a special lamp, fueled by oil or wax, kept alight to indicate and honor the presence of Christ. Electric lights must not be used for this purpose.⁶⁴

D. HONORING THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

- 5.4.1 The Catholic faithful are to hold the Holy Eucharist in highest honor, taking an active part in the celebration of the most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, receiving this sacrament in Holy Communion most devoutly and frequently, and worshiping the Blessed Sacrament with the greatest reverence and adoration. In explaining the doctrine of the

⁵⁸ GIRM 314; cf. EM 52; IO 95; SCS, Instruction *Nullo umquam tempore*, 28 May 1938, 4; HCWEOM 10-11; CIC, can. 938 §3; RMHE 2.3.

⁵⁹ CIC, can. 938 §5; RMHE 2.4.

⁶⁰ CIC, can. 938 §4; RMHE 2.9.

⁶¹ GIRM 314; RMHE 2.5; BB, Order for a Blessing on the Occasion of the Installation of a New Tabernacle, 919-929.

⁶² Cf. GIRM 315; EM 55; RMHE 2.6.

⁶³ GIRM 315a; GIRM 303; RMHE 2.7.

⁶⁴ GIRM 316, cf. CIC, can. 940; EM 57; HCWEOM, 11; BCLN December 1982; RMHE 2.8.

Church concerning this sacrament, pastors of souls are to teach the faithful diligently about these obligations.⁶⁵

- 5.4.2 The worship of the Eucharist outside the Sacrifice of the Mass is a tribute of inestimable value in the life of the Church and should be vigorously promoted, for by means of it the faithful give adoration to Christ, truly and really present, the “High Priest of the good things to come” (*Heb 9:11*) and Redeemer of the whole world.⁶⁶
- 5.4.3 The faithful show their reverence to Jesus Christ truly present in the Blessed Sacrament by genuflections toward the tabernacle whenever they enter and leave a Catholic church. They should also genuflect whenever they pass before the tabernacle expressing their acknowledgement of the Real Presence.

E. VISITS OF THE FAITHFUL TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

- 5.5.1 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.⁶⁷
- 5.5.2 The faithful should not forget to make visits during the day to the Most Holy Sacrament, as a proof of gratitude, a pledge of love, and a debt of the adoration due to Christ the Lord who is present there.⁶⁸ For the contemplation of Jesus present in the Most Holy Sacrament, as a Communion of desire, powerfully joins the faithful to Christ, as is splendidly evident in the example of so many saints.⁶⁹
- 5.5.3 Therefore the traditional practice of the faithful making a visit to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament when they pass near a church should be encouraged and the people, not least the children, instructed from time to time with simple suggestions for how it can be done in a practical and spiritually fruitful manner.

⁶⁵ CIC, can. 898.

⁶⁶ RS 134.

⁶⁷ CIC, can. 937; RS 135; RMHE 1.8.

⁶⁸ MF 66.

⁶⁹ RS 135; cf. EE 25.

F. OTHER PRACTICES OF EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

- 5.6.1 The Church has long encouraged the devotional practices of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. In addition to private visits, these include Benediction, processions, and holy hours.
- 5.6.2 In the arrangement of liturgical celebrations and devotional practices of this kind, the times of the liturgical year should be taken into account. Devotions should be in harmony with the Sacred Liturgy in some sense, take their origin from the liturgy, and lead the people back to the liturgy.⁷⁰

G. EUCHARISTIC ADORATION AND BENEDICTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

- 5.7.1 Eucharistic Exposition and benediction are recognized by the Church and not considered devotions,⁷¹ but rather a part of the Church's official liturgy. Whereas in the past benediction was frequently added on to the end of another service or devotion, this is no longer generally permitted. Eucharistic Exposition and benediction is a complete liturgical celebration in its own right and is to be celebrated as such, as laid down in the current liturgical books.
- 5.7.2 There is no reason, however, why Eucharistic Exposition should not be combined with some celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, in such a way that part especially of the principal hours, is celebrated before the Blessed Sacrament exposed.⁷²
- 5.7.3 The minister of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and of Eucharistic benediction is a priest or deacon. In special circumstances, the minister of Exposition and reposition alone (without benediction) is the acolyte, extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, or another person designated for this by the local ordinary. The precepts of the Archbishop on these matters are to be faithfully observed.⁷³
- 5.7.4 In churches or oratories where it is permitted to reserve the Blessed Sacrament, there can be Exposition with the ciborium or the monstrance; the norms prescribed in the liturgical books are to be observed.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ HCWEOM 79.

