

Eucharistic Adoration

Guidance for Schools

“Our Saviour inaugurated the eucharist sacrifice of his body and blood at the last supper . . . in order to make his sacrifice of the cross last throughout time until he should return; and to entrust a token to the church . . . by which to remember his death and resurrection.”¹

The celebration of the eucharist, which is both the re-enactment of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross and follows Christ’s command to take and share the one bread and one cup in his memory, is the ‘source and summit’² of the Christian life.

Adoration of Jesus present in the eucharistic bread is an extension of the Mass which is ‘truly the origin and goal of worship . . . shown to the eucharist outside Mass.’³

‘Jesus Christ is present in the eucharist in a unique and incomparable way. He is present in a true, real and substantial way, with his body and his blood, with his soul and his divinity. In the eucharist, therefore, there is present in a sacramental way, that is, under the eucharistic species of bread and wine, Christ whole and entire, God and man.’⁴

The Church regulates her worship and, while encouraging pious practice and devotion, it is important to realize that personal preference should not be allowed to intervene in the liturgical rites. Eucharistic adoration is governed by liturgical law⁵ and it is important that school chaplains know both the rubrics themselves and also the broader liturgical and pastoral principles which lie behind them.

Eucharistic adoration can play a very special part in the broader worship of the school community. It encourages adoration, reflection and contemplation. It introduces children to prayerful silence and the Christian tradition of “watching” with Christ:

“Save us, Lord, while we are awake,
protect us while we sleep;
that we may keep watch with Christ
and rest with him in peace.”⁶

Adoration can be our response to Jesus’ command to his disciples, “Remain here and watch with me.”⁷

¹ Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* n.47

² Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium* n.11

³ Congregation of Rites, *Eucharisticum mysterium* (1967) n.3

⁴ *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2005) n.282

⁵ *Eucharisticum mysterium* (1967) and *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* (1973)

⁶ Antiphon for the gospel canticle, *Nunc Dimittis*, at the Night Prayer of the Church (Compline)

⁷ Matthew 26:38 RSV

Teaching of the Church

‘The worship due to the sacrament of the eucharist, whether during the celebration of the Mass or outside it, is the worship of *latria*, that is, the adoration given to God alone.

The Church guards with greatest care the hosts that have been consecrated. She brings them to the sick and to other persons who find it impossible to participate at Mass.

She also presents them for the solemn adoration of the faithful and she bears them in processions. The Church encourages the faithful to make frequent visits to adore the blessed sacrament reserved in the tabernacle.’⁸

Pastoral Considerations

There are some important pastoral considerations before introducing the practice of eucharistic adoration in your school.

1. **Prior instruction** is important so that children (and staff) understand what eucharistic adoration is. There needs to be a sound grasp of the Church’s belief that this bread is the body and presence of the Lord Jesus in reality not just symbolically. Children need to understand that, because of our belief in the real presence of Jesus in the eucharistic bread (and wine), this is worship (*latria*) and so not like prayer before a statue or image.
2. The liturgical documents stress the **link between the Mass and eucharistic adoration**.⁹ Eucharistic adoration extends the period of reflection, contemplation and

adoration that we experience at and after communion. This link is made visual by exposing the blessed sacrament on the altar at which Mass is usually said, the number of candlesticks, the colour of vestments, the use of incense, etc.

