

History:

a. Scripture

- i. **John 6: 51**, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."
- ii. **Matthew 26: 40-41**, And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
- iii. **Luke 24: 30-31**: "When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight."
- iv. **Matthew 28:19-20**, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."
- v. **1 Corinthians 11: 20-30**, When you meet together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal, and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have

houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not. For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.

b. Early Tradition

- i. **Ignatius of Antioch**: "Take note of those who hold heterodox opinions ... and see how contrary their opinions are to the mind of God. [...] They abstain

from the Eucharist and from prayer because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, flesh which suffered for our sins and which that Father, in his goodness, raised up again. They who deny the gift of God are perishing in their disputes" (*Letter to the Smyrnaeans* 6:2–7:1 [A.D. 110]).

ii. **Justin Martyr**: "We call this food Eucharist, and no one else is permitted to partake of it, except one who believes our teaching to be true and who has been washed in the washing which is for the remission of sins and for regeneration [i.e., has received baptism] and is thereby living as Christ enjoined. For not as common bread nor common drink do we receive these; but since Jesus Christ our Savior was made incarnate by the word of God and had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so too, as we have been taught, the food which has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer set down by him, and by the change of which our blood and flesh is nurtured, is both the flesh and the blood of that incarnated Jesus" (*First Apology* 66 [A.D. 151]).

iii. **Cyril of Jerusalem**: "Do not, therefore, regard the bread and wine as simply that; for they are, according to the Master's declaration, the body and blood of Christ. Even though the senses suggest to you the

other, let faith make you firm. Do not judge in this matter by taste, but be fully assured by the faith, not doubting that you have been deemed worthy of the body and blood of Christ. ... [Since you are] fully convinced that the apparent bread is not bread, even though it is sensible to the taste, but the body of Christ, and that the apparent wine is not wine, even though the taste would have it so, ... partake of that bread as something spiritual, and put a cheerful face on your soul" (*Catechetical Lectures*, 22:6, 9 [A.D. 350]).

- iv. **CCC 1345:** Saint Justin wrote to the pagan emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161) around the year 155, explaining what Christians did: [...] "When he who presides has given thanks and the people have responded, those whom we call deacons give to those present the 'eucharisted' bread, wine and water and take them to those who are absent."
- v. The early hermits reserved the Eucharist in their cells. From at least the middle of the third century, it was very general for the solitaries in the East, especially in Palestine and Egypt, to preserve the consecrated elements in the caves or hermitages where they lived. The immediate purpose of this reservation was to enable the hermits to give themselves Holy Communion.

- vi. **Fermentum** is a practice of the Early Christian Church whereby bishops affirmed their communion with one another. The custom of the *fermentum* was first practiced as early as 120 AD. A particle of the Eucharistic bread was carried by a minister of the Church from the bishop of one diocese to the bishop of another diocese. The receiving bishop would then consume the species at his next celebration of the Eucharist as a sign of the communion between the churches. It was called a *fermentum* not necessarily because leavened bread was used but because the Eucharist symbolized the leaven of unity which permeates and transforms Christians, so that they become one with Christ.
- vii. As early as the Council of Nicaea (325) we know that the Eucharist began to be reserved in the churches of monasteries and convents. Again, the immediate reason for this reservation was for the sick and the dying, and also for the ceremony of the *fermentum*. The species were to be kept under lock and key and sometimes in a receptacle raised high enough to be out of easy reach of profaning hands.

c. Early Tradition

- i. A revolution hit the Church when Berengarius (999-1088), archdeacon of Angers in France, publicly

denied that Christ was really and physically present under the species of bread and wine.

- ii. The matter became so serious that Pope Gregory VII ordered Berengarius to sign a *credo*. This *credo* has made theological history, as it was the Church's first definitive statement of what had always been believed and never seriously challenged (included in *Mysterium Fidei*, 52 [1965]):

1. "I believe in my heart and openly profess that the bread and wine placed upon the altar are, by the mystery of the sacred prayer and the words of the Redeemer, substantially changed into the true and life-giving flesh and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord, and that after the consecration, there is present the true body of Christ which was born of the Virgin and offered up for the salvation of the world, hung on the cross and now sits at the right hand of the Father, and that there is present the true blood of Christ which flowed from his side. They are present not only by means of a sign and of the efficacy of the Sacrament, but also in the very reality and truth of their nature and substance."

- iii. With this profession of faith, the churches of **Europe** began a Eucharistic Renaissance. Processions of the Blessed Sacrament were instituted; prescribed acts of

adoration were legislated; visits to Christ in the pyx were encouraged. [...] From the eleventh century on, devotion to the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle became more and more prevalent in the Catholic world.

