

RETURNING TO THE CENACLE



*a Pastoral Initiative on the Holy Eucharist,
Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament,
and Prayer for Vocations to the Ministerial Priesthood*

Diocese of Crookston

Pastoral Office of Worship

Impetus for this Initiative

Bishop Michael Hoeppner addressed the presbyterate of the Diocese of Crookston shortly after his ordination-installation with the idea of “perpetual” exposition of the Blessed Sacrament with the particular intention of prayer for an increase in vocations to the ministerial priesthood and the vowed religious life. Bishop Hoeppner’s idea was given further encouragement by the publication from the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, Claudio Hummes announcing a new initiative to bring about perpetual Eucharistic adoration following the recommendations set forth by Pope Benedict XVI in his February 2007 post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis*.



Goals of the Project

The goals of this project are the following:

1. to provide the reader with a brief summary of post-conciliar magisterial teachings and theological reflections regarding the relationship of the celebration of the Mass (Eucharist) to adoration and exposition.
2. to provide the reader brief survey of the history of official devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and current liturgical norms treating adoration and exposition of the

Blessed Sacrament.

3. to offer direction to those preparing the liturgical rites associated with exposition and adoration.
4. to raise important pastoral and safety concerns regarding the implementation of exposition on the parish-deanery level.

A word about the title

The “Upper Room” or *Cenacle*, is the place where Jesus gathered on the night of the Last Supper to celebrate the Passover meal (Mk 14:15). It was the place where the resurrected Christ appeared to the disciples and those with them (Lk 24:33; Jn 20:19). It was the place that Matthias was chosen to be Judas’ replacement by the laying on of the Apostles’ hands (Acts 1:13). It was the place where the first Christians gathered for prayer and the ‘breaking of the bread’ (Acts 2:42), and where the descent of the Holy Spirit happened on Pentecost (Acts 2:1). It is also the metaphor the Congregation for Clergy uses in its letter, where Cardinal Hummes writes:

We are asking, therefore, all diocesan Ordinaries... to take an active role and promote—in the different portions of the People of God entrusted to them—true and proper cenacles in which clerics, religious and lay people—united among themselves in the spirit of true communion—may devote themselves to prayer, in the form of continuous Eucharistic adoration in a spirit of genuine and authentic reparation and purification.

This pastoral initiative seeks to create within local parish communities such ‘cenacles of prayer’ centered on the Eucharist. It is there that we will seek to do what those first Christians did in the *Cenacle*: gather for personal and communal prayer, listen to the Word of God proclaimed, ‘feel the room shake’ in the power of the Holy Spirit, and experience again the Holy Spirit through the Church calling men for the laying on of hands by the Apostles and their successors.

At heart, **we are asking parishes to become schools or centers of prayer**, whereby God’s people may come together *to grow in wisdom and grace before God and before all (see Lk. 2:52)*. We are seeking a transformation of ourselves and our communities of faith where seek to *put on the mind of Christ*. This may be a challenging transformation, yet it is one well worth striving for.

1. The Eucharistic Celebration and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass

At the outset of the twentieth century, Pope Saint Pius X (1903-1914) proposed bringing the Liturgy closer to the people. He maintained that the faithful assimilated the

*true Christian spirit by drawing from its primary and indispensable source, which is active participation in the most holy mysteries and from the solemn public prayer of the Church.*¹

The Second Vatican Council’s grave and well pondered words bear recalling: *every Liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the Priest and of his Body, which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree.*² As the Conciliar Decree on the Life and Ministry of Priests states: *The Eucharistic Action, over which the priest presides, is the very heart of the congregation. The Most Blessed Eucharist contains the entire spiritual boon of the Church, that is, Christ himself, our Pasch and Living Bread, by the action of the Holy Spirit through his very flesh vital and vitalizing, giving life to people who are thus invited and encouraged to offer themselves, their labors and all created things, together with him.*³

As Pope Paul VI wrote to the National Eucharistic Congress of France in 1966: *The unbloody renewal of the offering that was made in blood on Calvary, the one sacrifice of the New Law, is a sacrifice of adoration, thanksgiving,*

¹ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy* (hereafter *DPPL*) #46. quoting Pope St. Pius X, letter issued *motu proprio*, *Tra le sollecitudini*. 22 November 1903, in *Pii X Pontificis Maximi Acta*, I, Akademische Druck. Verlagsanstalt, Graz 1971, p. 77.

² Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (hereafter *SC*) no. 7. Dec. 4, 1963; AAS 56(1964), pp. 7-ff.

³ Second Vatican Council, *Presbyterorum ordinis*. Dec. 7, 1965. no. 5.