3. Eucharistic adoration should be celebrated in the context of the **liturgical season**.¹⁰
4. Children and young people need to be introduced to the **idea and skill of “watching”** – sitting or kneeling in silence, with one’s body, heart and mind stilled, looking, being in the presence of God, letting the prayer come naturally (including the prayer of attentiveness without filling the space with words and thoughts). For children much of this comes naturally after a while but they need to be introduced to the skills involved. The length of silence should be greater than the hymns, readings, etc. of the time of adoration. Eucharistic adoration should not need to be policed.
5. **Texts** (readings, prayers, songs) used at eucharistic adoration should focus on what the gift of the eucharist, the blessed sacrament, the ways in which God is present to us and sustains us.
6. The liturgy offers texts about **the precious blood**; if you use these texts there needs to be a clear explanation, for children, of the link between the bread and wine.
7. Eucharistic adoration needs to be celebrated with great sensitivity towards **pupils and staff who are not Catholics**. While it is reasonable to expect them to show outward respect and reverence in this Catholic devotion, care should be given to the choice of texts (readings, prayers, songs) which are understandable and inclusive.
8. The rite of eucharistic adoration allows exposition of the blessed sacrament either in a ciborium or in a **monstrance**. It is

⁸ *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2005) n.286

⁹ *Eucharistic Worship Outside Mass* n.82

¹⁰ *Eucharistic Worship Outside Mass* n.79

perhaps difficult to see how, in a school context, the use of a ciborium will have much visual impact and schools will probably more usually wish to use a monstrance.

9. The **use of incense** is prescribed by the rite¹¹ and consideration should be given to using it in school. The smell can appeal and the drifting smoke can create an atmosphere of the sacred. Experiment with different sorts of incense. The acrid smell sometimes associated with the use of incense is due to the burning of tar which builds up in thurible. The thurible needs to be cleaned regularly.¹²

The Minister

The ordinary minister of eucharistic adoration is a priest or deacon.

If no priest or deacon is available, a special minister of the eucharist is permitted to expose the blessed sacrament.¹³

It is not lawful¹⁴ for a lay person or special minister to give a blessing (benediction) with the blessed sacrament.¹⁵

An ordained minister will wear an alb and stole, and may wear a cope. The stole and cope may either be white or the colour of the liturgical season or feast.

A lay minister may wear an alb¹⁶ if this is their usual attire for assisting at the liturgy.

¹¹ *Eucharistic Worship Outside Mass* n.85

¹² Soaking in Coca Cola will dissolve the tar residue.

¹³ *Eucharistic Worship Outside Mass* n.91

¹⁴ ie. in liturgical law. In the Church's practice, liturgical law takes precedence over other kinds of law (eg. canon law).

¹⁵ *Eucharistic Worship Outside Mass* n.91

¹⁶ *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* n.339.

The alb is the white garment of baptism and is the proper liturgical dress of all the baptised, lay or ordained (cf. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* n.225).

The Rite of Eucharistic Adoration

The blessed sacrament may be exposed for adoration either in a ciborium or in a monstrance.¹⁷

It is not permitted to expose the blessed sacrament simply in order to give benediction.¹⁸

An altar cloth should be on the altar. It is customary for there to be a corporal on which the monstrance is to be placed.

There should be four or six candles lit on the altar.¹⁹ Two candles may be used if exposition is with a ciborium.²⁰ The old seven or fourteen branch candlesticks are no longer used.

Entrance procession

The priest processes to the sanctuary. If a lay person is leading, then they go, without procession, to the tabernacle.

Exposition

Traditionally, the *O Salutaris Hostia*²¹ has been sung as the blessed sacrament is exposed, but any suitable hymn may be used.

The monstrance or ciborium should be placed on the altar where the Mass is usually celebrated.²²

¹⁷ Canon law also allows exposition using a pyx (cf. *The Code of Canon Law* n.941).

¹⁸ *Eucharistic Worship Outside Mass* n.89

¹⁹ *Eucharistic Worship Outside Mass* n.85

²⁰ The rite assumes that two, four or six candles are normally used at the celebration of Mass to indicate the solemnity of the celebration. It emphasises the visual/symbolic connection between the Mass and eucharistic adoration – hence the same number of candles should be used as for Mass depending on the solemnity of the occasion. This reminds us that we should not always use just the minimal two candles at Mass. cf. *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* n.117 and n.307

²¹ *O Salutaris Hostia* is the last two verses of the hymn *Verbum supernum pordiens* written by St Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) for the new feast of Corpus Christi instituted in 1264 by Pope Urban IV.

