

## Norms for Eucharistic Exposition Diocese of Saint Augustine

As the practice of Solemn and/or Perpetual Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament becomes more common in parishes and institutions of the Diocese of Saint Augustine, it is important that certain norms/guidelines be established that are consistent with the Church's liturgical praxis.

Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament outside of Mass takes place in two ways: (1) prayer before the Blessed Sacrament reserved in a tabernacle and (2) the worship of the Holy Eucharist through exposition in a monstrance or ciborium. Pastors should encourage their people to make regular visits to a church or chapel for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament reposed in a tabernacle. The prayer that is offered by an individual, or even in groups, during such visits is not limited in any way by the law of the Church, though proper reverence should always be observed. Such practices as private meditation, praying of the rosary, spiritual reading, and the like may take place as a person wishes on his/her visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

In some places, the practice known as "Perpetual Adoration" has been successful. This occurs when a parish or religious community commits to a permanent presence of people to pray before the reposed Blessed Sacrament. Such adoration takes place every day of the year except from the conclusion of the Liturgy of the Passion and Death of the Lord on Good Friday through the celebration of the Easter Vigil. By its nature, this Eucharistic devotion requires no permission of the Diocesan Bishop or the pastor nor is there any liturgical legislation for its practice.

Once, however, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed for the public worship of the People of God, the liturgical laws of the Church must be observed. These can be found in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass* (published in 1973, English translation in 1976).

Generally, there are two forms of Eucharistic Exposition:

***Perpetual Exposition*** – Perpetual exposition is worship before the Blessed Sacrament exposed in a monstrance or ciborium every day of the year for a 24-hour period. This requires the permission of the Diocesan Bishop who must ensure that the liturgical laws in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass* are known and will be followed by the community who makes the request. At least two persons must be present when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed for public worship.<sup>1</sup>

***Solemn Exposition*** – This is exposition of the Blessed Sacrament "for an extended period of time." In parish churches where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, solemn exposition is recommended to take place at least once a year.<sup>2</sup> An extended period of time may be daily for a few hours or may take place through what was formerly called "Forty Hours." There may also be set times for Eucharistic Exposition to occur. The liturgical laws set forth in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass* are to be followed. The decision of when to offer solemn exposition in a parish, and how often, must be made based on the pastoral needs of the parish.

---

<sup>1</sup> Response from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments to the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, July 1995. Reported in June 1995 edition of the *Newsletter* of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy. (Hereafter cited as "Response from CDWDS, July 1995.")

<sup>2</sup> *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, 1973. No. 86. (Hereafter cited as *HCWEOM*.)

## **General Liturgical Norms for Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament**

When the Blessed Sacrament is taken from the tabernacle for the purpose of Exposition, the Church's liturgical laws are to be followed. They include:

1. During the period of exposition, "there should be prayers, songs and readings to direct the attention of the faithful to the worship of the Lord. ...Part of the Liturgy of the Hours, especially the principal hours, may be celebrated before the Blessed Sacrament."<sup>3</sup> The rosary may also be prayed.<sup>4</sup> *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass* also encourages "readings from scripture with a homily or brief exhortations" to assist the faithful in understanding the mystery of the Eucharist.
2. When exposition takes place in a monstrance, four to six candles are lighted and incense is used. If exposition takes place in the ciborium, at least two candles are to be lighted and incense may be used.<sup>5</sup>
3. When exposition occurs, a song may be sung as the period of exposition begins. If exposition takes place in a monstrance, the Blessed Sacrament is honored with incense.
4. When Mass will precede exposition and when Mass will interrupt the period of exposition, the host to be used for exposition should be consecrated at that Mass.<sup>6</sup> After the distribution of Holy Communion, the host is placed in the monstrance. The Prayer after Communion is then prayed followed by the singing of a Eucharistic hymn while the Blessed Sacrament is honored with incense.
5. The ordinary minister for exposition and reposition of the Blessed Sacrament is a priest or deacon. In their absence, an acolyte, an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion or another person specifically appointed by the local Ordinary may publicly expose or repose the Blessed Sacrament. These latter ministers may open the tabernacle for the purpose of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and/or repose the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. It is never lawful for lay ministers to give the blessing with the Blessed Sacrament nor do they incense it.<sup>7</sup>
6. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for the sole purpose of giving the Eucharistic blessing is always prohibited.<sup>8</sup>
7. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is prohibited during the Paschal Triduum (from Holy Thursday evening through Vespers/Evening Prayer of Easter Sunday).<sup>9</sup>

Exposition may include periods of sacred silence. However, silence may not be the only observance when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed. The rite requires that during exposition, there are to be times of public worship, either by "prayers, songs and readings," the Liturgy of the Hours, the rosary, or readings from scripture, e.g., a Liturgy of the Word.

---

<sup>3</sup> *HCWEOM*, nos. 95 and 96.

<sup>4</sup> From "Notes on the Recitation of the Rosary During Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament," published by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in *Notitiae*, vol. 34 (1998). This document is clear in saying, "One should not expose the Eucharist only to recite the rosary. However,

among the prayers that are used during adoration, the recitation of the rosary may be included . . . .”

5 *HCWEOM*, no. 85.

6 See *HCWEOM*, no. 94.

7 *HCWEOM*, no. 91.

8 *HCWEOM*, no. 89.

9 Response from CDWDS, July 1995. “Under no circumstances may perpetual exposition take place during the Easter (Paschal) Triduum.”

In addition to these General Norms, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, including Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, may never be added to any of the liturgies or rites of the Church with the exception of those that have been noted. Examples of rites to which Exposition and Benediction may not be attached include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Stations of the Cross
- The celebration of Confirmation, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, and Marriage
- The rituals of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*
- The rites of the *Order of Christian Funerals*
- Any of the rites in the *Book of Blessings*

### **Additional Norms in the Diocese of Saint Augustine**

For parishes which schedule Solemn Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament as well as parishes which the Diocesan Bishop has approved Perpetual Exposition, the following must be observed:

- ❖ At least two (2) people are to worship before the Blessed Sacrament during exposition. Pastors are to ensure that enough people are committed to worship before the Blessed Sacrament when it is exposed for public worship.
- ❖ Pastors *must* provide for the safety of those who are worshipping before the Blessed Sacrament when exposition will take place during the night time hours. A phone is to be provided in the immediate area that can be used in case of emergencies. Furthermore, between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m., the door to the chapel should be kept locked and entrance granted by use of a special access code that those assigned to those hours should know.
- ❖ As stated in number 1 of the “General Liturgical Norms for Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament” (above), *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass* is clear about the forms of prayer that are to be celebrated when Exposition occurs. In addition, the rosary along with litanies such as the Litany of the Holy Eucharist, the Litany of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, the Litany of the Sacred Heart may be used to direct the faithful’s prayer during exposition.
- ❖ In the Diocese of Saint Augustine, minimally, when a change occurs for the persons who are to be worshipping before the Blessed Sacrament, a short scripture passage is to be read aloud followed by a prayer. (Examples are given at the end of these norms and ritual cards will be provided by the Diocesan Liturgical Commission.)

**Norms Approved February 5, 2007**

*Most Reverend Victor Galeone, D.D.*

*Bishop of St. Augustine*