*impetration[petition], and expiation for the living and the dead. It will be well to call to mind a point that must be believed with unwavering faith: in the eucharist after the twofold consecration of the bread and the wine Christ is present immediately and not by a fleeting or passing presence...and under the veils of the sacrament he is worthy of divine worship in reverence and in the homage of adoration.*⁴

Recent papal and conciliar teaching focuses on the Eucharistic Liturgy as a source of Christ's ongoing presence. Pope John Paul II summarized this idea of presence considered under various aspects when he wrote the following: *Faith demands that we approach the Eucharist fully aware that we are approaching Christ himself. It is precisely his presence which gives the other aspects of the Eucharist — as meal, as memorial of the Paschal Mystery, as eschatological anticipation — a significance which goes far beyond mere symbolism. The Eucharist is a mystery of presence, the perfect fulfillment of Jesus' promise to remain with us until the end of the world.*⁵

The very richness of the Church's reflection on the mystery of Christ's presence in the Liturgy makes a distillation of these realities a

difficult challenge, and yet the even a cursory recollection yields great fruits. As the Council Fathers at Vatican II wrote: *Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations.*⁶ They went on to note: *The sacred liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church.*⁷ Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows.⁸ The Council focused on the presence of Christ in the sacrifice of the Mass in several loci. ***He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister, "the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross" [Council of Trent], but especially under the Eucharistic species. By His power He is present in the sacraments, so that when a man baptizes it is really Christ Himself who baptizes [St. Augustine]. He is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings.***⁹

⁴ Paul VI, Epistle *Vox laetitiae* to Cardinal Paul M. Richard and the National Eucharistic Congress of France at Bordeaux, March 25, 1966. AAS 58 (1966) pp. 356-8. [DOL 1222-3].

⁵ Pope John Paul II, *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, Apostolic Letter on the Year of the Eucharist, 7 October 2004, no.16.

⁶ SC, no. 7.

⁷ SC, no.9.

⁸ SC, no.10

⁹ SC, no. 7.

***“The mystery of your presence,
Lord, no mortal tongue can tell.”***

*Christ is joyfully experienced in many ways in
the Liturgy*

There is a concern that focusing on the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament will erode people's belief in the many modes of Christ's presence in the Liturgy. Rather, let the awesome mystery of Christ's Eucharistic presence lead to a deeper experience and appreciation of the multiple modes of his presence.

Pope Paul VI wrote in his 1965 encyclical letter, *Mysterium Fidei*, of the various ways in which Christ is present in the Church, expanding the list given in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

All of us realize that there is more than one way in which Christ is present in His Church. We want to go into this very joyful subject, which the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy presented briefly, at somewhat greater length. Christ is present in His Church when she prays, since He is the one who "prays for us and prays in us and to whom we pray: He prays for us as our priest, He prays in us as our head, He is prayed to by us as our God"; and He is the one who has promised, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them." He is present in the Church as she performs her works of mercy, not just because whatever good we do to one of His least brethren we do to Christ Himself, but also because Christ is the one who performs these works through the Church

and who continually helps men with His divine love. He is present in the Church as she moves along on her pilgrimage with a longing to reach the portals of eternal life, for He is the one who dwells in our hearts through faith, and who instills charity in them through the Holy Spirit whom He gives to us.

In still another very genuine way, He is present in the Church as she preaches, since the Gospel which she proclaims is the word of God, and it is only in the name of Christ, the Incarnate Word of God, and by His authority and with His help that it is preached, so that there might be "one flock resting secure in one shepherd."

He is present in His Church as she rules and governs the People of God, since her sacred power comes from Christ and since Christ, the "Shepherd of Shepherds," is present in the bishops who exercise that power, in keeping with the promise He made to the Apostle.

Moreover, Christ is present in His Church in a still more sublime manner as she offers the Sacrifice of the Mass in His name; He is present in her as she administers the sacraments.

These various ways in which Christ is present fill the mind with astonishment and offer the Church a mystery for her contemplation. But there is another way in which Christ is present in His Church, a way that surpasses all the others. It is His presence in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, which is, for this reason, "a more consoling source of devotion, a lovelier object of contemplation and holier in what it contains" than all the other sacraments; for it contains Christ Himself and it is "a kind of consummation of the spiritual life, and

in a sense the goal of all the sacraments." This presence is called "real" not to exclude the idea that the others are "real" too, but rather to indicate presence par excellence, because it is substantial and through it Christ becomes present whole and entire, God and man.¹⁰

“My flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.”

The fruits of active participation are communion and transformation

There is a concern that the focus on the perduring presence of Christ in the reserved eucharistic species will lead to a devaluing of receiving the Lord's body and blood. Instead, let the adoration of the humble of Christ, veiled under the signs of food and drink, lead all to the active participation demanded by the liturgy itself.