Adoration

During the time of adoration 'there should be prayers, songs and readings to direct the attention of the faithful to the worship of Christ the Lord.'²³

There must also be 'sufficient time for silent prayer.'²⁴ It is important to make sure that silence and stillness is not crowded out. As pupils become familiar with eucharistic adoration, they respond well to longer periods of silence.

Benediction

At the end of the period of adoration, a priest or deacon may give a blessing (benediction) with the blessed sacrament.

Just before the benediction is to be given, a hymn (traditionally the *Tantum Ergo*²⁵ but any suitable song may be used) is sung.

The priest incenses the blessed sacrament.

He then stands and says or sings the prayer:

**Let us pray.
Lord, Jesus Christ,
you gave us the eucharist
as the memorial of your suffering and death.
May our worship of this sacrament
of your body and blood
help us to experience the salvation
you won for us
and the peace of the kingdom
where you live with the Father
and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.**

²² Before the liturgical reforms of Vatican II, the monstrance was placed on a special throne above the high altar. In the new rite this is no longer appropriate (as it reduces expression of the relationship between eucharistic adoration and the Mass) unless the period of exposition is very lengthy but still the blessed sacrament should not be 'too lofty or distant' from the people at worship. (*Eucharistic Worship Outside Mass* n.93)

²³ *Rites* n.95

²⁴ *Rites* n.89

²⁵ The *Tantum ergo* is the last two verses of the eucharistic hymn *Pange lingua gloriosi* by St Thomas Aquinas (1225-74).

Alternative prayers are to be found in the *Rites* book.²⁶ Some are given below.

The priest puts on the humeral veil over the cope (or an altar server puts it around his shoulders), stands, genuflects, goes to the altar, takes the monstrance and blesses the people with it in the form of a cross. This takes place in silence.

It is customary to give three blessings in the form of a cross – one to each side and one to the middle of the congregation; but one will suffice in a smaller chapel.

A lay person may not give benediction.²⁷ So, if a lay person is leading eucharistic adoration, there is a hymn and prayer, and the blessed sacrament is then returned to the tabernacle.

Reposition

The blessed sacrament is then taken from the monstrance and returned to the tabernacle.

It is customary to turn the monstrance sideways on to the people, and left at the side of the altar, to indicate to the people that the blessed sacrament has been removed. Or an altar server can take the empty monstrance to the credence table.

The priest returns to his place before the altar and removes the humeral veil.

A hymn of thanksgiving²⁸ is then sung by priest and people standing. During the song, the priest and servers depart.

²⁶ *Rites* n.224-229

²⁷ *Eucharistic Worship Outside Mass* n.91

²⁸ Traditionally the *Adoremus in aeternum* but any suitable song may be used.

Genuflection

Genuflection before the blessed sacrament, whether in the tabernacle or exposed for adoration, is always on one knee.²⁹ The practice of double genuflection (going down on both knees) was ended by the decree of the Holy See *Eucharistic Worship Outside Mass* in 1973.

Practicalities

A large host for eucharistic adoration is usually kept in a lunette which has a slider 'foot' which allows it to be kept (in the tabernacle) in a special pyx. The pyx should be brought to the altar where exposition is to take place, and the monstrance has been placed (at the side, side on to the people). The lunette is then slid out of the pyx and into the corresponding 'runner' in the monstrance. The pyx is then set to one side.

It is important to make sure the large host, kept for adoration, is broken up and consumed every month or so and replaced with a fresh host.³⁰

Extended Adoration

Sometimes an extended period of adoration can have a big impact. Children respond well to being part of a relay of people worshipping before the blessed sacrament over a prolonged period of time.

