national bulletin on Liturgy

Eucharist: Celebrating and Savouring
This bulletin is primarily pastoral in scope. It is prepared for members of parish liturgy committees, readers, musicians, singers, catechists, teachers, religious, seminarians, clergy, diocesan liturgical commissions, and for all who are involved in preparing, celebrating, and improving the community's life of worship and prayer.

Editorial commentary in the bulletin is the responsibility of the editor.

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National Liturgy Office
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"Take this, all of you, and eat it: ... Take this, all of you and drink from it: ... Do this in memory of me." (Eucharistic Prayers, Roman Missal)

It is clear from the words of Jesus at the Last Supper that taking and sharing his body and blood are to constitute our remembrance of him and of his perpetual presence in his Church. This liturgical remembrance—the celebration of eucharist—opens up the possibility of having in our midst an enduring sacramental presence of our risen Lord. The Church is thus able to take advantage of this special mode of presence in order to unite the sick and the dying with the community's celebration of the sacrificial meal (the mass), and to give public expression to the Church's faith in the real presence by acts of adoration.

Throughout its existence, the Church has struggled to keep in balance these two types of eucharistic activity: celebrating and savouring, otherwise described as liturgy and devotion. This balance has been made all the more difficult to achieve and maintain because of the multivalent nature of the vocabulary that surrounds this particular sacrament. "Eucharist" is both action and object; these two meanings are intimately related but not synonymous. The word "communion" is used in most Catholic circles to refer to the sacred food "received," rather than to the spiritual effect achieved in the community's sharing of the bread of life and cup of salvation. Thus for many the "communion of saints" is an incomprehensible phrase. We have even had to translate communio, the Latin word in liturgical texts, as "fellowship" in the opening rites of the mass ("the fellowship of the Holy Spirit") to avoid confusion. (And then there's the recurring debate: are those who assist in the communion rite "eucharistic ministers," "ministers of communion," or "ministers of the bread and cup"?) The term "blessed sacrament" is used less ambiguously; it generally refers to the reserved consecrated bread.

The basic issues surrounding the "savouring" aspect of the eucharist are addressed in National Bulletin on Liturgy #69, which is still in print. Readers will find there excerpts from the Roman document, Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, recommended scriptural texts for celebrations, and suggested outlines for parish gatherings for adoration.

In the present issue Bishop Attila Mikloshazy and Father Kenneth Pearce lead us in a deeper exploration of our celebration of the eucharist and of Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass. Bishop Raymond Lahey writes on the lessons, questions and challenges of our experience of Sunday Celebration of the Word and Hours. What is at the heart of our Sunday celebration? Are communion services always allowed, always pastorally wise, ever necessary? What does it mean for devotions to be "in accord with the sacred liturgy"? What is adoration? What do Christians adore? How?

The tabernacle has been caught up, so to speak, in the tension between our liturgical and devotional activity. Articles by David Philippart and Conrad Kraus help us to sort out the underlying principles involved in our decisions with regard to the treatment of the tabernacle.

Our experiences of holy communion and worship of the eucharist outside mass often involve lay leaders of prayer. Mary Schaefer offers an incisive theological examination of lay leaders of prayer along with some very concrete and practical implications of this understanding of lay ministry. This article is the last in a series of three articles that have appeared in the Bulletin since the fall of 1998 (#154 and #155).

This issue of the Bulletin has an interactive element—two, in fact. One is a survey regarding the experience of parishes with tabernacles located in separate reservation chapels; the other is a request for general comment that will become a permanent part of the Bulletin. Please take some time to give us your input!
The Eucharistic Prayer: Summit of the Summit

Attila Mikloshazy, S.J.

Introduction

The Second Vatican Council reminded us again of what every Catholic Christian knew; that the liturgy is the source and summit of our whole Christian life. The liturgical celebration of the eucharist has undergone quite a development through the centuries. In the first millennium it was much more evident how the three dimensions of the eucharistic mystery—the real presence of Christ, the sacrificial action of the holy mass, and the holy communion—belong strictly to one another. For different historical and theological reasons, and with time, this strict unity between the three dimensions loosened considerably, and so our theology began to treat them separately; our liturgical practice has reflected this theological divergence. In the mass there was hardly any holy communion because this occurred elsewhere, either before or after. From the thirteenth century, great emphasis was then paid to the adoration of the real presence of Christ in the various eucharistic devotions.

Of course, all three dimensions of the eucharistic mystery are important, and it is understandable that in every age one or the other receives more attention. Yet this separation and division of the one mystery lessened the unified view of the eucharist, and sometimes even led to mistaken practices. The liturgical movement of the 20th century tried to correct this somewhat until the Second Vatican Council restored again the unity of the eucharistic mystery.

Centre and Summit of the Celebration

We do not want to analyze here the whole theology of the eucharist, but rather we would like to discuss its liturgical celebration, especially that which we call the central part of the eucharistic mystery: the eucharistic prayer. In the West, this is called the “canon”; in the East it is known as the “anaphora”; recently, we tend to use the ancient expression: eucharistic prayer.

The eucharistic prayer, of course, does not exhaust the whole celebration of the mass because that contains also the liturgy of the word, the preparation of the gifts, the rite of holy communion, and the concluding section, which are all important and integral parts of the mass; yet, the central part is still the canon, which begins with the invitation of the priest, “Lift up your hearts!” and ends with the doxology and the solemn Amen. We would like to talk now about this prayer in the light of more recent theological insights.

This deeper insight into the mystery is important for us because the eucharistic prayer is quasi our daily bread; the Church recites it every day, but we hardly realize in between the extent to which it is filled with the deepest theological content and spiritual food. From the theological viewpoint we should look upon this prayer as one of the most important sources of our theologizing, one that is superseded in importance only by scripture itself. Just as scripture is “the book of the Church,” so the eucharistic prayer is “the prayer of the

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Celebrating and Savouring • Eucharistic Prayer: Summit of the Summit

Church," which the Church produces and adopts as her own, in order to express in it her faith. In this prayer we find the mystery, the eucharistic mystery, which in ancient Christian times was surrounded with secrecy (disciplina arcani); it was not even written down for fear that it may fall into the hands of the enemies of the Church.

Liturgical theology today looks upon this prayer as the one, unified, unique consecratory prayer of the eucharist. This may sound a bit unusual because, according to the essentialist method of scholastic theology, we see the essential consecratory formula in the words of the Lord alone: "This is my body... This is my blood...." Today, however, recalling the first thousand years' practice of the Church, we find that the whole eucharistic prayer is consecratory. There are certain peak moments in the prayer, and it is certain that besides the epiklesis, such a peak moment is the pronunciation of the words of the Lord. But these peak moments cannot be isolated from the context of the whole prayer. It is therefore a unified, priestly prayer, pronounced by the head, the authorized and ordained leader, the priest, who speaks in the name of Christ and "in the person of Christ" the head of the Church.

Origins

The Last Supper

Let us see, first of all, from where this prayer comes. We find its origin, of course, in scripture because our eucharist arises from the Last Supper. The three synoptic gospels and the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians describe what happened in the room of the Last Supper. (But unfortunately this description is rather brief, terse, a compact presentation of the event.) The historical account of the scripture then entered into our eucharistic prayer.

What do these gospel accounts tell us? When the Lord Jesus came together with his disciples to celebrate and eat the traditional paschal meal, he took the bread, said the blessing, broke the bread and distributed it to them with these words: "Take it and it eat it, this is my-body." He did the same with the cup: took it into his hands, said the blessing, and gave it to his disciples to drink with these words: "This is the cup of my blood."

We do not want to analyze these words of the Lord here, though they are theologically very important. We do not want to examine here the meaning of the statement, "This is my body, this is my blood," or how essential, fundamental, and creative these words are. We presuppose here all that the Church teaches in this respect. What we do want to pay attention to, however, is the connection between the scriptural and liturgical texts.

Scripture describes for us the action of the Lord in four parts, out of which then our eucharistic action has developed. And so, the taking of the bread and wine happens during the preparation of the gifts, which is rightly speaking not an offering yet, but merely the preparation of the sacrificial gifts. Then comes the second part or action, the pronouncing of the blessing over the bread and wine. The third action is the breaking of the bread. And finally the fourth action: the distribution of the consecrated bread and drinking from the cup, the holy communion.

"Birkat Ha-Mazon"

Our primary interest at this point is the following question: What was that "blessing" that the Lord Jesus said at the Last Supper? It would be a wrong interpretation of the text if we assumed that the Lord took the bread and the cup, and blessed them in the way we understand that action today. This is wrong because we should not imagine that he blessed the bread and wine with some kind of formula as the priest blesses certain food on Easter Sunday in certain cultural traditions. The right translation is that the Lord said a "blessing prayer" (berakah). It is interesting to find that already in the fourth–fifth century there were some people who gently rebuked the evangelists for their terse account and for not writing more about
what happened at the Last Supper. They were especially interested in the text of that “blessing” that the Lord said over the bread and wine.

The study of this blessing leads liturgical scholars today to the text and structure of the Jewish paschal meal—to a prayer that is still in use today. It is well-known that the Jewish paschal meal consists of four parts and that at the end of each of the four parts the participants drink from the cup. The text speaks therefore of four cups. The first part of the paschal meal ritual contains an introduction and blessing over the different symbolic foods. The second part consists of ritual teaching in which the exodus from Egypt is recited in question and answer form. The third part contains the actual paschal supper when the paschal lamb is eaten. But before participants begin to eat it, they say a short blessing over the unleavened bread. After they finish the lamb, they drink the third cup. At this point—at the third cup—we find a longer prayer of blessing, which they called at the time of Jesus and even now the “grace after meals” or, in Hebrew, “Birkat Ha-Mazon”. Then the fourth part of the paschal meal follows, with thanksgivings and the singing of psalms, which are mentioned also in the biblical account of the night of the Last Supper.

We have to imagine the Last Supper, therefore, in this setting. From here we can understand that when the scripture indicates that the Lord “said the blessing,” it refers to the blessing over the bread, and especially the blessing over the third cup. St. Paul calls this third cup “the cup of blessing” because this blessing was so important and central that it gave the title to the cup that was connected with it. Recent liturgical investigations show that the most ancient eucharistic prayer that we have in written form is that of the East-Syrian liturgy (the “Anaphora of Addai and Mari”), which most probably originates from the second or third century. This prayer corresponds structurally, content-wise, and even in its key-words, with the Jewish text of the “Birkat Ha-Mazon”.

The later eucharistic prayers also manifest the same structure and content.

Berakah
Here we have to remember some important things about the “blessing of God,” the berakah. This is important for a right understanding of the content of the eucharistic prayer. The berakah is the fundamental act of worship and the basic attitude in the Jewish and Christian religions. To bless God means to acknowledge God as the only, omnipotent creator God, and also Father. When a creature accepts this “One God,” the creature says berakah. In this blessing everything is included. First, we include our joy that he is our God and we are his creatures and children, and we depend on our God in every moment of our existence. In this blessing and praise we have also to include the essence of sacrifice, that is, the surrender of ourselves into the hands of God.

This then is how we have to understand the text of the gospel story. When the Lord Jesus at the Last Supper wanted to make present his life-sacrifice, which he offered the next day on the cross, he said a blessing, a berakah in the context of the paschal meal. He praised and blessed God, and with this he perfectly expressed what every human being ought to do by the sheer fact that he or she is a creature. Adam was supposed to do this but did not. Now comes the second Adam, and lo, he blesses God with his whole life, because he accepts completely the creaturely existence of this human nature and his utter dependence on God.

Thanksgiving and Praise
The literary form of the eucharistic prayer is therefore blessing and praise, or berakah. The Greek translation uses two words to express the rich content of the Hebrew berakah: eulogia and eucharistia. These two words mean almost the same, yet there is a slight difference between the two.

Eulogia normally means “to say good about” someone, to praise. We bless God and praise God, because he is, above all, the
creator God who can do whatever he wants. Joyfully we acknowledge God's goodness, greatness, holiness. This is a pure, unselfish blessing and praising of God.

The other word, *eucharista*, is somewhat different because it means "thanksgiving," that is, returning thanks for the gifts that we have received, giving thanks for the great benefits bestowed upon humanity throughout salvation history. Pure praise acknowledges that we are creatures and God is the creator God and Lord above everything, saying in effect, "You created every being, even life itself, and because life is good and beautiful, we bless you and praise you." In thanksgiving, on the other hand, God appears not only as creator God, but also as the God of the covenant, that is the covenant partner, who is walking with us on the way of salvation history. God showers us with his benefits and for this reason we turn to God with gratitude; we give thanks and praise.

We express our blessing and praising of God in words and deeds. We praise God with words when we sing the hymns, chant the psalms, shout the alleluias; we praise with deeds when we bring symbolic gifts in return for God's goodness to us. This latter happens in the form of sacrifices, everyday small-offerings, or with the complete surrender of our life in the moment of our death. This blessing and praising of God is the main content of every celebration. Every liturgical celebration ought to express primarily this inner attitude of the human person.

**Acknowledgement, Confession**

The Hebrew *berakah* has still another translation in Greek: *exomologesis*, which means acknowledgement or confession. We notice that whenever the New Testament quotes the prayer of the Lord Jesus, this word always appears in the beginning. For example: "I acknowledge you and I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the learned and wise..." (Mt 11.25). When Jesus prays before raising Lazarus, he uses this same word (Jn 11.41). The Latin translation of this *exomologesis* is *confessio*, so that the word "confession" comes from *berakah*. Whenever we make a confession, we confess (acknowledge) the true reality—God and our utter dependence on God. This is applicable even to the confession of sins in the sacrament of reconciliation: here too, first of all we confess God's greatness, holiness and especially his kindness and mercy.

**The Content of the "Birkat Ha-Mazon"**

**First Pericope**

Let us take a look now at the content of this *berakah*, in order to learn from it how Jesus prayed, what he prayed at the Last Supper. The original "Birkat Ha-Mazon" is a rather lengthy prayer, which consists of three parts or pericopes. The first pericope begins with the words: "Blessed are you, YHWH, our God, King of the whole universe...." In essence it expresses: "Blessed are you, because you feed the whole world with your goodness. You created this universe and you give bread in your mercy to all living beings, you sustain us in existence by giving us food. You feed all creatures that you have created. And for this we bless you and praise you."

This first pericope therefore is pure praise of the creator God. Its theological content is this: YHWH is the creator who created everything, who produced life itself, who sustains this life by giving us food at all times. Food always directs one's attention to the fact that God sustains the world in being. So this first pericope is called *oratio theologica*, i.e. theological prayer.

**Second Pericope**

The second pericope of the "Birkat Ha-Mazon" contains thanksgiving. It begins, "We give you thanks, YHWH, our God...." It continues along the following lines: "We give you thanks because you promised to our fathers the promised land, led them out of Egypt, introduced them into Canaan; you entered into a covenant with them, you gave them the law to
direct their lives. You give us life, grace, mercy, and you care for us day by day. For all these we thank you and we praise you.”

This second part turns to the God of the covenant, who walks together with the people of Israel during their journey of salvation history and performs magnificent deeds, through which they experience how much God loves them. In the “Birkat Ha-Mazon” the people express gratitude and praise. Here we deal not so much with an unselfish, pure praise, but rather with gratitude for the gifts received. But this too belongs to the concept of berakah.

Third Pericope
The third pericope begins: “Be kind and have mercy on us, YHWH, our God....” It expresses the longings of the people with these sentiments: “Especially be gracious to your people, to your city Jerusalem, and the house of David, your anointed one. Our Father and our God, lead us as a good shepherd and feed us. Come among us, be with us on our way, remember how much you did for our fathers and for us in the past, and do it also in the future. Especially build up Jerusalem, your holy city. For all these once again we bless you and praise you.”

As we can see, this third pericope consists of petitions: the people ask God to be with them in the future as in the past. They ask God to come among them, so that the holy city may be built up.

So the “Birkat Ha-Mazon” consists of three parts: pure praise of God, thanksgiving, and petition for the presence of the Lord now and in the future so that he may gather his people into one and build up Jerusalem. This then is the prayer that the Lord used most probably at the Last Supper, when he instituted the eucharist and gave himself to us under the species of bread and wine. This structure and essential content is present in all the ancient eucharistic prayers.

Of course, the Jewish prayer underwent some stylistic changes when the Lord Jesus recited it, since he called God not “YHWH,” but “Father”; and when he spoke about the building up of Jerusalem, he spoke about the New Jerusalem, which is his Church. There was also a need to supplement the enumeration of God’s magnificent deeds, since beyond the events of the Old Testament, now the greatest benefit of God is Jesus Christ himself and his redemptive life work.

The “Birkat Ha-Mazon” and the Structure of the Eucharistic Prayers
Let us now see how we can find the structure and content of the “Birkat Ha-Mazon” in the eucharistic prayers that we know. We do not suggest taking the First Eucharistic Prayer, or Roman Canon, which has such a great authority and tradition in the Western Church, as an example because its structure, for various reasons, has been disturbed (although even the present form has its own meaning and reason, why and how it was changed). The best example however is the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer, which we propose to follow now in our reflection.

First Pericope
The first part of the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer corresponds precisely to the first pericope of the “Birkat Ha-Mazon”: pure praise of the creator God. This part concludes with the Sanctus. Let us take a look at the text: “Father in heaven, it is right that we should give you thanks and glory: you are the one God, living and true.” Mark the words: “thanks” and “glory,” the vocabulary of berakah. We call God “Father in heaven,” or Holy Father, where “holy” means the sovereign, transcendent God, who at the same time is also our Father. “You are the one God.” This parallels the Jewish profession of faith, the shema: “YHWH is our God, the only God, the true and living God.”

Then we hear the properties of this mighty God: exists from eternity, remains forever, incomprehensible, absolutely unapproachable. But at the same time this is the creator God, the source of all life, and
everything comes from him. God made everything in order to let us creatures partake in the divine holiness, in the divine life, the radiation of which is the light of glory. God made us in order “to fill [all] creatures with every blessing and lead all men to the joyful vision of [God’s] light.” And for this, “the countless host of angels stand before [God] ... night and day,” and “united with them, and in the name of every creature under heaven, we too praise [God’s] glory.”

We therefore sing together the Sanctus, which expresses precisely this profession of faith, in essence expressing: “Holy, Holy, Holy are you, eternal God; heaven and earth, the angels and the whole creation blesses you and praises you.” The first part of our eucharistic prayer is therefore the acknowledgement of the Holy God, just as we find in the first pericope of the “Birkat Ha-Mazon”.

Second Pericope
The second pericope of the Jewish prayer is thanksgiving. It enumerates the great benefits that God has showered upon us through salvation history. The second part of the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer also begins in this way: “We acknowledge (exomologoumai) your greatness.” The Latin text says confitemur, which is again the translation of berakah. We further acknowledge God’s greatness: “All your actions show your wisdom and love.”