Pope Paul VI, wrote his encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* while the Second Vatican Council was still in session. He wrote of his own goals for the renewed liturgy and its relation to Eucharistic devotion. *And so We earnestly hope that the restoration of the sacred liturgy will*

produce abundant fruits in the form of Eucharistic devotion, so that the Holy Church may, with this salvific sign of piety raised on high, make daily progress toward the full achievement of unity, inviting all Christians to a unity of faith and love and drawing them to it gently, through the action of divine grace.¹¹

These fruits were the intent of the Constitution on the Liturgy. *The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ's faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. They should be instructed by God's word and be nourished at the table of the Lord's body...¹² Sacramental communion received during Mass is a more complete participation in the eucharistic celebration. This truth stands out more clearly, by force of the sign value, when after the priest's communion the faithful receive the Lord's body and blood from the same sacrifice.¹³*

Lumen Gentium emphasized the aspect of communion when it stated: *Really sharing in the*

¹⁰ Pope Paul VI, Encyclical Letter, *Mysterium Fidei* [hereafter *MF*]. 3 September 1965 nos. 35-38. (emphasis added)

¹¹ Pope Paul VI. *MF*, no. 6.

¹² *SC*, no. 48.

¹³ Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship. Roman Ritual: *De Sacra Communione et de Cultu Mysterii Eucharistici extra Missam* (Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass) [hereafter *HCWEOM*], 21 June 1973. Introduction, no. 13. cf. *SC*, no. 55.

body of the Lord in the breaking of the Eucharistic bread, we are taken up into communion with Him and with one another. "Because the bread is one, we though many, are one body, all of us who partake of the one bread" (I Cor. 10:17).¹⁴

The effect of the Eucharist is also to nourish spiritually those who receive it as what the faith of the Church says it truly is—the Body and Blood of the Lord given as the food of eternal life (cf. Jn. 6:54-58). For the baptized, the Eucharist is spiritual food, a means by which they are brought to live the life of Christ himself, are incorporated more profoundly in Him and share more intensely in the whole economy of his saving mystery. (cf. Jn. 6:56). As the sacrament of full union with Christ and of the perfection of spiritual life, the Eucharist is necessary to every Christian: in our Lord's words, ". . . unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you" (Jn. 6:53). Those who live intensely the life of grace feel a compelling need for this spiritual sustenance, and the Church herself encourages daily communion.¹⁵

Professor Pamela E. Jackson of the Notre Dame Center for Liturgy wrote: *The energy generated by participation that is not aware of the very nature of the liturgy and is primarily external, does not last much longer than human enthusiasm; only by giving themselves to God through the rites and prayers of the liturgy do worshippers open themselves up to the transforming grace that enables*

*them to bring Christ to the world.*¹⁶

***“You give us Yourself to heal us
and bring us strength.”***

**As the human body needs daily bread,
Christ nourishes the divine life in us**

There is a concern that promoting the practice of adoration and exposition could lead to the mistaken conclusion that the primary motive for the Mass is adoration. Rather, let the *latria* (worship) of the august sacrament of the altar find expression in the truth celebrated in every Mass: ***This is the cup of my blood...it will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven.***

Pope Saint Pius X, in his 1905 decree, *Sacra Tridentina Synodus*, encouraging frequent communion, noted that Christ's intention of

¹⁴ Vatican Council II. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 21 November 1964. no. 7

¹⁵ Secretariat for the Promotion of the Unity of Christians. *In Quibus Rerum Circumstantiis*, On Admitting Other Christians To Eucharistic Communion In The Catholic Church. 1 June 1972. section II.1.

¹⁶ Pamela Jackson. *An Abundance of Graces: Reflections on Sacrosanctum Concilium*, (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2004), pg. 34.

instituting the Eucharist above all was to be near us *to feed, to heal, and to comfort us*.¹⁷

This idea was repeated and emphasized by the General Introduction to the 1973 *Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*. It states most clearly: *The primary and original reason for reservation of the eucharist outside Mass is the administration of viaticum.*

*The secondary reasons are the giving of communion and the adoration of our Lord Jesus Christ who is present in the sacrament. The reservation of the sacrament for the sick led to the praiseworthy practice of adoring this heavenly food in the churches. This cult of adoration rests upon an authentic and solid basis, especially because faith in the real presence of the Lord leads naturally to external, public expression of that faith.*¹⁸ It again emphasizes the relationship of exposition, the Mass, and healing when it states: *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.*¹⁹

Saint Teresa of Avila wrote to her Carmelite sisters in *The Way of Perfection: He[Christ] is*

*pleased not to abandon us but to remain here with us...as the sustenance and manna of humanity... the soul will find joy and comfort in the Most Holy Sacrament.*²⁰

The Rite for Viaticum is clear on the Church's desire that those approaching death be strengthened by the eucharist. *All baptized Christians who are able to receive communion are bound to receive viaticum by reason of the precept to receive communion when in danger of death from any cause. When in their passage from this life Christians are strengthened by the body and blood of Christ in viaticum, they have the pledge of the resurrection that the Lord promised. (cf. Jn. 6:54)*²¹

Liturgy and Popular Piety

Together they can form a harmonious unity

There could be a concern that a return to a more devotional form of prayer (exposition) will weaken the significant gains made in the last century and a half by the renewal of the liturgy and the active participation of all the

¹⁷ Pope St. Pius X, as quoted by Sacred Congregation for Rites. *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, Instruction on Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery. 25 May 1967. no. 60. [Pope St. Pius X, Decree *Sacra Tridentina Synodus*, On Frequent and Daily Reception of Holy Communion. Dec. 20, 1905: Denz-Schön. 1981 (3375).]

