

## History of Eucharistic Adoration

(this is not about the Real Presence or Eucharist but Eucharistic Adoration specifically)

Some topics do drift away from this goal but are relevant

Most of you know this material but it bears repetition

Eucharistic adoration is devotional practice primarily in Western Catholicism, but also to a lesser extent in certain Lutheran and Anglican traditions, in which the Blessed Sacrament is adored by the faithful.

This practice may occur **either** when the Eucharist is exposed, or when it is not publicly viewable because it is reserved in a place such as a church tabernacle like an informal "visit" to pray before the tabernacle.

### History

#### 100 A.D.

Already in the second century, popes sent the Eucharist to other bishops as a pledge of unity of faith; and, on occasion, bishops would do the same for their priests.

Under the impact of their faith, the **early hermits reserved the Eucharist in their cells**. From at least the middle of the third century, it was very general for the solitaries in the East, especially in Palestine and Egypt, to preserve the consecrated elements in the caves or hermitages where they lived.

The immediate purpose of this reservation was to enable the hermits to give themselves Holy Communion. But these hermits were too conscious of what the Real Presence was not to treat it with great reverence and not to think of it as serving a sacred purpose by just being nearby.

**Not only did they have the Sacrament with them in their cells, but they carried it on their persons** when they moved from one place to another. This practice was sanctioned by the custom of the *fermentum*, that certainly goes back to as early as 120 A.D. The rite of *fermentum* was a particle of the Eucharistic bread (sometimes dipped in the chalice) transported from the bishop of one diocese to the bishop of another diocese. **The latter would then consume the species at his next solemn Mass as a token of unity between the churches.** It was called a *fermentum* not necessarily because leavened bread was used but because the Eucharist symbolized the leaven of unity which permeates and transforms Christians, so that they become one with Christ.

#### 300 A.D.

As early as the Council of Nicea (325) we know that the Eucharist began to be reserved in the churches of monasteries and convents. **Again, the immediate reason for this reservation was for the sick and the dying, and also for the ceremony of the *fermentum*.** But naturally its sacred character was recognized and the place of reservation was set off from profane usage.

It is interesting to note that one of the first unmistakable references to reserving the Blessed Sacrament is found in a life of St. Basil (who died in 379). Basil is said to have divided the Eucharistic Bread into three parts when he celebrated Mass in the monastery. One part he consumed, the second part he gave to the monks, and the **third he placed in a golden dove suspended** over the altar.



Around the fourth century monasteries began to reserve the Eucharist, and by the 11th century, reservation, mainly for the Viaticum, was a regular feature in churches. The lay practice of Adoration formally began in Avignon, France, in 1226. To give thanks for a victory over the Albigesians, King Louis VII of France asked the bishop of Avignon to have the Blessed Sacrament exposed in the Chapel of the Holy Cross. The number of people visiting the chapel was so great, the bishop allowed Adoration to continue day and night.

## 800 A.D.

As monasticism changed from solitary to community life, the monks received something of the same privilege of carrying the Eucharist with them. They would have it on their persons when working in the fields or going on a voyage. The species was either placed in a small receptacle (*chrismal*) worn bandoleer-fashion, or in a little bag (*perula*) hung around the neck under their clothes. Irish and British manuscripts make frequent mention of the practice. It was not only to have the hosts ready for Communion but also to insure safety against robbers and protection against the hazards of travel.

The life of St. Comgall (died 601) tells how on one occasion he was attacked by heathen Pietists while working in a field. On seeing the *chrismal* around his neck, the attackers did not dare touch him for fear of some retaliation since they surmised (as the narrator says) that Comgall was carrying his God. The saint was so moved by the experience that he exclaimed, "Lord, you are my strength, my refuge, and my Redeemer."

From the beginning of community life, therefore, the Blessed Sacrament became an integral part of the church structure of a monastery. A bewildering variety of names was used to identify the place of reservation. *Pastoforium*, *diakonikon*, *secretarium*, *prothesis* are the most common. As far as we can tell, the Eucharist was originally kept in a special room, just off the sanctuary but separated from the church where Mass was offered.