⁷¹ Cf. SCR, Instruction *De Musica sacra*, (1958) 47, in AAS 50 (1958) 649: "Eucharistic Benediction is a true liturgical action."

⁷² HCWEOM 96.

⁷³ CIC, can. 943.

⁷⁴ CIC, can. 941 §1.

- 5.7.5 It is forbidden to expose the Precious Blood of Christ for Eucharistic Adoration,⁷⁵ either alone or together with the sacred host.
- 5.7.6 Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is not to be held in the same area of the church or oratory during the celebration of Mass.⁷⁶
- 5.7.7 The blessing imparted with the Blessed Sacrament should be preceded by a suitable period of readings of the Word of God, hymns, prayers, and sufficient time for silent prayer. This Eucharistic blessing can only be administered a bishop, priest or deacon.
- 5.7.8 Prayers of a clearly Christocentric character should be publicly recited during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. In their private prayers the faithful should remember that during Exposition everything should be so arranged that the faithful can devote themselves attentively in prayer to Christ our Lord.
- 5.7.9 One ancient and venerable devotion that is intended to foster a devotion to and meditation on the mystery of the Passion of Christ is the Stations of the Cross. As commendable as this devotion is, it cannot easily be combined simultaneously with Eucharistic Adoration, whose purpose is to draw the faithful more deeply into the mystery of Christ's presence in the Holy Eucharist in a time of stillness and recollection. Therefore, the Stations of the Cross, which traditionally requires physical movement between stations, should not be prayed during the Exposition of the Eucharist. This does not mean that some form of meditation on the saving Passion of our Lord, such as readings from the Gospel accounts, cannot take place during Eucharistic Adoration, provided the prescriptions of the liturgical books are observed.
- 5.7.10 Before the Most Holy Sacrament is either reserved or exposed, the praying of the Rosary, which is admirable "in its simplicity and even its profundity", is not to be excluded,⁷⁷ especially when the people request it. Even so, especially if there is Exposition, the character of this kind of prayer as a contemplation of the mysteries of the life of Christ the Redeemer and the Almighty Father's design of salvation should be emphasized, especially by making use of readings taken from Sacred Scripture.⁷⁸
- 5.7.11 Similarly, while prayers such as the Litany of the Saints and various novena prayers are laudable in themselves and certainly contribute to devotion and spiritual life, if such prayers are used during Exposition, care should be taken to ensure the centrality and primacy of the Eucharist, which should not appear as somehow subordinate to other forms of prayer.

⁷⁵ CDWDS, Response, April 2007. Cf. BCLN September-October 2007.

⁷⁶ CIC, can. 941 §2.

⁷⁷ Pope St. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (2002) 2.

⁷⁸ Cf. CDWDS, Letter of the Congregation, 15 January 1997: *Notitiae* 34 (1998) pp. 506-510; Apostolic Penitentiary, Letter to a Priest, 8 March 1996: *Notitiae* 34 (1998) 511; RS 137.

H. PROLONGED EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

- 5.8.1 Prolonged Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is a practice that brings great spiritual blessings. However, it must not take place unless the proper reverence for the Body and Blood of the Savior can be guaranteed and any risk of profanation excluded. In particular, the Blessed Sacrament exposed cannot ever be left unattended, even for a moment. Therefore:
- a. The participation of the faithful must be so organized that a core group of persons is always present, a group sufficiently numerous that if some have to absent themselves or the arrival of replacements should be delayed, there will still remain enough persons on watch.⁷⁹
 - b. At every given moment there should be a responsible adult person or persons present who can ensure the necessary decorum, lead occasional prayers and deal with practical matters such as a falling candle, a blown fuse, a medical emergency or an intrusion.
 - c. There should be an emergency plan, drawn up in writing by the pastor, with clearly indicated priority contacts relating to possible contingencies.

It can be seen that such a beautiful moment truly calls for the attentive exercise of responsibility by the whole community of the faithful, under the guidance of their pastors. It is praiseworthy to involve existing parish societies in the planning and organization.