¹⁸ HCWEOM, no. 5.

¹⁹ HCWEOM. no. 82.

²⁰ Saint Teresa of Avila. *The Way of Perfection, chapter 34.* trans. and ed. by E. Allison Peers. (New York: Image Books, 1991), pp. 223-4.

²¹ Roman Ritual. *Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum*, General Introduction, nos. 26, 27.

faithful. Rather, let times of personal prayer and contemplation become a source of spiritual depth which finds full expression in liturgical celebrations.

In its consideration of the relationship of popular piety and the liturgy, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments traces the factors which contributed to an oppositional stance between the liturgy (public prayer) and personal piety (private prayer). *Between the seventh and the fifteenth century, a decisive differentiation between Liturgy and popular piety began to emerge which gradually became more pronounced, ending eventually in a dualism of celebration. Parallel with the Liturgy, celebrated in Latin, a communitarian popular piety celebrated in the vernacular emerged.*²² Two of the several factors influencing the division between the liturgy and popular piety were:

[1] *the marked distinction of roles in Christian society - clerics, monks, and laity, and [2] the idea that the Liturgy was the competence of clerics since the laity were no more than spectators at the Liturgy.*²³ The Directory goes on to state:

Throughout the middle ages many forms of popular piety gradually emerged or developed...as a parallel, or even an alternative to many liturgical expressions, several devotional forms appeared; for example, various forms of Eucharistic adoration

*served to compensate for the rarity with which Holy Communion was received.*²⁴

Without denying the tensions he experienced in his own religious life, Fr. Louis (Thomas) Merton OCSO came to the conclusion that things had not always been so. *The early Christian tradition and the spiritual writers of the Middle Ages knew no conflict between "public" and "private" prayer, or between liturgy and contemplation. This is a modern problem. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say it is a pseudo-problem. Liturgy by its very nature tends to prolong itself in individual ...prayer, and prayer in its turn disposes us for and seeks fulfillment in liturgical worship.*²⁵

Merton states: *There is nowhere an explicit conflict between liturgical and private prayer; they both form part of a harmonious unity.* He says that they are inseparably linked, like two sides of one coin. *Hence, though liturgical prayer is by its nature more "active," it may at any moment be illuminated by contemplative grace. And though ["private"] prayer may tend by its nature to a*

²² DPPL, no. 29.

²³ DPPL, no. 30.

²⁴ DPPL, no. 32.

²⁵ Thomas Merton. *Contemplative Prayer*. (New York: Image Books, 1971), pg. 46.

*greater personal spontaneity, it may also be accidentally more arid and laborious than communal worship, which is in any case particularly blessed by the presence of Christ in the mystery of the worshipping community.*²⁶

Pope John Paul II expressed his hopes and understanding of the interplay of personal and communal prayer: *Let us deepen through adoration our personal and communal contemplation, drawing upon aids to prayer inspired by the word of God and the experience of so many mystics old and new.*²⁷

There is no doubt that the creative tension of liturgical and personal prayer must be maintained. Indeed, this is the spirit from within which the union of the contemplative and active experiences of prayer must develop in the life of those who adore.

The Sacrament of Charity

We are bread broken for the life of the world

There is a concern that an imbalanced focus on the contemplative beholding of Christ's presence in the Blessed Sacrament will lead to an attitude of neglect for the needy and the requirements of justice. Let it be the case that the hearts of those who adore the Lord be permeated with *caritas*; the self-surrendering

love of Jesus, *who came to serve rather than be served.*

Pope Benedict XVI's 2007 post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, reminds readers that there is an intrinsic relationship between Christ's Eucharistic presence and his presence in the living members of the Body of Christ. *I wish here to endorse the wishes expressed by the Synod Fathers by encouraging the Christian people to deepen their understanding of the relationship between the eucharistic mystery, the liturgical action, and the new spiritual worship which derives from the Eucharist as the sacrament of charity.*

*Consequently, I wish to set the present Exhortation alongside my first Encyclical Letter, Deus Caritas Est, in which I frequently mentioned the sacrament of the Eucharist and stressed its relationship to Christian love, both of God and of neighbour.*²⁸

Pope Benedict continued: *And it is precisely in this personal encounter with the Lord that then strengthens the social mission contained in the Eucharist, which seeks to break down not only the walls that separate the Lord and ourselves, but also and especially the walls that separate us from one another.*²⁹ In the the Holy Father's encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, he writes: *Eucharistic communion includes the reality both of being loved*

²⁶ Merton. pg. 61.

²⁷ Pope John Paul II. *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, no. 18.