Certainly by the 800's, the Blessed Sacrament was kept within the monastic church itself, close to the altar. In fact, we have a poem from the year 802, telling of a pyx containing the Sacred Species reserved on the high altar of the abbey church at Lindisfarne in England.

It takes its name 'Pyx' from wooden boxes in which silver and gold pieces were kept secure to await the "Trial of the Pyx" - melting down the measured silver content as a way of showing that the coinage was pure - established in 1281. The stone table (not an altar) against the east wall was used to test the silver. The Trial continues to this day in Goldsmiths' Hall in the City of London.



The practice of reserving the Eucharist in religious houses was so universal that there is no evidence to the contrary even before the year 1000. In fact, numerous regulations are extant which provided for protection of the sacred elements, as the wording went, "from profanation by mice and impious men." **The species were to be kept under lock and key and sometimes in a receptacle raised high enough to be out of easy reach of profaning hands.**

## Middle Ages – up to about 1500AD

However, it is not until the late 11th or early 12th Century, and the refining of the Church's teaching on the Eucharist at Lateran IV, prompted by the false teaching being proclaimed by the monk, Berengar of Tours, that we really see a strong devotion developing for prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament. From this point on we see numerous Eucharistic devotions like processions, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and other prayers focused on the reserved Sacrament, becoming part of Catholic life.

About a century later, to counter the falsehood being promulgated by Peter Cantor, that transubstantiation of the bread only took place when the priest had pronounced the words of consecration over both the bread **and wine**, a custom arose and spread of adoring the Host immediately after the words, "Hoc est enim corpus meum" (This is My Body" (some say the word "hocus-pocus" may be a parody or corruption of it), and **by a natural transition the practice of showing it to the people for this purpose arose.** **Times of extended exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, outside the Mass, grew out of this action,** born out of a natural desire to spend longer **"gazing or seeing"** upon Our Lord. **Eventually a blessing with the exposed Eucharist, or Benediction, developed.** Important: **This is due to lack of receiving communion on a regular basis.** Penances from confession were so onerous and fasting before communion so severe that reception began to decline.

Toward the end of the eleventh century we enter on a new era in the history of Eucharistic adoration. Until then the Real Presence was taken for granted in Catholic belief and its reservation was the common practice in Catholic churches, including the chapels and oratories of religious communities. Suddenly a revolution hit the Church when Berengarius (999-1088), archdeacon of Angers in France, publicly denied that Christ was really and physically present under the species of bread and wine. Others took up the idea and began writing about the Eucharistic Christ as not exactly the Christ of the Gospels or, by implication, as **not actually there.**

The matter became so serious that Pope Gregory VII ordered Berengarius to sign a retraction. This credo has made theological history. **It was the Church's first definitive statement** of what had always been believed and never seriously challenged. The witness came from the abbot-become-pope, whose faith in the Blessed Sacrament had been nourished for years in a Benedictine monastery.

Gregory's teaching on the Real Presence was quoted verbatim in Pope Paul VI's historic document *Mysterium Fidei* (1965) to meet a new challenge to the Eucharist in our day--very similar to what happened in the eleventh century.

**"I believe in my heart and openly profess that the bread and wine placed upon the altar are, by the mystery of the sacred prayer and the words of the Redeemer, substantially changed into the true and life-giving flesh and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord, and that after the consecration, there is present the true body of Christ which was born of the Virgin and offered up for the salvation of the world, hung on the cross and now sits at the right hand of the Father, and that there is present the true blood of Christ which flowed from his side. They are present not only by means of a sign and of the efficacy of the Sacrament, but also in the very reality and truth of their nature and substance."**

**With this profession of faith, (about the time of the two councils of Lateran (1078 and 1079 ) the churches of Europe began what can only be described as a Eucharistic Renaissance.** Processions of the Blessed Sacrament were instituted; prescribed acts of adoration were legislated; **visits to Christ in the pyx were encouraged;** the **cells of anchoresses had windows made into the church to allow the religious to view and adore before the tabernacle.** An early ordinal of the Carmelites included the words "for the devotion of those in the choir" when referring to the reservation of the species.

