

# HOLY COMMUNION AND WORSHIP OF THE EUCHARIST OUTSIDE MASS

## CHAPTER II Forms of Worship of the Holy Eucharist

### Introduction

48. The eucharistic sacrifice is the source and culmination of the whole Christian life. Both private and public devotion toward the eucharist, therefore, including devotion outside Mass, are strongly encouraged when celebrated according to the regulations of lawful authority.

In the arrangement of devotional services of this kind, the liturgical seasons 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.<sup>1</sup> [79]

49. When the faithful honour Christ present in the sacrament, they should remember that this presence is derived from the sacrifice and is directed toward sacramental and spiritual communion.

The same piety which moves the faithful to eucharistic adoration attracts them to a deeper participation in the paschal mystery. It makes them respond gratefully to the gifts of Christ who by his humanity continues to pour divine life upon the members of his body. Living with Christ the Lord, they achieve a close familiarity with him and in his presence pour out their hearts for themselves and for those dear to them; they pray for peace and for the salvation of the world. Offering their entire lives with Christ to the Father in the Holy Spirit, they draw from this wondrous exchange an increase of faith, hope and love. Thus they nourish the proper disposition to celebrate the memorial of the Lord as devoutly as possible and to receive frequently the bread given to us by the Father.

The faithful should make every effort to worship Christ the Lord in the sacrament, depending upon the circumstances of their own life. Pastors should encourage them in this by example and word.<sup>2</sup> [80]

50. Prayer before Christ the Lord sacramentally present extends the union with Christ which the faithful have reached in communion. It renews the covenant which in turn moves them to maintain in their lives what they have received by faith and by sacraments. They should try to lead their whole lives with the strength derived from the heavenly food, as they share in the death and resurrection of the Lord. Everyone should be concerned with good deeds and with pleasing God so that he or she may imbue the world with the Christian spirit and be a witness of Christ in the midst of human society.<sup>3</sup> [81]

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1 Cf. Congregation of Rites, instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, no. 58: AAS 59 (1967), 569

2 Cf. *ibid.*, no. 50: *loc. cit.*, 567

3 Cf. *ibid.*, no. 13: *loc. cit.*, 549.

# 1. EXPOSITION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

## INTRODUCTION

### I Relationship between Exposition and Mass

51. Exposition of the holy eucharist, either in the ciborium or in the monstrance, is intended to acknowledge Christ's marvellous presence in the sacrament. Exposition invites us to the spiritual union with him that culminates in sacramental communion. Thus it fosters very well the worship which is due to Christ in spirit and in truth.

This kind of exposition must clearly express the cult of the blessed sacrament in its relationship to the Mass. The plan of the exposition should carefully avoid anything which might somehow obscure the principal desire of Christ in instituting the eucharist, namely, to be with us as food, medicine, and comfort.<sup>4</sup> [82]

52. During the exposition of the blessed sacrament, the celebration of Mass is prohibited in the body of the Church. In addition to the reasons given in no. 6, the celebration of the eucharistic mystery includes in a more perfect way the internal communion to which exposition seeks to lead the faithful.

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.<sup>5</sup> [83]

### II Regulations for Exposition

53. A single genuflection is made in the presence of the blessed sacrament, whether reserved in the tabernacle or exposed for public adoration. [84]

54. For exposition of the blessed sacrament in the monstrance, four to six candles are lighted, as at Mass, and incense is used. For exposition of the blessed sacrament in the ciborium, at least two candles should be lighted, and incense may be used. [85]

### Lengthy Exposition

55. 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 reflect more profoundly upon this mystery and adore Christ in the sacrament.

This kind of exposition, however, may take place, with the consent of the local Ordinary, only if suitable numbers of the faithful are expected to be present.<sup>6</sup> [86]

56. For a grave and general necessity the local Ordinary may direct that a more extended period of supplication before the blessed sacrament exposed take place in churches where the faithful assemble in large numbers.<sup>7</sup> [87]

57. If a period of uninterrupted exposition is not possible, because of too few worshippers, 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.