It may be that extended adoration takes place for some particular occasion, to celebrate a

²⁹ *Eucharistic Worship Outside Mass* n.84. See also *Rites* n.84

³⁰ If you have a church/chapel that can be damp it is a good idea to keep silica gel bags discretely in the back of the tabernacle (silica bags come with various electrical goods to prevent rusting and corrosion or can be bought online). Silica absorbs dampness.

feast day or a liturgical season, in thanksgiving or in reparation.³¹

A school mission has used extended adoration to great effect by inviting adult parishioners to pray before the blessed sacrament for the pupils of the school while the children were engaged in a school mission/retreat.

Great care needs to be taken to ensure there are always at least two people "watching" and that the chapel is never empty.

The blessed sacrament must be reposed if and while Mass is celebrated during the extended period.³²

Eucharistic Processions

Some schools have a tradition of a procession of the blessed sacrament, often on or around the feast of Corpus Christi. Other schools may wish to consider introducing a procession.

Traditionally, a procession of the blessed sacrament will begin with exposition and a period of adoration in the church/chapel and then process the blessed sacrament around the school grounds, returning at the end to the church/chapel.

During the procession, hymns are sung interspersed with periods of prayer, often decades of the rosary.

Another traditional way of organizing a procession of the blessed sacrament is to have

³¹ For the feast of Corpus Christi in June 2013, Pope Francis called on Catholics worldwide to join him for an hour of eucharistic adoration for two intentions: for the Church, that it would be "ever more obedient" to the word of the Lord "in order to stand before the world 'ever more beautiful, without stain or blemish, but holy and blameless" and for "victims of war, human trafficking, drug running and slave labour", as well as "the unemployed, the elderly, migrants, the homeless, prisoners, and those who experience marginalisation".

³² *Code of Canon Law* (1983) n.941.2

'stations' where the procession stops and the monstrance is set down on a temporary altar, decorated with flowers and candles. At each station there could be a reading, a psalm or hymn and a prayer. The readings and prayers at each station could reflect a different aspect of the eucharist.

When the blessed sacrament is processed outside in the open air, it is customary to hold a special canopy (carried by four people) or *ombrellino* (like an umbrella; carried by one person) over it. But this is not a requirement. The blessed sacrament is accompanied by lights and incense. There is also a tradition of strewing flower petals in the path of the procession.

The Liturgy Office of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales provides detailed guidance for processions of the blessed sacrament (see *Resources* below).

Glossary

Altar Cloth

There should always be at least one cloth³³ on the altar which must be white and of 'noble and simple design'. This cloth symbolises both the cloths used to wrap the body of Jesus in the tomb,³⁴ and also the cloth of the banquet table (at the Lord's Supper, the celebration of the eucharist, and the future heavenly banquet³⁵).

Ciborium

The ciborium (Latin *cibus/food*) is the sacred vessel in which the blessed sacrament is kept. There are two kinds of ciboria: an open bowl is more usually used at Mass and for the distribution of communion; a ciborium with a lid is used to reserve the blessed sacrament in the tabernacle.

³³ *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* n.304.

From the 9th century, there has been a tradition to have three cloths on the altar, referencing the grave cloths of Jesus burial in John 20:6-7.

³⁴ John 19:40 and 20:5

³⁵ Revelation 19:1-10

Cope

A cope (Latin *cappa/cape*) is a large cloak-like vestment worn by bishops, priests or deacons for solemn liturgical celebrations outside Mass. Copes come in the usual liturgical colours reflecting the liturgical season or particular celebration.

Corporal

The corporal (Latin *corpus/body*) is the cloth (usually folded into nine) placed in the centre of the altar on which the sacred vessels (and at eucharistic adoration the monstrance) are placed.

Divine Praises

The *Divine Praises* are a litany of blessings probably compiled by Louis Felici SJ around 1797 as a prayer of reparation against Protestant attacks on the doctrine of the real presence. Praise of the Immaculate Conception was added in 1857; the Sacred Heart in 1897 and St Joseph in the 20th century.