1. **What happened in the East?** The Berengarius heresy did not affect the Eastern Church. The tradition that developed in the East was a continuation and a development of the Eucharistic practice already mentioned: “It was very general for the solitaries in the East ... to preserve the consecrated elements in the caves or hermitages where they lived.”
2. The Tradition that developed was not exposing the Blessed Sacrament but a “covering and veiling” of the Eucharist to show that the Mystery is greater than what the eye can see—to show how sacred the Host is by not exposing it. This is expressed in the Divine Liturgy in two aspects:
 - a. In the Byzantine Rite of the Catholic Church, the bread and wine used for the Divine Liturgy (The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass) are prepared by the priest at a small table located on the left side of the Altar (The Table of Preparation). After he

has completed this rite (called *Proskomedie*) the priest leaves the prepared chalice and paten on the Table of Preparation and goes to the Altar to begin the Divine Liturgy.

- b. During the consecration, there is no elevation of the Sacred Species. The first time the Mystery of the Eucharist is revealed to the faithful is during the reception of communion, where both species are mixed.

3. This does NOT mean that the East has less reverence for the Eucharist—not by a long shot!

iv. Pope Urban IV, in the thirteenth century, instituted the feast of Corpus Christi. When establishing the feast, the Pope stressed the love of Christ who wished to remain physically with us until the end of time.

v. **The Monstrance.** In Latin, the monstrance is known as an *ostensorium* (from *ostendere*, "to show").

Created in the medieval period for the public display of relics, the monstrance today is a symbol of the Blessed Sacrament since the monstrance is the sacred vessel which contains the consecrated Host when exposed or carried in procession. The word *monstrance* comes from the Latin word *monstrare*,

meaning "to show", and is cognate with the English word *demonstrate*, meaning "to show clearly."

vi. Urban IV commissioned Thomas Aquinas to compose the Liturgy of the Hours for the feast of Corpus Christi.

Three hymns which Aquinas composed for the feast are among the most beautiful in the Catholic liturgy. They express the unchangeable faith of the Church in the Real Presence of Jesus on earth. They also explain why the faithful adore Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. All three hymns are part of the Divine Office. They are best known by each of their last two verses, which have become part of the treasury of Catholic hymnology.

1. *O Salutaris Hostia* is an act of adoration of Christ the Saving Victim who opened wide the gate of heaven to man below.
2. *Tantum Ergo Sacramentum* is an act of adoration of the Word-made-flesh, where faith supplies for what the senses cannot perceive.
(*Pange Lingua*)
3. *Panis Angelicus* is an act of adoration of that Wondrous Thing where the lowly and poor are fed, banqueting on their Incarnate Lord and King.

vii. **Benediction** began around this time as well. One aspect of the history of Benediction is its early association with devotion to the Blessed Virgin. This was already expressed- in the *Pange Lingua* for the First Vespers of the Corpus Christi liturgy, saying, "To us He was given, to us he was born of a pure Virgin." Except for Mary, there would have been no Incarnation, and except for the Incarnation there would be no Eucharist.

d. **Later Tradition**

- i. By the sixteenth century, the whole spectrum of Catholic belief in the Holy Eucharist was challenged by the Reformers. As a consequence, the Council of Trent treated this subject exhaustively. Every aspect of the Sacrifice of the Mass, Holy Communion, and the Real Presence was clarified and defined.
- ii. Before the end of the sixteenth century, Pope Clement VIII (in 1592) issued a historic document on the Forty Hours Devotion. The devotion consisted of forty hours of continual prayer before the Blessed Sacrament exposed.
- iii. About a century later (1731) his successor, Clement XIII, published a detailed set of instructions (**rubrics**) for the proper carrying out of the Forty-Hours' devotion.

e. Modern Tradition

i. **Eucharistic Congress Movement.** The first international Eucharistic Congress at Lille, in France, in 1881. Pope Leo XIII addressed to those attending that Congress and approved its purpose, namely "of repairing the iniquities wreaked upon the Most Holy Sacrament and of promoting Its worship." He praised the laymen for "the great extension of the work of Nocturnal Adoration" and for the report of "how this salutary institution is taking root, progressing and bearing fruit everywhere." The key factor, according to Pope Leo, is that Eucharistic Adoration is bearing supernatural fruit wherever the practice is nourished by the faith of the people.

ii. **Popes Benedict XV and Pius XI** carried on the papal tradition of encouraging adoration of the Holy Eucharist, and prayers of expiation and petition to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

1. It was Benedict XV who issued the first Code of Canon Law in 1917 which legislated the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament in "every parish or quasi-parish church" (Canon 1265, #1). It was this same Code which encouraged the private and public exposition of the Holy Eucharist.