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 after

4 Cf. *ibid.*, no 60: *loco cit.*, 570.

5 Cf. *ibid.*, no. 61: *loc. cit.*, 570-1.

6 Cf. *ibid.*, no. 63: *loc. cit.*, 571. 7.

7 Cf. *ibid.*, no. 64: *loc. cit.*, 572

a brief period of adoration and a prayer said with those present. The exposition of the blessed sacrament may take place in the same manner (at the scheduled time).<sup>8</sup> [88]

### Brief Period of Exposition

58. Shorter expositions of the eucharist are to be arranged in such a way that the blessing with the eucharist is preceded by a suitable period for readings of the word of God, songs, prayers, and sufficient time for silent prayer.<sup>9</sup>

Exposition which is held exclusively for the giving of benediction is prohibited. [89]

### Adoration in Religious Communities

59. 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 brotherhood 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 worshippers adore Christ the Lord in the sacrament and pray to him in the name of the whole community and of the Church. [90]

### III The Minister of Exposition

60. The ordinary minister for exposition of the eucharist is a priest or deacon. At the end of the period of adoration, before the reposition, he blesses the people with the sacrament.

In the absence of a priest or deacon or if they are lawfully impeded, the following persons may publicly expose and later repose the holy eucharist for the adoration of the faithful:

- a) an acolyte or special minister of communion;
- b) a member of a religious community or of a lay association of men or women which is devoted to eucharistic adoration, upon appointment by the local Ordinary.

Such ministers may open the tabernacle and also, if suitable, place the ciborium on the altar or place the host in the monstrance. At the end of the period of adoration, they replace the blessed sacrament in the tabernacle. It is not lawful, however, for them to give the blessing with the sacrament. [91]

61. The minister, if he is a priest or deacon, should vest in an alb, or a surplice over a cassock, and a stole. Other ministers should wear either the liturgical vestments which are used in the region or the vesture which is suitable for this ministry and which has been approved by the Ordinary.

The priest or the deacon should wear a white cope and humeral veil to give the blessing at the end of adoration, when the exposition takes place with the monstrance; in the case of exposition in the ciborium, the humeral veil should be worn. [92]

8 Cf. *ibid.*, no. 65: *loc. cit.*, 572.

9 Cf. *ibid.*, no. 66: *loc. cit.*, 572.

# RITE OF EUCHARISTIC EXPOSITION AND BENEDICTION

The structure of the Rite is as follows:

## **Exposition**

Song

Exposition (Procession from the place of Reservation)

(Exposition after Mass)

## **Adoration**

Readings, homily, prayers, songs *ad libitum*

*or*

Liturgy of the Hours

## **Benediction**

Eucharistic Song

Prayer

Blessing

## **Reposition**

Reposition (Procession to the place of Reservation)

Acclamation

Ideas and sample material for services of adoration, which will help the faithful to devote themselves attentively in prayer to Christ the Lord and lead them to a better understanding of the eucharistic mystery, are provided in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*: Supplementary Appendix (pp 64–95).

# EXPOSITION

## SONG

62. After the people have assembled, a song may be sung while the minister comes to the altar. <sup>[93]</sup>

## EXPOSITION (PROCESSION FROM PLACE OF RESERVATION)

63. If the holy eucharist is not reserved at the altar where the exposition is to take place, the minister puts on a humeral veil and brings the sacrament from the place of reservation; he is accompanied by servers or by the faithful with lighted candles.

The ciborium or monstrance should be placed upon the table of the altar which is covered with a cloth. If exposition with the monstrance is to extend over a long period, a throne in an elevated position may be used, but this should not be too lofty or distant,<sup>10</sup> After exposition, if the monstrance is used, the minister incenses the sacrament. If the adoration is to be lengthy, he may then withdraw. <sup>[93]</sup>

## EXPOSITION AFTER MASS

64. In the case of more solemn and lengthy exposition, the host should be consecrated in the Mass which immediately precedes the exposition and after communion should be placed in the monstrance upon the altar. The Mass ends with the prayer after communion, and the concluding rites are omitted. Before the priest leaves, he may place the blessed sacrament on the throne and incense it. <sup>[94]</sup>

# ADORATION

## READINGS, HOMILY, PRAYERS, SONGS ad libitum

65. During the exposition there should be prayers, songs, and readings to direct the attention of the faithful to the worship of Christ the Lord.