²⁸ Pope Benedict XVI. Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, no. 14. 22 February 2007.

²⁹ Pope Benedict XVI. *Sacramentum Caritatis*, no. 66.

and of loving others in turn. A Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice of love is intrinsically fragmented.³⁰ The 2001 *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy* makes a similar statement: *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 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.*³¹

Pope Paul VI's words from 1965 are as true as ever: *Hence it is that devotion to the divine Eucharist exerts a great influence upon the soul in the direction of fostering a "social" love, in which we put the common good ahead of private good, take up the cause of the community, the parish, the universal Church, and extend our charity to the whole world because we know that there are members of Christ everywhere.*³²

Sr. Mary Collins, professor emerita of Liturgical Studies at the Catholic University of America, wrote of the connection of human

suffering, the liturgy, and justice: *It is the work of the the eucharistic assembly to remember God's justice in its fullness in the face of human suffering; it does this through its remembrance of Christ Jesus. The memory of God's radical justice is the only authentic foundation for Christian acts on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world.*³³

Pope Benedict XVI wrote: *"We are thus encouraged to commit ourselves in the first person to helping our brethren, especially those in difficulty, because the vocation of every Christian is truly that of being, together with Jesus, bread that is broken for the life of the world."*³⁴

2. A Brief History of Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament

A full rehearsal of the Church's deep and abiding belief in Christ's perduring eucharistic presence and its expressions over time could well take hundreds of pages. For those who desire such, the author suggests *Cult and Controversy* by Nathan Mitchell.³⁵

However, some context is needed by anyone approaching this subject, and what is offered

³⁰ Pope Benedict XVI. Encyclical letter, *Deus Caritas Est*, no. 14. 25 December 2005.

³¹ *DPPL*, no. 164.

³² Pope Paul VI. *MF*, no. 69.

³³ Mary Collins, OSB. *Worship: Renewal to Practice*. (Washington, D.C: Pastoral Press, 1987), pg. 257.

³⁴ Pope Benedict XVI, Message for 16th World Day of Prayer for the Sick. 11 February 2008. no. 3.

³⁵ Nathan Mitchell, OSB. *Cult and Controversy: The Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1982.)

below is drawn from official sources of the universal Church and the U.S. Bishops.

*Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is a form of Eucharistic cult which is particularly widespread in the Church and earnestly recommended to her Pastors and faithful. Its initial form derives from Holy Thursday and the altar of repose, following the celebration of the [Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper] Coena Domini Mass. This adoration is a most apt way of expressing the connection between the celebration of the memorial of the Lord's Sacrifice and his continued presence in the Sacrament of the Altar. The reservation of the Sacred Species, so as to be able to administer Viaticum to the sick at any time, encouraged the practice among the faithful of recollection before the tabernacle and to worship Christ present in the Sacrament.*³⁶

Popular piety encouraged the process that led to the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi, which reciprocally inspired the development of new forms of Eucharistic piety among the people of God.

[In the dioceses of the United States] the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ [Corpus Christi] is observed on the [Sunday] following on the solemnity of the Most Blessed Trinity. This feast is both a doctrinal and cultic response to heretical teaching on the mystery of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the apogee of an ardent devotional movement concentrated on the Sacrament of the Altar. It was

extended to the entire Latin Church by [Pope] Urban IV in 1264.

*For centuries, the celebration of Corpus Christi remained the principal point of popular piety's concentration on the Eucharist. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, faith, in reaction to various forms of protestantism, and culture (art, folklore and literature) coalesced in developing lively and significant expressions Eucharistic devotion in popular piety.*³⁷

For several centuries, the traditional Quarant'Ore [40 hours] Devotion has been celebrated in parishes as a time of annual renewal and prayer. It originated in the early part of the sixteenth century at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Milan,

³⁶ Cf. Pius XII, Encyclical letter *Mediator Dei* in AAS 39 (1947) 568-572; Pope Paul VI, *MF*; Sacred Congregation for Rites. Instruction, *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, nos. 49-50; Roman Ritual, *HCWEOM*, no. 5.

³⁷ *DPPL*, no. 160.

*Italy, probably as a commemoration of the forty hours that Christ's body lay in the tomb between his death and resurrection.*³⁸

*On November 25, 1592, the devotion was given formal recognition by Pope Clement VIII, who decreed that it should henceforth be observed in the churches of Rome.*³⁹ *The form of the devotion was later codified for all the churches of Rome in instructions issued by Clement XI in 1705 and Clement XII in 1731.*⁴⁰ *These 'Clementine Instructions' were also influential in other places as the Forty Hours Devotion spread throughout the Church. The Forty Hours Devotion was first approved for the diocese of Baltimore on December 10, 1857 and was extended to all the dioceses of the United States by a decision of the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore on January 24, 1868.*⁴¹

During the first half of this [20th] century benediction of the Blessed Sacrament held, practically speaking, an almost higher place of importance in the lives of many U.S. Catholics than the eucharistic sacrifice itself. The reasons for that emphasis were many and complex. The liturgical movement sought to reverse this trend, reestablish correct priorities and lead the faithful to full