Then follows a list of historical events, God’s magnificent deeds among and with us. The prayer leads us beautifully through the Old Testament: “You formed man in your own likeness and set him over the whole world to serve you, his creator, and to rule over all creatures. Even when he disobeyed you and lost your friendship... [You] helped all men to seek and find you... Again and again you offered a covenant to man ... and through the prophets taught him ...”

Then we hear the wonderful deeds of the New Testament: “You so loved the world that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior....” The greatest gift of God to us is the incarnation, the person of Jesus Christ, the Christ-event. God has come among us, became like us, and brought us the good news. The good news of the evangelium is summed up here in the text: how Christ healed the sick, how he brought us freedom, how he consoled everyone.

After the historical enumeration we arrive at the main event of the life of Christ, when he put the crown upon his life with his death on the cross, and doing the Father’s will, he surrendered himself with loving obedience to the Father. The paschal mystery is presented here, because “by rising from the dead, he destroyed death and restored life.”

The second part of this eucharistic prayer is therefore thanksgiving for the great benefits, just as in the Jewish prayer, but the Christian prayer includes the Christ-event, the paschal mystery. We call therefore this part “Christological prayer,” through which we arrive at the paschal mystery.

First Christian Insertion: Institution Narrative
At this point something interesting happens. When in the historical account we arrive at the event of Christ’s death on the cross, the Christian tradition inserts into the Jewish prayer structure a special text. This insertion is called an “embolism,” that is, a text that was not in the original text, but became part of it by addition from outside. This is nothing other than the gospel account of the Last Supper. As we have seen before, this account is concrete, brief, terse and precise. This text came to be inserted into the structure of the “Birkat Ha-Mazon” at that point, when the death of Christ is mentioned: “When the time came for him to be glorified ... he took bread....”

Second Christian Insertion: Anamnesis
We notice that not only the account of
the Last Supper is inserted into the structure of the “Birkat Ha-Mazon”; but we also notice something quite significant: the anamnesis. The scriptural text ends with the commandment of the Lord: “Do this in memory of me!” The account is followed by the very commandment by which the Lord institutes the celebration of the eucharist until the end of time. The commandment includes the words anamnesis, memoria, solemn remembrance. This needs some explanation, because unfortunately the Greek, the Latin, and also the English translation indicate merely an intellectual act, that is, remembering something that happened in the past.

The original Hebrew work is zikkaron, which means much more. Its real meaning can be seen again in the Jewish liturgy. In the liturgy of the Jewish paschal meal is a text that reminds the members of the Jewish family who eat the paschal supper, “Keep in mind that when you now remember the exodus from Egypt, when you eat the paschal lamb in memory of being freed from slavery, then you must know that not only your ancestors have been freed from the slavery of Egypt, but be aware that you yourself and everyone partaking in this ritual are freed from slavery and are being led to the God-given freedom.” This is the real meaning of the anamnesis.

Jesus Christ referred to this when he said to his disciples: “Do this in memory of me!” Celebrate this symbolic meal with bread and wine; celebrate it as his memorial-feast. That is, he wanted to say, we should not just remember his death on the cross and his resurrection 2000 years ago, but all of us who participate in this memorial feast should get involved in this event, which happened in the past, yet now becomes present to us. Therefore, we ought to become active, dynamic participants of the paschal mystery, the paschal transformation: the transition from death to life. The anamnesis therefore is an invitation to this active, intimate participation by all who take part in the celebration.

Anamnesis as Participation
We have to point out still another thing in this connection. When the Aramaic text was translated into Greek for the sake of the Christians in Antioch, the Hebrew and Aramaic zikkaron became anamnesis. The Greek word means simply to remember some past event; it did not have the rich meaning of the Hebrew. Therefore when the Church wanted to say that we obey the Lord’s commandment and consequently celebrate his memorial (anamnesis), they added always the word anaphora, which means offering or sacrifice in Greek. Thus in the Greek texts and its translations up to our day, the remembrance is always connected and complemented with the word of offering, surrender and sacrifice.

In the text of the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer, after the institution narrative and commandment, we find the acclamation by the people, which clearly states that we proclaim the death and resurrection of the Lord until he comes again. The text of the anamnesis follows immediately: “We now celebrate this memorial of our redemption. We recall Christ’s death ....” The remembering is an intellectual act, but at the same time, we also celebrate actively. Internally and externally we participate in that action that precisely through the anamnesis will become present: the paschal mystery of Christ, his self-surrender and resurrection. The text of the anamnesis expresses that here truly we deal with offertory, oblation, offering, self-surrender within the eucharistic sacrifice. Consequently, the remembrance is not merely an intellectual act, but a deep, inner act of which we are active participants.

In the middle ages, the eucharistic prayer was called actio (actio Missae). Why? Because we do not just listen to the mass but we must become actively involved in the paschal transformation of Christ. We have been invited to this through our baptism and we commit ourselves to do this: to live and die with Christ so that we may live with him forever.
The text of the anamnesis mentions in detail this paschal mystery: "Christ's death, his descent among the dead, his resurrection, and his ascension." We mention even his glorious return because that too becomes mysteriously present at this time. In this way we offer sacrificially the eucharist that Christ has offered once and for all on the cross, and that now becomes present for us, so that we all may join him, may surrender ourselves to the Father and in Christ we may make our existential sacrifice. The eucharistic commandment says, "Do this in memory of me!" But St. Paul adds: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor 11.26). This already points to the future. We celebrate the eucharist on one hand as a profession of faith in the paschal mystery of Christ; on the other hand, we proffer it before the Father as a supplication, insistently begging and waiting for the glorious coming of the Lord. Thus, through the celebration of the eucharist we keep alive the expectation of this coming of the Lord, as it was expressed also in the ancient Christian acclamation: "Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus!"

Third Pericope

The third pericope of the "Birkat Ha-Mazon" is petition for the coming of God among the people and for his continued presence among them. In the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer, this is how it sounds: "Lord, look upon this sacrifice..." i.e. look upon us and accept in your fatherly love this sacrifice. Then we ask for the sending of the Spirit as a sign of God's acceptance: "and by your Holy Spirit, gather all who share this one bread and one cup into the one body of Christ, a living sacrifice of praise." This is the epiklesis. It begins by asking the Father to send the Holy Spirit upon us to penetrate everything, especially the sacrificial gifts, the bread and wine, and to change them into the body and blood of Christ; this is one of the aims of the Holy Spirit's coming, which the newer eucharistic prayers usually express in the epiklesis that comes before the narrative of the institution.

The second epiklesis then begs the Father that we who receive the body and blood of Christ, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, may be transformed into the mystical body of Christ, i.e. that the Holy Spirit may make us, separate individuals, into the one body of Christ, which is the Church. In other words, we expect that through the mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit, first the bread and wine, then the gathered people, may be transformed into the body of Christ.

The Jewish prayer asks God to be with the people, to come among them, to help them and to build up Jerusalem, the holy city. The eucharistic action reaches its fruit and goal when it arrives at the building up of the ecclesial communion.

The eucharistic prayer then further develops this idea and draws in the whole Church. We remember all those with whom and for whom we offer this sacrifice: the pope, our bishops, priests, the whole people of God, and all those who seek God with a sincere heart. The whole earthly Church is present here, in union with the bishop of Rome and the local bishop.

Then we pray for and with those who have died in the peace of Christ: here appears the suffering Church. Finally we remember the victorious Church: the Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the apostles and other saints. We express in this way that the saints in heaven also take part in this eucharistic action and communion; so our attention is directed now towards heaven. This is the goal of our life and also of our eucharistic action: that one day we may arrive where together with the saints and the whole creation, we may glorify, praise and bless God.

At the end of the eucharistic prayer, we then bless God with the doxology: glory and praise to the Almighty Father, through Jesus Christ, in union with Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. To this final berakah then thunders the response of the created world: Amen!
Transformation through Active Engagement in the Liturgy

We must look upon the mass, therefore, as an action, as an intensive activity. It is not enough just to "hear" the mass or "say" the mass. We must get involved in it—actively involved. For this to happen, it is necessary to explore and make our own the inner attitude that is expressed in the texts. It is important to bring our whole selves and to include our previous spiritual experiences in our celebration of the mass and there, through the words and sacramental actions, express all that is in our hearts. We should bring to the mass the fruit of our daily prayer life, our private prayers, devotions, liturgical prayers, meditations, etc., because they are joined to the great, transformative action of Christ. In this way, the eucharistic prayer will become the compendium of our whole spiritual life.

Praising
First, one praises, glorifies, blesses God. But one can bless God only if one loves life, loves the creator, and even loves one's utter dependence on the creator—which is not easy, especially when beset with troubles. To acknowledge the greatness and goodness of God, and at the same time to make the basic sacrifice of one's life in these occasions requires quite a bit of spiritual strength.

Thanking
The same can be said about thanksgiving. Each person ought to bring to the mass all that has happened during the course of his or her own salvation history. One's private life, family, and nation all have their own salvation history in which God leads, often on crooked paths, but always with fatherly care. Having made such an historical recollection of one's past life, one would be able to discover God's marvelous deeds. Everything that happens in the spiritual life—the events of the past day or week, its sorrows and joys—one ought to bring into the mass and give thanks for them all.

Neither should we forget the material creation, the cosmos. In the Oriental liturgy this is much more prevalent. It is interesting to note that in the Western church, we are so much awed by the fact of redemption that we almost forget about the fact of creation, about its rich variety of gifts. Yet, redemption cannot be considered independently from creation. Sunday is not only the celebration of the resurrection, but also of creation. This, of course, presupposes that we accept the beauty and goodness of creation and that we can rejoice in it.

Interceding
At the same time, the mass widens our horizon, and does not allow us to withdraw into our individual sorrows and woes, but shares those of others, and so it makes us truly "catholics," i.e., having universal interests not just our own. Here the whole Church prays and celebrates; here we deal with the interests and needs of the whole Church. Our Christian life opens up in time and space. This broader, catholic aspect of the mass is served also by the feasts of the saints, when we realize our solidarity with the great figures of our Christian past and also the great multitude of Christians in the celebration of the eucharist.

Longing
The basic attitude of active participation in the mass demands also that we take the threefold salvation historical dimension of the liturgical signs and symbols (past, present, future) seriously. The divine action of the past becomes present in the present time, so that we may here and now enjoy it; and it points also to the future, where we long to go. We ought to include this longing in the mass, just as the early Christians did when they insistently asked for the coming of the Lord in their acclamation: Maranatha! "Come Lord Jesus!"

Begging
In the eucharist there is place also for the begging attitude of the Christian faithful,
especially when we feel the weakness of the creaturely and sinful self. We realize that we are unable to stand on our feet alone and that we are unable to live without the helping presence of God. Therefore, we beg and entreat God to be with us on our pilgrim way in every moment.

Dining

The eucharistic celebration, the mass, is also a meal, an agape, a sacrificial meal, full of sobriety and dignity. The symbolism of meal here serves precisely to make us aware of our union of love with Christ and with one another, so that it may produce that unity, communion, koinonia, which is the Church. In this joyful meal we may receive the bread of life every day. The primitive Church called this daily communion "viaticum" because it was truly a food for the journey of the pilgrims. This is clearly in opposition to that Jansenist opinion, according to which only the truly holy people may receive communion. This is not the right Christian attitude. The eucharist was given by the Lord to us fallible sinners to give us strength for our daily life.

Conclusion

This is, therefore, the theological and spiritual content of the eucharistic prayer and the eucharistic action. We find in it our entire Christian theology and spirituality. But we should not forget that the eucharistic prayer first of all is action, dynamic activity. If we pray it sincerely, if behind the words there is our whole life, then this half-hour or hour-long celebration truly would exhaust our spiritual energy. Yet, we find here the source of our Christian life and its summit; here we truly enter into the life of God.

Congratulations Archbishop Hayes

On Monday, June 19, 2000, Archbishop James Hayes was one of four recipients of the Liturgy Network's "Spirit and Truth" awards presented at the opening of the Pastoral Liturgy Conference of the Center for Pastoral Liturgy, University of Notre Dame. This is the second year in which the Center has recognized Network members, nominated from within the Network, whose work stands as a testimony to those "unsung efforts" needed to bring worship to life. The citation accompanying the award reads:

"For thirty-four years, Archbishop James Martin Hayes (emeritus) has nurtured the priestly action of the body of Christ in tireless collaboration with men and women of the local church and the Canadian church. He has taught us all across our land, and established a tradition for all who follow. It is [for] this work of shaping a priestly people ... that we nominate him..." wrote [the Canadian members of the Liturgy Network of the Center for Pastoral Liturgy, University of Notre Dame.] As parish priest, chancellor, bishop, and now hospital chaplain, Archbishop Hayes has seen with a penetrating vision and the eyes of the heart the beauty and power of the liturgy to touch and to transform the people of God. Archbishop Hayes' credentials are impressive—a doctorate in Canon Law form the Angelicum, participation in Vatican Council II, member of the Canadian Bishops committee in the Liturgy (with two terms as president), Canada's representative to the Episcopal Board of ICEL, member of Societas Liturgica, the North American Academy of Liturgy, and our own Liturgy Network! He bears these distinctions with humility and grace.
The Pastoral Situation
In some parts of Canada, the experience of Sunday celebrations of the word now spans a whole generation. Of course, that experience is not uniform across the country. It has predominated in the rural areas rather than the urban centres; it is far widespread, and has a longer history, in the west, the east and the north, than it has had in south-central Canada. While it is usually attributed to the shortage of priests, this is not entirely true.

What has happened in Canada was the convergence of the decline in the number of priests that began in the 1960s with the decline also of the small rural community. While churchgoers are at least generally aware of the decline in numbers of the clergy, and the overall growth of the Canadian population, few recognize the degree to which urbanization has created an additional problem.

To appreciate why there has been a growing need for Sunday celebrations of the word, it is worthwhile considering a few demographic facts. Overall there has been a significant shift in Canada to the cities. In 1951, 62% of the population lived in cities; in 1996, that figure had increased to 78%. However, this was not an even movement across the country. It bypassed Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick was little affected by it. Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba and British Columbia were also below the national average of 16% in this regard. By far the greatest changes took place in the west and in the territories, with major change also on Prince Edward Island (and probably Newfoundland also, although for there historical figures are not available). In the 1951–1996 period, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and the Yukon all had population shifts from rural to urban areas of over 30%, for example. Moreover, despite the population boom in that period, the rural populations of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (and likely Newfoundland also) actually decreased in absolute terms, the first by over 200,000.¹

These population shifts have had, and will likely continue to have, a great impact on pastoral planning. Yet they often go unrecognized. The sad fact is that while the rural communities have not disappeared, they have become much smaller and their population older. The cities, on the other hand, where populations are generally younger and more diverse in ethnic and socio-economic terms, continue to make growing demands on the fewer Canadian clergy.

Regional distinctions often contribute to differences of perception, even among Canadian Catholics. In parts of the west, the east, and the north, Sunday celebrations of the word can be regarded as

¹ In 1951 the rural population of Saskatchewan was 579,258; in 1996 it was only 363,059, a difference of 216,199. For the same years, the Manitoba figures are 336,931 and 313,835 respectively. Source: Statistics Canada.
Celebrating and Savouring • Sunday Celebrations of the Word

commonplace, normal and even traditional. In many areas of the country these are becoming a regular part of the lived experience of being a Catholic. On the other hand, people in south central Canada who have nothing in their experience that would allow them to appreciate the real need for such celebrations can regard them as something novel, certainly uncalled for in a developed country like Canada, and even “un-Catholic.” Sometimes one even encounters just the opposite reaction (although it too comes from a failure to appreciate the circumstances): a practice that is clearly not ideal, but that can be justified in the north (because of a genuine need that cannot be met otherwise) is imported into the south for reasons of convenience or perhaps just because the “new” becomes attractive.

Even a cursory reading of the raw statistics indicates that in many smaller communities Sunday liturgical celebrations without a priest are likely to be a factor for some time to come. Clearly in those areas most affected this constitutes a major pastoral challenge that is not likely to disappear quickly. The pace of urbanization shows no signs of slowing; in some areas it may still be accelerating. (In this diocese, for example, the average rural community lost 10% or more of its people between 1991 and 1996 alone—before the full impact of the Newfoundland fishery crisis!) Further, the incidence of Sundays without the eucharist in rural areas would probably outlast any resurgence in vocations to the priesthood, at least with the current models of priestly ministry and parish organization. Community size, financial viability, and distances would remain major factors. Indeed, for many remote areas of Canada, Sundays without a priest are not a new phenomenon but an historical one. Long before the present generation of Sunday celebrations of the word was conceived, numerous Catholic communities in Canada celebrated the eucharist only monthly or even quarterly. In the intervals, they gathered on Sundays using their own forms of common prayer.

Recent Happenings

While this is by no means an entirely new situation, then, four things have changed. First, of course, the shortage of priests and the demographic decline of the rural parish have led to a dramatic increase in the frequency of Sunday worship when no priest can be present. A crucial second factor was that for the first time in its history the universal Church effectively institutionalized this development. Several documents were central to this process. The practice seems first to have been given recognition in the liturgy constitution of Vatican II. Three later documents—paragraph 37 of the instruction Inter Oecumenici (1964), Canon 1248 of the Code of Canon Law (1983) and the Directory of Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship in 1988—codified this recognition. Locally, various diocesan,
regional and national initiatives implemented these general provisions. A third consideration, related to the second, was that the form of such Sunday worship has taken on the fixed character of a liturgical celebration of the word; this was suggested by Vatican II, outlined in *Inter Oecumenici*, "strongly recommended" by Canon 1248, and provided for in the Directory. Finally, the ritual provision, confirmed by the papal instruction *Immensae caritatis* of 1973, allowing the laity to distribute communion in various circumstances apart from the celebration of mass, meant that communion can take place in such circumstances on a regular basis even when the eucharist is not celebrated. This has had the significant effect of making such celebrations far more acceptable to parishioners, especially in light of the fact that the worshipping populations of the communities in which they take place are often older than average.

We now have had a relatively long-term experience of Sunday worship without a priest in many parts of this country. Perhaps we also have at this point the opportunity to assess this experience more fully, to examine the issues it raises, and to understand better its implications for the Church in future years.

Sunday celebrations of the word cannot be viewed in isolation. Taken together (and supported by improved transportation), three relatively recent changes in Church discipline have had an important and positive pastoral effect on the Sunday worship of rural Canada. The first change was the mitigation of the eucharistic fast, since this allowed the priest, in practical terms, to celebrate the Sunday eucharist in places much farther apart, and over a longer time period. Secondly, the provisions allowing for Sunday evening mass and anticipated Sunday mass on Saturday evening, combined with the more extensive concessions for bination and trination that gave these provisions practical application, had a similar, though perhaps an even greater, effect. These first changes allowed the more frequent and regular provision of Sunday eucharist in smaller communities. They were quickly followed by the institutionalization of Sunday worship without a priest. This last change promoted the common Sunday worship of the community when the eucharist could be celebrated. Together all these changes gave a different face to the liturgical celebration of Sunday in larger areas of this country and underlined the centrality of Sunday to Christian life. Even beyond their implications for Sunday worship, they had the wider effect of maintaining and building up parish life in rural areas. Indeed, it is difficult to envisage just what would have happened to the religious life

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7 *Documents on the Liturgy*, 2074–2081.