Humeral Veil

The humeral (Latin *humerus/shoulder*) veil is a long rectangular vestment worn over the shoulders of the bishop, priest or deacon, when he processes with, or gives a blessing with the blessed sacrament. The monstrance or other sacred vessel is traditionally held within the ends of the humeral veil.

Monstrance

The Monstrance (Latin *monstrare/to show*) is designed to show the blessed sacrament. It is usually in the form of sun's rays emanating from a central glass window in which a large consecrated host is placed. The host is kept in place by a **lunette** (French *lunette/little moon*) which has a foot that slides into a runner in the monstrance window (and also into a similar runner in a special kind of pyx designed to keep the large host for eucharistic adoration in the tabernacle).

Pyx

A pyx (Greek *πυξίς/pyxis/box*) is a small box in precious metals with a hinged lid or door. It is used for keeping small quantities of consecrated hosts and taking them to give

communion to the sick and housebound. A special type of (larger) pyx is used to keep the large host used for eucharistic adoration. It houses the lunette which holds the host in place in the monstrance. When it is kept in the tabernacle, or moved to the altar for the blessed sacrament to be placed in the monstrance, the pyx is traditionally covered with an ornate cloth covering.

Tabernacle

The tabernacle (Latin *tabernaculum/a ritual tent or hut*; Hebrew מִשְׁכָּן/*mishkan/residence or dwelling place*) is the box where the blessed sacrament is kept. The tabernacle must be in a 'truly pre-eminent' place,³⁶ be immovable,³⁷ solid, opaque and unbreakable³⁸, 'so locked as to give the greatest security against any danger of profanation',³⁹ its key kept 'most carefully',⁴⁰ with the presence of the eucharist shown by a veil⁴¹, and lamp burning constantly.⁴²

Scripture Readings

The book of *Rites*⁴³ suggests the following texts for use at eucharistic adoration and processions:

Genesis 14:18-20 (Melchisedech brought bread and wine)
 Exodus 12:21-27 (Passover)
 Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15 (Bread from heaven)
 Exodus 24:3-8 (The blood of the covenant)
 Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 15b-16a (Food your fathers did not know)
 1 Kings 19:4-8 (Strengthened by the food)
 Proverbs 9:1-6 (Come and eat my bread)

Acts 2:42-47 (The fellowship of breaking bread)
 Acts 10:34a, 37-43 (We ate and drank with him)
 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 (One bread, one body)
 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (When you eat this bread)

³⁶ *Rites* n.9

³⁷ *Code of Canon Law* (1983) n.938.3

³⁸ *Rites* n.10

³⁹ *Code of Canon Law* (1983) n.938.3

⁴⁰ *Rites* n.10

⁴¹ *Rites* n.11

⁴² *Rites* n.11

⁴³ *Rites* n.113-153

Hebrews 9:11-15 (The blood of Christ purifies our hearts)
 Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24 (Jesus brings you to the Father by shedding his blood for you)
 1 Peter 1:17-21 (Redeemed by the precious blood)
 1 John 5:4-7a, 8b (The spirit, water, blood give witness)
 Revelation 1:5-8 (Because he loves us)
 Revelation 7:9-14 (Washed in the blood of the lamb)

Mark 14:12-16, 22-26 (This is my body)
 Mark 15:16-20 (They dressed Jesus up in purple)
 Luke 9:11b-17 (All the people ate and were satisfied)
 Luke 22:39-44 (His sweat ... like drops of blood)
 Luke 24:13-35 (or shorter 13-16, 28-35) (Emmaus)
 John 6:1-15 (They gave the people all the food)
 John 6:24-35 (You will never be hungry)
 John 6:41-51 (Bread from heaven)
 John 6:51-58 (True food and drink)
 John 19:31-37 (Blood and water flowed out)
 John 21:1-14 (Jesus took bread and gave it to them)

You can also use readings from the Votive Mass of the Sacred Heart.⁴⁴

Music

Some of the older hymns have a strong theological expression of the mystery of the real presence but may be better understood by older pupils. Much of the more contemporary music either has a scriptural base for understanding the eucharist, or uses simple, repeated words of adoration. As always, it is a matter of choosing what best serves the needs of your own school context.

