

Eucharistic Adoration at St. Patrick

Article 1

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With this article I am announcing a new initiative at St. Patrick. It is one that holds great promise for nourishing the spiritual life of our parish and drawing down abundant blessings upon us and upon our families.

At the urging of some parishioners and staff members, we will begin regular Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Since our parish is very active and many events take up the various evenings, we think that Adoration will best take place on the third Thursday of each month *in the church*. However, we will have Adoration *weekly* during Lent. We will initially schedule it from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the hope that many can stop in after work. We will begin on January 18 and continue on February 15 (the Thursday after Ash Wednesday) and on the Lenten Thursdays thereafter. (Stations of the Cross will still be held on Lenten Fridays, before the Knights of Columbus fish-fry.)

Lest I forget, allow me to point something out from the very beginning. *While you are welcome to be present for the entire hour of Eucharistic Adoration, this is not by any means required. You may drop in for prayer at any time from beginning to end of the hour and stay as long or as briefly as you like.*

What will actually happen during this hour? (If you remember these services, please excuse me if I explain things in an elementary way for those who have no such memories.) First, an altar bread which was consecrated at Mass and kept in the Tabernacle, is brought out. Once consecrated at Mass it has become truly, in Catholic faith, the Body of the Lord. It is generally referred to as the Host.

The Host is placed in the Monstrance, an ornate display-case designed for this purpose. The Monstrance has a built-in pedestal. The Host is placed in the center of the Monstrance, which is then placed on the altar, facing the people. The Blessed Sacrament is now “exposed.” This opening ceremony, which can include a song, is therefore called Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. It only takes a few minutes.

At the end of the hour, in the last five minutes or so, the people are blessed with the Blessed Sacrament. The priest or deacon picks up the Monstrance and makes the sign of the cross with it over the people. This is called the Benediction. Then the Host is put back in the Tabernacle, or “reposed.” This concluding ceremony may include a song or two and possibly incense.

What happens during that hour between the opening and closing? There could be communal prayers directed to the eucharistic Presence of the Lord. Or, there can simply be silence and the opportunity for each to pray in his or her own words, to meditate, to read and reflect on scripture or on any other spiritual reading. This silent, individual prayer will be our form of Adoration at St. Patrick, rather than communal prayers. We will provide some reading material for those who find it helpful. I will also make some suggestions in future columns in this space.

Remember, during this hour you may come and go as you please and stay as long as you wish. *Also, it is my plan to be in the Reconciliation Room during this time to provide an opportunity for Confession, in addition to the regular Saturday afternoon schedule.*

In future articles, besides guidance for your prayers of Adoration, these are some of the topics I will cover: Catholic teaching on the Real Presence; the practice of reserving the Blessed Sacrament on our altars; the relationship between Adoration and the Mass; the need for an intentional and personal relationship with Christ based on Catholic teaching; an appeal to Catholic youth to establish that relationship; the practice of meditation and contemplation.