8 Pius XII, *Christus Dominus*, January 6, 1953, and *Sacram communionem*, March 19, 1957.

9 Anticipated Sunday eucharist on Saturday evening occurred by means of an indult given in individual cases to specific countries. It is "rather uncommon and remains an exception to the general law according to which the discipline of the Church stays unchanged; ever since the apostolic age the Church has regarded Sunday to be the Lord's Day." One of the reasons given for this concession, already in 1964, was "the regrettable shortage of clergy." *La Civiltà cattolica*, 115, 3 (1964) cited in *Documents on the Liturgy*, 3829, R1. The general permission to bishops to allow bination and trination for genuine pastoral needs was given by *Pastorale munus*, November 30, 1963. See *Documents on the Liturgy*, 713.

10 In Canada, the first formal recognition of this seems to have been in the *National Bulletin on Liturgy*, no. 51 (November–December, 1973), pp. 310–311, where, in response to a question posed by a priest regarding a remote community in his parish, the use in such circumstances of a bible service presided over by a sister was approved and encouraged, and an outline was provided. It was suggested, for harmony with the universal Church and for reasons of familiarity, that "it would seem best to have it follow the Mass as closely as possible," although it is made clear that "in no way should the leader try to imitate the eucharistic prayer." Six years later, a further National Bulletin was entirely devoted to this topic, with a full order of service. *National Bulletin on Liturgy*, no. 79 (May–June, 1981).
of many small Canadian communities had these changes not occurred.

**Gains**

Even as we accept that Sunday liturgies celebrated when the eucharist cannot take place are never the ideal, we must recognize their positive effects. One has to acknowledge that they maintain and build up the community as the body of Christ and that they encourage the development of the co-responsibility of the laity for the things of the Church. They contribute to the formation of the laity, and to their active participation in a variety of ministries and services, some of which go beyond the Sunday assembly. They enrich the prayer life of the community, and they bring to the gathered assembly the presence of Christ speaking through the word. In fact, by gathering to hear and reflect upon the same word of God that is proclaimed universally, the community renews its own communion in Christ, is connected to the larger parish and diocesan community, and is united to the Church throughout the world. Even more to the point, a community unable to celebrate the eucharist is still enabled, as part of the body of the risen Christ, to gather in the Spirit to offer its own Sunday worship and praise to God.

**Questions**

**Assessing the Community’s Need**

Of the questions that arise with regard to Sunday celebrations of the word perhaps the most general is when they should take place and when should they not. Because of the enormous variety of situations the answer to this question may not always be clear-cut. For this reason, both the *Code of Canon Law* and the *Directory* recognize the clear and broad authority of the local diocesan bishop to regulate this matter, and to decide in just what circumstances Sunday celebrations without a priest should take place. However the operative principle is both simple and very clear: Sunday celebrations of the word can, and should, take place in any case where for a group of the faithful “participation in the celebration of the Eucharist is impossible” (Canon 1248 §2). As the *Directory* points out, and as the Holy Father’s more recent letter on the Lord’s Day eloquently re-states, “the Sunday celebration of the Lord’s Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church’s life.” The Sunday celebration of the word is never an *alternative*, in any real sense of that word, to the Sunday eucharist. The former should take place only in circumstances where for good reasons the eucharist cannot be celebrated, thus rendering impossible the participation of the faithful. Because particular situations can be very complex, the Church regards the bishop’s judgment in this matter as both necessary and decisive.

However while the principle here is quite simple and straightforward, the reasons that might give rise to the bishop’s judgment that such a situation genuinely exists can cover a wide range of circumstances.

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11  See Canon 1248 §2; *Directory*, 24.
12  See also *Directory*, 2–7, 18.
13  *Dies Domini*, 32; see also *Directory*, 1, 18, and 25. The Holy Father says that Sunday celebrations of the word should take place “in situations where the Eucharist cannot be celebrated.” *Dies Domini*, no. 53.
14  Without here entering into what must needs be a prolonged discussion on the obligation of Catholics “to participate in the Mass” on Sundays and holydays, it must be noted that the matter of the Sunday obligation and that of the bishop’s decision to provide Sunday celebrations where the eucharist cannot be celebrated, although related to one another, are distinct issues. The Sunday obligation is personal, and binds unless individuals are excused from it by “serious reason or dispensed by their pastor.” (Traditional considerations have included illness, age, child-care, work, and distance.) On this matter see Canon 1247 and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Ottawa, CCCB, 1994), nos. 2180 and 2181. The bishop’s decision to authorize Sunday celebrations of the word is to be made on the basis of a pastoral judgment that it is not possible, practically speaking, for a particular group or groups of the
The degree to which a community is isolated is an obvious consideration, along with the difficulty of transportation, and economic considerations such as whether people have their own vehicles and what are the costs involved. In Canada, weather and road conditions (and sometimes even the thickness of ice cover) can be real factors. So too can entirely different things like the general age and health of the group in question. The physical impossibility of people being able to get to mass nearby is clearly a valid reason, as for example in the case of prisoners, the hospitalized, and members of the armed forces who must remain on base. Language might also be a consideration in some circumstances. So must be the temporary absence of the clergy because of illness, vacation, or other good reasons. But almost none of these criteria is absolute, and usually they must be carefully weighed in combination with one another. What is called for here is a genuinely pastoral and prudent judgment that recognizes the real situations where people cannot, in practical terms, participate in the Sunday eucharist, while never detracting from the ideal that participation in the Sunday eucharist is central to the life of the Catholic Church and its members.

Urban Areas

It should be noted that while for obvious reasons the celebration of Sunday liturgies of the word most often will be justified in rural areas involving large distances and scattered populations, there are situations where such celebrations can be warranted, even in the urban core. Prisons, hospitals, nursing homes, and senior citizens complexes are cases in point. If a significant group of people genuinely cannot get out to take part in the eucharist, and it is impossible for priests to celebrate Sunday eucharist in these institutions, then the circumstances for Sunday celebrations of the word would clearly seem to exist. The case for their approval in such instances would not be diminished in the least by the fact, for example, that they had mass on a weekday, or by the fact that a communion minister brought communion on Sundays to the individuals in such situations. Even when there are other types of liturgical celebrations on weekdays, people still have a right and a duty to take part in Sunday worship and to hear proclaimed in their midst each Sunday the word of God that is proclaimed elsewhere. Moreover, when communion is distributed apart from mass, it is the Church’s clear preference, especially on Sunday, that the faithful be gathered in groups in which they can be nurtured by the riches of the Sunday scriptures. Where possible, communion of the sick and others in similar circumstances will most fittingly take place within this context.

On the other hand, the indiscriminate use of Sunday celebrations of the word in situations for which they are clearly not intended is a real disservice to the Church. Their use, for example, when a priest in an urban or suburban context is on holidays must be carefully considered. In drawing faithful to take part in the Sunday eucharist. (Directory, 24.) To cite an extreme but clear example, the bishop’s decision to authorize the regular Sunday celebration of the word for the patients confined to a hospital is not of itself the removal of the Sunday obligation to participate in the eucharist for the personnel who work there, even if by virtue of their duties they were to take part in the Sunday celebration of the word. The fact that they must work a twelve-hour shift that prevents them from participating in any local mass, however, could clearly constitute matter for a “serious reason”. At the same time the bishop’s judgment that it is a practical impossibility for a group of the faithful to participate in the Sunday eucharist should afford the comfort of conscience some people need when they cannot realistically participate in the mass. Basically each of these matters must be treated on its own merits.

15 Directory, 19-20; see also Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum (Ottawa, CCCB, 1983), 72, 73, 78.

16 Obviously a whole different set of considerations would apply where, for a good reason, a number of priests in an area were absent from their parishes simultaneously.
up a policy to address this situation, the bishop will certainly want to examine a whole range of facts, such as the time period involved, the possibility of clerical supply, distance, transportation, the age, economic circumstances, mobility and language of the community, the availability and times of mass elsewhere, and the capacity of other churches to accommodate larger numbers. But while all of these factors may need to be taken into account and weighed carefully, the automatic use of Sunday celebrations of the word when a priest is absent from an urban parish would hardly seem to be justified.

It is sometimes said that the parish community should be kept together as a Sunday worshipping community. This is clearly true, and obviously an important value, but it is rarely likely to be an absolute. It must be weighed against the equally clear, and even more important, value of the centrality of the Sunday eucharist for the life of the Church. It certainly is far less than absolute when many members of the same parish may already be very mobile in their choice of masses. Given the current shortage of priests for supply, however, reciprocal arrangements among a cluster of parishes, with parishioners of a particular parish being formally hosted and welcomed by a neighbouring parish while their own pastor is unavoidably absent, may be a good solution in many situations. Ideally they would be able to return the same hospitality during the absence of the priest from a neighbouring parish. With some real preparation, and provided that things like distance, transportation, language, and space are not major problems, such arrangements can have the very positive effect of building communion and reducing unacceptable rivalries.

**Weekdays**

Whatever may be the considerations relative to Sunday worship, nothing in the relevant documents justifies applying to weekdays the liturgical provisions regarding the absence of a priest on Sunday. This would be the case for urban and rural areas equally. The *Directory*, for example, quite clearly envisages only the situation of Sunday, where people would otherwise be deprived of the opportunity to celebrate the Lord's Day liturgically. The *Directory*'s provisions for Sunday are based on the assumption of a real and serious need, not on convenience. Again it must be said that what is of paramount importance here is that the celebration of the word is not presented, or does not come to be regarded, as an *alternative* to the eucharist. On weekdays in urban areas, daily mass is usually readily available in nearby parishes. If it is not, or if for any reason there is a need to provide a liturgical service on weekdays, morning or evening prayer will always be fitting, whether the situation is urban or rural. Indeed, the daily parish liturgy of the hours is fully appropriate even when the eucharist is celebrated.

**Communion**

A further general question often arising from the more widespread use of Sunday celebrations of the word concerns the distribution of communion. Indeed, this has been a matter of much debate. Neither the Liturgy Constitution of Vatican II nor the Code of Canon Law makes reference to communion, but only to liturgies of the word. The *Instruction Inter Oecumenici* in 1964 outlined an order of service that clearly did not include communion. Nevertheless, the *Directory* of 1988 encouraged it. The Canadian ritual book makes provision for communion, while

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19 *Documents on the Liturgy*, 329.
20 *Directory*, 20.
rightly not including it as an essential part of the service. Nevertheless, at least in places where Sunday celebrations of the word take place regularly, the sensus fidelium seems to demand communion. There are good reasons for this. First of all, of course, communion provides a sense of “familiarity,” especially for the many older Catholics who often form a significant portion of the congregation in rural areas. Second, it provides a link to the Catholic eucharistic tradition and to the Sunday eucharist celebrated elsewhere throughout the world. And finally, it comes from a strong sense that Catholics in areas where the eucharist cannot be celebrated are no less deprived of communion through no fault of their own than are their fellow Catholics confined to hospitals, nursing homes and other similar situations.

Certainly, communion can be both a legitimate and proper component of such Sunday worship. If people question its place, presumably they do so because of its effects on the long-term perception of such services when communion is an integral part of them. In other words, will the regular provision of communion as part of the liturgies of the word—initially proposed by the Council and by Canon Law without mention of communion—effectively create, over time, an alternative to the Sunday eucharist? To ask this question is really to recognize the centrality of communion to the Catholic tradition and to the Catholic psyche. In other words, is communion being used to fabricate a novel kind of Catholicism that finds its strength apart from the eucharist?

While to raise this question is clearly reasonable—indeed, it is something those responsible for the sacramental discipline of the Church must evaluate over time—to raise it in such a way as to challenge the deep and valid convictions of those in the pews will certainly be unproductive. What may be more fruitful would be to seek to deepen their understanding of eucharistic communion. For in the truest sense there is never communion “outside mass” or “apart from mass.” Indeed, this is recognized in the very decree approving the Church’s document entitled Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass. Unfortunately we simply lack other language. However ultimately these commonly used terms are misleading. Eucharistic communion is always and inextricably linked to the eucharistic sacrifice. Of course it is about receiving the Lord Jesus Christ, but it is also about being received by him, made one with him and being given a part in that great paschal action by which he is raised from death to new life. Communion is about “epiclesis”: the Holy Spirit has been invoked upon those who share the sacramental body of the Lord to transform them into the one body of Christ, and to bring them into communion with one another. Communion is about our communion with our God; for even here on earth sacramental communion brings us into the divine life itself. Thus communion can never be static or passive. It is always a participation in the eucharistic sacrifice, in the pasch of our salvation, it is always another mighty deed of God on our behalf, and it is always our own surrender to God and to others in Jesus Christ. To share communion is to enter into and to be linked to the celebration of the eucharist. In that sense, the communion rite, whenever it takes place, is always the extension of the communion rite of the eucharist itself.

21 Eucharistiae Sacramentum (“Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass”), June 21, 1973. The second paragraph of the decree of approval reads: “The celebration of the eucharist in the sacrifice of the Mass is the true origin and purpose of the worship shown to the eucharist outside Mass. The principal reason for reserving the sacrament after Mass is to unite, through sacramental communion, the faithful unable to participate in the Mass, especially the sick and the aged, with Christ and the offering of his sacrifice.” The Rites of the Catholic Church as Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and Published by the Authority of Pope Paul VI (2 vols.; New York, Pueblo, 1976), I, p. 453.
Celebrating and Savouring • Sunday Celebrations of the Word

It is notable that today many parishes explicitly indicate in some fashion that ministers are taking communion to the sick and shut-ins to enable them to share in the eucharistic sacrifice. The converse of this is precisely the sense that must be developed when people participate in communion during a Sunday celebration of the word. They should understand that their act of communion is not just the receiving of something, even something so important as the body of Christ, but it is an action that links them to the table of the Lord and to the great saving action of Jesus Christ celebrated and made present in the eucharist. Actually, it is encouraging to see that many communities who frequently have Sunday celebrations of the word take real care when they celebrate of the eucharist to emphasize those elements of the communion rite that most convey its inherent connection to the eucharistic sacrifice: communion under both forms; a proper celebration of the breaking of the bread; the use, as the Church prescribes, only of the sacred species consecrated at that celebration.

Awareness of the connection between communion at a Sunday celebration of the word and participation in the eucharistic action is clearly something to be fostered. So too is whatever creates a yearning for the celebration of the Sunday eucharist. In more general terms, it will be always helpful to emphasize the connection between this celebration, this community, and the Sunday eucharistic worship of the whole Church. Initially some people feared that Sunday celebrations of the word might come to be mistaken for a eucharist with a lay presider. It is true that there were occasional references to “Sister’s mass,” and perhaps in the early years prayers were sometimes used that were difficult to distinguish from the eucharistic prayers of the missal. Today, especially with the evolution of the ritual forms, there is little danger of this. If anything, it seems that parishioners are able to make a very clear distinction between the two. Indeed, the most common complaint is that parishioners who feel less bound by the general precept to keep holy the Lord’s Day than by the legal obligation to take part in the mass, do not attend Sunday worship in their communities when the eucharist is not celebrated.

Long Term Effects

If there is a problem in this regard today it may be that communities who over the long term can celebrate the eucharist only occasionally and for whom the Sunday celebration of the word is the norm and not the exception will come to view the latter as “normal.” A related difficulty may have to do with the all-too-ready use of such services as an alternative to mass, sometimes in circumstances far removed from those intended in the Church’s documents.22 In a less than happy turn of phrase, the Directory says at one point: “it is imperative that the faithful be taught to see the substitutional character of these celebrations.”23 The context indicates, however, that it is precisely the opposite that the Directory intends. It wants Catholics to know that such services, although they meet a real pastoral need in some circumstances, are never a substitute for the eucharist. Despite the best of catechesis, however, regular practice may give a different message.

Sunday celebrations of the word can never be the ideal. Provided that major concerns are adequately addressed, however, they should continue to fill a real pastoral need in a positive way. In Canada at least, the need for them is historical. In some areas at least, it goes back for centuries, antedating the current priest shortage. To change that traditional situation would probably involve significant changes in the way...

22 They “should not be regarded as the optimal solution to new difficulties nor as a surrender to mere convenience.” Directory, 21.

23 Ibid.
priests are provided for small and isolated rural communities, if not in the discipline of the Church. The absence of a priest and the need for Sunday worship in that situation is nothing new to rural Canada. What is new is that the traditional need is now being met in an untraditional way: by providing for the community's celebration of Sunday using a liturgy other than the Sunday eucharist. In a relatively short period Sunday celebrations of the word have met with general acceptance, and they have been productive of real good. But they are likely to be with us for some time to come, and because of that, whatever the good and valid reasons for them, the Church will have to consider their long-term effects.

It is worthwhile here to reflect on some insightful remarks on this issue made to the bishops of central France by Pope Paul VI even as early as 1977:

You are faced also with the issue of Sunday assemblies without a priest in rural areas. There the village forms a kind of natural unity, both social and religious, that it would be dangerous to give up or to scatter. We understand the sense of this very well and the advantages that can be gained for the participants' exercise of responsibility and the village's vitality. Today's preference is for communities that keep their human dimension, provided they have sufficient resources, are alive, and are not ghettos. We therefore say to you: proceed judiciously, but without multiplying this type of Sunday assembly, as though it were the ideal solution and the last chance! ... Furthermore, the goal must always be celebration of the sacrifice of the mass, the only true actualization of the Lord's paschal mystery. These same challenges seem destined to face the Church for some time to come.

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24 Among those issues that would likely require attention are seminary formation, financial support, the matter of "part-time" priests, and the possibility of married clergy in certain situations. Sometimes it has been suggested that the encouragement of deacons would meet the needs of such communities. This is not really so. Deacons of course, though ordained, would not be able to celebrate the eucharist. Nor is the role of the deacon really that of presiding over the parish and its liturgy. In fact Canon 517 §2 makes no distinction between a deacon and a layperson in terms of administering a parish in the absence of a priest.

25 March 26, 1977, Documents on the Liturgy, 3842.
Those generations of Roman Catholic Christians raised on the ceremony of benediction of the blessed sacrament (as well as parishes currently "rediscovering" something of the same) often find it difficult to understand why the Second Vatican Council forbade this particular ritual. In fact, neither the Council nor the subsequent documents that followed the event did any such thing. What was called for, however, was a re-understanding of this ritual—and indeed all aspects of eucharistic devotion that took place outside of the celebration of the eucharist itself—along with a clearer vision of how these activities should look.

This discussion was given practical form in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, which was published by the Congregation for Divine Worship on the feast of Corpus Christi, (June 21) 1973. Although the document is now almost thirty years old, it remains the fundamental statement guiding all aspects of eucharistic devotion. It deserves not only a re-visititation, but in some instances perhaps a simple discovery, as it remains one of the more overlooked, let alone misunderstood, of the post-Conciliar instructions.