## Feast of Corpus Christi

There was nothing startling, therefore, when Pope Urban IV, in the thirteenth century, instituted the feast of Corpus Christi. When establishing the feast, the Pope stressed the love of Christ who wished to remain physically with us until the end of time.

In the Eucharist, said the Pope, "Christ is with us in His own substance." For "when telling the Apostles that He was ascending into heaven, He said, 'Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world,' thus comforting them with the gracious promise that He would remain and be with them even by His bodily presence" (August 11, 1264).

Urban IV commissioned Thomas Aquinas to compose the Liturgy of the Hours for the feast of Corpus Christi, to be celebrated annually on the Thursday following Trinity Sunday.

Three hymns which Aquinas composed for the feast are among the most beautiful in the Catholic liturgy. They express the unchangeable faith of the Church in the abiding Presence of her Founder on earth. They also explain why the faithful adore Christ in the Blessed

Sacrament. All three hymns are part of the Divine Office. They are best known by each of their last two verses, which have become part of the treasury of Catholic hymnology.

—*O Salutaris Hostia* is an act of adoration of Christ the Saving Victim who opened wide the gate of heaven to man below.

—*Tantum Ergo Sacramentum* is an act of adoration of the Word-made-flesh, where faith supplies for what the senses cannot perceive.

—*Panis Angelicus* is an act of adoration of that Wondrous Thing where the lowly and poor are fed, banqueting on their Incarnate Lord and King.

Aquinas, like the Church, never separated the Eucharist as Sacrifice, Communion and Presence. But, with the Church, he also realized that without the Real Presence there would be no real sacrifice nor real communion. Aquinas assumed that God became man so He might offer Himself on Calvary and continue to offer Himself in the Mass. He became man that He might give Himself to the disciples at the Last Supper and continue to give Himself to us in Holy Communion. He became man to live in flesh and blood in Palestine and continue to live now on earth as the same Jesus Who died and rose from the dead and is seated at the right hand of His heavenly Father.

## Conflicting Beliefs

- A theoretical question was raised that had serious practical implications. Some writers speculated whether Christ still remained in the Eucharist when the sacred species were desecrated. Pope Gregory XI demanded *rejection of the following statements*:
  - If a consecrated Host falls or is thrown into a sewer, the mud, or some other profane place, even though the species remain, the Body of Christ ceases to be present and the substance of bread returns.
  - If a consecrated Host is eaten or consumed by a rodent or some other animal, even while the species remain, the Body of Christ ceases to be present under the species and the substance of bread returns (August 8, 1371).
- More serious was the problem created by the so-called Calixtines in the fifteenth century. They claimed that the whole Christ is not received unless the faithful receive Holy Communion under both forms, including the chalice. This time, the General Council of Constance decided to "declare, decree and define" as an article of faith that "the entire Body and Blood of Christ are truly contained both under the species of bread and under the species of wine." This definition was confirmed by Pope Martin V (September 1, 1425). The implications for the exposition and adoration of the Eucharist are obvious.

## The Council of Trent

By the sixteenth century, the whole spectrum of Catholic belief in the Holy Eucharist was challenged by the Reformers. As a consequence, the Council of Trent treated this subject exhaustively. Every aspect of the Sacrifice of the Mass, Holy Communion and the Real Presence was clarified and defined.

For our purpose, the Council's teaching on the Real Presence was historic. It was the dawn of the most significant development of Eucharistic doctrine since apostolic times. **Even a few sentences from Trent are revealing.**

The other sacraments do not have the power of sanctifying until someone makes use of them, but in the Eucharist the very Author of sanctity is present before the Sacrament is used. For before the apostles received the Eucharist from the hands of our Lord, He told them that it was His Body that He was giving them.

**The Church of God has always believed that immediately after the consecration the true Body and Blood of our Lord, together with His soul and divinity, exist under the species of bread and wine. His Body exists under the species of bread and His Blood under the species of wine according to the import of the words. But His Body exists under the species of wine, His Blood under the species of bread, and His soul under both species in virtue of the natural connection and concomitance which unite the parts of Christ our Lord, who has risen from the dead and dies now no more.**

## Modern Era

### The Forty-Hours Devotion

Before the end of the sixteenth century, Pope Clement VIII in 1592 issued a historic document on what was called in Italian *Quarant' Ore* (Forty Hours).