Adoremus in aeternum
 Adoro te devote (St Thomas Aquinas)
 Amazing grace
 At the Lamb's high feast we sing
 Behold the Lamb of God (Lundy)
 Be still and know that I am God
 Be still for the presence of the Lord (Evans)
 Bread of the world (Heber)
 Godhead here in hiding whom I do adore (Hopkins)
 Guide me, O thou great redeemer
 He brings us to his banqueting table
 Holy, holy, hold Lord God almighty
 I am the bread of life
 Jesus, my Lord, my God, my all

⁴⁴ *Lectionary* Vol.III p.818

Jesus said "I am the bread" (Dean)
Let all mortal flesh keep silence
Lord Jesus Christ you have come to us
Love is his word, love is his way
Majesty, worship his majesty (Hayford)
Of the glorious body telling
One bread, one body
O priest and victim, Lord of life
O Sacrament most holy
O Salutaris hostia / O Saving Victim opening wide
Soul of my Saviour
Sweet Sacrament divine
Tantum ergo / Therefore we before him bending
The Lord's my shepherd
This is my body
Unless a grain of wheat shall fall
When the time came (Scouarnec)
Word made flesh (Vissing)

Taizé music especially suited for eucharistic adoration, including:

Adoramus te, Domine
Jesus, remember me
O Christe, Domine Jesu
Ubi caritas et amor

If you have a choir singing at eucharistic adoration, you may wish to consider the large repertoire of settings of the *Ave Verum Corpus* and of the *Agnus Dei* (*Lamb of God*).

Prayer Texts

Alternative prayers at benediction

[227]
**Lord, give to our hearts
the light of faith
and the fire of love,
that we may worship in spirit and in truth
our God and Lord, present in this sacrament,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.**

[226]
**Lord our God,
you have given us the true bread from heaven.
In the strength of this food
may we live always by your life
and rise in glory on the last day.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.**

[229]

**Lord our God,
teach us to cherish in our hearts
the pascal mystery of your Son
y which you redeemed the world.
Watch over the gifts of grace
your love has given us
and bring them to fulfilment
in the glory of heaven.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.**

The Divine Praises

The Divine Praises are said either by repeating each line after the priest/leader or with everyone saying them together.

**Blessed be God.
Blessed be his Holy Name.
Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true Man.
Blessed be the Name of Jesus.
Blessed be his Most Sacred Heart.
Blessed be his Most Precious Blood.
Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament
of the Altar.
Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.
Blessed be the great Mother of God,
Mary most Holy.
Blessed be her Holy and Immaculate Conception.
Blessed be her Glorious Assumption.
Blessed be the Name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.
Blessed be St Joseph, her spouse most chaste.⁴⁵
Blessed be God in his Angels and in his Saints.**

⁴⁵ There are two versions of this line which are used in different parts of the UK: 'Blessed be St Joseph, her most chaste spouse' or 'Blessed be St Joseph, her spouse most chaste'. It is important to know which is used in your part of the world!

Reflection

In a shoreless sea

*Pope Francis
Homily at Mass
Chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, Rome
20th October 2016*

Prayer, adoration, and acknowledging that we are sinners: these are the three paths which open a Christian to the knowledge and understanding of the mystery of God.

The Pontiff's reflection was inspired by the words of Saint Paul to the Philippians (3:8), taken from the day's Gospel acclamation: "I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ".

In the day's first reading (Ephesians 3:14-21), Paul asks that the Ephesians may likewise receive "the grace" to "gain Christ". It is about "a step in prayer", Francis explained. Indeed, Paul teaches the Ephesians "this path", and prays on his knees: 'I bow my knees before the Father... that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man'".