**Background**

**Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (1963)**

The bishops of the Council, during their deliberations on liturgy, specifically on the celebration of eucharist, were concerned to return the celebration itself to its place as the central action in the life of the Church. Quite simply, every other activity was to be seen as flowing from and leading to the celebration of the (Sunday) eucharist. In dealing with devotions, including those that were in fact eucharistic at least in their intent, this centrality was to be clear and uppermost. The Council did not seek to end devotional practices, but called for a re-understanding of their intent. And so it declared:

> Popular devotions of the Christian people are to be highly endorsed ... Devotions proper to particular Churches also have a particular dignity ... But these devotions should be so fashioned that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some way derived from it, and lead the people to it, since, in fact the liturgy by its very nature far surpasses any of them (13).

This was to be the touchstone for the discussion and documentation that followed the Council.

**Eucharisticum Mysterium (1967)**

On May 25, 1967, the first instruction touching the matter of eucharistic devotion was issued by the Sacred Congregation of Rites. Its stated purpose was to fulfill a need “to draw out practical norms” from the teaching of the various documents so far published “in order to indicate what the relationship of the Christian

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people toward this mystery should be so that they may achieve that understanding and holiness which the Council set before the Church as an ideal” (2).

Archbishop Annibale Bugnini was an architect of the liturgical reform. His reflections on that reform, published in 1983 (translated and published in English in 1990) provide a context for this particular (and just about every other) document. He insists that Eucharisticum mysterium be read with Pope Paul VI's encyclical Mysterium fidei (September 3, 1965). Bugnini points out that this sort of instruction would usually follow an encyclical, thereby translating the doctrinal principles into particular norms. In this case, however, the two documents were independent in their genesis, though the writers of the instruction did take the encyclical into account. He does note, however, that the instruction was to be understood as the basic document on the regulation of the worship of the eucharist. It was meant to be a practical document, and did not attempt to re-discover or restate all of the theological points that had been developed in Paul VI’s encyclical or in already published documents.

One basic and unifying principle was clearly stated in the instruction: “The celebration of the eucharist in the sacrifice of the Mass is truly the origin and the purpose of the worship that is shown to the eucharist outside Mass” (3e).

It was this principle in paragraph 3e that guided the entire text of the document. It provided the underlying sense of the matters that were the subject of legislation, including that of the simple enough sentence in paragraph 66 that seems to have started much of the difficulty: “Exposition merely for the purpose of giving benediction after Mass is prohibited.”

Bugnini regarded this 1967 instruction as fundamental; any discussion of the subsequent 1973 document will properly take it into consideration. The legislation and principles that were stated (or re-stated) in 1973 had already been hashed out with some care and deliberation back in 1967. The 1973 document fleshed out the 1967 instruction and gave it ritual content by actually providing texts for some of the rites.

**Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass (1973)**

In 1973 the Congregation for Divine Worship set about to “bring together and update all the extensive material dealing with the Eucharist” that had so far been published. Although it contained nothing new from the doctrinal and pastoral viewpoint, Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass was a synthesis of material already published and the legislation already in force. As its name clearly indicates it regulated the rites of communion outside mass and the forms of eucharistic worship.

It was new in one area: this was the first time that a formal rite had been published for the reception of communion outside mass. Up to this time the ritual had simply taken the people's communion rite from the Tridentine missal and added a concluding prayer (as at benediction) and blessing.

The various forms of worship outside mass were set out: exposition of the holy eucharist, eucharistic processions, and eucharistic congresses. It is paragraphs 79–108 of the 1973 document (those dealing with exposition and processions) that are of concern in this article.

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2 Ibid., 848–858.
3 Ibid., 661.
One basic principle guides the Church's approach to eucharistic devotion:

The first and original purpose of reserving the sacred species is the communion of the sick, especially in the form of viaticum; secondary purposes are the distribution of communion to the faithful who have not been able to take part in the Mass, and adoration. 4

That sense is reflected in the general introduction to the 1973 document and guides the legislation. Since “the celebration of the eucharist is the center of the entire Christian life” (1), the devotion that surrounds eucharist must mirror that fact. Therefore:

• There is to be no reservation of the sacrament in the tabernacle from the beginning of mass. (In other words communion is always to be from bread consecrated at this particular celebration.)

• The eucharistic presence is to be seen as the fruit of the consecration.

• Churches are to be open for some time each day so that people may pray in the presence of the blessed sacrament. 5

The text continues with the matter of reservation in a pre-eminent, though ideally separate place, 6 and with the signs of reverence (lamp and veil) that mark the place of reservation (9–11). Everything is to centre on the celebration of the eucharist and appear to be drawn from it; eucharist is to be the reason for devotion, and not the other way around. It is that principle, once again, that drives the legislation and centres the document itself.

**A Closer Look at Eucharisticum Mysterium (1967)**

At the risk of involving readers in dizzying time shifts, there is something to be gained by looking at the 1967 instruction, if only to take advantage of some of Archbishop Bugnini’s comments on the process that produced the document, and to note some of the responses to questions raised and answered in the Notitiae commentaries. If nothing else, the background will flesh out some of the terse prose of the final (1973) document.

**Prayer “in the Presence of the Blessed Sacrament”**

Both the 1973 document and the 1967 instruction deliberately avoid the use of the term “visits to the blessed sacrament,” which had become a standard part of Roman Catholic vocabulary. Prayer was certainly to be encouraged since it “leads to familiarity with Christ and to the opening of the person’s heart to him. It also leads the person to realize that the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is the fruit of the sacrifice and leads to communion.” 7 Archbishop Bugnini points out that while some of the commentators on the 1967 document saw the phrase “visit” as useful—since it was common currency and evoked a sense of pilgrimage—most felt that it had too many other connotations, namely the idea of the “prisoner of the tabernacle” and that of “showing an imprisoned Lord an act of courtesy.” The phrase was dropped. This same approach was echoed in the 1973 document.

**Eucharistic Processions**

The first feeling was that indoor eucharistic processions should be prohibited. The 1967 instruction originally contained a simple and explicit interdiction of processions inside the church. Processions were to be a matter only of public outdoor witness, celebration and externalized devotion. Strictly speaking, as is clear in the

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4 Ibid., 856; see also Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass, 5.
5 See Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass, 6–8.
6 For more on the place of reservation see pp. 171–181, 188–190 of this issue of the Bulletin.
7 Bugnini, 856.
1973 document, a procession is something that implies movement through streets, involving a real march with the participation of the community, not simply an immobile congregation watching someone else's movement. (The procession to the place of reposition at the end of the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, and the procession during the inauguration of the blessed sacrament chapel in the rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar are not, strictly speaking, processions, but transfers.) The text was eventually modified however, in consideration of those areas of the world where religious display outside of churches is forbidden by civil authority. 8

Exposition

There was never intent to end the devotional practice of exposition. There was, however, a very clear aim to reform the practice and to give it new direction.

The forty-hours devotion was not a casualty of the Second Vatican Council. In fact, it had been losing popularity for some time. The 1967 instruction did, in fact, suppress the "Clementine Instruction," which had mandated the form of the annual devotion since 1731, as well as the provisions of the 1917 Code, which had made the devotion mandatory. Two aspects of the Clementine Instruction made the forty-hours, as it was practised, impossible under the 1967 instruction: Eucharisticum mysterium forbade celebration of mass in the presence of the exposed sacrament (83), and it raised the question of exposition when there is an insufficient number of adorers. Bugnini put it baldly enough, "Protracted exposition that no one or only a few people attend is meaningless." The instruction is gentler, saying, "This kind of exposition, however, may take place ... only if suitable numbers of the faithful are expected to be present" (86). It is, however, no less explicit. The practice of having a list of one or two people promising to "spend an hour" is clearly contrary to the public and solemn character of the annual (and even of any less formal) exposition.

Just to make this point even more plain, one of the Notitiae responses 11 notes that there is a clear difference between a few people being present at exposition, on the one hand, and a religious community in which daily adoration is part of the rule and whose members take it in turns to spend periods of prayer before the sacrament, on the other hand. (This was taken up in Eucharisticum mysterium, 90.)

Solemn and prolonged exposition implies both serious celebration and the presence of the faithful in proper numbers.

Exposition and Non-eucharistic Devotions

Eucharistic devotions and other devotions are presented as two separate actions; they are not to be intermingled, especially where the devotion in question has no relevance to, for example, the liturgical season. Exposition falls clearly under the heading of an activity of eucharistic devotion. But what about other (non-liturgical) devotions that take place during exposition? In other words, what does, normally, take place during the period of exposition?

The 1967 instruction proposed the following rubric: "During the exposition everything should be arranged that the faithful can devote themselves attentively in prayer to Christ the Lord" (62). Bugnini points out that the text, which now reads "Christo Domino vacent," originally read "unice vacent"; people were to "devote themselves solely in prayer" to Christ the Lord. His commentary notes that "the

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8 See Eucharisticum mysterium, 59.
9 For more information see heading "Forty-hours Devotion," p. 160 below.
10 Bugnini, 857.
11 Notitiae (Not) 4 (1968) 135, no 113.
intention was to prevent the minds of the faithful from being drawn to other things and therefore to ban prayers and songs in honor of Our Lady (rosary) and saints during the time of exposition."12

In the final revision, the "solely" disappeared. Still, some commentaries argue that there should be no prayers (including the rosary) that are not strictly eucharistic during exposition. A Notitiae reply13 does invite a more restrictive sense, opening the door for the "solely" back into the interpretation, if not into the text itself:

"Other devotions, although good and commendable take the attention away to a different object and should therefore be assigned to another time, either before or after exposition and benediction of the blessed sacrament."

However, this was published before the final legislation. Bugnini points out quite honestly that this interpretation is not in the spirit of the final text, even if he personally leaned toward the more restrictive reading. The 1973 document simply argues for the precedence of the liturgical season and that devotions be in harmony with the liturgy.

A Closer Look at Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass (1973)

All this brings us to the matter of exposition as it is presented in the 1973 document, Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass. It begins with some general regulations (84–85) that are in themselves informative, and then discusses "lengthy" exposition (86–88) and what is termed exposition for a "brief period" (89), which would encompass the traditional forms of the holy hour and benediction, as well as any new forms.

The regulations in general are not just a matter of simplification; they attempt to focus the rites connected with exposition on the celebration of eucharist; exposition and mass are fundamentally one event. Exposition, whether brief or lengthy, must always refer to the mass that provided its possibility and beginning.

It is already stated (83) that exposition must be interrupted for the celebration of mass (unless the celebration is in a truly distinct area and exposition itself continues with a sufficient number of people). Now the ceremonies surrounding exposition are also to refer back to the celebration, to the way that mass is itself celebrated:

- a single genuflection,
- only four or six candles (two for exposition with the ciborium),
- the presence of a priest (or deacon) for the benediction itself (88), although other specific individuals may interrupt the exposition during the day (91), and
- the use of the altar table (94) for the exposition (although a throne is permitted provided it is not lofty or distant) to keep clear the connection with the sacrificial action.

The desired connection is made clear with a simple phrase—all is to take place "as at mass" (85)—and a summary statement:

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 (82).

The simplification of the ceremonies was not intended to lessen the reverence and devotion surrounding the rite, but to make it clear that exposition is no more important or solemn than the celebration.
that makes it possible. (If six candles are good enough for mass, they are good enough for exposition. Extra candles and ornament, while attractive, can create a false sense of focus.)

Exposition flows out of and must be seen to flow out of a previous celebration. (In the section under processions, the note suggests that “it is fitting that a eucharistic procession begin after the Mass in which the host to be carried in the procession has been consecrated” [103].) In the case of extended exposition, the host is to be consecrated in the mass that immediately precedes, and the concluding rites of the mass omitted (94). The exposition thus takes on the character of an extended period of prayer after communion in the spirit of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 121. What is clear is that there is a connection being set up: Exposition flows out of celebration, and benediction will be its conclusion—a sort of concluding rite of the mass, delayed.

Rite of Eucharistic Exposition and Benediction

Although the 1973 document deals with lengthy exposition first (and it is the more solemn that sets the standard for the simpler), brief periods of exposition will likely be more common and will themselves have to be more generally known and more widely celebrated, if any lengthy devotion is to be possible let alone properly understood.

It would likely come as something of a surprise to most to find out that benediction, that ceremony that was a standard part of the devotional life of Catholics prior to the Council, was actually not accepted as a “true liturgical function” until a 1958 decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, a decree that was really more concerned with sacred music and the possibility of the dialogue mass than with eucharistic devotion. Prior to the decree, benediction was simply an accepted and widely used conclusion to almost any service, from novenas to the rosary-sermon-and-benediction format that had become a staple of parish devotional life (Sunday vespers having pretty well ceased to be celebrated in parishes).

The 1958 decree patterned itself on the theology expressed in Pope Pius XII’s (1947) encyclical Mediator Dei. In raising benediction to the level of a proper liturgical action, the decree made three assertions:

• It is unlawful to mix liturgical functions and pious exercises, which are to precede or follow the liturgical rite (12).
• Vernacular hymns and prayers were not permitted at liturgical functions (13).
• The form of benediction was to be that given in the Rituale Romanum under X, v, 5 (47).

Local differences could be tolerated if they were of “immemorial” custom and practice.

Historically, benediction seems to have developed out of the Corpus Christi procession as a rite of conclusion (or an action repeated at various stations along a procession route). Although accepted as a quasi-independent service by the 16th and 17th centuries, the initial legislation was in fact quite restrictive. Nathan Mitchell suggests that its increasing popularity “reflected popular but unofficial custom” and that “officially, the Church has always insisted that the norm of eucharistic devotion in the life of Christians is participation in Mass.”

He also notes that there was a definite reluctance by the Church to approve the custom: on the one hand there were the problems and excesses associated with Jansenism, on the other hand was the desire to maintain the centrality of mass. But in this case, popular devotion won out.

Celebrating and Savouring • Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery

The form that found its way into the 1614 Rituale Romanum simply made reference to and took the format of the Corpus Christi procession as the rite for benediction:

- exposition,
- the singing of the “Tantum Ergo” (last two verses of the “Pange Lingua”),
- the versicle and response: “Panem de caelo...” and “Omne declamentum...”
- the collect of the feast of Corpus Christi, and
- the blessing with the sacrament by the priest.

All this was carried out in Latin (since this was a proper liturgical function) although there was often local variation in the details as (barely) tolerated by the 1958 decree. Hymns and acclamations in the vernacular were permitted only before the service began or after the blessing, because the liturgical part of the action had ended. (Such was the case with the “Divine Praises” and the final hymn—often “Holy God, We Praise Thy Name”—which, because they were in the vernacular, were never permitted until after the blessing which closed the rite itself.)

Benediction became a popular and increasingly complicated rite with, for example, the ministry of deacon and sub-deacon, and provisions for a bishop to preside at the ceremony without actually being the one vested or giving the blessing. One indication of its popularity, and an example of a rite starting to get out of balance, was the summer custom of benediction (complete with singing, added candles and servers, and a complete change in vestment and style) following immediately—and sometimes by local diocesan decree—after a summer Sunday “low mass” that had taken place without song and with minimal ceremony.

The 1973 document seeks to remedy both difficulties and abuses by legislating: “Exposition which is held exclusively for the giving of benediction is prohibited.” Benediction may still take place, but it is now always a form of shorter exposition and is 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” (89).

An “Official” Rite for Benediction

A new (or rather an official) rite for benediction is provided in the document in paragraphs 97–100. The implication is that exposition has occurred some time before and songs, readings and prayer have taken place. The ritual then calls for:

- a hymn or eucharistic song (“Tantum Ergo” is neither mentioned nor specified) during which incense is used,
- an invitation to prayer, a period of silence and a presidential prayer (the opening prayer from the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of the Lord or a choice from six other options),
- the action of blessing with the monstrance or ciborium (using the humeral veil),
- reposition of the sacrament, and
- an optional hymn or acclamation by the people.

The current rite is distinguished from the former by the option of a choice of hymn, the absence of the versicle and response, and by an insistence upon a time of prayer before the actual benediction. (The “Divine Praises” were not prescribed in the former rite any more than they are mentioned in this one.)

Mitchell suggests that “the use of the Divine Praises in the liturgy seems to have originated in the nineteenth century among the prayers recited after Mass (the “Leonine” prayers15). Their use at Benediction appears to have developed gradually

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15 The Leonine prayers (originally placed by Pope Leo XIII at the end of all “low masses” for the intention of the conversion of Russia) consisted of: three Hail Mary’s, the Hail Holy Queen, the prayers that begin “O God our refuge and our strength ...,” and “St. Michael, the archangel, defend us in battle ...,” followed by three ejaculatory prayers to the Sacred Heart.
around the end of the century.”¹⁶ They were not a part of the rites given in any version of the Rituale (including the Latin version) and are not given in the current ritual. Although they might take the place of the acclamation suggested as an option at the end of the rite or be included among the prayers during exposition, adding prayers after the blessing seems superfluous and certainly goes against the “noble simplicity” that is to mark liturgical rites. If indeed, the benediction comes at the end of a period of adoration that follows mass, they seem as out of place as the Leonine Prayers now suppressed.

Benediction is presided over by a priest (or deacon). An appointed lay person may expose the sacrament and interrupt the exposition as required, but the celebration of the rite belongs to the ordained minister. Benediction is an extension of eucharist; its celebration is thus given over to those who preside at eucharist (priest) or formally preside at liturgy in the name of the Church (deacon).

Again, benediction is seen by this document as the conclusion of a time of prayer, song, reading the word, and reflection. The 1967 instruction had prohibited exposition “merely for the purpose of giving benediction after Mass” (66) and the current document (1973) prohibits exposition “exclusively for the giving of benediction” (89). Benediction is to be celebrated as a rite that involves dignity, care, activity, and time.

Worship during Exposition

Paragraph 95 of Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass offers a guideline, if not exactly providing an example or framework, for the time of exposition:

• 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 reading of the word of God by singing and to spend some periods of time in religious silence.

There is a genuine sensitivity to the need for some series of activities to take place in order to help focus the attention of those gathered for the period of exposition. Extensive or long periods of uninterrupted silence are simply not part of the mindset of this generation.

Earlier on, we mentioned the discussion that took place in the matter of Marian devotions (including the rosary) taking place during exposition. Whatever the concerns around the 1967 document, this devotion is not excluded. There was a similar discussion around the celebration of (specifically) evening prayer before the exposed sacrament. In the discussion one particular point was made: “Benediction must not take on the appearance of being a conclusion to evening prayer.”¹⁷ The suggestion and solution offered was that evening prayer should take place first, then exposition—with a period of silence, though without readings and homily if these have taken place during evening prayer—and benediction.

The 1973 document does not have the same limitation and indeed encourages the celebration of the liturgy of the hours and “especially the principal hours” during exposition since they “[direct] the prayers of the Church to Christ and through him to the Father in the name of the whole world” (96).