The devotion consisted of forty hours of continual prayer before the Blessed Sacrament exposed. Introduced earlier on a local scale in Milan, the Bishop of Rome not only authorized the devotion for Rome, but explained how it should be practiced.

We have determined to establish publicly in this Mother City of Rome an uninterrupted course of prayer in such wise that in the different churches [he specifies them] on appointed days, there be observed the pious and salutary devotion of the Forty Hours; with such an arrangement of churches and times that, at every hour of the day and night, the incense of prayer shall ascend without intermission before the face of the Lord.

About a century later (1731) his successor, Clement XIII, published a detailed set of instructions for the proper carrying out of the Forty-Hours' devotion, for example:

- The Blessed Sacrament is always exposed on the high altar, except in patriarchal basilicas.
- Statues, relics and pictures around the altar of exposition are to be removed or veiled.
- Only clerics in surplices may take care of the altar of exposition.
- There must be continuous relays of worshippers before the Blessed Sacrament and should include a priest or cleric in major orders.
- No Masses are to be said at the altar of exposition.

Gradually the Forty Hours devotion spread throughout the Catholic world. Proposed by the Code of Canon Law in 1917, the new Code states that in churches or oratories where the Eucharist is reserved, "it is recommended (*commendatur*) . . . **that there be held each year a solemn exposition of the Blessed Sacrament** for an appropriate, even if not for a continuous, time so that the local community may more attentively meditate on and adore the Eucharistic Mystery" (Canon 942).

## Perpetual Adoration

The term "perpetual adoration" is broadly used to designate the practically uninterrupted adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The term may mean several things:

- The adoration is **literally perpetual**, so that someone is always in prayer before the Holy Eucharist.
- The adoration is **morally perpetual**, with only such short interruptions as imperative reasons or uncontrollable circumstances require.
- The adoration is **uninterrupted for a longer or shorter period**, a day or several days, as in the Forty-Hours devotion.
- The adoration is **uninterrupted in one special church or chapel**.
- The adoration is **uninterrupted in different churches** or chapels in a locality like a diocese or a country, or throughout the world.

Some writers trace the first beginnings of **perpetual adoration to the late fourth century, when converts to the faith in some dioceses were to adore the Blessed Sacrament exposed for eight days after their baptism**. It is certain, however, that even before the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi, not only religious in convents and monasteries but the laity practiced Eucharistic adoration.

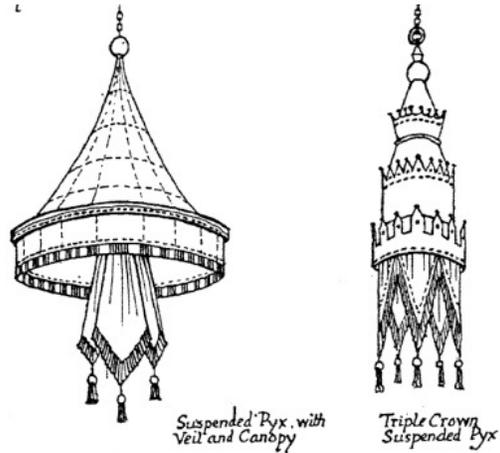
After his victory over the Albigenses, King Louis VII of France asked the Bishop of Avignon to have the Blessed Sacrament exposed in the Chapel of the Holy Cross (September 14, 1226). The throng of adorers was so great that the bishop decided to have the adoration continue day and night.

**This was later ratified by the Holy See and continued uninterrupted until 1792 during the French Revolution** (566 years !). It was resumed in 1829.

It was not until after the Council of Trent, however, that perpetual adoration began to develop on a world-wide scale. We may distinguish especially the following forms.