What the Apostle is calling for is the "grace to be strong, strengthened, through the Holy Spirit". However, why would he wish "that the Ephesians be strengthened through the Holy Spirit?" Paul responds: it is so that "Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith". This "is the core", the Pope said.

However, the Apostle "does not stop there, he continues: [it is so] 'that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints'". And this is the understanding which the letter to the Ephesians gives to this original explanation: "to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge".

"Paul, in this prayer", Francis said, "goes forward and immerses himself into this sea, this bottomless, shoreless sea, an immense sea

which is the person of Christ". Thus, "he prays that the Father may give to the Ephesians — he prays for us — this grace: to know Christ".

Yet, how does one "know Christ" in such a way that He is the "true gain", before whom "all other things are refuse"? Through the Gospel, the Pope said. Indeed, Christ "is present in the Gospel": therefore, by "reading the Gospel we know Christ". And "all of us do this, at least when we hear the Gospel when we go to Mass". Of course, we can also know Jesus "through the study of the catechism: the catechism teaches us who Christ is". All of this, however, "is not sufficient. In order to be able to understand 'the breadth and length and height and depth' of Jesus, we first must enter into a context of prayer, as Paul did, on bended knee: 'Father, send me the Spirit to know Jesus Christ'".

Thus, understanding goes beyond the superficial, and penetrates into the depths of the mystery. The Pope observed: "We know the Child Jesus, Jesus who heals the sick, Jesus who preaches, who performs miracles, who dies and resurrects. We know all of this, but this does not mean we know the mystery of Christ". Indeed, it deals with "something very profound, and for this reason prayer is necessary: 'Father, send me your Spirit in order that I might know Christ'. It is a grace. It is a grace which the Father gives".

In addition to prayer, Francis spoke of the need for adoration. Paul, in fact, "not only prayed, he adored this mystery which surpasses all understanding, and in a context of adoration asks for the grace that 'to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations'". This is therefore "an act of adoration, of praise: to adore". This is because "one cannot know the Lord without this habit of adoring, of adoring in silence".

The Pontiff observed that this practice is not always found in the Christian life. "I believe, if I am not mistaken", he said, "that this prayer of adoration is the [prayer] least known by us, it is

the one we do the least”, as if it were a “waste of time before the Lord, before the mystery of Jesus Christ”. Instead, we should rediscover “the silence of Adoration: he is the Lord and I adore him”.

In short, “in order to know Christ, it is necessary to have self-knowledge, which means having the inclination to blame yourself”, recognizing that, before God, “I am a sinner. But, no, I am a sinner by definition, since you know all the things I have done, and what I am capable of doing”. In this respect, Francis recalled the passage from Chapter 6 of Isaiah, in which the prophet, at the moment in which he sees “the Lord, and all the angels who adore the Lord”, exclaimed: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips” (v. 5): in other words, the Pope said, he admits to being a sinner. Therefore, “one cannot adore without blaming oneself”.

In the end, “in order to enter into this bottomless, shoreless sea, which is the mystery of Jesus Christ”, these three attitudes are necessary, the Pope concluded. The first is “prayer: ‘Father, send me the Spirit so that he may lead me to know Jesus’. Second, adoration of the mystery, to enter into the mystery, to adore. And the third, to blame yourself: ‘I am a man of unclean lips’”. From here there is the hope that “the Lord may give us this grace which Paul asks for the Ephesians, and also for us; the grace to know and gain Christ”.

Resources

The liturgical texts and rubrics for Eucharistic Adoration are contained in the document *Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* (1973) of the Congregation for Divine Worship.

The Catholic Truth Society (CTS) publishes a small book of prayers and devotions and also contains the rite of benediction: *Eucharistic Adoration: Prayers, Meditations and Devotions* (CTS 2004).

Detailed liturgical guidance for eucharistic processions is available from the Liturgy Office of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales here:

<http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Adoremus/Processions.pdf>



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