

HOLY COMMUNION AND WORSHIP OF THE EUCHARIST OUTSIDE MASS

Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship

Prot. no. 900/73

DECREE

The sacrament of the eucharist was entrusted by Christ to his bride, the Church, as spiritual nourishment and as a pledge of eternal life. The Church continues to receive this gift with faith and love.

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.

In turn, eucharistic reservation, which became customary in order to permit the reception of communion, led to the practice of adoring this sacrament and offering to it the worship which is due to God. This cult of adoration is based upon valid and solid principles. Moreover, some of the public and communal forms of this worship were instituted by the Church itself.

The rite of Mass has been revised and, in the instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium* of May 25, 1967, regulations have been published “on the practical arrangements for the cult of this sacrament even after Mass and its relationship to the proper ordering of the sacrifice of the Mass in the light of the regulations of the Second Vatican Council, and of other documents of the Apostolic See on this matter”.¹ Now the Congregation for Divine Worship has revised the rites, “Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass”.

These rites, approved by Pope Paul VI, are now published in this edition, which is declared to be the *editio typica*. They are to replace the rites which appear in the Roman Ritual at the present time. They may be used at once in Latin; they may be used in the vernacular from the day set by the episcopal conferences for their territory, after the conferences have prepared a vernacular version and have obtained the confirmation of the Holy See.

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

From the office of the Congregation for Divine Worship, June 21, 1973, the feast of Corpus Christi.

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¹ See Congregation of Rites, instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, no. 3g: AAS 59 (1967) 543.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

I The Relationship between Eucharistic Worship outside Mass and the Eucharistic Celebration

1. The celebration of the Eucharist is the centre of the entire Christian life, both for the Church universal and for the local congregations of the Church. “The other sacraments, all the ministries of the Church, and the works of the apostolate are united with the eucharist and are directed toward it. For the holy eucharist contains the entire spiritual treasure of the Church, that is, Christ himself, our passover and living bread. Through his flesh, made living and life-giving by the Holy Spirit, he offers life to men, who are thus invited and led to offer themselves, their work, and all creation together with him.”¹
2. “The celebration of the eucharist in the sacrifice of the Mass,” moreover, “is truly the origin and the goal of the worship which is shown to the eucharist outside Mass.”² Christ the Lord “is offered in the sacrifice of the Mass when he becomes present sacramentally as the spiritual food of the faithful under the appearance of bread and wine.” And, “once the sacrifice is offered and while the eucharist is reserved in churches and oratories, he is truly Emmanuel, ‘God with us’. He is in our midst day and night; full of grace and truth, he dwells among us.”³
3. No one therefore may doubt “that all the faithful show this holy sacrament the veneration and adoration which is due to God himself, as has always been customary in the Catholic Church. Nor is the sacrament to be less the object of adoration because it was instituted by Christ the Lord to be received as food”.⁴
4. In order to direct and to encourage devotion to the sacrament of the eucharist correctly, the eucharistic mystery must be considered in all its fullness, both in the celebration of Mass and in the worship of the sacrament which is reserved after Mass to extend the grace of the sacrifice.⁵

II The Purpose of Eucharistic Reservation

5. The primary and original reason for reservation of the eucharist outside Mass is the administration of viaticum. The secondary reasons are the giving of communion and the adoration of our Lord Jesus Christ who is present in the sacrament. The reservation of the sacrament for the sick led to the praiseworthy practice of adoring this heavenly food in the churches. This cult of adoration rests upon an authentic and solid basis, especially because faith in the real presence of the Lord leads naturally to external, public expression of that faith.⁶
6. In the celebration of Mass the chief ways in which Christ is present in his Church gradually become clear. 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, the whole and entire Christ, God and man, is substantially and permanently present in the sacrament. This presence of Christ under

1 Second Vatican Council, decree *Presbyterorum ordinis*, no. 5.

2 Congregation of Rites, instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, no. 3e: AAS 59 (1967) 542.

3 *Ibid.*, no. 36: *loc. cit.*, 541; Paul VI, encyclical *Mysterium fidei*, near the end: AAS 57 (1965) 771

4 Congregation of Rites, instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, no. 3f: AAS 59 (1967) 543.

5 Cf. *Ibid.*, 3g: *loc. cit.*, 543.

6 Cf. *ibid.*, no. 49: *loc. cit.*, 566–7.

the appearance of bread and wine “is called real, not to exclude other kinds of presence as if they were not real, but because it is real par excellence.”⁷