# Monstrance

Use of a monstrance developed as time progressed. Monstrances were vessels created to display the consecrated Host, the body of Christ. They were first created in response to the Feast of Corpus Christ established in 1263 that enabled the faithful to see and venerate the consecrated Host on a **crescent moon-shaped mount**. (refer to discussion on Guadalupe)



The usual method for fixing the pyx was for a crane or pulley to be so arranged over the altar as to permit of the ready raising or lowering of the pyx, which was suspended by a cord or chain attached to a ring on its top. Above the pyx was hung the canopy, a circular tent-like construction formed of some costly fabric, which was generally attached to a ring and ornamental crown of metal. The pyx itself was veiled in a pyx cloth, which often had the form of a square napkin, with a hole in the middle, through which the suspending cord passed, and weighted tassels at the four corners which kept it down close by the pyx.



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## Religious Orders of Adoration

*Cloistered Religious Institutes* were founded for the express purpose of adoring the Holy Eucharist day and night. Some, like the Benedictines of the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in Austria (1654), took a solemn vow of perpetual adoration.

*Apostolic Religious Institutes* were started to both practice adoration themselves and promote perpetual worship of the Eucharist among the faithful. Thus began the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and of the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Formally approved in 1817, its aim is to honor and imitate the four states of Christ's life to be honored and imitated by the exercise of adoration of the Eucharist.

*Men's Nocturnal Adoration* societies began on an international scale in Rome in 1810 with the founding of the Pious Union of the Adorers of the Most Blessed Sacrament. They spread throughout Europe and into North and South America. Their focus was (and is) on perpetual adoration in the strict sense.

*Perpetual Eucharistic Associations* of the faithful go back to the seventeenth century. One of the earliest was started by Baron de Renty in 1641 at St. Paul's parish in Paris. It was a perpetual adoration society for ladies. At Boulange in France (1753), the parishes were divided into twelve groups representing the twelve months of the year. Each group contained as many parishes as there were days in the month it represented. Each church in every group was assigned one day for Eucharistic adoration.

## Visits to the Blessed Sacrament

Not unlike perpetual adoration, so the history of visits to the Blessed Sacrament is best known from the monastic spirituality of the early Middle Ages. In the thirteenth century *Ancren Riwle*, or Rule for Anchoresses, the nuns were to begin their day by a visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

Priests also, who had easy access to the reserved Holy Eucharist, would regularly visit Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Thus the martyr, St. Thomas a Becket (1118-1170), in one of his letters writes to a friend, "If you do not harken to me who have been wont to pray for you in an abundance of tears and with groanings not a few before the Majesty of the Body of Christ" (*Materials*, V, 276).

One of the sobering facts of the Reformation is to know what happened when the English Reformers separated from Rome. At first they did not forbid the clergy to reserve some of both species after the Lord's Supper ceremony--to be taken to the sick and the dying. But before long, reservation of the Eucharistic elements became rare. This was to be expected after the *Thirty-Nine Articles* (1571) declared that transubstantiation was untrue and that the Eucharist should not be worshiped or carried about in procession.

## Recommended Authors

There is probably no other topic written about as extensively as this one.

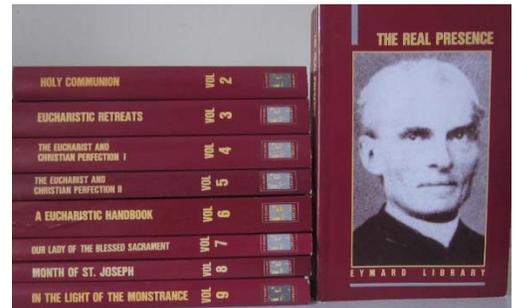
Remember your faith experience is between you and God. These discussions are for inspiration only. There must be a thousand books on meditations during adoration and they are all wonderful. Find one you like. We are all different. So find one that is right for you or NOT! You can find hundreds of great books on Adoration, but each of us is different, let God direct your thoughts to His plan for your perfection. Use the books if you wish but God can do it all if we persevere. Have a few solid topics on which to begin and return to as meditations and let God lead your thoughts.

