



NORMS FOR EUCHARISTIC ADORATION WITH EXPOSITION

A SERVICE OF CATHOLICS UNITED FOR THE FAITH

ISSUE

Who is the “ordinary minister” for exposition of the Holy Eucharist? May lay people serve in this role? What are the duties of this minister? May there be a homily or other preaching during exposition?

RESPONSE

As decreed by the Vatican, a priest or deacon is the “ordinary minister” for exposition, though lay people may also serve. The minister’s duties include opening the tabernacle and placing the ciborium (container of sacred Hosts) on the altar or the Eucharist in the monstrance.¹

DISCUSSION

Exposition of the Holy Eucharist is strongly encouraged by the Church, because it leads us to acknowledge Christ’s Real Presence in the sacrament and His invitation to lead us to spiritual union with Him that culminates in sacramental Communion. Care should be given to illustrate the clear connection between adoration and the “Eucharistic sacrifice” of the Mass, which is “the source and summit of the Christian life.”² Thus, the “ordinary minister” for exposition of the Eucharist should be a priest or deacon. However, in the absence of a priest or deacon or if they are “lawfully impeded,” an acolyte, extraordinary minister of Communion, or another person appointed by the diocesan bishop may publicly expose and later repose the Eucharist.³

Such [lay] ministers may open the tabernacle and also, as required, place the ciborium on the altar or place the host in the monstrance. At the end of the period of adoration, they replace the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. It is not lawful, however, for them to give the blessing with the sacrament.⁴

The minister, if he is a priest or deacon, should vest in an alb, or a surplice over a cassock, and a stole. Other ministers should wear either the liturgical vestments that are used in the region or the vesture that is befitting this ministry and is approved by the Ordinary.⁵

During adoration with a group present, there should be prayers, hymns and readings to focus the faithful on worshipping God. To further encourage a prayerful spirit, there should be readings from Scripture with a homily or brief exhortations to help develop a better understanding of the Eucharistic mystery. The Church also recommends periods of silence and the faithful’s singing in response to the Word of God.⁶

At the end of adoration, before the reposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, only a priest or deacon blesses the congregation with sacrament.⁷

The priest or deacon should wear a white cope and humeral veil to give the blessing at the end of adoration, when the exposition takes place with the monstrance; in the case of exposition in the ciborium, he should put on the humeral veil.⁸

¹ Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *Eucharistiae Sacramentum* (On Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery Outside of Mass), 1973, nos. 91-92.

² Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), no. 11; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 1323-24;

³ *Eucharistiae Sacramentum* no. 91

⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 91.

⁵ *Ibid.*, nos. 91-92.

⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 95.

⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 91.

⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 92

Adoration Norms

Further inquiries in this matter can be directed to CUF, your diocesan liturgy office, or, if necessary, the Secretariat for the Liturgy, United States Conference

of Catholic Bishops, 3211 4th St., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1194.

RELATED FAITH FACTS

Defending Our Rights: Constructively Dealing With Liturgical Abuse

Lay Preaching

Following Our Bishops

Come, Worship the Lord!: Promoting Adoration of the Most Holy Eucharist

FURTHER READING

CATHOLICS UNITED FOR THE FAITH

85882 Water Works Road

Hopedale, OH 43976-8600

(740) 283-2484

www.cuf.org