Therefore, to express the sign of the eucharist, it is more in harmony with the nature of the celebration that, at the altar where Mass is celebrated, there should if possible be no reservation of the sacrament in the tabernacle from the beginning of Mass. The eucharistic presence of Christ is the fruit of the consecration and should appear to be such.⁸

7. The consecrated hosts are to be frequently renewed and reserved in a ciborium or other vessel, in a number sufficient for the communion of the sick and others outside Mass.⁹
8. Pastors should see that churches and public oratories where, according to law, the holy eucharist is reserved, are open every day at least for some hours, at a convenient time, so that the faithful may easily pray in the presence of the blessed sacrament.¹⁰

III The Place of Eucharistic Reservation

9. The place for the reservation of the eucharist should be truly pre-eminent. It is highly recommended that the place be suitable also for private adoration and prayer so that the faithful may easily, fruitfully, and constantly honour the Lord, present in the sacrament, through personal worship.

This will be achieved more easily if the chapel is separate from the body of the church, especially in churches where marriages and funerals are celebrated frequently and churches which are much visited by pilgrims or because of their artistic and historical treasures.

10. The holy eucharist is to be reserved in a solid tabernacle. It must be opaque and unbreakable. Ordinarily there should be only one tabernacle in a church; this may be placed on an altar or, at the discretion of the local Ordinary, in some other noble and properly ornamented part of the church other than an altar.¹¹

The key to the tabernacle where the eucharist is reserved must be kept most carefully by the priest in charge of the church or oratory or by a special minister who has received the faculty to give communion.

11. The presence of the eucharist in the tabernacle is to be shown by a veil or in another suitable way determined by the competent authority.

According to traditional usage, an oil lamp or lamp with a wax candle is to burn constantly near the tabernacle as a sign of the honour which is shown to the Lord.¹²

IV The Competence of Episcopal Conferences

12. It is for episcopal conferences, in the preparation of particular rituals in accord with the Constitution on the Liturgy (no. 63b), to accommodate this title of the Roman Ritual to the needs of individual regions so that, their actions having been confirmed by the Apostolic See, the ritual may be followed in the respective regions.

In this matter it will be for the conferences:

7 Paul VI, encyclical *Mysterium fidei*: AAS 57 (1965) 764; cf. Congregation of Rites, instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, no. 9: AAS 59 (1967) 547.

8 Cf. Congregation of Rites, instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, no. 55: AAS 59 (1967) 568-9.

9 Cf. Roman Missal, General Instruction, nos. 285 and 292.

10 Cf. Congregation of Rites, instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, no. 51: AAS 59 (1967) 567.

11 cf. *ibid.*, nos. 52-3: *loco cit.*, 567-8.

12 Cf. *ibid.*, no. 57: *loc. cit.*, 569.

- a) to consider carefully and prudently what elements, if any, of popular traditions may be retained or introduced, provided they can be harmonized with the spirit of the liturgy, and then to propose to the Apostolic See the adaptations they judge necessary or useful; these may be introduced with the consent of the Apostolic See;
- b) to prepare translations of texts which are truly accommodated to the character of various languages and the mentality of various cultures; they may add texts, especially for singing, with appropriate melodies.

CHAPTER I

Holy Communion Outside Mass

Introduction

I The Relationship between Communion outside Mass and the Sacrifice

13. Sacramental communion received during Mass is the more perfect participation in the eucharistic celebration. The eucharistic sign is expressed more dearly when the faithful receive the body of the Lord from the same sacrifice after the communion of the priest.¹ Therefore, recently baked bread, for the communion of the faithful, should ordinarily be consecrated in every eucharistic celebration.
14. The faithful should be encouraged to receive communion during the eucharistic celebration itself.

Priests, however, are not to refuse to give communion to the faithful who ask for it even outside Mass.²

In fact it is proper that those who are prevented from being present at the community's celebration should be refreshed with the eucharist. In this way they may realize that they are united not only with the Lord's sacrifice but also with the community itself and are supported by the love of their brothers and sisters.

