

THE ROMAN RITUAL:
HOLY COMMUNION AND
WORSHIP OF THE EUCHARIST
OUTSIDE MASS

21 JUNE 1973

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

I. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
EUCHARISTIC WORSHIP OUTSIDE MASS
AND THE EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION

1. The celebration of the eucharist is the center of the entire Christian life, both for the universal Church and for the local congregations of the Church. "The other sacraments, like every other ministry of the Church and every work of the apostolate, are linked with the holy eucharist and have it as their end. For the eucharist contains the Church's entire spiritual wealth, that is, Christ himself. He is our Passover and living bread; through his flesh, made living and life-giving by the Holy Spirit, he is bringing to life people and in this way inviting and leading them to offer themselves together with him, as well as their labors and all created things."

2. "The celebration of the eucharist in the sacrifice of the Mass," moreover, "is truly the origin and purpose of the worship that is shown to the eucharist outside Mass."² Christ the Lord "is offered in the sacrifice of the Mass when he begins to be sacramentally present as the spiritual food of the faithful under the appearances of bread and wine"; "after the sacrifice has been offered . . . as long as the eucharist is reserved in churches and oratories, Christ is truly the Emmanuel, that is, 'God with us.' Day and night he is in our midst; full of grace and truth, he dwells among us."³

3. No one therefore may doubt "that all the faithful show this holy sacrament the veneration and adoration that is due to God himself, as has always been the practice recognized in the Catholic Church. Nor is the sacrament to be less the object of adoration on the grounds that it was instituted by Christ the Lord to be received as food."⁴

4. In order to give right direction and encouragement to devotion to the sacrament of the eucharist, the eucharistic mystery must be considered in all its fullness, both in the celebration of Mass and in the worship of the sacrament reserved after Mass in order to extend the grace of the sacrifice.⁵

CHAPTER III

FORMS OF WORSHIP

OF THE EUCHARIST

79. The eucharistic sacrifice is the source and culmination 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.

In structuring these devotional exercises account should be taken of the liturgical seasons so that they accord with the liturgy, are in some way derived from it, and lead the people back to it.'

80. when the faithful adore Christ present in the sacrament, they should remember that this presence derives from the sacrifice and has as its purpose both sacramental and spiritual communion.

Therefore, the devotion prompting the faithful to visit the blessed sacrament draws them into an ever deeper share in the paschal mystery and leads them to respond gratefully to the gift of him who through his humanity constantly pours divine life into 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.

Therefore, the faithful should strive to worship Christ the Lord in the blessed sacrament in a manner fitting in with their own way of life. Pastors should show the way by example and by word encourage their people.²

81. 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. They should strive to lead their whole lives in the strength of this heavenly food, as sharers in the death and resurrection of the Lord. All should be eager to do good works and to please God, so that they may seek to imbue the world with the Christian spirit and, in all things, even in the midst of human affairs, to become witnesses of Christ.³

1. EXPOSITION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

INTRODUCTION

I. Relationship Between Exposition and Mass

82. Exposition of the holy eucharist, either in a ciborium or in a monstrance, leads us to knowledge Christ's marvelous presence in the sacrament and invites us to the spiritual union with him that culminates in sacramental communion. Therefore it is a strong encouragement toward the worship owed to Christ in spirit and in truth.

In such exposition 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 Christ's intention of instituting the eucharist above all to be near us to feed, to heal, and to comfort us.⁴

83. During the exposition of the blessed sacrament, celebration of Mass in the body of the church or oratory is prohibited.

In addition to the reasons given in no. 6, the celebration of the eucharistic mystery includes in a higher way that inner communion to which exposition is meant to lead the faithful.

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 it is celebrated in a chapel separate from the area of exposition and at least some of the faithful remain in adoration.

II. Regulations for Exposition

84. Genuflection in the presence of the blessed sacrament, whether reserved in the tabernacle or exposed for public adoration, is on one knee.

85. 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.

Lengthy Exposition

86. In churches and oratories where the eucharist is 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 meditate on this mystery more deeply and adore.

This kind of exposition, however, may take place only if there is assurance of the participation of a reasonable number of the faithful.⁶

87. For any serious and general need, the local Ordinary is empowered 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.”

88. 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.

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 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.⁸

Brief Period of Exposition

89. Shorter expositions of the eucharist 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.⁹

Exposition merely for the purpose of giving benediction is prohibited.

Adoration in Religious Communities

90. 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. Then, with the whole community taking part, the adoration before Christ the Lord will consist of readings, songs, and religious silence to foster effectively the spiritual life of the community. This promotes between the members of the religious house the spirit of unity and mutual love that the eucharist signifies and effects, and gives the worship due the sacrament a more sublime expression.

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. Through it, in accordance with the nature 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 entire community and Church.

III. Minister of Exposition

91. 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 congregation with the sacrament.

In the absence of a priest or deacon or if they are lawfully impeded, an acolyte, another special minister of communion, or another person appointed by the local Ordinary may publicly expose and later repose the eucharist for the adoration of the faithful.

Such ministers 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, they replace the blessed sacrament in the tabernacle. It is not lawful, however, for them to give the blessing with the sacrament.

92. 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 that are used in the region or the vesture that is befitting this ministry and is approved by the Ordinary.

The priest or 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, he should put on the humeral veil.

RITE OF EUCHARISTIC EXPOSITION AND BENEDICTION

Exposition

93. After the people have assembled, a song may be sung while the minister comes to the altar. 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 maybe used, but this should not be too lofty or distant.^{1°} After exposition, if the monstrance is used, the minister incenses the sacrament. If the adoration is to be lengthy, he may then withdraw.

94. 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.

Adoration

95. 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.

96. 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.

Benediction

Eucharistic Hymn and Incensation

97. Toward 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." Meanwhile the minister, while kneeling, incenses the sacrament if the exposition has taken place with the monstrance.

Prayer

98. Afterward the minister rises and sings or says:
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.

Reposition

100. 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. Meanwhile the people may sing or say an acclamation, and the minister then leaves.