As a side note, for those interested in eucharistic miracles I highly recommend

- **"Eucharistic Miracles and Eucharistic Phenomena in the Lives of the Saints" by Joan Carroll Cruz. This is available in many formats including audible book. Very Good**
- **Carlo Acutis' website on the same topic.**

Among the apostles of perpetual adoration for the laity, none has had a more lasting influence in the modern world than **St. Peter Julian Eymard**. In 1856 he founded the Blessed Sacrament Fathers in Paris and two years later, with Marguerite Guillot, he established the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, a cloistered contemplative congregation of women. **Peter Eymard's published conferences on the Real Presence** have inspired numerous lay associations. They have taken his words literally when he said, "In the presence of Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament, all greatness disappears, all holiness humbles itself and comes to nothing. Jesus Christ is there!"

St. Peter Julian Eymard was born in France in 1811. He was ordained in 1834 for the Society of Mary. Because of his extraordinary love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and realizing there was no Order of priests dedicated to perpetual adoration, he was permitted to found such an Order—the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. He also founded the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament. His written works on the Holy Eucharist are classics in that field. He died in 1868 and his feast day is August 2nd.



[ The [Eymard Library 9 volume set](#) is an excellent resource recommended for your adoration chapel or library. It is ideal for ongoing formation of adorers, as well as for homiletics, catechetics, bulletin inserts and quotes \$154.00]

### **Volume 6 is on our website**

Some quotes from Fr. Eymard:

“Eucharistic Adoration is the greatest act of holiness on earth.”

“The object of Eucharistic adoration is the divine person of our Lord Jesus Christ present in the most Blessed Sacrament. He is living there. He wants us to speak to him, and he will speak to us. Anybody may speak to our Lord. Is he not there for everybody? Does he not tell us, “Come you all to me”?”

“The grace of (Eucharistic Adoration) is given to everybody. In order, however, to succeed in it and avoid routine or dryness of mind and heart, adorers must seek inspiration in the grace of their vocation, in the various mysteries of the life of our Lord and of the Blessed Virgin, or in the virtues of the saints.”

“When your hour is particularly difficult, rejoice all the more; your love will be greater for its suffering more. It is a privileged hour that will count for two.”

“Love cannot triumph unless it becomes the one passion of our life. Without such passion we may produce isolated acts of love; but our life is not really won over or consecrated to an ideal. Until we have a passionate love for our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament we shall accomplish nothing.”

“Look upon the hour of adoration assigned to you as an hour in paradise. Go to your adoration as one would to heaven, to the divine banquet. You will then long for that hour and hail it with joy. Take delight in fostering a longing for it in your heart. Tell yourself, “In four hours, in two hours, in one hour, our Lord will give me an audience of grace and love. He has invited me; he is waiting for me; he is longing for me.”

**He allows us to be overwhelmed with distractions so as to keep our pride in check.** We should like to pray, without distractions, but We Cannot. And we say: "Since I cannot pray without sinning, I will give up prayer." is a wrong attitude. Put yourselves under the influence of our Lord's goodness, and your sins will frighten you no longer. Divine mercy will forgive them.

## The Case for Adoration

For this we will switch gears.

The Solar system. We all know about this right? What if all the planets lost control and began to collide. That would be a huge event, even a **cataclysmic** event.

Well, the crucifixion was a bigger event. The biggest that will ever be. We all know this I'm sure. The sheer magnitude of the crucifixion event makes it a key focal point. So just how big is this focal point?

### **Its cataclysmic!**

Important: Eucharistic adoration brings us into the presence of this event. In the presence of the Cataclysmic event of Christ's death The bad news is our good works become minimal and the good news is our sins become insignificant. (This does not mean our sins are not serious, because they do offend God and our good works do go with us to heaven but at the moment of our presence in front of the Eucharist ALL is about God.

The Eucharist was left for us as evidence, physical evidence of this event. [I combine the passion death and resurrection into this one concept.] It was left in perpetual physical form. If it had not been done this way humanity would have been in peril of forgetting how big this was.

Our only responsibility is to get ourselves there. Our prayers belong to God, our thoughts our meditations are carried only by grace. But our presence is only ON US. We must, by free ,will bring ourselves there. Once there it becomes God's work. He leads us in thought, in prayer in adoration. We show honor to Christ crucified by our presence. The Eucharist is bound to the crucifixion.

Our presence shows our respect and acknowledgement and gratitude for this event.

Unable to adore your sacramental Jesus as He deserves, call upon your Guardian Angel, your faithful companion through life, to help you. He will be so happy to do with you here below what he must continue doing eternally with you in Heaven.