Pastors should see that an opportunity to receive the eucharist is given to the sick and aged, even though not gravely sick or in imminent danger of death, frequently and, if possible, daily, especially during the Easter season. It is lawful to minister communion under the appearance of wine to those who cannot receive the consecrated bread.³

15. The faithful should be instructed carefully that, even when they receive communion outside Mass, they are closely united with the sacrifice which perpetuates the sacrifice of the cross. They are sharers in the sacred banquet in which "by communion in the body and blood of the Lord the people of God shares in the blessings of the paschal sacrifice, renews the new covenant once made by God with men in the blood of Christ, and by faith and hope prefigures and anticipates the eschatological banquet in the kingdom of the Father, proclaiming the death of the Lord until he comes".⁴

II The Time of Communion outside Mass

16. Communion may be given outside Mass on any day and at any hour. It is proper, however, to determine the hours for giving communion, with a view to the convenience of the faithful, so that the celebration may take place in a fuller form and with greater spiritual benefit.

Nevertheless:

- a) on Holy Thursday, communion may be given only during Mass; communion may be brought to the sick at any hour of the day;

¹ Cf. Second Vatican Council, constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 55.

² Cf. Congregation of Rites, instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, no. 33a: AAS 59 (1967) 559-60.

³ Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 40-1: *loc. cit.*, 562-3.

⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 3a: *loc. cit.*, 541-2.

- b) on Good Friday communion may be given only during the celebration of the Passion of the Lord; communion may be brought to the sick who cannot participate in the celebration at any hour of the day;
- c) on Holy Saturday communion may be given only as viaticum.⁵

III The Minister of Communion

17. It is, first of all, the office of the priest and the deacon to minister holy communion to the faithful who ask to receive it.⁶ It is most fitting, therefore, that they give a suitable part of their time to this ministry of their order, depending on the needs of the faithful.

It is the office of an acolyte who has been properly instituted to give communion as a special minister when the priest and deacon are absent or impeded by sickness, old age, or pastoral ministry or when the number of the faithful at the holy table is so great that the Mass or other service may be unreasonably protracted.⁷

The local Ordinary may give other special ministers the faculty to give communion whenever it seems necessary for the pastoral benefit of the faithful and a priest, deacon, or acolyte is not available.⁸

IV The Place of Communion outside Mass

18. The place where communion outside Mass is ordinarily given is a church or oratory in which the eucharist is regularly celebrated or reserved or a church, oratory, or other place where the local community regularly gathers for the liturgical assembly on Sundays or other days. Communion may be given, however, in other places, including private homes, when it is a question of the sick, prisoners, or others who cannot leave the place without danger or serious difficulty.

V Regulations for Giving Communion

19. When communion is given in a church or oratory, a corporal is to be placed on the altar, which is already covered with a cloth.⁹ A communion plate is to be used.

When communion is given in other places, a suitable table is to be prepared and covered with a cloth; candles are also to be provided.

20. The minister of communion, if he is a priest or deacon, is to be vested in an alb, or a surplice over a cassock, and a stole.

Other ministers should wear either the liturgical vesture which may be traditional in their region or the vestment which is appropriate for this ministry and has been approved by the Ordinary.

The eucharist for communion outside a church is to be carried in a pyx or other covered vessel; the vesture of the minister and the manner of carrying the eucharist should be appropriate and in accord with local circumstances.

21. In giving communion the custom of placing the particle of consecrated bread on the tongue of the communicant is to be maintained because it is based on a tradition of several centuries.

5 Cf. Roman Missal, typical edition 1970; *Missa vespertina in Cena Domini*, 243; *Celebratio Passionis Domini*, 250, no. 3; *Sabbato sancto*, 265

6 Cf. Congregation of Rites, instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, no. 31 : AAS 59 (1967) 557-8.

7 Cf. Paul VI, apostolic letter *Ministeria quaedam*, August 15, 1972, no. VI: AAS 64 (1972) 532.

8 Cf. Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments, instruction *Immensae caritatis*, January 29, 1973, 1, I and II.

9 Cf. Roman Missal, *General Instruction*, no. 269.

Episcopal conferences, however, may decree, their actions having been confirmed by the Apostolic See, that communion may also be given in their territories by placing the consecrated bread in the hands of the faithful, provided there is no danger of irreverence or false opinions about the eucharist entering the minds of the faithful.¹⁰

The faithful should be instructed that Jesus Christ is Lord and Saviour and that, present in the sacrament, he must be given the same worship and adoration which is to be given to God.¹¹

In either case, communion must be given by the competent minister, who shows the particle of consecrated bread to the communicant and gives it to him, saying The body of Christ, to which the communicant replies Amen.

