



OFFICE OF SACRED LITURGY * DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM IN ALABAMA
P.O. Box 12047 * Birmingham, AL 35202 * 205-838-8322 * sacredliturgy@bhmdiocese.org

PERPETUAL ADORATION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

PERPETUAL ADORATION

Perpetual Exposition within the liturgical norms has been an exception and required a special indult. In recent years, paragraph 90 of the Roman Ritual: *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* has received considerable attention by diocesan liturgy offices and the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments.

This directive of the ritual 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. Some commentators reflected an understanding of this paragraph held by many people in the Church: "*Outside of a religious community perpetual exposition is not permitted.*" (BCL Newsletter, 1986)

In 1986, the Congregation for Divine Worship gave a corrective interpretation of paragraph 90 writing, "*When all the conditions are observed the bishop can grant permission for a pious association to have perpetual exposition.*"

Perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is encouraged in the Diocese of Birmingham.

PRACTICAL CONCERNS REGARDING PERPETUAL ADORATION IN THE PARISH

1. The existence of practical matters of safety of the adorers and the danger of profanation, theft and robbery, especially in the night hours must be a consideration. Some measures to ensure safety are necessary if perpetual adoration is observed in a parish facility.

2. Many of our parishes, because of the small number of members, would suffer a physical and moral burden should they attempt alone to carry out perpetual adoration. While most people can afford one hour a week for prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, to be present for a set hour every week of the year is impossible for most people. The result is the maintenance of an organization for scheduling hours of adoration that can weigh heavily on a small congregation and could impinge on one's duties of state.

Parents and working people are misguided if they omit their duties to their families and employers in order to keep their commitment to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. A parish family should not be tempted to feel less generous or guilty if they are unable to maintain

perpetual adoration. Much better that they limit adoration to one or two days a week and adore with a larger complement of the parish members in attendance. People are obligated to pray, but we can only encourage and not obligate people to participate in a devotion of perpetual adoration.

3. A separate chapel should be used to avoid interference with the daily liturgical celebrations of the parish. Without such a facility, a parish wishing to initiate perpetual adoration should set briefer periods of time and perhaps fewer days of scheduled adoration. Laws governing Eucharistic reservation protects some important theological values. The Eucharist may be reserved only in a church or oratory or chapel legitimately erected. These are sacred places blessed or dedicated according to the liturgical rites and established with the permission of the Bishop or competent Ordinary.

Secondly, the Eucharistic Sacrifice must be celebrated regularly to maintain the intrinsic connection between the Eucharist celebrated and reserved and to ensure the frequent renewal of the host. (cc. 934,2; 939)

SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS

1. Before a parish completes plans for perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament exposed, permission should be requested of the bishop. The pastor should indicate in his request how the parish will comply with the Church's regulations in the Roman Ritual: *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass*.
2. The pastor should demonstrate how the parish will handle the three practical concerns listed above and indicate the approved pious association with which they will affiliate.
3. If another parish in the deanery has other opportunities for perpetual adoration, serious thought should be given to participating cooperatively with that parish before initiating a separate devotion of adoration.
4. A parish should consider the introduction of a weekly Eucharistic Day(s) following morning Mass as a helpful way to prepare the parish for perpetual adoration or to discern its feasibility.
5. After one year, the pastor should submit to the Office of Sacred Liturgy an evaluation of the perpetual adoration devotion indicating the amount of participation, the effects on people's spiritual life and the parish life, and any problems encountered in the practical concerns listed above.