To encourage a prayerful spirit, there should be readings from scripture with a homily or brief exhortations to develop a better understanding of the eucharistic mystery. It is also desirable for the people to respond to the word of God by singing and to spend some periods of time in religious silence. <sup>[95]</sup>

## LITURGY OF THE HOURS

66. Part of the liturgy of the hours, especially the principal hours, may be celebrated before the blessed sacrament when there is a lengthy period of exposition. This liturgy extends the praise and thanksgiving offered to God in the eucharistic celebration to the several hours of the day; it directs the prayers of the Church to Christ and through him to the Father in the name of the whole world. <sup>[16]</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Congregation of Rites, instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, no. 62: ,4AS 59 (1967) 571.

# BENEDICTION

## EUCCHARISTIC SONG

67. Towards the end of the exposition the priest or deacon goes to the altar, genuflects, and kneels. Then a hymn or other eucharistic song is sung)I Meanwhile the minister, while kneeling, incenses the sacrament if the exposition has taken place with the monstrance. [97]

## PRAYER

68. Afterwards the minister rises and sings or says: [98]

Let us pray.

After a brief period of silence, the minister continues:

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you gave us the eucharist  
as the memorial of your suffering and death.  
May our worship of this sacrament of your body and blood  
help us to experience the salvation you won for us  
and the peace of the kingdom  
where you live with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God,  
for ever and ever.

All respond:

Amen.

Or:

[224]

Lord our God,  
in this great sacrament  
we come into the presence of Jesus Christ, your Son,  
born of the Virgin Mary  
and crucified for our salvation.  
May we who declare our faith in this fountain of love and mercy  
drink from it the water of everlasting life.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Or:

[225]

Lord our God,  
may we always give due honour  
to the sacramental presence of the Lamb who was slain for us.  
May our faith be rewarded  
by the vision of his glory,  
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Or

[226]

Lord our God,  
you have given us the true bread from heaven.  
In the strength of this food  
may we live always by your life and rise in glory on the last day.  
We ask this through Christ the Lord.

Or

[227]

Lord,  
give to our hearts  
the light of faith and the fire of love,  
that we may worship in spirit and in truth  
our God and Lord, present in this sacrament,  
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Or

[228]

Lord,  
may this sacrament of new life  
warm our hearts with your love and make us eager  
for the eternal joy of your kingdom.  
We ask through Christ our Lord.

Or

[229]

Lord our God,  
teach us to cherish in our hearts  
the paschal mystery of your Son  
by which you redeemed the world.  
Watch over the gifts of grace  
your love has given us  
and bring them to fulfilment  
in the glory of heaven.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

## BLESSING

69. After the prayer the priest or deacon puts on the humeral veil, genuflects, and takes the monstrance or ciborium. He makes the sign of the cross over the people with the monstrance or ciborium, in silence. [99]

# REPOSITION

## REPOSITION (PROCESSION TO PLACE OF RESERVATION)

70. After the blessing the priest or deacon who gave the blessing, or another priest or deacon, replaces the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle and genuflects. (If the place of reservation is apart from the altar, he may go there in procession.) [100]

## ACCLAMATION

71. As the priest is replacing the blessed sacrament the people may sing or say an acclamation, and the minister then leaves. [100]

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The Congregation of Rites, instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, n. 62 (AAS 59 (1967) 570, and a subsequent explanation of the Consilium for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Notitiae* 4(1968) 133-4), direct that services of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament exposed are to be arranged in ways that help the faithful to devote themselves attentively in prayer to Christ the Lord and lead them to a better understanding of the Eucharistic mystery. It is more fitting, therefore, that prayers addressed directly to our Lady or the Saints and devotions in their honour be held outside the period of exposition.

The custom is commended by which, after the reposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, the celebrant leads the faithful to an image of the Blessed Virgin. There an appropriate hymn or antiphon in her honour can be sung, followed by a traditional prayer such as the prayer for England: *O Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God...*

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