In the case of communion under the appearance of wine, the regulations of the instruction *Sacramentali Communionem* of June 29, 1970, are to be followed exactly.¹²

22. Fragments which may remain after communion are to be reverently gathered and placed in a ciborium or in a vessel with water.

Likewise, if communion is given under the appearance of wine, the chalice or other vessel is to be washed with water.

The water used for cleansing the vessels may be drunk or poured out in a suitable place.

VI Dispositions for Communion

23. The eucharist continuously makes present among men the paschal mystery of Christ. It is the source of every grace and of the forgiveness of sins. Nevertheless, those who intend to receive the body of the Lord must approach it with a pure conscience and proper dispositions of soul if they are to receive the effects of the paschal sacrament.

On this account the Church prescribes “that no one conscious of mortal sin, even though he seems to be contrite, may go to the holy eucharist without previous sacramental confession”.¹³ In urgent necessity and if no confessor is available, he should simply make an act of perfect contrition with the intention of confessing individually, at the proper time, the mortal sins which he cannot confess at present.

It is desirable that those who receive communion daily or very often go to the sacrament of penance at regular intervals, depending on their circumstances.

Besides this, the faithful should look upon the eucharist as an antidote which frees them from daily faults and keeps them from mortal sins; they should also understand the proper way to use the penitential parts of the liturgy, especially at Mass.¹⁴

24. Communicants are not to receive the sacrament unless they have fasted for one hour from solid food and beverages, with the exception of water.

The period of the eucharistic fast, that is, abstinence from food or alcoholic drink, is reduced to about a quarter of an hour for:

- 1) the sick who are living in hospitals or at home, even if they are not confined to bed;

10 Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship, instruction *Memoriale Domini*, May 29, 1969: AAS 61 (1969) 541-55.

11 Cf. Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments, instruction *Immensae caritatis*, January 29, 1973, no. 4.

12 Cf. no. 6: AAS 62 (1970) 665-6.

13 Cf. Council of Trent, Session XIII, Decree on the Eucharist, 7: Denz.Sch/Sn. 1646-7; *ibid.*, Session XIV Canones de sacramento Paenitentiae, 9: Denz-Sch/Sn. 1709; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Normae pastorales circa absolutionem sacramentalem generali modo impertiendam*, June 16, 1972, introduction and no. VI: AAS 64 (1972) 510 and 512.

14 Cf. Congregation of Rites, instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, no. 35 : AAS 59 (1967) 561.

- 2) the faithful of advanced age, even if not bedridden, whether they are confined to their homes because of old age or live in a nursing home;
 - 3) sick priests, even if not bedridden, or elderly priests, whether they are to celebrate Mass or to receive communion;
 - 4) persons who care for the sick or aged, and the family of the sick or aged, who wish to receive communion with them, when they cannot conveniently observe the fast of one hour.¹⁵
25. The union with Christ, to which the sacrament is directed, should be extended to the whole of Christian life. Thus the faithful, constantly reflecting upon the gift they have received, should carry on their daily work with thanksgiving, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and should bring forth fruits of rich charity.

So that they may continue more easily in the thanksgiving which is offered to God in an excellent manner through the Mass, it is recommended that each one who has been refreshed by communion should remain in prayer for a period of time.¹⁶

Rite of Distributing Holy Communion Outside Mass

The structure of this rite is as follows:

Introductory Rites

Greeting

Penitential Rite

Celebration of the Word of God

Reading(s)

General Intercessions

Holy Communion

The Lord's prayer

The sign of peace

Communion

Silent prayer or psalm/song of praise

Concluding prayer

Concluding rite

Blessing

Dismissal

26. This rite is to be used chiefly when Mass is not celebrated or when communion is not distributed at scheduled times. The purpose is that the people should be nourished by the word of God. By hearing it they learn that the marvels it proclaims reach their climax in the paschal mystery of which the Mass is a sacramental memorial and in which they share by communion.

Nourished by God's word, they are led on to grateful and fruitful participation in the saving mysteries.

¹⁵ Cf. Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments, instruction *Immensae caritatis*, January 29, 1973, no. 3.

¹⁶ Cf. Congregation of Rites, instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, no. 38: AAS (1967) 562.

CHAPTER II

Forms of Worship of the Holy Eucharist

Introduction

48. The eucharistic sacrifice is the source and culmination of the whole Christian life. Both private and public devotion toward the eucharist, therefore, including devotion outside Mass, are strongly encouraged when celebrated according to the regulations of lawful authority.

In the arrangement of devotional services of this kind, the liturgical seasons should be taken into account. Devotions should be in harmony with the sacred liturgy in some sense, take their origin from the liturgy, and lead the people back to the liturgy.¹⁷ [79]

49. When the faithful honour Christ present in the sacrament, they should remember that this presence is derived from the sacrifice and is directed toward sacramental and spiritual communion.

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.

The faithful should make every effort to worship Christ the Lord in the sacrament, depending upon the circumstances of their own life. Pastors should encourage them in this by example and word.¹⁸ [80]

50. Prayer before Christ the Lord sacramentally present extends the union with Christ which the faithful have reached in communion. It renews the covenant which in turn moves them to maintain in their lives what they have received by faith and by sacraments. They should try to lead their whole lives with the strength derived from the heavenly food, as they share in the death and resurrection of the Lord. Everyone should be concerned with good deeds and with pleasing God so that he or she may imbue the world with the Christian spirit and be a witness of Christ in the midst of human society.¹⁹ [81]

17 Cf. Congregation of Rites, instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, no. 58: AAS 59 (1967), 569

18 Cf. *ibid.*, no. 50: *loc. cit.*, 567

19 Cf. *ibid.*, no. 13: *loc. cit.*, 549.

1. EXPOSITION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

INTRODUCTION

I Relationship Between Exposition and Mass

51. Exposition of the holy eucharist, either in the ciborium or in the monstrance, is intended to acknowledge Christ's marvellous presence in the sacrament. Exposition invites us to the spiritual union with him that culminates in sacramental communion. Thus it fosters very well the worship which is due to Christ in spirit and in truth.

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.¹ [82]

52. During the exposition of the blessed sacrament, the celebration of Mass is prohibited in the body of the Church. In addition to the reasons given in no. 6, the celebration of the eucharistic mystery includes in a more perfect way the internal communion to which exposition seeks to lead the faithful.

If exposition of the blessed sacrament is 'extended for an entire day or over several days, it is to be interrupted during the celebration of Mass. Mass may be celebrated in a chapel distinct from the area of exposition if at least some members of the faithful remain in adoration.'² [83]

II Regulations for Exposition

53. A single genuflection is made in the presence of the blessed sacrament, whether reserved 'in the tabernacle or exposed for public adoration. [84]

54. For exposition of the blessed sacrament in the monstrance, four to six candles are lighted, as at Mass, and incense is used. For exposition of the blessed sacrament in the ciborium, at least two candles should be lighted, and incense may be used. [85]

Lengthy Exposition

55. In churches where the eucharist is regularly reserved it is recommended that solemn exposition of the blessed sacrament for an extended period of time should take place once a year, even though this period is not strictly continuous. In this way the local community may reflect more profoundly upon this mystery and adore Christ in the sacrament.

This kind of exposition, however, may take place, with the consent of the local Ordinary, only if suitable numbers of the faithful are expected to be present.³ [86]

56. For a grave and general necessity the local Ordinary may direct that a more extended period of supplication before the blessed sacrament exposed take place in churches where the faithful assemble in large numbers.⁴ [87]

57. If a period of uninterrupted exposition is not possible, because of too few worshippers, the blessed sacrament may be replaced in the tabernacle during periods which have been scheduled and announced beforehand. This reposition may not take place more often than twice during the day, for example, about noon and at night.

1 Cf. *ibid.*, no 60: *loco cit.*, 570.

2 Cf. *ibid.*, no. 61: *loc. cit.*, 570-1.

3 Cf. *ibid.*, no. 63: *loc. cit.*, 571. 7.

4 Cf. *ibid.*, no. 64: *loc. cit.*, 572

The following form of simple reposition may be observed: the priest or deacon, vested in an alb, or a surplice over a cassock, and a stole, replaces the blessed sacrament in the tabernacle after a brief period of adoration and a prayer said with those present. The exposition of the blessed sacrament may take place in the same manner (at the scheduled time).⁵ [88]