A similar discussion took place regarding preaching during exposition. The pre-Conciliar tradition (if not its actual legislation) was that during sermons a veil was

¹⁶ Mitchell, 330.
¹⁷ Not 4 (1968) 134, no 111.
to be placed in front of the monstrance. When the question was raised after the 1967 instruction, the reply was clear enough: “Sermons in the presence of the exposed blessed sacrament are forbidden.” Thus, the custom of using a period of exposition (holy hour) as an occasion for presentations on general doctrinal matters was to be excluded. In its place (and therefore without a veil) there were to be short elucidations of the texts of the readings proclaimed during exposition that would lead “to a better understanding of the eucharistic mystery.” Any preaching is to be integrated into and flow from the sense of the action.

Accordingly, while certainly giving pride of place to the celebration of parts of the liturgy of the hours, there are few restrictions put on what can, in fact, take place, other than a sensitivity to the liturgical seasons and to the eucharistic character of the moment. The Notitiae reply, however, does offer one useful guideline: the rite of benediction should not appear as an add-on to another liturgical event; it must stand on its own. This was precisely the reasoning behind the prohibition of exposition merely for the giving of benediction. What takes place during exposition is to lead to better reflection on the entire mystery of the eucharist.

Lengthy Exposition

Both the 1973 document and 1967 instruction recommend a yearly period of solemn exposition. (The earlier instruction actually mentions the “annual solemn exposition” under a separate heading. The later document groups it with lengthy exposition, without singling out a yearly one for separate mention.) This is not the traditional forty-hours devotion, since exposition may now be interrupted up to twice a day, something that was excluded in the forty-hours devotion (although the exposition was customarily—though not everywhere—halted during the night) and mass may not be celebrated during exposition. The only restriction mentioned regarding the lengthy period of exposition is the consent of the local Ordinary and the assurance that “suitable numbers of the faithful are expected to be present” (Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass, 86).

Forty-hours Devotion

The custom of the forty hours began in 1527 Milan as a period of prayer in time of war. The remote origins of the devotion may possibly be traced to the medieval custom of keeping watch at a sepulchre constructed (much like a nativity scene) in churches for the last days of Holy Week. A cross, and later in some places a consecrated host, was “buried” in the tomb after the Good Friday liturgy, remaining there until Easter morning, when it was brought out. The devoted faithful would keep watch at this tomb through the “forty-hour” period.

The Milanese devotion, later popularized by St. Philip Neri in Rome (around 1550), and preached by the Jesuits as a time of parish and personal reparation, was permitted as a devotion by Pope Pius IV in 1560. He linked it to the forty days of Jesus’ fast in the desert and omitted any sense of the tomb watch. In 1731, Pope Clement XII issued regulations for Rome (the “Clementine Instruction”) that eventually became the norm for the three-day annual exposition, and were made mandatory for parishes in the 1917 Code of Canon Law. In this incarnation, the period of devotion has evolved from an occasion of reparation to an annual period of formal reverence—an annual extended act of piety to the sacrament itself.

The Clementine form of the devotion took place over three days.

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18 Not 4 (1968) 135, no112.  
19 Ibid.
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- **Day One**: opening mass followed by a procession, the litany of the saints and extended intercessory prayers;
- **Day Two**: votive mass (for peace), an evening devotion (usually a holy hour consisting of a sermon and benediction);
- **Day Three**: closing ceremony consisting of the litany of the saints, intercessory prayers, procession and benediction.

Masses during the period of exposition were celebrated either at a side altar or in the presence of the exposed sacrament, which was usually placed on a raised throne or simply on top of the tabernacle. It was considered acceptable to have as few as two (or even one) individuals at prayer in the church. Exposition was not interrupted except after the evening celebration.

Jungmann offers a sketch of the development of the practice—a sketch admittedly valid only up to the time of the Council:

> The ancient Christian devotion of the Forty Hours has had an uninterrupted tradition right down to the present day. There have been two lines of development. There has been devotion at the Holy Sepulchre between the deposition in the grave and the celebration of the Resurrection, either disregarding the integrity of the whole original period or advancing the beginning of the devotion to the evening of Holy Thursday. And secondly, there has been the Forty Hours' Devotion which, since 1527, has been separated from its living source and become rather a form of the cult of the Blessed Sacrament. 20

It was this devolution—the rise of the devotion as a cult form rather than one centred on the celebration of the eucharist, i.e., an expression of sentiment rather than of liturgy—that led to the post-Conciliar suppression of the Clementine form of the devotion in favour of an encouraged, though unspecified, lengthy (annual) exposition.

**Annual Exposition (American Model)**

In 1993, the (American) National Conference of Catholic Bishops published an *Order for the Solemn Exposition of the Holy Eucharist* as a ritual and guideline for an annual lengthy exposition.

The book presents examples for formal opening and closing celebrations, offers forms for the celebration of morning and evening prayer and gives suggestions for services of the word that may take place at different times during the period of exposition. There are a few points to highlight:

- The celebrations during the period of exposition are clearly centred on the eucharist, with the forms of prayer taken from the offices of Corpus Christi.
- The guidelines make definite reference to the note that “processions within the body of the church are no longer permitted” (20).
- With reference to celebrations of the eucharist during interruptions of the exposition: “It is appropriate that a new host be consecrated for the continuation of exposition following the Mass and that the host previously used for exposition be consumed at communion” (117).
- Two forms of a closing liturgy are offered: a closing mass (simple reposition takes place first, and a new host is consecrated for a final period of exposition after mass), and one without mass that involves a traditional word service and benediction.

This is clearly a new approach to the celebration, not an attempt to restore or restructure the forty hours.

The American effort does bring out two difficulties in planning for any extended

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exposition. First, how are we to integrate the liturgical seasons into the time of exposition or, indeed, celebrate major feasts that might appear in the calendar at the time? Is it proper, or does it in fact become necessary, to make an extended exposition into a two- or three-day celebration of the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of the Lord? Second, how are other celebrations of the mass to be integrated into the exposition? The guidelines make it clear that each period of exposition is to follow each particular celebration, but what seems to be the ultimate result is that rather than a period of extended exposition there will be a whole series of shorter periods stacked together. This seems to be true especially of the closing liturgy when that liturgy is mass. Perhaps this is simply inevitable.

A similar consideration is faced by communities in which "first Fridays" (or other days) are a time of extended (all day) exposition that begins with a morning (or noon) mass that is concluded with benediction, and is then followed immediately by another (evening) mass. As in the closing ceremonies of the American model, the day becomes a matter of mass-exposition-mass, with little expression of the separateness of the events. (Moreover, there is often the additional difficulty of a lengthy exposition with no activity other than private prayer, a matter to be considered later.) Perhaps the simplest suggestion is that the two events, benediction and a second eucharist, be separated by a sufficient (and indeed lengthy) period of time to indicate that there are two separate events here. Benediction is not to be the mere closing of another rite, but it is not to be the beginning (indeed the opening rite) of another eucharist either. A second option, one not envisaged by the current legislation, though not excluded, is simply that when exposition that takes place with another mass following, benediction not be included. The sacrament is simply reposed (as for any celebration of mass that will take place in the same area) and, after a suitable period, mass begins.

Perpetual Adoration

Continual exposition of the blessed sacrament is not something that is considered by either of the two documents, except in regard to that form of "perpetual eucharistic adoration or adoration over extended periods of time" as it is practised by certain religious communities or groups (Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass, 90). The practice as it is currently taking place in certain churches is unknown, and frankly not envisaged, by the 1973 legislation.

Some general direction, however, may be offered in a 1971 Notitiae reply.

The question concerned the use of glass as a material for tabernacle construction. The 1917 Code forbade the use of glass as a construction material. Current legislation speaks of a tabernacle that is solid, opaque, immovable and unbreakable (Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass, 10; Canon 938, 3). Medieval custom saw the use of "sacrament houses," which had glass windows or open grille or grate work that permitted the sacrament to be seen at all times. This custom was eventually excluded.

The Notitiae reply makes three points:

1. Referring to the legislation that eventually forbade the use of glass or grating, the reply notes that such material "would give the impression of having a kind of permanent exposition of the blessed sacrament in the church and that is unacceptable."

2. Since mass before the exposed sacrament is forbidden, "the difficulties indicated in the Instruction would not be avoided if the celebration of Mass were to take place in proximity to a tabernacle of glass."

3. Finally, since the purpose of exposition

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is to lead to devotion and prayer, “if the sacrament were exposed continuously, there would be a lessening of the value of these occasions as reminders of their proper place in the spiritual life and of their character as high points for reflection on the eucharist.”

The problem is not in glass as a material, since it can in fact be suitably secure, but in the possible effect of its use. (Tamper proof glass is acceptable if a veil is used.) Continual exposition, by its character of constant celebration, minimizes what is to be something particularly significant; constant exposition tends to minimize its importance.

A further difficulty is simply that the legislation sees exposition as always involving significant numbers of people. The special permission given to religious communities to “take it in turn” during exposition itself points to the unacceptability of one or two individuals as all who are present at exposition.

Perpetual adoration (having someone in the church) is not the same as perpetual exposition—a practice that certainly has to be approached carefully in light of the character of significance encouraged as part of every period of exposition.

However, in places where perpetual exposition is permitted to take place (and the legislation does note that the permission of the Ordinary is what is required for such an undertaking—as, indeed for any lengthy exposition [86])—care must at least be taken to provide a sufficient number of the faithful (86) and to make certain that any celebration of mass is not in conflict with the exposition. This would, again, mean the interruption of exposition for the celebration or, if the adoration is taking place in a separate chapel, that sufficient numbers remain there during mass.

The other matter that needs to be addressed during any lengthy form of exposition is the provision of “prayers, songs, and readings to direct the attention of the faithful to the worship of Christ the Lord” as envisaged by the document (Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass, 95). While silence and reflection are certainly part of exposition prayer, the limitations of the community have to be considered and respected. Are people today capable of long periods of unsupported, sustained reflection? Perhaps, in the beginning, events (however brief) may have to be scheduled hourly, to provide material for personal reflection.

Expressing Adoration

Although there is clear mention of “periods of time in religious silence” the document certainly intends that there be activity during the times of exposition. In fact, these activities are placed under the heading of “adoration” in paragraphs 95 and 96. It would seem that these activities are the way that adoration is expressed. Readings from scripture and exhortations will develop a sense of what is taking place. In other words, any period of exposition (including perpetual) has to be the scene of formal prayer and activity, of response in sacred song, not simply of private and silent devotion.

Liturgy of the Hours during Exposition

We have already looked at the discussion around devotions that were deemed to be acceptable during exposition; the rosary was included. It is, however, not mentioned in the 1973 document. What is singled out (and, again, there was a discussion about this that was noted earlier) is parts of the liturgy of the hours. By their very nature, the hours extend “the praise and thanksgiving offered to God in the eucharistic celebration to the several hours of the day” and direct “the prayers of the Church to Christ and through him to the Father in the name of the whole world” (96). By the simple format of their celebration, the liturgy of the hours keeps adoration within the wider context of the prayer of the whole Church, not simply of that of an individual.
Organized prayer during extended exposition could well begin with the celebration of the hours, especially with the more important events of morning and evening prayer. This should not be a particular burden, even a financial one. Basic forms of this prayer are found in the Catholic Book of Worship, and one-volume versions are available that reflect the whole year (including those in shorter forms). Only the leader and reader need to be briefed on and have available the actual prayers attached to the liturgical day. To begin, a community might find it useful to begin with a "votive" office (see General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours, 245), such as that from the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of the Lord, to acquaint itself with the format of the office. The leader and reader will change the readings and intercessions appropriately until some level of understanding has been reached by all. Then the psalms could follow their proper order and cycles.

The presider at these hours need not be a priest or deacon (although it would be improper for a priest or deacon to merely attend without presiding); lay people are encouraged to lead the hours (in church as well as at home).

Other forms of prayer (novenas and prayer cycles) are not mentioned in the document, which suggests that they should be used sparingly, if at all. Any devotion that takes place during exposition must take into account the liturgical season, be in harmony with the spirit of the liturgy, and both draw its inspiration from the liturgy and lead people back to it (Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass, 79).

On a practical level, while devotions are not excluded, they must reflect the character of proper liturgy. For example, they must respect the liturgical season: "Alleluia" is not sung during the season of Lent; the choice of songs and hymns will take this into account. Seasons are not anticipated: Advent remains Advent until Christmas, and the choice of readings and songs will reflect the current season as well as the change to a new one. Mention of the celebration of a particular saint is appropriate on a proper feast or memorial, but must not be a constant factor in devotions during exposition. (This would be particularly true of novena devotions and prayers to particular saints, which seem out of place during exposition. Novena devotions are no more acceptable during exposition than they are during mass.) Finally the sense of "noble simplicity" that is the characteristic of the Roman Rite should be apparent. We do not multiply prayers nor add what are essentially personal devotions to the public celebration.

One simple example of faulty respect for the tradition of simplicity is the tendency for devotion to outstrip liturgy, at least in length. Some communities have developed the tradition of reciting the rosary after (or before) daily mass. But what happens when the recitation starts to accumulate more and more individual and personal prayers? when the prayers after mass start to take longer than the mass itself? when the Leonine prayers return? Prayers and prayer services that take place during periods of exposition are reflective of and guided by the public, liturgical prayer life of the Church. They cannot be allowed to simply "happen" without any respect for the Church's tradition and legislation, or without direction from an educated and sensitive parish pastoral staff. The forms of celebration offered by the liturgy of the hours (including the shorter day hours and the longer Office of Readings) offer not only options for celebration, but standards against which celebrations can and should be measured.

What is Adoration?

Referring back to the 1967 instruction, the introduction to Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass (1973) notes that no one may doubt "that
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all the faithful show this holy sacrament the veneration and adoration which is due to God himself, as has always been customary in the Catholic Church” (3). There is, however, even in the paragraphs under adoration (95 and 96), no definition of what is actually meant by adoration. Even in his encyclical, Pope Paul VI simply notes that the Church “has always offered and still offers the worship of latria to the sacrament of the eucharist, not only during Mass, but also outside it” (Mysterium fidei, 56). That we worship and adore the eucharist is taken for granted; what that means is expressed more under the category of how this is done than by giving a definition of what this means.

The encyclical makes use of the word “latria” to describe the veneration given to the eucharist. Latria is the worship that is given to God alone. It is the recognition that God is present here; it is the essence of adoration. Thus, the (secondary) reason—secondary, after viaticum and the giving of communion to the sick—for the reservation of the eucharist is the adoration of our Lord Jesus Christ who is present in the sacrament (Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass, 5). Exposition gives the community an opportunity “to acknowledge Christ’s marvellous presence in the sacrament” (Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass, 82) and by ritual gesture and personal prayer to worship and adore.

Adoration is the response of the Christian in the presence of God. As such, it can take place anywhere and at any time. When this takes place in church, there is the added character of presence. When this takes place with the exposed sacrament, there is a particular aspect of acknowledgement and celebration that is peculiar to this form of worship. It is an avowal of the ways in which God is present to us and Christ is present in his Church:

First he is present in the very assembly of the faithful gathered together in his name; next he is present in his word, when the Scriptures are read in the Church and explained; then in the person of the minister; finally, and above all, in the eucharistic sacrament. In a way that is completely unique … (Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass, 6).

Worship, whether private or communal, at home or in church, in the blessed sacrament chapel or before the exposed sacrament, is the recognition of the presence of God.

Private Prayer at Exposition

The community gathered in prayer during periods of exposition is invited not only to participate in the prayers and exercises that are to be part of the period of exposition, but also to spend time in silent prayer (89) and religious silence (95). But these moments of gathering can also provide a framework for all personal and private prayer of adoration, even outside the time of exposition. These times are meant for reflection on the word of God that was read to the community, even for reflection on the word as it was read at the mass that preceded, or at least made possible, this time of exposition. These times of prayer are meant to build the communion with the Lord that is the fruit of the celebration of the eucharist.

In one of its more eloquent passages, the document lays out a regimen for private prayer before the sacrament:

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 (80).

It is that sense that is at the core of the reflective feeling of the document.

**Conclusion**

The rediscovery of forms of eucharistic adoration is a phenomenon that is welcomed by and is beginning to be celebrated in more and more parishes. The 1973 document offered a framework for that celebration when it was first published, and it deserves to be acknowledged as the framework for celebration now. Far from attempting to eliminate benediction, or to diminish exposition or other forms of eucharistic adoration, it attempted to provide a wider context. If that context seemed limiting thirty years ago, surely now its truly expansive nature is more evident, as it invites a creative community to find forms of celebration that will both serve their needs and reflect the liturgical reality of the Church. Rather than looking to old forms, *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass* invites us to celebrate with the Church the mystery of the Lord’s presence in a style that is grounded firmly on authentic eucharistic devotion.

**Discussion**

Some questions for discussion for parishes planning an event of eucharistic (adoration) exposition.

1. What is the reason for this event? Why now (why not before now)?
2. What is the parish tradition regarding benediction, exposition, lengthy exposition? Has such an event happened lately or ever before? Will a catechesis be necessary to explain what is to take place?
3. What will this involve and who will do it?
4. How long will the event be: an evening, afternoon and evening, all day? a number of days?
5. Will this truly be a parish event—will it involve a sufficient number of people to meet the requirement that numbers of people be present during exposition?
6. What will be the participation of readers, musicians, and other ministers so that the event will have a sense of occasion?
7. How often will such celebrations take place? Is there a need to offer some sort of communal celebration at frequent intervals (hourly) at least for the first occasions of exposition?
8. What about celebrations of mass (those regularly scheduled throughout the year) during the time of exposition?
9. Will evening events have to include mass, i. e. will this be the only way to insure participation? (But does this not defeat the purpose of the event itself?)
10. Are there solemnities (feasts) that will have to be included in the event? How will the liturgical season be respected and celebrated?
11. How will the event be assessed and who will do it?
12. How will the assessment be used in the planning of future similar occasions?
Documentation

Basic document:

Relevant documents:


Background.


Reference


An excellent example of local guidelines.


This issue of the Bulletin includes significant portions of the text of the 1973 Instruction and presents some of the same themes visited here. It is not outdated. It also provides texts from scripture suitable for use during exposition or at short celebrations during exposition (although the lectionary references will be out of date). It also offers celebration outlines for services during exposition and a possible outline of activities during a period of yearly celebration.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PASTORAL MUSICIANS

President and CEO

The NPM Board is seeking applications for the position of Chief Executive Officer of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians.

Successful candidates should be recognized administrators whose active and distinguished professional records include some combination of music, liturgy, and/or pastoral leadership in the arts, with competence in either finance or convention planning. Candidates must be Roman Catholic, either lay or clergy, able to own and live the mission of NPM.