Leads to showing respect

Leads to acknowledgement

The Insignificance both of your good works and your sins

Our presence is all we can really do – all else will be from grace

Eucharist is physical evidence of the crucifixion – Similarity of Faith and trust

Let Christ lead you during adoration

During Eucharistic Adoration, you can pray, meditate, or simply be present with God. Here are some suggestions: Praying the Psalms, Liturgy of the Hours, or Rosary, reading Scripture, reciting the Jesus Prayer, or even just sitting in silence and adoring Him. You can also pour out your heart, ask for forgiveness, intercede for others, or read the life of a saint and pray with them.

When you don't know what to do

- Be Still: Simply sit or kneel before the Eucharist. ...
- Repeat a Simple Prayer: Use phrases like "Jesus, I trust in You," or "Lord, have mercy on me" to focus your mind and heart.
- Offer Intercessions: Pray for your family, friends, Church leaders, and the world.
- "Adoration by Seeing or Gazing": When physical separation from the altar and infrequent communion became

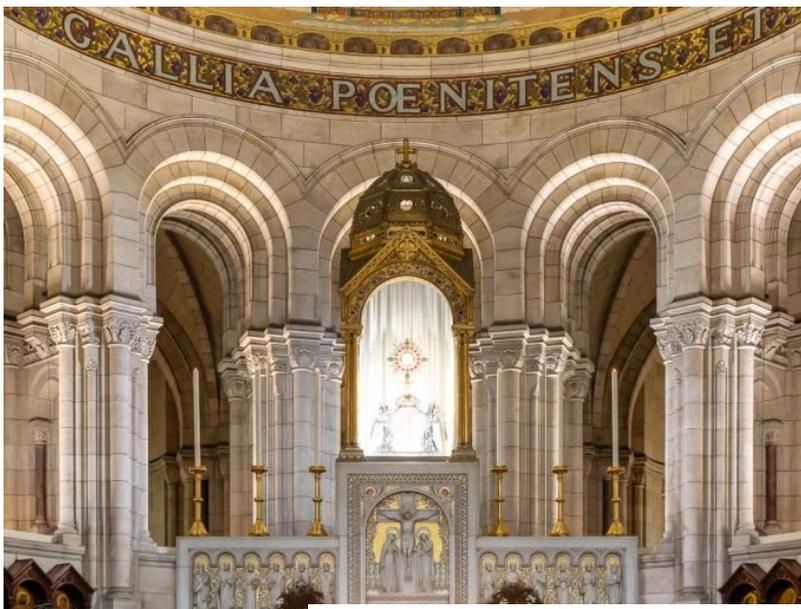
more common, people developed a form of adoration by simply looking at the elevated Host during Mass.

- St. Basil (died 379): . One of the earliest references to reserving the Blessed Sacrament is found in his life, where he divided the Eucharistic bread into three parts during the Mass, one for his own consumption, one for the monks, and one placed in a golden dove over the altar. he reasons for the faithful's refraining from receiving Communion are complex, and some reasons are specific to certain epochs. One example is the reaction to Arianism in the earlier period which gave rise to a highly exalted vision of the Eucharist as the "awesome table of the Lord," which one feared to approach. Later during the medieval period a more restricted practice of penance before Communion, detailed rules regarding extended fasting, and recommendations regarding abstention from marital acts before Communion produced an overall cumulative falling away from reception even though Mass attendance remained constant and religious fervor remarkably high. Even the increase in Eucharistic adoration in the 12th century led some to consider that gazing upon the host could in some way replace the sacramental reception.

We're talking about an awful lot of church history, and all my books are in the other room. Several councils produced canons that urged the faithful to receive at least annually. They weren't saying "you cannot receive more than once a year". They were saying "you must receive at least once a year." There were times when the laity, by and large, felt that there was an insurmountable gap between themselves and the glorious Holiness of Christ. It was enough simply to see Christ at the elevation, which gave rise to something called ocular communion- adoring at the elevation of the host and the chalice (which is why we still have bells at those moments).