2. Pope Pius XI associated the worship of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament with expiation for sin.
- iii. **Pius XII**. The Encyclical *Mediator Dei* (1947) was on the Sacred Liturgy. Nine complete sections of *Mediator Dei* deal with "Adoration of the Eucharist." This provides the most authoritative explanation of what the Pope describes as "the worship of the Eucharist," which "gradually developed as something distinct from the Sacrifice of the Mass."
- iv. **Paul VI**. *Mysterium Fidei* (1965). Most of the encyclical is a doctrinal analysis of the Real Presence. By all accounts, it is the most extensive and penetrating declaration in papal history on two articles of the Catholic faith: the corporeal presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament and His communication of grace through this Eucharistic presence now on earth.
- v. **Saint John Paul II**. John Paul II was known as the Pope of the Real Presence. In one document and address after another, he has repeated what needs repetition for the sake of emphasis: "The Eucharist, in the Mass and outside of the Mass, is the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and is therefore deserving of the worship that is given to the living God, and to Him alone."

- vi. **Pope Benedict XVI.** Well known as a liturgical scholar. *Sacramentum Caritatis* (2007). “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. [...] I also recommend that, in their catechetical training, and especially in their preparation for First Holy Communion, children be taught the meaning and the beauty of spending time with Jesus, and helped to cultivate a sense of awe before his presence in the Eucharist”.

II. Practice:

- a. **What is the purpose of exposition of the Blessed Sacrament?** There are three purposes of Eucharistic exposition:
- i. (1) to acknowledge Christ’s marvelous presence in the sacrament;
 - ii. (2) to lead us to a fuller participation in the celebration of the Eucharist, culminating in Holy Communion; and
 - iii. (3) to foster the worship which is due to Christ in spirit and in truth.
- b. **What are the fruits of Eucharistic adoration?** People who observe Eucharistic adoration experience a deeper devotion to Jesus, and this manifests itself in countless ways:

- i. The primary fruits are repentance and conversion which lead to increased charity –that is, the love of Christ alive in his people.
- ii. The adoration of Jesus in the Eucharist also leads to greater reverence at Mass, a deeper desire for personal holiness, and a stronger sense of union with the parish and the whole Church.
- iii. Ever since the early centuries of Christianity, the Church has linked Eucharistic devotion to service to the poor.
- iv. The practice has led to an increase in vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life.
- v. **CCC 1418** Because Christ himself is present in the sacrament of the altar, he is to be honored with the worship of adoration. "To visit the Blessed Sacrament is ... a proof of gratitude, an expression of love, and a duty of adoration toward Christ our Lord" (Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, 66).

Suggested Format for Adoration

The idea is to divide one's holy hour into four quarters: "You spend the first in adoration; you spend the second in thanks; you spend the third quarter in reparation; and finally you spend the last quarter in giving something to God."

1. Adoration. Every prayerful posture of the soul before God should begin with adoration. In fact every prayer, no matter what other form it may take, is basically a form of adoration. The first purpose of the holy hour: to adore the Divine Majesty.

- Rosary
- Chaplet of Divine Mercy
- Liturgy of the Hours
- Psalms
 - **Psalm 63:** O God, you are my God, for you I long;
for you my soul is thirsting.
My body pines for you
like a dry, weary land without water.

So I gaze on you in the sanctuary
to see your strength and your glory.

For your love is better than life,
my lips will speak your praise.
So I will bless you all my life,
in your name I will lift up my hands.
My soul shall be filled as with a banquet,
my mouth shall praise you with joy.

2. *Petition.* If adoration is the first attitude of a believing soul in the presence of the Word Incarnate, petition is the logical second. As a person realizes whom he is addressing, that it is the Lord of the Universe, here in human form; and he pauses to reflect on his own great misery, almost without reflection he will ask the Savior to give him what he needs. Where to begin? Begin by asking Jesus, Who is God, for His love.

3. *Reparation.* The next stage in the holy hour, which may actually pervade the whole sixty minutes, is the practice of reparation. This art of reparation is mainly the practice of resignation. We resign ourselves to the trials and difficulties God sends us, and thereby expiate for the offenses committed against Him. Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament serves the purpose of motivating our wills and prayerfully uniting ourselves with Christ in the Eucharist, whose very presence on earth is a form of reparation.

4. *Love.* The final disposition of heart with which to keep the holy hour is affective charity. We can voluntarily, willingly give something to God. And what can a man give to God that He does not already possess? We can give Him our love:

Psalm 119:

41 Lord, let your love come upon me,
the saving help of your promise.
42 And I shall answer those who taunt me
for I trust in your word.

43 Do not take the word of truth from my mouth
for I trust in your decrees.

44 I shall always keep your law
forever and ever.

45 I shall walk in the path of freedom
for I seek your precepts.

46 I will speak of your will before kings
and not be abashed.

47 Your commands have been my delight;
these I have loved.

48 I will worship your commands and love them
and ponder your statutes.