Successful candidates will share the membership’s vision of inclusiveness, and be coalition builders aware and appreciative of the broad spectrum of musical abilities in the Catholic Church. Nominations and applications will be reviewed continuously from this date forward and will be accepted until the position is filled.

Contact: John A Romeri, NPM Search Committee, 509 Kingsbury Square W, St. Louis, MO 63112.
Or: NPMSearch@aol.com.
Outlines for Eucharistic Exposition and Benediction

as suggested by Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, 93–100

Outline of the Rite of Eucharistic Exposition with Liturgy of the Word

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Use either A or B.

A: Song and Entrance of Minister(s)
   (during which the blessed sacrament is brought to the altar)

B: Entrance of Minister(s)
   Greeting
   Opening Prayer
   Song (during which the blessed sacrament is brought to the altar)

PERIOD OF EXPOSITION

Period of Silent Adoration
Celebration of the Word of God
   [Song]
   First Reading
   Responsorial Psalm
   Second Reading
   Gospel Acclamation
   Gospel
   Homily
   Period of Silent Adoration

BENEDICTION

Entrance of Minister
Song [and Incensation†]
Prayer
Blessing with Monstrance or Ciborium

REPOSITION [with song or acclamation]
Outline of Lengthy Eucharistic Exposition
with Liturgies of the Word throughout the Day and
Evening Prayer and/or Morning Prayer

**MASS** (which ends with the prayer after communion)

[ENTHRONEMENT AND INCENSATION OF
BLESSED SACRAMENT]

**PERIOD OF EXPOSITION**

Period of Silent Adoration

Celebration of the Word of God*
  - Song
  - First Reading
  - Responsorial Psalm
  - Second Reading
  - Gospel Acclamation
  - Gospel
  - Homily

Period of Silent Adoration

Celebration of Evening Prayer
- Invitation to Prayer
- Evening Hymn
- Evening Psalm
- Second Psalm
- Psalm or Canticle of Praise
- Word of God
- Homily
- Gospel Canticle
- Intercessions
- Lord's Prayer
- Concluding Prayer
- Blessing (without dismissal)

**BENEDICTION**

- Entrance of Minister
- Song [and Incensation†]
- Prayer
- Blessing with Monstrance or Ciborium

**REPOSITION** [with song or acclamation]
Celebrating and Savouring • Outlines for Exposition and Benediction

If it is impossible to begin the lengthy exposition with a community celebration of the eucharist, or if exposition has continued throughout the night or begins before it is appropriate to celebrate morning prayer, the following may be inserted in the schedule at or after sunrise:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of Silent Adoration</th>
<th>Word of God</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celebration of</td>
<td>Homily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning Prayer</td>
<td>Gospel Canticle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invitation to Prayer</td>
<td>Intercessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning Hymn</td>
<td>Lord's Prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning Psalm</td>
<td>Concluding Prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Psalm</td>
<td>Blessing (without dismissal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalm or Canticle of Praise</td>
<td>Period of Silent Adoration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Portion in shaded area should be inserted several times throughout the day using different songs, readings and responsorial psalms.
† Incensation is always used if exposition is celebrated using the monstrance. It is optional when a ciborium is used.

Helpful Reading

Basic Documents

On the Celebration of the Eucharist

Sunday Celebrations of the Word


On the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery
Congregation of Rites. Instruction Eucharisticum mysterium, on worship of the eucharist, 1967.
Pope Paul VI. Encyclical Mysterium fidei on the doctrine and worship of the eucharist. 1965.

On Architecture for Catholic Worship
Is locating the tabernacle in its own chapel distinct from the main body of the church (and not in view of all at Mass), "shoving Jesus aside"? Is having the tabernacle in the center of the sanctuary the authentic Roman Catholic tradition? Does having a separate chapel for the tabernacle lead people away from belief in the real presence? Should we put the tabernacle back behind the altar to encourage faith in the eucharist and enable eucharistic devotions?

These issues arise frequently today, though rarely in such civil form. Usually they are not even asked as questions but hurled as accusations by those objecting to the proposed location of the tabernacle in a new or renovated church building. Pastors (priests in good canonical standing), consultants and architects (who often are themselves practicing Catholics likewise in good canonical standing) are accused of being heretics: "You don't believe in the real presence of Christ in the eucharist!" The people making these serious accusations often think their desire to see the tabernacle during Mass is guaranteed by liturgical law.

Options and a Preference

What does the law say? Inter oecumenici, the 1964 instruction on carrying out the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (CSL), first gave options initiating a transition from the prior common practice of locating the tabernacle on the high altar in parish churches: The tabernacle may go either on the main altar or on another altar, or in "another, special, and properly adorned part of the church" (#95). Options were necessary in order to address both existing church buildings and those still to be built.

Two years later, the instruction Eucharisticum mysterium noted that the place for the tabernacle should be "suited to private prayer," and "therefore it is recommended that as far as possible, the tabernacle be placed in a chapel set apart from the main body of the church, especially in churches where there frequently are marriages and funerals and in places that, because of their artistic or historical treasures, are visited by many people ..." (#53). Notice that this says "especially," not only. A preference among the options emerges.

Tabernacle in Reserved Sacrament Chapel
Holy Spirit Parish, Saskatoon, SK

David Philippart has a master's degree in liturgical studies and ten years of parish pastoral experience. He lectures widely about church architecture and art.
The 1973 document *Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass* (HCWE) reiterates this preference, adding that the respect due to the reserved sacrament and the adoration of the people “will be achieved more easily if the [tabernacle’s] chapel is separate from the body of the church” (#9). The 1975 *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) goes further: “Every encouragement should be given to the practice of eucharistic reservation in a chapel suited to the faithful’s private adoration and prayer” (#276; another translation of this passage is “It is highly recommended that the holy eucharist be reserved in a chapel ...”) Notice that it says “private adoration.” It is assumed that public acts of devotion to the eucharist outside of Mass will take place at the altar.

**Lex Orandi**

Most importantly, the revised *Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar* (1977) presumes that a new church will have a blessed sacrament chapel. After communion, the chapel is inaugurated by the bishop (see #79–82). Again, there is flexibility: The rubric allows that “if there is no inauguration” (#78) the Mass concludes with the blessing and dismissal. (There are instances in which the eucharist might not be reserved in a dedicated church building—in a parish’s “mission station,” for example.) This inauguration of the blessed sacrament chapel is no mere blessing of a tabernacle that is a few feet behind the altar:

When the prayer [after communion] is completed, the bishop returns to the altar, genuflects, and incenses the blessed sacrament. Afterward, when he has received the humeral veil, he takes the pyx, which he covers with the veil itself. Then a procession is formed in which, preceded by the cross-bearer and with lighted torches and incense, the blessed sacrament is carried through the main body of the church to the chapel of reservation. As the procession proceeds, the following antiphon is sung with Psalm 147:12–20: “Praise the Lord, Jerusalem!” Another appropriate song may be sung. (80)

Further, the *Rite of Dedication* states: “If the chapel where the blessed sacrament is reserved can be seen clearly by the congregation, the bishop immediately imparts the blessing of the Mass. ... Otherwise the procession returns to the sanctuary by the short route ...” (82). *Lex orandi, lex credendi*: The law of prayer is the law of belief. This part of the dedication, modeled after the closing rite of the Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper to be celebrated each year hence in this new church, clearly indicates that the liturgy inherently prefers a separate blessed sacrament chapel.

**Later Documents**

The United States Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy’s 1978 statement *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship* (EACW) simply reiterated Roman legislation adding “A room or chapel specifically designed and separate from the major space is important so that no confusion can take place between the celebration of the eucharist and reservation. Active and static aspects of the same reality cannot claim the same human attention at the same time” (78). This is a clumsy explanation, but clearly EACW did not invent the idea of a separate tabernacle chapel.

In 1980, the Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship issued the instruction *Inaestimabile donum*. Some have argued that paragraph 24 of this instruction supersedes and invalidates all that has been quoted above. This is simply false. *Inaestimabile donum* itself states that it is “not a summary of everything already stated by the Holy See in the documents concerning the eucharist promulgated since the Second Vatican Council and still in force, particularly in the Missale Romanum (GIRM), the ritual De Sacra Communione et de Cultu Mysterii Eucharisticii Extra Missam [HCWE], and the instructions Eucharisticum mysterium, Memoriale Domini, Immensae caritatis, and Liturgicae instaurationes” (from the foreword).
Furthermore, concerning the placement of the tabernacle, *Inaestimabile donum* simply paraphrases existing legislation. It says: “The tabernacle in which the eucharist is kept can be located on an altar or away from it, in a spot in the church which is prominent, truly noble, and duly decorated, or in a chapel suitable for private prayer and for adoration by the faithful” (24). So GIRM, 276 is still in force, and thus “every encouragement” is still given to having a separate chapel.

Nor does the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* contradict this. It simply reminds us that “the tabernacle in which the most holy eucharist is reserved should be placed in a part of the church that is prominent, conspicuously, beautifully decorated, and suitable for prayer” (=938.2; emphasis added). Nowhere does the code say or even imply that the tabernacle must be visible from every part of the room. Nor does it suggest that the tabernacle be near the altar of sacrifice. “Prominent” and “conspicuous” are not here (or anywhere in the law) restricted to mean “behind the altar.” Canon 2 explicitly states that “current liturgical norms retain their force unless a given liturgical norm is contrary to the canons of the Code.” So again, GIRM, 276 is still in force.

The 1989 *Ceremonial of Bishops* (CB) states: “It is recommended that the tabernacle, in accordance with a very ancient tradition in cathedral churches, should be located in a chapel separate from the main body of the church” (49). True, this addresses the cathedral church, but three paragraphs earlier, CB, 46 states: “The cathedral church should be a model for the other churches of the diocese in its conformity to the directives laid down in liturgical documents and books with regard to the arrangement and adornment of churches.”

Some now quote the commentary written to accompany the *responsum ad dubium* about “contempt for the eucharist,” issued in June 1999 by the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts, as proof that the tabernacle belongs in the center of the sanctuary. But that too is wrong. The actual *dubium* has nothing to do with the tabernacle. The accompanying commentary makes a tangential remark about the tabernacle, which again is a paraphrase of existing legislation, expressing concern that “the tabernacle be placed on an altar or in a part of the church that is clearly visible, truly noble and duly adorned.” “Clearly visible” is a paraphrase of “conspicuous” and “prominent.”

The blessed sacrament chapels of St. Louis Cathedral (Missouri), SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral (Indianapolis), Blessed Junipero Serra Church (Camarillo, California) and Santa Maria de la Paz Church (Santa Fe, New Mexico)—just to name four—are clearly visible because of their architecture, and they are very distinct chapels. (They are also “truly noble and duly adorned.”)

**The Lawful Ideal**

The legislation is straightforward. It’s based on the traditional reasons for reserving the eucharist: first, for the communion of the sick, especially the dying; and second, for the adoration of the eucharist *outside of Mass*. (The ranking is deliberate; see HCWE, 5.) It’s also based on the liturgy’s inherent logic: At Mass, communion is given not from tabernacle but from the sacrifice just enacted (see GIRM, 56h).

Does the law require, in a strict sense, that every church must have a distinct chapel? No. In smaller or preconciliar buildings, a distinct chapel may not be possible. That’s okay. But should we discourage establishing such chapels when they are possible? Not if we want to obey the law. Especially in new constructions, why should we not aim for the ideal?

This is not “arid liturgical rationalism” or ivory-tower elitism. The long history and tradition of reserving the blessed sacrament favors a separate chapel, and today there remain sound theological and pastoral reasons for continuing this tradition. The history of reserving the eucharist will have to be dealt with in another article, but here, let’s look at why supporting the tradition of a separate chapel is a good idea today.
Pastoral Questions

No hard data exists on what Roman Catholics think about where the tabernacle should be. Most are trying hard to live the gospel in their daily lives and are willing to trust their pastors regarding the arrangement of church furnishings. Those who come to the meetings about a new or renovated church design are parishioners who are excited about the project and parishioners who are afraid that orthodox faith is going to be harmed by it. Both groups are usually numerical minorities in the parish. Thus claims that it is "the sense of the faithful" that the tabernacle belongs in the center of the sanctuary are premature.

For the sake of discussion, though, let's assume that 90 percent of the faithful would vote to put the tabernacle right behind the altar. Does this make it a good thing to do? Majority percentages also might vote to limit Mass to 30 minutes, to conduct homilies in the style of a talk show, or to eliminate homilies altogether. (And no matter what you think about the state of preaching in the church today, you have to admit that these would not be good things to do.) So "give the people what they want" is no solution—even if we were ever to ascertain what they truly want.

More to the point: What is behind the upset of this minority over the tabernacle? The underlying issue is quite important: It's about locating the divine, finding God. Those who would focus the whole building around the tabernacle believe this serves best to express the divine presence. But the church building is not merely a tabernacle for the tabernacle. The building is, as history shows and Pope John Paul II recently stated in his 1999 Letter to Artists (#12), first of all a place for the celebration of the sacred mysteries. The liturgy invites us to encounter Christ in four active ways in the liturgy: in the assembly of the baptized, in the person of the ordained minister, in the proclamation of the scriptures and in the consecrated elements that are shared in holy communion (and only then reserved in the tabernacle; see CSL, 7 and GIRM, 7; see also Mysterium fidei, 39). And this is best served by respecting the internal, poetic logic of the liturgy: The baptized go up to God's altar and share in the fruits of the sacrifice in which they are participating. Then, outside of Mass, they share communion with the sick and dying from, and adore Christ present in, the tabernacle—in its worthy chapel.

People who have been to St. Peter's Basilica never claim that the popes have shoved Jesus aside. Most visitors to St. Peter's—or any of the major churches of Rome—don't even notice that the tabernacle is not near the altar, even though they visit the blessed sacrament chapel. They are not bothered in the least. The overall environment and the solemn enacting of the liturgy engage people. They encounter God and don't sweat the arrangement of things.

Parish churches are not all papal basilicas. But in their own ways, they too can provide a sense of the sacred, especially and maybe even only if the liturgy is enacted there with beauty and with grace, nobly robed in the best elements of the culture(s) of those participating in it. No particular location of the tabernacle will substitute for poor celebrations of the liturgy. Putting a tabernacle in full view from the pews belies a terrible misunderstanding if the building itself is not the most fitting place for liturgy that the community can create.

Liturgical Questions

And putting a tabernacle in full view of the pews causes interesting problems. If the tabernacle is behind the altar, what do ministers do, after the eucharistic prayer, when they pass between the tabernacle and the altar? Do they genuflect to the tabernacle and then pirouette and genuflect to the eucharist on the altar? Do they ignore the eucharist on the altar? Ignore the tabernacle? Those claiming that the tabernacle belongs in the sanctuary appeal to reverence for the sacrament. But what's so reverent about the priest and other ministers constantly having their backs to the tabernacle when
they minister at ambo, chair or altar? What are ministers signaling to the assembly when they genuflect whenever they pass the tabernacle and ignore the consecrated altar of sacrifice, the focus of the liturgy? And outside of Mass, when the lone person is in church, wouldn't it be an aid to prayer to be closer to the tabernacle?

Benefits of a Chapel

In architecture, space signifies importance: The CEO gets the largest office with the best view; the public spaces of a building are larger and more lavish than its storerooms; a formal parlor gets better wood trim, rugs and furniture than a rumpus room. Devoting an entire chapel to the reservation of the eucharist is not "shoving Jesus aside." It is establishing in stone the parish's love and reverence for this mode of Christ's presence. And done right, it isn't cheap! A separate chapel dedicated solely to the presence of Christ in the blessed sacrament makes a bold architectural and financial statement: We make room for the things that we hold most dear.

A distinct blessed sacrament chapel in the parish church has any number of pastoral advantages:

1. It accommodates the faithful's access to the blessed sacrament for prayer (see canon 937). The rest of the building can be secured, and entry to the chapel can be controlled (by locating an outside door to the chapel near the office or by installing a keypad lock for which parishioners can obtain the code, for example) so that the safety of lone or off-hour worshipers is enhanced. Lights, heating and ventilation can also be used more efficiently and economically. (The folks of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Carmel, Indiana, have 24-hour access to their lovely chapel, and the keypad system is used by the folks at St. Celestine in Elmwood Park, Illinois, for their popular chapel.)

2. It allows for adoration (perpetual or periodic) uninterrupted by funerals, wedding rehearsals, choir practice, children's liturgies and so on. When exposition is done here, it need not be interrupted.

3. It allows for the eucharist to be taken to the dying at any moment of the day or night without interrupting the celebration of Mass or other rites.

4. At Mass, it encourages attentiveness to the altar of sacrifice, to the action of the liturgy, without showing disregard of the tabernacle.

5. Outside of Mass, it encourages intimacy and focus in adoration. You can kneel in close proximity to the tabernacle. You can prostrate yourself on the floor without feeling self-conscious. Isn't this better than being 40 feet away from the tabernacle in a wide-open church that seats 1000 people? (This has been parishioners' experience with the austere and beautiful chapel at Most Holy Trinity parish in Saco, Maine, as well as the experience of retreatants at the new spiritual life center in the diocese of Wichita, Kansas, which has a chapel for celebration, and another, quite lovely one for reservation.)

6. It allows for the proper celebration of the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, the beginning of the holiest days of the year. (How reverent is it to set up an elaborate altar of repose for the close of Holy Thursday only to have to take it apart at midnight and then remove the blessed sacrament to the sacristy safe for Good Friday and Holy Saturday?)

Practice and Belief

But what about the 1992 Gallup poll that claims that only 35 percent of Catholics believe in the real presence? Just as Trent cemented the tabernacle to the high altar in response to seventeenth-century doubts about the nature of the reserved sacrament, shouldn't we be doing the same now? If this poll is true, we are in big trouble. This is not to doubt the poll's technical accuracy—Gallup did it!—but did it truly measure the faith of Catholics? For most people today, "real" means "empirically quantifiable." Electricity is real—I can measure it and I have to pay for it. Pizza is
real because it looks, smells, tastes and handles like pizza. This Gallup poll measured the fact that a majority of Catholics do not know that the word "real" has a technical theological meaning. (I think that those who took the poll thought, "Hmmm ... after the consecration, it still looks like bread, tastes like wine, but I know it’s Christ’s body and blood; okay, it’s not scientifically skin and corpuscles, so, let’s see ... I’ll say ‘symbol.’") Look at the people coming up in procession Sunday after Sunday to eat Christ’s body and drink Christ’s blood! Tell me that they do not believe! Tell them that they do not believe!

Contemporary European American, middle class culture is very informal. We wear shorts to church, we don’t genuflect and bow much anymore, and we shuffle up to communion. Some even sit through the eucharistic prayer and communion. This doesn’t mean that we don’t believe—it means that we need to be convinced that walking in procession, genuflecting before a tabernacle and bowing to an altar are important prayers of the body. We need spiritual exercise!

Where you place the tabernacle is not going to make or break people’s faith in the eucharist. How you celebrate the liturgy will! Whether or not you provide catechesis will! Rome could change liturgical law.