*involvement in the celebration of Mass. In the quite normal reaction to an overstress of such devotional practices as benediction and personal visits to the Blessed Sacrament, some at times tended to downgrade these aspects of the Church's prayer life.*⁴²

*The worship of the holy eucharist outside Mass was reaffirmed in the documents of the liturgical reform issued subsequent to the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. The Sacred Congregation of Rites, in its Instruction on Eucharistic Worship (May 25, 1967), encouraged the practice of solemn annual exposition. The revised portion of the Roman Ritual: Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass, published by the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship in 1973, provides the most recent regulations and texts for solemn annual exposition.*⁴³

³⁸ Cf. 41st International Eucharistic Congress, 1975-1976, *Program of Spiritual Renewal and Preparation: Liturgy*, Part I, Philadelphia: Archdiocese of Philadelphia, 1975, p. L-5.

³⁹ Clement VII, Constitution, *Graves et diuturnae*, 25 November 1592.

⁴⁰ Pope Clement XI published an Instruction on the Forty Hours Devotion for the Diocese of Rome on 21 January 1705 and Pope Clement XII republished the instruction on 1 September 1731. The *Instructio Clementina* was gradually extended to other parts of Italy and other nations.

⁴¹ Cf. *Acts of the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore*, p. 149.

⁴² National Conference of Catholic Bishops: Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *The Body of Christ*. 1977. p.3.

⁴³ HCWEOM, (New York: The Catholic Book Publishing Co. 1976).

*Eucharistic devotion, which is so deeply rooted in the Christian faithful, must integrate two basic principles: 1) the supreme reference point for Eucharistic devotion is the Lord's Paschover; the Pascha as understood by the Fathers, is the feast of Easter, while the Eucharist is before all else the celebration of Paschal Mystery or of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ; 2) all forms of Eucharistic devotion must have an intrinsic reference to the Eucharistic Sacrifice, or dispose the faithful for its celebration, or prolong the worship which is essential to that Sacrifice.*⁴⁴

*Hence, the Rituale Romanum states, "The faithful, when worshipping Christ present in the Sacrament of the Altar, should recall that this presence comes from the Sacrifice of the Eucharist, and tends towards sacramental and spiritual communion."*⁴⁵

3. The Practice of Eucharistic Adoration

a. An expression of faith

The Church has expressed its belief in the presence of Christ in the reserved Blessed Sacrament in three general ways:

Simple visits to the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle: a brief encounter with Christ spurred on by faith in his true presence, and characterized by silent prayer. This is modeled on an personal visit to the Blessed Sacrament for prayer.

⁴⁴ DPPL, no. 161.

⁴⁵ DPPL, no. 161; cf. HCWEOM, no. 80.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, exposed, in the monstrance, [ciborium,] or pyx, as per liturgical norms, be it for shorter or longer durations of time. This is modeled on the time of adoration following the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday.

- The [solemn annual] Quarant'Ore [40 hours] devotion or other such forms of perpetual adoration, which gather together an entire religious community, Eucharistic association, or parish community, and which furnish the occasion for numerous expressions of Eucharistic piety. This is modeled on an annual communal celebration, typically around the feast of Corpus Christi.

b. "Perpetual Adoration" clarifying these terms

The term "perpetual adoration" has become common parlance in the last several years to describe a practice of prayer in the presence of the exposed Blessed Sacrament which is unending ('24/7'), excepting certain norms of church law.

However, it is important to be very clear about terminology when talking about the practice we are seeking to implement.

i. "Perpetual"

In speaking of the duration of time spent in prayer, The General Introduction to *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*

mentions three periods of exposition, corresponding to the three models mentioned above.

- **“brief” or “shorter” periods** of exposition (*HCWEOM*, no. 89).
- **“lengthy” periods** of exposition (*HCWEOM*, nos. 86-88) on an annual basis, or as directed by the diocesan bishop.
- **“extended,” “continual,” or “perpetual”** periods of exposition (*HCWEOM*, no. 90). Some religious communities or other pious associations have as part of their constitutions such continuous exposition.
- It should be noted that the initiative of the Congregation for Clergy suggested several modes to fulfill their goal of creating cenacles of prayer. *The modalities for Eucharistic adoration in different places may be diverse, according to the circumstances. For example:*

~perpetual Eucharistic adoration throughout the 24-hour day;

~extended Eucharistic adoration, beginning in the early hours of the morning and continuing until the evening;

~daily Eucharistic adoration during specific hours;

~Eucharistic adoration during one or more days of the week during specific hours;

~Eucharistic adoration for special circumstances, such as feast days and anniversaries.