I. SOLEMN ANNUAL EXPOSITION, OR “FORTY HOURS”

- 5.9.1 It is recommended that in churches and oratories an annual solemn Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament be held for an appropriate period of time, even if not continuous, so that the local community more profoundly meditates on and adores the saving mystery of the Eucharist. Such an Exposition is to be held, however, only if a suitable gathering of the faithful is foreseen and the established norms are observed.⁸⁰
- 5.9.2 Solemn annual Exposition may take place either on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ or at a time which is especially appropriate or more convenient for the particular parish.

⁷⁹ Cf. RS 138.

⁸⁰ CIC, can. 942. The Forty Hours' devotion was first celebrated in memory of the period of about forty hours that our Blessed Lord's body was in the tomb, and was a time of renewal and prayer in each parish. This devotion began around 1534 in Milan, Italy, and was adopted in Rome in 1551.

- 5.9.3 Since the worship given to the Blessed Sacrament should be seen by signs in its relation to Holy Mass, solemn annual Exposition will begin at the end of Mass, at which the host to be exposed has been consecrated. It is desirable that this Mass be concelebrated by all the priests of the parish, if possible, and at a time most convenient for the faithful.
- 5.9.4 Unless it is not practicable, solemn annual Exposition should be continued the next day and even a third day. However, the Blessed Sacrament must not remain exposed during times when it is foreseen that only a few of the faithful will be present for adoration. Exposition may be interrupted and the Blessed Sacrament reposed in the tabernacle once or twice during the day, for example, about noon and at night, so as to have Exposition only at times convenient for a significant number of the faithful to be present in adoration. The Blessed Sacrament should not be left exposed outside the tabernacle in a locked church, but the Exposition ended in accordance with the liturgical books and the Blessed Sacrament returned reverently to the tabernacle.
- 5.9.5 During Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, celebration of Mass is prohibited in the body of the Church. If Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is extended for an entire day or over several days, it is to be interrupted during the celebration of Mass. Mass may be celebrated in a chapel distinct from the area of Exposition if at least some members of the faithful remain in adoration.
- 5.9.6 During the extended Exposition the faithful should be asked to plan (e.g., through parish societies) the times when they will participate in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Other parish activities should not take place during solemn annual Exposition.
- 5.9.7 In preparation for solemn annual Exposition, convenient times for the Sacrament of Penance should be provided according to the needs of the parish.

J. PERPETUAL EXPOSITION

- 5.10.1 According to the constitutions and regulations of their institute, some religious communities and other groups have the practice of perpetual Eucharistic Adoration or adoration over extended periods of time. It is strongly recommended that they pattern this holy practice in harmony with the spirit of the liturgy. Thus, when the whole community takes part in adoration before Christ the Lord, readings, songs, and religious silence may foster effectively the spiritual life of the community. This will promote among the members of the religious house the spirit of unity and kinship which the Eucharist signifies and effects, and the cult of the sacrament may express a noble form of worship. The form of adoration in which one or two members of the community take turns before the Blessed Sacrament is also to be maintained and is

highly commended. In accordance with the life of the institute, as approved by the Church, the worshipers adore Christ the Lord in the sacrament and pray to Him in the name of the whole community and of the Church.

K. EUCHARISTIC PROCESSIONS

- 5.11.1 When it can be done, in the judgment of the Archbishop, a procession through the public streets may be held as a public witness of veneration toward the Holy Eucharist, especially on the solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ.⁸¹

L. INDULGENCES

- 5.12.1 A plenary indulgence is granted to the faithful who either:
- a. Visit the Blessed Sacrament for adoration lasting at least half an hour.
 - b. Piously recite the verses of the *Tantum ergo* after the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday during the solemn reposition of the Blessed Sacrament.
 - c. Devoutly participate in a solemn Eucharistic procession, held inside or outside a church, of greatest importance on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ.
 - d. Participate religiously in the solemn celebration of Holy Mass which is customarily held at the conclusion of a Eucharistic congress.⁸²
- 5.12.2 A partial indulgence is granted to the faithful who either:
- a. Visit the Blessed Sacrament for adoration.
 - b. Offer any duly approved prayer to Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament (e.g., the *Adoro Te Devote*, the prayer *O Sacrum Convivium*, or the *Tantum Ergo*).⁸³

⁸¹ CIC, can. 944 §§1-2.

⁸² MI, grants, 7 §1.

⁸³ MI, grants, 7 §2.



ARCHDIOCESE
OF PORTLAND IN
OREGON