The U.S. bishops themselves could seek an indult for a variance in practice. But this isn’t going to solve anything. Having claimed “the confusion of the faithful” as the excuse for such action, real confusion will result as the majority of parishes—who have tried to be faithful to liturgical law and sound pastoral practice—will now have to undo what they did and explain one more time why furniture is being rearranged again, when what people really want and need today are celebrations of the liturgy that will enable them to live their daily struggles to be faithful to Christ.

The problem is not with separate chapels but rather with the poor chapels that are sometimes built, and even more so with the half-hearted ways we continue to enact the rites. Rather than abandon the wisdom of current liturgical law, let’s embrace it and get it right! Let’s build chapels for our tabernacles that are stunning and evocative. (Sometimes it’s as simple a solution as scale—make the chapel big enough! Always, it’s a matter of money—we get what we’re willing to pay for.) Let’s build places for celebration that are worthy and beautiful. When we do, people won’t even be tempted to think that Jesus has been “shoved aside.” Then in these places, let’s act accordingly. 

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Encourage a Separate Chapel

Conrad Kraus

If a mother were to give “every encouragement” to her child with poor reading skills, would she offer the remote control for the television, or a book? If an insurance company were to give “every encouragement” for annual physical examinations, would it refuse to cover such exams in its benefits?

A Suitable Chapel

Every encouragement should be given to the practice of eucharistic reservation in a chapel suited to the faithful’s private adoration and prayer. If this is impossible because of the structure of the church, the sacrament should be reserved at an altar or elsewhere, in keeping with local custom, and in a part of the church that is worthy and properly adorned.

“Every encouragement” are the first two words of paragraph 275 of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, in which is found the liturgical law currently in force about the location for the reservation of the blessed sacrament: “Every encouragement should be given to the practice of eucharistic reservation in a chapel suited to the faithful’s private prayer and adoration.” Contrary to what some are claiming today, this text is not superseded by the 1980 instruction Inaestimabile donum, the 1983 Code of Canon Law, the Catechism of the Catholic Church or any recent reponsum ad dubium from the Pontifical Council for the Authentic Interpretation of Texts.

One would suppose that if “every encouragement” were to be given to a practice, then that practice is the ideal: Bishops, pastors and architects should see that this is what is done; any contrary practice is exceptional. GIRM 275 goes on to say, “If this is impossible ... ” and then gives options. But these options are exceptions, and certainly not preferred. One of the options is placing the tabernacle on an altar. But the instruction Eucharisticum mysterium (#54) clearly instructs that there should be one altar in the place of worship, and that “as far as possible, the tabernacle should be placed in a chapel set apart from the main body of the church.

Such a preference for the location of the tabernacle, although it may offend the piety of some, logically follows from the church’s teaching about how Christ is present in the action of the liturgy. This teaching is found in both the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, (#7) and GIRM itself (also #7). Succinctly summarizing this teaching, Eucharisticum mysterium makes another important point, indicated here by the italics:

In order to achieve a deeper understanding of the eucharistic mystery, the faithful should be instructed in the principal modes by which the

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Lord is present to his church in liturgical celebrations.

He is always present in the assembly of the faithful gathered in his name (see Matthew 18.20). He is also present in his word, for it is he who is speaking as the sacred scriptures are read in the church.

In the eucharistic sacrifice he is present both in the person of the minister, “the same now offering through the ministry of the priest who formerly offered himself on the cross,” and above all under the eucharistic elements. For in that sacrament, in a unique way, Christ is present, whole and entire, God and man, substantially and continuously. This presence of Christ under the elements “is called the real presence not to exclude the other kinds, as if they were not real, but because it is real par excellence.”

This last sentence is a quote from Pope Paul VI’s encyclical Mysterium fidei. “In order to achieve a deeper understanding of the eucharistic mystery, the faithful should be instructed ...” This is precisely why a separate chapel for the tabernacle is so strongly encouraged. It embodies concretely a pride of place for adoration of the reserved sacrament outside of Mass. And it creates four focal points for the celebration of the liturgy. For in that sacrament, in a unique way, Christ is present, whole and entire, God and man, substantially and continuously. This presence of Christ under the elements “is called the real presence not to exclude the other kinds, as if they were not real, but because it is real par excellence.”

A short tour of some of our more important buildings for liturgy teaches much about the best location for the tabernacle. One of the earliest basilica-style building in Rome is Saint John Lateran, which is often called “the pope’s cathedral” because it is the cathedral of the bishop of Rome. It has been renovated, rebuilt (after having burned down by invading armies), and adjusted to fit the evolving demands of liturgy since it was first constructed, some time between 311 and 314. The separate blessed sacrament chapel is befitting a cathedral church (see the Ceremonial of Bishops, 49). Notice, though, its interesting location—nearer the baptistry than the altar.

Not long after the Lateran was built, in the 380s, the basilica of Saint Paul outside the Walls was constructed. It completely burned down in 1823 but was rebuilt as it was prior to the fire. It’s hard to tell how all of the spaces were originally used, which spaces might have been rebuilt from the fourth century and which are reconstructed additions made between the
fourth and nineteenth centuries. But one thing is clear: A separate blessed sacrament chapel has been part of this basilica since time immemorial. The same is true of the basilica of Saint Mary Major which was built in Rome between 432 and 440.

Finally, and perhaps ultimately, Saint Peter's Basilica contains a lovely chapel for the reservation of the blessed sacrament. The basilica took about 160 years to build, and it's important to realize that it was being worked on as the Council of Trent was articulating aspects of the doctrine of the eucharist. In St. Peter's, there are no signs, no arrows, to tell visitors where the sacrament is reserved. Yet no one complains. Once visitors discover this fitting chapel, they never need to ask again. It is a favoured place of prayer in this, perhaps the world's most famous church.

We can spring forward to the twentieth century and to the United States, and look at a church building that is at the centre of both ecclesiastical and national life. The basilica of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., includes a wonderful blessed sacrament chapel on the left aisle, about half-way down the building. Information about the history of this chapel indicates that it was added by order of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. This chapel is a good example of being "suitably decorated" and noble.

In the Shrine, as in the four major basilicas of Rome, there is no lack of devotion to the blessed sacrament, and the architecture does not fail to embody a sound theology of eucharist in terms of reserving the sacrament. One would be hard-pressed to assume that the architects, the pastors or parishioners of these places do not believe in the real presence.

Some will object that these five examples are not pertinent to parish practice. All five of these classic churches are places of pilgrimage, and one of them is a cathedral. So of course they should have separate blessed sacrament chapels, but that does not mean that parish churches should. Yet in the "Church of the Year 2000," a parish church designed by U.S. architect Richard Meier for the diocese of Rome on direct orders from Pope John Paul II, the tabernacle is not located in the main body of the church. It is in the daily Mass chapel.

The practice of placing the tabernacle in the daily Mass chapel is common in European churches built since Vatican II, following a suggestion by Cardinal Giacomo Lercaro in a letter to the presidents of the national conferences of bishops on furthering the reform. The letter, called today "Le renouveau liturgique," is dated 30 June 1965. It was written in French and translated into six other languages. In it, Cardinal Lercaro, who was writing on behalf of the Consilium in charge of implementing the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, wrote: "Particularly in larger churches, a chapel set aside for the reservation and adoration of the eucharist is advisable and might well be used for the eucharistic celebration during the week, when there are fewer of the faithful participating" (see Documents on the Liturgy, 416).

Cardinal Lercaro's suggestion never makes it into any other documents about locating the tabernacle. Placing the tabernacle in the daily Mass chapel does not do either the tabernacle or the altar for daily Mass justice. It does not solve the problem of one overshadowing the other—it simply relocates it. The same architectural focus on the four modes of Christ's presence that is needed in the Sunday assembly is no less needed Monday through Saturday.

So it is an odd situation today that groups who otherwise claim fidelity to the law choose to ignore or explain away the clear directives of the Holy See that every encouragement is to be given to establishing a separate chapel for the tabernacle. National or diocesan documents that list exceptions, that automatically exempt older churches from wrestling with the issue, or that call for devices that close and open a niche to hide or reveal the...
tabernacle before or after Mass, seem to run counter to "every encouragement" that bishops ought to be giving to the building of distinct chapels for reserving the blessed sacrament.

The Presences of Christ

In the celebration of the Mass the principal modes of Christ's presence to his church emerge clearly, one after the other: first he is seen to be present in the assembly of the faithful gathered in his name; then in his word, with the reading and explanation of scripture; also in the person of the minister, finally, in a singular way under the eucharistic elements. Consequently on the grounds of sign value, it is more in keeping with the nature of the celebration that, through reservation of the sacrament in the tabernacle, Christ not be present eucharistically from the beginning on the altar where Mass is celebrated. That presence is the effect of the consecration and should appear as such.

_Eucharisticum mysterium_ (#54)

Proper Reverence

The eucharist is reserved for the following purposes and in this order: viaticum to the dying, communion for the sick and for others absent from Mass, and adoration of the "sacred species. Communion from the tabernacle during Mass is not foreseen in church documents, since consecration of hosts at each celebration is the norm. It is strongly recommended that the eucharist be reserved in a chapel, suited to private adoration and prayer, set apart from the main body of the church. A room specifically designed and separate from the major worship space will help avoid any confusion between the celebration of the eucharist and eucharistic reservation for the purposes listed above. Far from relegating the reserved eucharist to an unimportant place, a eucharistic chapel, if properly designed and appointed, gives it proper reverence and attention. ... 

Only when it is impossible to arrange for a separate room or chapel should a location within the main assembly space be considered. This, however, should not lie on a central axis behind the altar, nor should the place of reservation compete in importance with the altar. During Mass there should be no additional lighting or candles to draw attention to the place of reservation. ... 

The eucharistic chapel should be retained for the sole purpose of quiet adoration and prayer. When it becomes necessary to celebrate the eucharist in an area outside the main worship space, namely on weekdays, it is preferable to appoint a room other than the eucharistic chapel for this purpose. Celebration of the eucharist and adoration of the reserved sacrament should clearly appear as two distinct forms of worship conducted at different times.

National Liturgy Office
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
_Our Place of Worship_ (draft 1998), pages 46-47
Distinctive Location

The place of reservation relates to the ancient tradition of reserving the blessed sacrament when Mass is over. The purpose of this reservation is to provide for communion of the sick and for adoration, both public and private.

In designing for reservation, it should be kept in mind that the eucharistic celebration itself is the true center of the church’s worship, and indeed of the whole Christian life. The actual celebration of the eucharist is the focus of the normal Sunday assembly, and the altar its center. ...

As with other liturgical elements, the tabernacle should have its own distinctive location, visibly set apart for the purpose of reservation. Much more is therefore required than a merely arbitrary chosen place, however convenient. ...

Two possible arrangements are recommended:

A: A blessed sacrament chapel. This arrangement is recommended by current legislation. ... Such a setting can more easily provide an ambiance of quiet, calm and withdrawal, being of a scale conducive to intimate contemplative prayer and spiritual communion. ...

B: The tabernacle in the sanctuary. This arrangement accords with current legislation. A tabernacle in the sanctuary (but not on the altar), properly related to the altar and the other sanctuary elements, and visible to the congregation during Mass, public devotions and private prayer, can give a total, ordered and permanent unity to the whole church.

Being “properly related to the altar” does not necessarily mean “located in the center behind the altar.” In fact, such an arrangement is not satisfactory from a liturgical point of view, as it can create its own problems by occasioning a visual tension between altar and tabernacle, since both are on one axis; by requiring genuflections that disrupt liturgical movement and weaken recognition of Christ’s presence in other forms; and by drawing attention away from the progressive unfolding of Christ’s presence during the celebration.

The Irish Episcopal Commission on Liturgy,
Roman Catholic Bishops of Ireland

The Place of Worship: Pastoral Directory on the Building and Reordering of Churches, 16
Canadian Realities
Lay Leadership of Prayer: Theology and Practice
Mary M. Schaefer

For more than half of the world’s Catholics lay-led Sunday celebrations are a regular feature of life. This holds true for parishes and missions in the Canadian north and in many rural or coastal areas. In one-priest parishes sudden illness may occasion a lay-led celebration. Conditions may prohibit travel; a meeting of the wider Church or a holiday may call away the pastor. Within Catholic circles large and small, at gatherings of people implementing the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, among people gathered for social justice, bible study, communal prayer, retreats, meetings, and in senior citizens’ residences, homes for the infirm and hospitals, a non-ordained member of the laos may lead prayer. After all, it is the prerogative and responsibility of the baptized, sharers in the royal priesthood of Jesus Christ, to pray together.1

Why Do Christians Pray Together as well as in the Secrecy of Hearts and Homes?

Christians assemble weekly on the Lord’s Day to celebrate the resurrection of Christ and the dawn of the new creation, to hear God’s word and respond to it as good news, to pray in praise and petition, to offer thanks in eucharist, and to be brought into God’s intimate company in communion with his body the Church. Obligation alone cannot motivate them, and God does not need the worship of human beings. Rather, we need worship, for expressing faith in word and symbol realizes and deepens faith in ourselves and encourages that of others. Defying an imperial edict that prohibited assemblies, in the year of the Lord 303, the members of a small house-church in North Africa were rounded up by the authorities. They confessed the faith in these terms:

As though a Christian could be without the dominicum (Lord’s Day assembly) or the dominicum be celebrated without the Christian.... the Christian is constituted in the Lord’s Day assembly and the assembly in the Christian....

Assembling on Sunday for prayer is in Christians’ bones.

Why Is Our Corporate Prayer Offered through Christ?

Sociologists tell us that a leaderless group does not survive. This axiom holds for the Church, community of Jesus Christ, who

1 This article continues the theme of two previous ones on the configuration of the Church, which can be analyzed architecturally (the environment for worship), ecclesiologically (the theology of Church), and ministerially (here focusing on the ministry of lay leader of prayer). See Mary M. Schaefer, “Building Communities of Faith, Building the Church,” National Bulletin on Liturgy #134 (Vol. 31, Fall 1998) 144-155; idem, “Liturgical Ministry, Faith and Discernment,” NBL #155 (Vol. 31, Winter 1998) 242-245.


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is its faithful leader and high priest. Moreover, Christ abides with the community of disciples.

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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age (Matthew 28.19-20).

The crucified One, by the power of the Spirit risen from the dead to sit at God’s right hand, has a new, cosmic presence in the world. Christ has a special kind of visibility when human beings, confessing him as Lord, allow him to configure their lives to his. Christians know from experience that to hear Christ preached, to remember his deeds, and to recount his promises is to encounter him. Here is another kind of visibility: Christ is actively present whenever faith is expressed mutually, in the very gathering for worship, in the word, in the persons of the presider and the other ministers, in prayer and song. All of the above are aspects of the “real” presence of the risen Christ, although that adjective is most commonly applied to the substantial presence of Christ in the consecrated bread and wine.

Christ’s promise to remain with believers, that is, to be actively or operationally present, concludes the commission to make disciples by baptizing. The point of the “make disciples” pericope (Matthew 28.16–20) is not Jesus’ bestowal of authority (thus conferring personal status) but rather his entrusting to others the work and mission that animated his life and for which he died.

Royal Priesthood, Charisms and Ministries

All service of leadership in the Church is based on the royal priesthood which Christians share (1 Peter 2.4–5, 9–10; Revelation 1.6, 5.10) and which is held in common by the whole people (the laos). Baptized into Christ and anointed by the Spirit, this kingdom of priests is nourished for the faith-journey by eucharistic food. “Each has a particular gift from God, one having one kind and another a different kind” (1 Cor 7.7). Gifts of grace are to be “received” and put to use in the community. Acknowledgement and “reception” of the different gifts of grace up-build the whole people. (A gift “unreceived” is a source of suffering for the bearer; the community that rejects the offer actually despises the Spirit’s gift.) When the many gifts are received, the community grows in the Spirit into the stature of Christ its leader. The Sunday eucharistic assembly constitutes the visible communion of the Church. Laity exercise ministries by virtue of sharing in the royal priesthood. Charisms, duly discerned in the community, together with appropriate formation, equip laity for ministerial collaboration.

Ordained and Lay Leadership of Public Prayer

To signify that the body of Christ is animated by Christ, a duly appointed and equipped leader is required. Bishops and presbyters are ordained as permanent leaders of the Spirit-filled Church; deacons are ordained for a permanent ministry of service. For Catholic Christians the “bishop or priest who presides” at the eucharist “signifies the presence of Christ the Head with his body. Presbyter and bishop, by

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4 The synoptics do not show Jesus “preaching” himself. He is entirely focused on furthering the reign of God. So it should be with Church leadership. Not status but a call from God accompanied by charisms that equip persons to do God’s work are criteria to be discerned and accepted by the ecclesial community.
virtue of ordination, also represent the bond of communion between this assembly and the local and universal Church."

The Catholic affirmation that some persons are constituted apostolic witnesses to God's plan of salvation in Jesus Christ by the sacrament of holy orders does not restrict authentic representation and carrying out of the ministry of Jesus Christ to the ordained. (The Lord is always most fully represented by the witness of holiness, faith and love.) But those who are made permanent pastoral officers to act in the name of the community give the community a public face and accountability. They "sacramentalize" Christ when they act in the name of the body. Structurally they also link their local assembly to the larger Church. They may be entrusted with ministry beyond parish boundaries. Their ordination endures even when they do not have the right to exercise it. As signs of every Christian's call, the ordained undertake, within the Church and before the world, to be permanent, publicly accountable witnesses to Jesus Christ.

Lay leaders of prayer may be deputed by ecclesial authority to positions of responsibility for sustaining the ongoing life of a faith community. Such deputation should be public, and should include prayer. However, laity and lay religious are not installed into the permanent ecclesial office of apostolic witness. As well, lay liturgical ministries are exercised within the parish. These ministries are not diocesan in scope, nor are they "transportable."

The different ways that lay and ordained relate to Church structures suggest differences in the way ordained and laity function appropriately as leaders of the prayer.

When lay leaders forget that royal and ministerial priesthood are of two different orders, they may take ordained leadership as a model for their ministry and become "clericalized." This happens, for example, when they act as sole minister or take upon themselves a number of ministries intended to be shared among others.

However, liturgical celebrations whether led by ordained or by lay leaders share the same general liturgical principles. Remembering that the assembly is the primary mode for Christ's liturgical presence, animating the action of the assembly, and facilitating its variety of ministries is the leader's raison d'être. And like the ordained leader, it is never enough that a lay minister volunteers or is self-appointed. His or her charism for liturgical ministry must be identified within the community, and he and she commit themselves to its development.

Qualities "Wanted" in Lay Leaders of Prayer

Attitude of Service to the Liturgical Assembly

1. They are regular members of the praying assembly that has commissioned them and worship with the community whether "their name is on the list" or not. They know that the ministry of the assembly, not their own ministry, comes first. Without the assembly their ministry has no reason to exist. Instead of modelling themselves on the ordained, they are content to act as members of the baptized and anointed people. Their leadership gives visibility to the royal priesthood of all the baptized. It is characterized by openness, mutuality, and collaboration.