**Special Story - PARIS** — As the health crisis caused by the coronavirus epidemic immersed the whole country into a long period of lockdown March 17, Sacré-Cœur Basilica in Paris, which had to close its doors for the first time in its history, nonetheless remained an unflappable beacon of prayer in France. **Since Aug. 1, 1885, (135 years) the chain of perpetual adoration of the Holy Sacrament at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Montmartre in Paris has continued uninterrupted, including during the 1944 bombing and the coronavirus crisis**

Enthroned at the top of the emblematic butte Montmartre, the highest point of the city, the basilica is particularly prized by tourists and art lovers for the purity of its Roman-Byzantine architecture and its rounded shapes.



society.

*Basilique du Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre in Paris.*

It is, after the Cathedral of Notre Dame, the second-most-visited monument of the City of Light.

But this high place of world tourism, as a "Sanctuary of Eucharistic Adoration and Divine Mercy," is also one of the most important religious sites of France.

Day and night since Aug. 1, 1885, the Body of Christ in the Holy Sacrament has been exposed and adored inside the basilica (except for Good Friday), whatever the external conditions, even the most extreme. This is remarkable, as the history of France hasn't exactly been calm since that time, including for the Catholic Church, which is also facing an unprecedented [wave of secularization](#) at every level of

"The adoration hasn't stopped even for a minute, including during the two world wars," Sister Cécile-Marie, member of the [Benedictine Sisters of the Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre](#) and responsible for the nights of adoration at the basilica, told the Register. "Even during the 1944 bombing, when some fragments fell right next to the basilica, the adorers never left." And the recent quarantine period was, of course, no exception. While, usually, many lay or religious people come from outside and take turns in perpetual adoration, this unprecedented situation necessitated the 14 nuns of the community

to reorganize their daily life in order to keep honoring the special tradition of the sanctuary, which stayed closed to the public for more than two months, until May 31.

“It was obvious to us that since we were not touched by the coronavirus, as long as we were still on our feet, we had to act and adapt quickly to this new situation,” Sister Cécile-Marie continued. Each nun had to pray in adoration one hour twice a day to ensure a 24/7 presence, including during meals. “We never leave the Lord alone, and one cannot leave before the next person arrives, which could be pretty difficult at night when one of us didn’t wake up on time!” she said, adding that this has also been an opportunity for them to focus more on prayer and thus reconnect with the very essence of their rule of life.

However, she confessed, the lockdown also created a totally unusual sense of emptiness within the church, usually crowded with pilgrims and visitors. In her view, the most difficult thing to handle when the basilica suddenly emptied was the sight of all the candles slowly going out.

“It was a very sad vision, but, miraculously, we immediately started receiving requests of intentions of prayer from people via email; so, eventually, there were always at least one or two candles burning, and when they were about to extinguish, we would suddenly receive another request, which was so comforting.”

And the Benedictine community was quickly joined in prayer by a multitude of adorers who prayed with them remotely, following an [online](#) table for intentions of prayers.

“It was a beautiful experience: We were alone in the basilica, but we felt we were always connected with the adorers that were in spiritual communion from where they were,” Sister Cécile-Marie recalled. “We couldn’t help people by wearing white coats, but we fought the epidemic our own way: through prayer.”



## Paris goes dark

day after 'debauched' Olympics opening ceremony mocks Last Supper but Sacré-Cœur Basilica remained lit amid the darkness



Parts of Paris, France, were struck with a blackout over the weekend, just 24 hours after the Olympics drew global backlash for its opening ceremony that detractors claimed mocked Christianity and the Last Supper with drag queens.

Approximately 85,000 Parisians in four districts were affected by the blackout that lasted for about 10 minutes at 11:40 p.m. on Saturday night, which the electricity supplier Enedis chalked up to "a technical anomaly," according to Le Parisien.

Footage of the blackout went viral on social media, with many users also pointing out the striking image of the Basilique du Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre (Basilica of the Sacred Heart of

Montmartre) remaining brightly lit amid the darkness.

Yet, to this day, it’s only Catholic churches that Satanists seek to steal a Sacred Host from when they want to desecrate and commit a sacrilege against God. Why is this? Well, even the devil knows where Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist.