

IMPORTANT VOCABULARY ON THE CELEBRATION OF SOLEMN EXPOSITION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

“Staying on the Right Track”

Important Vocabulary

Adoration (of the Blessed Sacrament) Describes a time of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, outside of the celebration of the Eucharist (Mass). It is a time in which the faithful are given an opportunity to deepen their relationship with Christ and his Body, the Church. Adoration may be organized and scheduled within a local community to meet the needs of that community. Eucharistic adoration is never a requirement, it is a *privilege*. Adoration first developed of note in the 13th c.

Exposition (of the Blessed Sacrament OR Eucharist) Term refers to the *public display of the reserved sacrament, either in the monstrance or in a ciborium*. There is an official order of service to be used for the Exposition of the Holy Eucharist. **Perpetual exposition of the Holy Eucharist** is a privilege reserved to some religious and church communities, as a part of their communal life. It is not permitted in parish churches without the permission of the local ordinary (bishop). Exposition is never permitted *simultaneously* with the celebration of Mass, or during the Triduum. Exposition should always be seen in the context of flowing from the celebration of the Eucharist. *Note: it is not permitted to expose the Blessed Sacrament merely for the purpose of Morning or Evening Prayer.*

Benediction The liturgical practice which is the ritual blessing-prayer that concludes Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Central to this rite is the blessing of the faithful, making the sign of the cross with the monstrance, in silence (only priest or deacon).

Reposition (Think: a *re-positioning*) The action that the presider (priest or deacon) takes—removing the Blessed Sacrament or the monstrance from the altar, and reposing it in the tabernacle. The priest then returns to the altar, bows, and processes with the thurifer to the sacristy.

Ciborium A ciborium is a container, usually made from precious metal, with a lid. This vessel is used as a receptacle for holding consecrated hosts that are reserved for the sick. The ciborium is placed inside the **tabernacle** for safekeeping. It is usually brought to the credence table before communion is distributed (or just after), so that it is ready to receive any extra consecrated hosts. *Note: Communion is not to be actively distributed from the ciborium, at Mass. The consecrated hosts or bread that is distributed should be bread that is consecrated during the Mass in which it is to be distributed. The ciborium is the vessel that holds the remains. Extra consecrated hosts are reserved for adoration and for the sick.*

Blessed Sacrament or Eucharist (generally interchangeable) Term used to describe the consecrated host (sometimes it is called consecrated *bread*, but the host [round wafer] of unleavened bread is a convenient, usual form). Faith demonstrates to us that the consecrated host is the Real Presence of Jesus Christ—body, blood, soul, and divinity. The consecrated wine contains the same Real Presence, although when we hear “Blessed Sacrament” people are usually referring to the element of the host.

Monstrance The special receptacle, usually quite ornate, in which the Blessed Sacrament (consecrated host) is placed (into the **luna**, which is a glass oculus that can be opened) for adoration and solemn exposition.

Humeral Veil An ancient vestment, similar to a wide stole, that is draped over the shoulders of the priest or deacon, and used to handle the monstrance or ciborium—instead of using the bare hands. It is a vestment of “respect,” and used only during the rites of Solemn Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

Priest/Deacon Both are ordained (having received the Sacrament of Orders) for service in the Church. The priest is ordained for sacramental and Eucharistic service, the deacon is ordained to do works of charity.

Lay ecclesial minister A lay (meaning “non- ordained) person who works, either professionally or as a volunteer, in service to the Church.

“Forty Hours’ Devotion” The term for a devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, which a Catholic parish might enact one or more times annually. Contrary to popular belief and practice, “Forty Hours” was not intended to describe *the amount of time that Exposition took place*. Rather, the term “Forty Hours” traditionally was thought to be the amount of time that Jesus lay in the tomb before his resurrection. The expression was never meant to determine the amount of time that the parish spent in devotion to/adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The expression—as a length of time— is not supportive of what Adoration and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament truly encompasses. This type of devotion was created in 1592 in Milan, Italy, and approved for practice in the U.S. in 1868.

Tabernacle (Think: “tent” from the Latin) It is a locked receptacle with *two primary functions*: to contain reserved Blessed Sacrament for the sick and dying, and for personal devotion. There is to be only ONE tabernacle in a church, and providing a separate chapel ensures that proper reverence and sensitivity is provided. The faithful can spend time in prayer before the tabernacle. Often, the main body of the church is used for activities that clearly disrupt private prayer—thus, newer church buildings provide for a chapel outside of the worship space.

Thurifer/thurible The **thurifer** is the altar server, acolyte, or deacon who assists the presider by swinging and handling the **thurible**. The thurifer is *a person*, the thurible is *a container into which incense is placed, for liturgical use*. We often refer to the thurible as a *censer*.

Church documents which are essential to this discussion+

CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY The seminal document that flowed from the Second Vatican Council, that emphasized that the celebration of the Eucharist is the source and summit of the whole Christian life (n. 10), 1968. **Sacrosanctum concilium**

HOLY COMMUNION AND WORSHIP OF THE EUCHARIST OUTSIDE MASS (This is the English-language version of a Church document, translated by ICEL and published in 1976. This contains the only authorized Roman Catholic liturgical rites for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. **HCWEOM**

ON CERTAIN NORMS CONCERNING WORSHIP OF THE EUCHARISTIC MYSTERY (OR The instruction ***Inaestimabile Donum***. This essentially is a letter that Pope John Paul II addressed to the bishops of the world, and in which he considered the priceless gift of the Eucharist. The document was *prepared by* the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship and approved by the Pope on Holy Thursday, 1980.) It is only 7 pages long, and contains 42 footnotes—all at the end.

The Ritual Book is called the **Order for the Solemn Exposition of the Holy Eucharist**, and comes in a ministers’ edition, a people’s edition, and with an organ accompaniment edition. Every parish should have a copy of this ritual book in its collection,

Approved posture in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, whether it is reserved in the tabernacle or exposed for adoration: genuflection on one knee.

During exposition, there should be prayers, songs, readings from Scripture...also some time singing and some time in reverent silence. Part of the Liturgy of the Hours may also be celebrated in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

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