5 Sunday Celebration of the Word and Hours (Ottawa: CCCB 1995), Pastoral Notes, 19, pp. xvi–xvii.
6 Mary M. Schaefer and J. Frank Henderson, The Catholic Priesthood: A Liturgically Based Theology of the Pastoral Office (Canadian Studies in Liturgy, 4; Ottawa: CCCB 1990) esp. 53–65. No doubt the Churches established ordained leaders everywhere during the course of the 2nd century because of sociological and theological imperatives which were undergirded by the Spirit's prompting.
7 Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 10.
2. They aim for transparency, that self-forgetfulness that enables the leader to pray in front of others so as to model authentic prayer before God. The old virtue of humility (not self-abasement) enables them to see things in their true light and to accept the truth about self.

3. Ministry is undertaken "for the greater glory of God." To advance the work of God they willingly yield ministry to others. They live the demanding counsel, "Give way to one another in the Lord." After all, Jesus willingly gave away everything.

4. They offer their gift to be discerned and received instead of volunteering a talent. They accept community discernment, by bishop or priest, then by others skilled in the ministry. They understand how wanting to "do" everything is debilitating to other ministers. They do only what is appropriate to a given ministry.

5. They count it a privilege to animate the gifts of the gathered community. Large-heartedness inspires them to acknowledge giftedness in others and to assist the assembly in receiving these gifts. They are alert to the formation of cliques and to jealousies that inhibit the Spirit's action. They work to enlarge the hearts of those who may be threatened by an abundance of Spirit-gifts.

6. They are not divisive. Their ministry actually up-builds the community without drawing undue attention to themselves. They do not sit in the seat reserved for a presbyter, actually or figuratively.

7. They are full members of the team that prepares liturgy, not expecting others to do their work for them.

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8. From time to time they participate in sessions for prayer, education and skill development. They realize that reflection on the celebration, its strengths and areas needing improvement, is an integral part of any ministry.

9. Leaders of prayer, as all ministers, strive to live a centred life of personal prayer and reflection on the scriptures. What has been said of preaching is equally applicable to lay leadership of prayer: One truth that always comes across, regardless of one's preaching [presiding] abilities, is the preacher's [presider's] relationship to God, a universally important matter to worshipers. They discern it with or without the preacher's [presider's] help.... Whatever the nature of the preacher's [presider's] relationship to God, it is food for the congregation.... Nothing can obscure it.10

When sharing the fruits of their prayer and study, they are attentive to the Spirit's movements, speaking if the Spirit has given them something useful to say, otherwise realizing the blessings of silence.

10. Outside the time of communal prayer their work and life contributes to the Church's mission. Liturgical ministry is the ritual dimension of ongoing commitment to advance God's reign in the world.

11. They are authentic witnesses to Christian discipleship in lifestyle, word and works. If their life beyond the church walls is not in keeping with what Christian ministry symbolizes, they withdraw voluntarily, taking to heart the apostle's exhortation to the Ephesians.

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9 Because of their role overseeing the community's witness, service and worship, ordained leaders must exhibit aptitude and be trained for a whole range of competencies. The natural leaders of the parish, e.g., the chair of parish council or even of the bible study group, may not have the charism to lead prayer. The community may require education to accept the person having a gift for leadership of public prayer.

10 Richard N. Chrisman, "Preaching the Truth," Liturgy 8/2 (Fall 1989) 87-88 [my insertions in brackets].
Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us, and gave himself up for us.... But fornication and impurity of any kind, or greed, must not even be mentioned among you, as is proper among saints. Entirely out of place is obscene, silly, and vulgar talk; but instead, let there be thanksgiving (Ephesians 5.1-4).

Developing and Offering Natural Abilities and Gifts

12. They possess the ability to take charge when this is called for, and insight and strength to stand up for what God requires, Christ models, the Spirit encourages, and the Church intends.

13. Even if training is limited, leaders possess a "theological instinct," which enables them to discern the action of God calling the assembly together and of Christ and the Spirit animating its witness and prayer.

14. They have a prudential ability to judge who is the person God has gifted for ministry in this particular celebration, at this moment of the community's life.

15. As with ordained ministry, lay leaders are appointed only after they have internalized the meaning of and acquired the skills of a variety of ministries. They wait their turn to serve. They accept "feedback" both when it flatters and when it challenges.

16. Having studied the liturgy to understand its rationale and rhythms, they love it. They are competent to set its pace, and can orchestrate its peace and prayerfulness, its ability to inspire and convert. They do not undertake more than their given ministry entails, more than the ritual books indicate or more than circumstances require. They do not combine the ministry of lay leader of prayer and communion minister in the same celebration.

17. Having been invited and prepared, then appointed for a set period, lay ministers do not presume appointment in perpetuity. When needed, their commission is renewed. Otherwise they take their place in the assembly of the royal priesthood, perhaps serving in another ministry.

Differing Perspectives

In recent years the question has been raised whether those not ordained can be called to "ministry." This question cannot be answered solely at the level of canon law or even of liturgical principles. The operative theology of Church must also be accounted for. Does the particular faith community live an ecclesiology of communion modelled on the life of the Trinity? Does it make place for the action of both Christ and the Holy Spirit in raising hearts and minds to God and building a community of praise and witness? For fruitful lay ministry the answer to these questions must be "yes." If royal priesthood is not presumed and ministers are not selected on the basis of charism, individuals cannot hope to participate in a true ministry of the Church.

The diagram that follows provides a schematic analysis of the diverse ecclesiologies (theologies of church) that underly liturgical participation and leadership.
## Ecclesiologies Underlying Liturgical Ministry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Lay Ministers</th>
<th>Theory of Church(^{11})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>POLITICAL</strong> (authority, laws determine roles, actions)</td>
<td>individuals volunteer their talents</td>
<td>Juridical (radically secular)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing, “how to”</td>
<td>“I” will do ...</td>
<td>ordained leader decides everything, acts “in place of God, Christ”; others act by the authority of the ordained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ritual</strong></td>
<td>scholastic sacramental theology emphasizes God’s downward grace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LITURGICAL</strong> (principles are drawn from the liturgy)</td>
<td>gifts identified, training developed to meet faith-community’s needs</td>
<td>“Christ-only” communion (christomonistic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting and reflecting with community discernment</td>
<td>“we” represent the community, try to act according to the mind of the Church</td>
<td>the bishop or presbyter alone represents Christ; he confers, but makes all decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Earthly liturgy</strong></td>
<td>sacramental theology uses model of encounter, takes account of the assembly’s response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THEOLOGICAL</strong> (modelled on triune activity)</td>
<td>Christ and the Spirit are active in faith-filled ministers to lead the community to God</td>
<td>Trinitarian communion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being, allowing Christ and the Spirit to act</td>
<td>every minister seeks in the Spirit to be transparent to Christ(^{12})</td>
<td>representing Christ the Head, the ordained leader consults, shares with the team, rarely needs to make decisions alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heavenly liturgy</strong></td>
<td>theology of liturgy is derived from the Trinity and their mutual relations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{11}\) The categories are those of Edward J. Kilmartin. *Culture and the Praying Church* (Canadian Studies in Liturgy, 5; Ottawa: CCCB 1990), Ch. 3.

\(^{12}\) See Schaefer and Henderson, *Catholic Priesthood*, 89.
If the political perspective governs the activity of a parish, its ordained leader must make all decisions respecting liturgy. Laity cannot be awarded competence; in the strict sense they do not even participate in ministries. While the governance of every human community necessarily involves juridical elements, a worshipping community that does not go beyond juridical ecclesiology is not living out its royal priesthood. How can a lay leader whose mode of acting has not developed beyond the level of ritual signify Christ’s presence in the Spirit?

In a liturgical perspective the ordained leader represents the risen Christ, who is present according to a variety of modes. In this “Christ-only” ecclesiology the work of the Holy Spirit is given structural ecclesial recognition in the ministry of the ordained, but not in the activity of other Christians. Therefore participation of laity in ministries cannot be fully explained. Awareness of the Spirit’s action elsewhere in the Church is limited. The ministry of the laity can be activated only in juridical terms, by the ordained leader.

Trinitarian communion ecclesiology is the fully theological perspective that grounds a collaborative model and an authentic liturgical spirituality. Ecclesial activity is modelled on the work of both Christ and the Spirit in drawing the world to the Father. Therefore laity as well as ordained ministers exercise true ministries that, in their various ways, are acknowledged as representing Christ and having the Spirit as inspiration. The theology of liturgy and sacraments is drawn from the Church’s trinitarian prayer. In this model the parish as well as the liturgical team can say, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.” Trinitarian communion ecclesiology, barely present in the documents of Vatican II but increasingly found in writings of John Paul II, is still more proposed than actualized. Lay liturgical leaders will be required to live in the world of juridical practice unless their communities take the trinitarian life as model. As long as this is so, exercise of ministries by laity will remain in question. More seriously, the earthly liturgy will fail to be a vibrant reflection of the liturgy of heaven. And Christ and the Spirit will be inhibited in their work of returning all of creation to God.

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13 Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium), 7.

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From the National Office
Reservation Chapels:
A Preliminary Look at Our Experience

In mid-March, the National Liturgy Office (NLO) sent questionnaires to a small number of parishes that were known to have their tabernacle located in a separate reservation chapel. The purpose of this survey was to assess the validity of claims that such chapels are detrimental to the faith and spiritual life of individuals and communities. This article is a brief summary and discussion of the responses. (The questionnaire appears at the end of this article. We ask any readers in a leadership position in a community that has a separate reservation chapel and did not previously receive a
questionnaire to please photocopy and complete it and send it to the NLO, 90 Parent Ave., Ottawa, ON K1N 7B1 by December 31, 2000.)

Within six weeks, responses were received from 26 parishes in six provinces and one territory. Only three respondents reported sensing a loss of reverence for the eucharist in their communities. Signs of loss of reverence for the eucharist listed by two of these respondents included: casual socialization in the main worship area, males not removing hats inside the church building, gum chewing and bulletin reading during mass, in addition to minimal use of reservation chapel. One of these two was unwilling to attribute this perceived loss of reverence to the existence of the chapel. (The third responded "yes and no," but did not specify any signs.)

Fifteen respondents reported a greater intensity of eucharistic devotional activity since the establishment of the separate chapel. They also reported that this special place of honour for the reserved sacrament allows the community to express its faith in the real presence by its use of the chapel and by its attention to design and appointments within the chapel. (Six respondents included photos to demonstrate what a truly special place they have created to house the blessed sacrament.) Four of the remaining eight respondents (those who did not report either positive or negative change in eucharistic devotion) noted an increased appreciation of the nature of the Sunday celebration of eucharist on the part of parishioners.

The most positive responses came from communities in which the chapel is most accessible physically and temporally. However, such accessibility often calls for careful design so that the whole building does not need to be open just because the chapel is. In some instances, worshippers simply punch in an access code, which allows ready access to the space while guaranteeing a degree of safety and security.

Only ten of the 26 respondents reported that the chapel was used exclusively for eucharistic adoration (including recitation of the rosary). Eight of the remaining 16 reported that daily mass (among other things) is celebrated in the chapel of reservation. This practice of using the reservation chapel for small group liturgies seems to undermine all the arguments for having a separate chapel: instead of devotional activity in the liturgical space we now have liturgical activity in the devotional space. In fact, if we think about the mathematics of such situations, mass is probably celebrated more frequently in the reservation chapel than in the “main” worship space; the chapel thus becomes a celebration chapel rather than a reservation chapel. Surely a reservation chapel has no need of an altar.

Two respondents indicated regular simultaneous use of two tabernacles, one parish having tabernacles both in the main worship space and in the reservation chapel, while the other had tabernacles both in a reservation chapel and in a perpetual adoration chapel. On this practice see Canon 938 §1.

A few respondents made additional comments that should be noted.

• The most common extra comment (seven respondents) was to note the need for thorough and ongoing eucharistic catechesis both with regard to the nature of the Sunday celebration and to the practice of eucharistic reservation.

• In two parishes the chapel was in a high traffic area, a fact that rendered the atmosphere non-conducive to private adoration at times when the building was being used for other purposes. In fact, the extent of traffic in one of these parishes (the only access to the sacristy is through the chapel of reservation) seemed to do a serious disservice to the blessed sacrament. Two respondents noted that they have had to be assertive about closing the chapel during liturgical celebrations; this certainly makes sense if the community is offered a reasonable alternative opportunity to use the chapel.
• One respondent noted that it is a source of sadness to the community that while many parishioners have intensified their eucharistic adoration activity and deepened their appreciation of the Sunday celebration, a few have left the parish because of the location of the tabernacle.

• The pastor of an urban parish with a large perpetual adoration chapel in a separate building on the parish property commented that the chapel attracts a large number of "people with problems and difficulties both in their private lives and in their understanding of God and Church." He warns that ministry to this group occupies a large portion of his time and energy, and that those who establish a perpetual adoration schedule must be well prepared to take on this ministry in addition to ministry within the parish community.

• And finally, one respondent sent us a quote from David Philippart, "If the Mass is being celebrated so poorly that people aren't aware of how Christ becomes present in the Eucharist, the priest can wear the tabernacle around his head and it's not going to make any difference." [1]

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Reservation Chapel Survey

Several claims have been made as to the effects (for good or ill) of a separate chapel of reservation on the faith, eucharistic devotion and prayer life of ordinary Catholic parishioners and on parish liturgy and parish life in general. At this time many parishes have opened such chapels of reservation in the course of renovations or in building a new parish worship space. The National Liturgy Office would like to gather information about the experience of such parishes. We invite you to photocopy and complete this survey questionnaire or, if you find the questionnaire too confining, to submit your comments on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Does your parish church have a separate chapel of reservation?

2. List the times when it is accessible to worshippers?

3. How long has this chapel been in existence?

4. How many people will it accommodate?

5. Describe its location in relationship to the altar-table at which the daily and Sunday eucharist is celebrated.

6. In addition to the personal private prayer of individuals, for what else is it used?

7. Have you seen any signs that any of the following have arisen since and because of the establishment of the separate chapel:
   • a decreased reverence for the eucharist in the parish community?
   • a decrease in faith in the real presence of Christ in the eucharist?
   • a diminished sense of the importance of Christ in the lives of Christians and Christian communities?
   • an attitude of contempt for the eucharist?

   If you answered "yes" to any part of question 7, please explain the signs you have seen.

8. What benefits or positive changes in parish life have you witnessed that you would attribute to the establishment of the chapel?

9. Please use the back of the paper to describe (or diagram) the chapel in greater detail and to add any further comments you have.
The Ontario Liturgical Conference (OLC) held its annual meeting at St. Joseph's Retreat Centre (Morrow Park), in Toronto, on Nov. 10-12, 1999. The conference is currently grappling with the question of how it can best assist Ontario dioceses with the implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. The past practice was centred on annual institutes offered in a different diocese each year, with the bulk of the organizational work handled by personnel of that diocese. This approach has become increasingly difficult in recent years and less broadly effective than the conference hoped. At this year's meeting the question was addressed with a two-pronged approach. First, Sheila O'Dea, of the North American Forum on the Catechumenate, was invited to enter into a frank dialogue with the conference about the Forum's current programs, style and accommodation of the Canadian reality. Second, noting the words of Bishop James Doyle in the ritual book, "Regular use of the rites over a period of some years will enable us to determine what further adaptations may be necessary or desirable in our land. Suggestions for adaptation may be sent at any time to our National Liturgical Office," the conference asked Catherine Ecker of Toronto's Catholic Office of Religious Education to lead members in a process of reflecting on twelve years of experience with the rite in the province of Ontario. The discussion proved highly fruitful and revealing, and notes on the discussion were taken back to Ottawa by Sr. Donna Kelly, director of the National Liturgical Office.

The OLC's second major project during the past was the Summer School for Liturgical Musicians held August 2-6, 1999 at St. Joseph's College in Toronto. (Focus presentations from this year's summer school, entitled "the Easter Journey," were published in Bulletin #160 Spring 2000.) Participants included guitarists, organists, choir directors, choir members, cantors, members of folk ensembles, teens, young and middle-aged adults, and seniors from all over Ontario and outside the province, including music ministers from other Christian denominations. Our 96 students spent the week in an intense program which included morning and evening prayer, two daily skill classes (guitar, organ, cantor, music leader, sight-singing, music reading for guitarists, liturgical movement and dance, and the concert choir for advanced voice students), a daily liturgical focus session and follow-up discussion group, a plenary session to highlight music for the various parts of the Easter Journey, in addition to special events each evening. It was a tremendous success!

The third major project of the conference during the past year has been the development of a tool for the examination of the practice of various popular devotions in dioceses, parishes, schools and various other Catholic groups who pray together. This project was originally undertaken in response to discussions over the past two years centred on the relationship of popular devotions to the liturgical celebration of the paschal mystery, and the meaning of the paschal mystery in daily Christian life, in light of the fact that the Great Jubilee Year 2000 has been dedicated to the eucharist.

The OLC plans to meet in Toronto, October 25-27, 2000 to discuss "Liturgical Catechesis" with the assistance of Catherine Ecker and Margaret Bick. For further information on the work of the Ontario Liturgical Conference contact:

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Phone: 905-528-7988
Fax: 905-528-1088
In the years since Vatican II our appreciation of eucharist has been nourished. We are evermore aware of the importance of the celebrating community. There is a new appreciation for the eucharistic prayer, and there are a variety of liturgical texts facilitating our worship on any occasion. New forms of liturgical service and other ministries have been established—noting in particular those who bring communion to the sick.

Currently, many parishes are rediscovering other dimensions of eucharist, especially the devotional aspects. As a youngster, I was enthralled by the mystery, beauty and simplicity of the weekly Sunday evening benediction in our parish church. This time of prayer was followed by a breakneck sprint home to watch “The Ed Sullivan Show” on television!

Eucharistic devotion did not cease as a result of any decree of Vatican II. In fact, such devotions had started to wane before the Council. A contributing factor, perhaps, was the acceptance of Sunday evening celebrations. (Saturday anticipation would come much later.) Just as vespers had been replaced by novenas and benediction as a fixture of Sunday evening, now such devotions were themselves to give way to Sunday evening celebrations of mass.

Today, for more than nostalgic reasons, some parishes are rediscovering some of our devotional roots, e.g., in the service of benediction. The post-conciliar documents do in fact have something to say about the matter of devotion—both encouraging it and centring it on the celebration of the eucharist itself. These documents also provide new rituals for celebration, which are not exactly the same as those commonly in use before their publication.

As we deepen our appreciation of the eucharist as a centre of devotion, it is important that those who plan such devotions keep in sight the primary sense of celebration, and respect the theology and ritual set before us by the Church.

+ Douglas Crosby, OMI, bishop of Labrador City-Schefferville is currently chair of the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy.
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