

*Eucharistic Adoration at St. Patrick*

*Article 4: Adoration and the Mass*

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By the term “Eucharistic Adoration,” we are referring to prayer before the reserved Blessed Sacrament *outside of Mass*. This devotion can, of course, always take place in our churches and chapels where the Sacrament is enclosed in the tabernacle. We all know that in Catholic Churches, the sacramental presence of the Lord is indicated by a burning red candle. The Church has always encouraged people to drop by at any time to pray. Unfortunately, in our day and age, prudence dictates locked churches most of the time.

The more formal sense of Adoration outside of Mass involves the Blessed Sacrament exposed in the monstrance. This exposition of the reserved Sacrament is more visual and hence more spiritually powerful because it makes greater use of our human senses to put us in touch with the divine.

Such a practice is usually for a designated period of time at specific hours and days, unless it is “perpetual,” that is “24-7,” as we have it in the chapel at Columbus High School. (However long the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, the Church requires that someone be present.)

Adoration outside of the time of Mass is not in any way disconnected from the Mass itself. The consecrated Bread derives from the Mass and will eventually be consumed in Holy Communion. More important, though, is the spiritual connection between the Mass and our adoration outside of Mass.

We believe that the Lord becomes present to us sacramentally at the words of consecration (“This is my body... this is my blood”) during the Eucharistic prayer at Mass. We are joined intimately to the Lord when we receive his Body and Blood in Holy Communion. The moments after Communion, as I always remind the children when they receive their First Communion, are special moments for Catholics. This very powerful, grace-filled, time of intimacy with Jesus is central to our spiritual lives. It is a special time for deep prayer or just for quiet contemplation of his loving presence in our hearts.

But let’s face it. These precious moments are often lost. Besides the constant problem of routine, we are also distracted by much that is going on around us in the congregation. And especially if we have a few high-maintenance youngsters with us, quiet communion with Jesus is a distant ideal! I’m sure the Lord understands all of this.

But the Church also understands. Here comes the point of Eucharistic Adoration. In this devotion, *outside of Mass* and in a quiet church or chapel, we have the opportunity to compensate for those lost moments of intimacy with Jesus. Precisely because the Presence at Mass is *prolonged* through reservation in the tabernacle and exposition in the monstrance, we have the time, the leisure, to be more prayerful and more conscious of the Lord’s intimate union with our hearts. Our prayer and our contemplation can be in peace, a peace often not found in the few moments after Communion at Mass, even when the priest observes a brief period of silence before the blessing and dismissal.

This is the connection from Mass to Adoration. It also goes in the other direction. The practice of Adoration outside of Mass gradually teaches our souls. It makes us more aware of the astonishing grace and mercy of God who brings us into such gracious union with Jesus and with one another at every Mass. So Adoration derives from the Mass and leads us into a greater appreciation of the Mass.

As we begin the regular practice of Eucharistic Adoration at St. Patrick, please consider joining in this devotion from time to time. I can promise you a profound effect upon your personal spiritual life and that of the entire parish.