Brief Period of Exposition

58. Shorter expositions of the eucharist are 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.⁶

Exposition which is held exclusively for the giving of benediction is prohibited. [89]

Adoration in Religious Communities

59. According to the constitutions and regulations of their institute, some religious communities and other groups have the practice of perpetual eucharistic adoration or adoration over extended periods of time. It is strongly recommended that they pattern this holy practice in harmony with the spirit of the liturgy. Thus, when the whole community takes part in adoration before Christ the Lord, readings, songs, and religious silence may foster effectively the spiritual life of the community. This will promote among the members of the religious house the spirit of unity and brotherhood which the eucharist signifies and effects, and the cult of the sacrament may express a noble form of worship.

The form of adoration in which one or two members of the community take turns before the blessed sacrament is also to be maintained and is highly commended. In accordance with the life of the institute, as approved by the Church, the worshippers adore Christ the Lord in the sacrament and pray to him in the name of the whole community and of the Church. [90]

III The Minister of Exposition

60. The ordinary minister for exposition of the eucharist is a priest or deacon. At the end of the period of adoration, before the reposition, he blesses the people with the sacrament.

In the absence of a priest or deacon or if they are lawfully impeded, the following persons may publicly expose and later repose the holy eucharist for the adoration of the faithful:

- a) an acolyte or special minister of communion;
- b) a member of a religious community or of a lay association of men or women which is devoted to eucharistic adoration, upon appointment by the local Ordinary.

Such ministers may open the tabernacle and also, if suitable, place the ciborium on the altar or place the host in the monstrance. At the end of the period of adoration, they replace the blessed sacrament in the tabernacle. It is not lawful, however, for them to give the blessing with the sacrament. [91]

61. The minister, if he is a priest or deacon, should vest in an alb, or a surplice over a cassock, and a stole. Other ministers should wear either the liturgical vestments which are used in the region or the vesture which is suitable for this ministry and which has been approved by the Ordinary.

5 Cf. *ibid*, no. 65: *loc cit.*, 572.

6 Cf. *ibid*., no. 66: *loc. cit.*, 572.

The priest or the deacon should wear a white cope and humeral veil to give the blessing at the end of adoration, when the exposition takes place with the monstrance; in the case of exposition in the ciborium, the humeral veil should be worn. ^[92]

Rite of Eucharistic Exposition and Benediction

The structure of the Rite is as follows:

Exposition

Song

Exposition (Procession from the place of Reservation)

(Exposition after Mass)

Adoration

Readings, homily, prayers, songs ad libitum

or

Liturgy of the Hours

Benediction

Eucharistic Song

Prayer

Blessing

Reposition

Reposition (Procession to the place of Reservation)

Acclamation

2. EUCHARISTIC PROCESSIONS

72. When the eucharist is carried through the streets in a solemn procession with singing, the Christian people give public witness of faith and devotion towards the sacrament.

It is for the local Ordinary, however, to judge whether this is opportune in today's circumstances, and to determine the time, place, and order of such processions, so that they may be conducted with dignity and without loss of reverence to the sacrament.¹ [101]

73. The annual procession on the feast of Corpus Christi, or on an appropriate day near this feast, has a special importance and meaning for the pastoral life of the parish or city. It is therefore desirable to continue this procession, in accordance with the law, when today's circumstances permit and when it can truly be a sign of common faith and adoration.

In the principal districts of large cities there may be additional eucharistic processions for pastoral reasons at the discretion of the local Ordinary. If the procession cannot be held on the feast of Corpus Christi, it is fitting to hold some kind of public celebration for the entire city or its principal districts in the cathedral church or other appropriate places. [102]

74. It is fitting that a eucharistic procession begin after the Mass in which the host to be carried in the procession has been consecrated. A procession may also take place, however, at the end of a lengthy period of public adoration. [103]

75. Eucharistic processions should be arranged in accordance with local customs concerning the decoration of the streets and the order followed by the participants. In the course of the procession there may be stations where the eucharistic blessing is given, if this custom is in effect and is of pastoral advantage. Songs and prayers should be so directed that all proclaim their faith in Christ and direct their attention to the Lord alone. [104]

76. The priest who carries the blessed sacrament may wear the vestments used for the celebration of Mass if the procession takes place immediately afterward, or he may vest in a white cope. [105]

77. Lights, incense, and the canopy under which the priest carrying the blessed sacrament walks should be used in accordance with local customs. [106]

78. It is fitting that the procession should go from one church to another. Nevertheless, if local circumstances require, the procession may return to the same church where it began. [107]

79. At the end of the procession benediction with the blessed sacrament should be given in the church where the procession ends or at another appropriate place. Then the blessed sacrament is reposed. [108]

¹ Cf. Congregation of Rites, instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, no. 59: AAS 59 (1967) 570.