Further, they go on to mention in a footnote: *What is meant by "continual Eucharistic adoration" is not only 24 hours a day uninterrupted adoration, but also continuous adoration from the first hours of the morning until the last hours of the evening. The latter, in fact, may be more viable for priests and faithful living in small communities. Obviously, where the number of faithful is larger and willing, the possibility of exposing the Eucharist without interruption might be explored.*

ii. “Adoration”

-Adoration is a personal act of prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. The Sacrament need not be visible and remains locked in the tabernacle. *Eucharistic adoration of the reserved Blessed Sacrament is a devotional act* ⁴⁶ which the faithful and clergy have been consistently encouraged to deepen their Eucharistic piety.

-Exposition is a liturgical rite governed by norms in the liturgical books. These are rites *by which the Blessed Sacrament is displayed outside the tabernacle in a ciborium or monstrance for public veneration by the faithful. It is a*

⁴⁶ USCCB Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy. *BCL Newsletter Volume XLII September 2006* “Nine Questions on the Rites for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament”.

*public celebration that enables the faithful to perceive more clearly the relationship between the reserved Sacrament and the “sacrifice of the Mass [which] is truly the origin and the purpose of the worship that is shown to the Eucharist outside Mass.” (Eucharisticum Mysterium, no. 3e)*⁴⁷ As with any liturgical rite, there are proper and improper ways of performing it.

It is most accurate, then, to speak of **perpetual exposition**, as the Church has defined it. This is more than a matter of semantics; because it would be very possible to have *perpetual adoration* without ever exposing the Blessed Sacrament in a liturgical rite.

Bishop Hoepfner’s desire and directive is that there be perpetual exposition (and adoration) of the Blessed Sacrament in each deanery (at least) in the Diocese of Crookston.

This is for deans and pastors, in consultation with the lay faithful, to implement on the local level.

c. The Rites to be followed in Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

i. *What are the liturgical rites for adoration of the exposed Blessed Sacrament?* *These rites are found in the third chapter ritual book Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass [HCWEOM],*

entitled “Forms of Worship of the Holy Eucharist.” The rites for adoration of the exposed Blessed Sacrament are found in [HCWEOM] numbers 82-100. These rites consist of Exposition, Adoration, Benediction, and Reposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

ii. *What are the rites of Exposition and Adoration?* *While the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, and the ciborium or monstrance is placed upon the altar, it is fitting that a song be sung by those gathered. If the monstrance is used (rather than the ciborium) the minister incenses the sacrament. (Cf. HCW, no. 93). For the period of adoration “there should be prayers, songs, and readings to direct the attention of the faithful to the worship of Christ the Lord.” (HCW, no. 95) A homily or brief exhortation is also appropriate, as are extended periods of silence.*⁴⁸

iii. An additional complementary ritual resource has been published by Liturgical Press: *Order of Solemn Exposition of the Holy Eucharist*. This is a compilation of rites and prayers from HCWEOM as well as appropriate music.

⁴⁷ BCL Newsletter, September 2006 “Nine Questions...”.

⁴⁸ BCL Newsletter, September 2006 “Nine Questions...”.

iv. The Office of Worship is most happy to offer any and all assistance in preparing texts and materials.

4. Practical Concerns regarding Perpetual Exposition

Things to address when beginning

1. **Safety is primary:** Some measures to ensure safety are necessary if perpetual adoration is observed in a parish facility.

a. For the adorers

i. *never alone:* It is imperative, not only liturgically, but also from a standpoint of prudence, to never have someone alone during exposition. This is particularly true at night.

ii. *locked doors:* Every prudent effort should be made to ensure the physical safety of those coming to the Church. Local situations and systems will need to be assessed.

iii. *lighting & walks:* Adequate lighting (both interior and exterior) should be provided for those coming to pray. Also, in inclement (snowy, icy) conditions hospitality and common sense dictate that paths be as clear and safe as possible.

iv. *emergency numbers/procedures:* local emergency numbers and procedures should be readily available to all.

b. for the Blessed Sacrament

i. those responsible should take all prudent measures to avoid the danger of profanation, theft, or robbery of the Blessed Sacrament especially in the night hours.

ii. The use of “exposition tabernacles” is a new phenomenon, and their acceptance is not yet widespread. In the September 2006 *Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy Newsletter* the following question was asked and response given: *Is it permissible to use an “Exposition Tabernacle,” which includes a small window with a sliding cover, for exposition of the Blessed Sacrament? No. “The holy Eucharist is to be reserved in a solid tabernacle. It must be opaque and unbreakable.” (HCWEOM, no. 10; cf. Code of Canon Law, 938 §3; General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 314.)* This is an indication that the utmost caution should always be taken with the Blessed Sacrament. The Office of Worship has spoken with vendors about the solidity of the materials used, and they assure customers that the glass is “bulletproof”, and yet there is an official caution.