3. EUCHARISTIC CONGRESSES

80. Eucharistic congresses have been introduced into the life of the Church in recent years as a special manifestation of eucharistic worship. They should be considered as a kind of station to which a particular community invites an entire local church or to which an individual local church invites other churches of a single region or nation or even of the entire world. The purpose is that together the members of the church join in the deepest profession of some aspect of the eucharistic mystery and express their worship publicly in the bond of charity and unity.

Such congresses should be a genuine sign of faith and charity by reason of the total participation of the local church and the association with it of the other churches. [109]

81. Both the local church and other churches should undertake studies beforehand concerning the place, theme, and programme of the congress. These studies will lead to the consideration of genuine needs and will foster the progress of theological studies and the good of the local church. Specialists in theological, biblical, liturgical, pastoral and humane studies should help in this research. [110]

82. In preparation for a eucharistic congress, primary consideration should be given to the following:

- a) a thorough catechesis concerning the eucharist, especially as the mystery of Christ living and working in the Church, accommodated to the capacity of different groups;
- b) more active participation in the liturgy in order to encourage a religious hearing of the word of God and the spirit of brotherhood and community;²
- c) research and promotion of social undertakings for human development and the proper distribution of property, including temporal property, following the example of the primitive Christian community.³ Thus the ferment of the Gospel, as a force in the growth of contemporary society and as the pledge of the future kingdom⁴ may be diffused in some measure at the eucharistic table. [111]

83. The celebration of the congress should follow these criteria:⁵

- a) the celebration of the eucharist should be the true centre and high point of the congress to which all efforts and the various devotional services should be directed;
- b) celebrations of the word of God, catechetical meetings, and public conferences should be planned to investigate thoroughly the theme of the congress and to propose clearly the practical aspects to be carried out;
- c) there should be an opportunity for common prayers and extended adoration in the presence of the blessed sacrament exposed at designated churches which are especially suited to this form of piety;
- d) the regulations concerning eucharistic processions⁶ should be observed for the procession in which the blessed sacrament is carried through the streets of the city with common hymns and prayers, taking into account local, social, and religious conditions. [112]

2 Second Vatican Council, constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 41-52; constitution *Lumen gentium*, no. 26.

3 Cf. Acts 4:32.

4 Second Vatican Council, constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 47; decree *Unitatis redintegratio*, no. 15.

5 Cf. Congregation of Rites, instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, no. 67: AAS 59 (1967) 572-3.

6 Cf. above, nos. 72-9.

SUPPLEMENTARY APPENDIX

Rite of Eucharistic Exposition and Benediction

CATECHETICAL POINTS

The theological basis for the eucharistic devotion is well set out in nos. 48–50 of the rite itself. For the purposes of introduction, brief homily, etc, the following four main points will prove useful:

1. In the blessed sacrament, God is truly with us (Emmanuel). Though in the form of bread, Christ is really present as God and Man.

The changes in minor points of discipline, such as single genuflections instead of double ones, are merely externals and in no way lessen the respect due to God truly present in the sacrament.

2. Devotion to the eucharist has its origin in the sacrifice of the Mass, where bread and wine are truly changed into the body and blood of Christ. Such devotion should lead the faithful back to the Mass with renewed, invigorated and increased spirituality, by nourishing the spiritual union with Christ that leads to a heightened sacramental communion with him in the Mass.
3. Eucharistic devotion fosters a deeper participation in the paschal mystery. The faithful are more closely associated with the grace of salvation effected by Christ in his death and resurrection.
4. Through the eucharist, divine life is poured into the members of the Mystical Body. The faithful thank God for the gifts given to man through Jesus Christ, and are thus drawn further into the life and love of the body of Christ which is the Church. From this they can also draw help and inspiration in the missionary aspect of their lives as witnesses to Christ.

PASTORAL POINTS

The presentation of services of eucharistic devotion demands as much preparation as any other liturgical service. Through proper planning, based on thought and reflection as well as prayer, the minister may lead the people in this act of worship as a community rather than making it an occasion for individualized prayer; and this will also benefit the celebration of other liturgical services, especially the Mass.

On a practical level, the following points should be borne in mind:

1. *Light.*

Light is a visual aid, though we seldom think of it as such. (Further remarks about other visual aids will be found below.) Subdued lighting will normally assist in producing an appropriate atmosphere for prayer and meditation. However, enough lighting will be required for the people to be able to read the words (and the music) of anything that they have to say or sing. It will often be found useful to alter the lighting in some way — in intensity, or in area, or by changing the focal point — in the course of a service in order to give visual relief and contrast. (It is envisaged that such a change in atmosphere would occur at the beginning of the second stage of silent adoration during the suggested format for Holy Hour on p. 70 above. See also below under Music.) Lighting changes may also be

carried out by means of lighting (or extinguishing) candles if the electric lighting system is not sufficiently flexible. The transition from one kind of lighting to another should not be too abrupt (see also below under Silence) since this will risk destroying the atmosphere of prayer and meditation.

2. *Silence.*

It is generally better to have too much than not enough. If a real spirit of prayer and adoration has been promoted in the service, there will be no such thing as a surfeit of silence. A major point to remember is the transition from silence to something else — normally a spoken prayer or reading. (See above under Light.) The atmosphere is easily broken when a spoken voice utters something in a “public reading” or “proclamation” style after a period of silence. A softer, more intimate, delivery is called for, at least at the beginning of the new section. (Such a delivery will be necessary throughout prayers of the Meditation Prayer type, if these are used; it should also be noted that these are specifically designed for use after a period of silence and not after a reading or song.) The priest or reader should remain open and sympathetic to the mood of the worshipping community at all times, as in any other liturgy.

3. *Music.*

Nothing too demanding should be sung. Uncomplicated hymns and psalms — which need not necessarily be accompanied if no musicians are available — will generally work well. So also will litanies and other forms that include recurring refrains that can easily be picked up. It is probably best not to attempt to teach anything new, except in unusual circumstances (such as an extended vigil before the Blessed Sacrament). It might seem that this principle would create a problem for such forms as acclamations, which are short and probably not known by the people. In such cases, it is sufficient for a cantor to declaim the acclamation, everyone repeating it after him or her.

There is a particular place in meditative services for background music as an aid to prayer. If an organist is available, there is a large repertoire of suitable pieces to choose from. An unaccompanied woodwind instrument such as a flute or recorder may also prove effective, as may a plucked (not strummed) guitar. Much will depend on the resources available. If there are no musicians, recorded music on tape, cassette or disc could well be played through the church loudspeaker system. Background music, if it is used, will be most effective during a period of silent adoration, and perhaps occasionally during a reading (careful selection will be required in this case).

It would be particularly effective at times such as the second stage of silent adoration in the suggested Holy Hour structure given above, in conjunction with the change of lighting suggested (cf. *supra*). Whenever background music is used, it should be precisely that — an unobtrusive background. This should cause no problems with musicians, but some experiments may need to be carried out for recorded music—levels with the church loudspeaker system. A list of suitable pieces is given below; any other suitable pieces may be selected at choice.

The rite of exposition suggests that an Opening Song be sung while exposition takes place. This will be a Processional Song if the eucharist is not reserved at the altar where the blessed sacrament is to be exposed. If exposition follows immediately after Mass (see para 64 of the rite) the Opening Song here will replace the Song after Communion of the Mass. This would be the normal practice. On some occasions, however, it may be thought

preferable to begin the service with exposition carried out in silence. Similarly, the rite suggests that a song or acclamation be sung during reposition. It will normally be found that song and not silence will be better at this point.

4. *Visual aids.*

As already mentioned above, light itself is a visual aid and could well be used as such in a service of eucharistic devotion. Other visual aids, such as paintings and posters, are often useful in bringing out the seasonal tone of a celebration. Colour-slides projected in darkness on to a screen or light-coloured wall can also be effective. In the context of a eucharistic devotional service, it is suggested that slides should not be used during periods of silent adoration as they will tend to be a distraction. On the other hand, their catechetical value could well come into play on occasions as the accompaniment to a reading. As with all the other elements of preparation, the selection of visual aids, and especially slides, will require care and thought.