2. Exposition should, preferably, take place in a chapel separate distinct from the body of the church.

Built of Living Stones: Art Architecture and Worship - Guidelines of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops states: *"Some parishes have inaugurated the practice of continuous adoration of the Eucharist. If, for some good reason, perpetual exposition must take place in a parish church, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has directed that this take place in a separate chapel that is 'distinct from the body of the church so as not to interfere with the normal activities of the parish or its daily liturgical celebration.'"*⁴⁹ This is a quotation of a response to a *dubium* (question) of the U.S. Bishops to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in 1995.⁵⁰

The norms 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 authority. 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. (CIC canons 934 § 2; 939)

3. Be realistic regarding participation.

a. **On the parish level:** Some parishes, because of the small number of members and distances to travel, would suffer a physical and moral burden should they attempt alone to carry out perpetual exposition. In such cases it is better to limit exposition to one or two days a week and adore with a larger number of members in attendance; or better yet to band together with other parishes in the deanery. This is why we have encouraged deans and deaneries to undertake this project on a wider scale. To think God's generous blessings are due to our maintenance of twenty-four hours of prayer a day is just bad theology: a serious misunderstanding of God's goodness and His gratuitous grace.

⁴⁹ *Built of Living Stones*, #78.

⁵⁰ cf. Response of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments Regarding Perpetual Exposition of the Eucharist published in the June 1995 issue of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' *BCL [Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy] Newsletter*, p. 21: "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 celebration. 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."

b. **On the personal level:** While most people can afford one hour a week for prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, as ministers our participation and example are key. People are obliged to pray, but we can only encourage and not obligate individuals to participate in perpetual exposition.

4. **There must be consistently good preaching and catechesis on the Eucharist.** Regular catechesis should be offered to enable the faithful to have a wholeness and balance in their understanding of Eucharistic theology and in their prayers of adoration. The people should understand the dynamic relationship of personal prayer and the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The following practices can assist the people in seeing this correlation and the harmony of private devotions with the liturgical seasons. *Sunday Eucharistic celebrations should be exemplary* so that the Scripture is well proclaimed, the preaching is good, participation is active, and liturgical ministerial roles filled. A host consecrated at the Mass should be regularly taken at the end of Mass to the chapel for exposition.

5. **Regular gatherings for prayer of larger groups of the faithful should be held during periods of exposition.** There are several forms this can take.

~Adoration and Sacred Scripture. *The prayers, hymns and chants used during Eucharistic exposition should all lead the faithful to focus their piety upon Christ the Lord.*

Readings of Sacred Scripture, together with a homily or brief exhortation moving the faithful to deepen in the Eucharistic mystery, may be used to increase the intimacy of their prayer. During exposition, at each hour or several times a day, the adorers could be encouraged to read the word of God aloud following the Lectionary readings for the Mass of the day, or another systematic schedule of selections from the books of the Bible. In such cases, it is recommendable that the faithful respond in song, and when appropriate, that they observe sacred silence” (HCWEOM,no. 95).

~Adoration and the Liturgy of the Hours. *Part of the Liturgy of the Hours may also be celebrated before the Blessed Sacrament, exposed for a given length of time. This is particularly true of the celebration of the principal Hours [Morning & Evening Prayer]. In such a celebration, in fact, the praise and thanksgiving which the Eucharistic Celebration and the Church render unto Christ – and by means of him, unto the Father in the name of the whole world – is extended throughout the day (HCWEOM,no. 96).*

~Adoration and the Rosary. *The Apostolic Letter, Rosarium Virginis Mariae has already helped us overcome a certain vision of the Rosary as a strictly “Marian” prayer, by inviting us to value its eminently Christological character, in contemplating the mysteries of Christ through the eyes and heart of Mary. This it does both in communion with her, and in imitation of her example.*

~ While it remains true that during the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament one should not practice other devotions in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the Saints (cf. DPPL, no. 165), it should be understood, however, that the Magisterium does not exclude the Rosary: it is precisely by virtue of this Christocentric character that it is emphasized and developed.⁵¹

novelty, people can inadvertently minimize the significance of the Real Presence, and reduce it to a par with other signs or symbols in the Church (statues, stained glass windows, vessels of the Holy Oils, baptismal font, etc.) However, exposition should become an occasion for contemplation and religious experience.

6. Adoration must lead to spiritual maturity and living virtues. One of the challenges of Christian spirituality in our society today is to avoid empty activism on the one hand and spiritual escapism on the other. The practice of perpetual exposition should lead the faithful to a sense of gratitude for God's tremendous love and a response of reaching out in the spirit of love to their neighbors and the community, especially to the poor. Pastors and other ministers should be attentive in preaching and catechesis to encourage the people of the parish to ponder Jesus' teaching in their hearts and put it into practice. Parishes may want to place prayer cards or other materials throughout the chapel which remind the people to pray for the parish, the community and our brothers and sisters around the world, especially the poor and the oppressed.

7. Avoid the danger of routine or being overly casual about the Eucharistic presence. After the initial fervor, brought by

⁵¹ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. *The Year of the Eucharist: Suggestions and Proposals*. (15 October 2004) nos. 14-16.