



*From the Pastor
26th Sunday
in Ordinary Time - C
September 25, 2022*

WHY IS EUCHARISTIC ADORATION A RITE?

In part 7 of my series on *The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church* Bishops' document, I offer a history of *Eucharistic Adoration*. Past articles on this *Revival*, the whole document, and a free study guide, are on our Parish

website: easeton.net; click on *National Eucharistic Revival Bulletin Articles*. I begin with words from a familiar *Eucharistic* hymn; all its lyrics offer a 'crash course' in our venerable devotion to the *Blessed Sacrament*.

'O Sacrament Most Holy' - verse 1 & refrain

*O Jesus, we adore you, Who, in your love divine,
Conceal your mighty Godhead
In forms of bread and wine.*

*O Sacrament most holy, O Sacrament divine,
All praise and all thanksgiving
Be every moment Thine!*

OUR BELIEF FROM DAY ONE. An often-raised question from *non-Catholics* - and even *Catholics* - is: why did *Eucharistic Adoration* 'only begin' in the 13th/14th Century? They then go on to deduce that the *Catholic Church* did not believe in *Christ's Real, True Eucharistic Presence* until that time; but nothing could be further from the truth! As a brief recap of *Church* history shows, there are many reasons why *Eucharistic Adoration* *SEEMS* to be a 'latecomer' to our doctrines and rites.

AD 33-300's. On *Easter* evening, the *Risen Lord* revealed His *REAL PRESENCE* to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus "... *in the breaking of the bread*" [Luke 24:13-35] The first Christians "*devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers.*" [Acts 2:42] After asking: "*The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?*" [1 Corinthians 10:16], *Saint Paul* then condemned all who receive *Eucharist* unworthily; why would he be so upset if it were just 'regular food?' And *Saint Justin Martyr* [died: 165] wrote in defense of *Christians* accused of being cannibals because of their belief in *Christ's Real Presence*!

4TH - 11TH CENTURIES. After the Roman Empire 'legalized' the Church, persecutions ended, and she began to formalize her teachings and rites. Records show that in the 300's, the *Eucharist* was kept in tabernacles, mostly in monasteries as the 'Parish Church' structure we know had not yet been developed. The 'reserved' *Sacrament* was kept mainly so that the sick and those who lived in communities without a *Priest* could receive weekly or even daily *Holy Communion*. Ancient tabernacles were crafted to look like: a *tomb* or *church*, from which the *Risen Lord* came forth; a *dove*, the biblical symbols of the *Holy Spirit* and peace; or a *pelican*, who pecks off her own flesh to feed her young, as *Christ* feed us with His own *Body* and *Blood*. By the 11th Century, it was normative that every church had a *Tabernacle*.

12TH - 20TH CENTURIES. Then things changed as some said *Christ* was only symbolically present, as a *mere memorial*, not as a way of participating in His *Sacrifice*. This 'forced' the *Church* to define more clearly - and honor with communal rites - *Christ's Real Presence* in the *Eucharist*. And as an *over-emphasis* on human sinfulness became more prevalent, fewer actually *received* the *Sacrament*. In 1215, the *Easter Duty* was promulgated, which requires all *Catholics* of age to receive *Holy Communion* at least once a year!

For centuries, the focal point was then the elevation of the *Host* and *Chalice*, which were added to the *holy Mass*. New rites, which help us honor and adore the *Blessed Sacrament: Benediction, Eucharistic Processions, Forty Hours*, etc., became more popular. The feast of *Corpus Christi*, now called the *Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ* was created; we still *use some of the orations and hymns written by Saint Thomas Aquinas* [1225-1274] for that feast!

TODAY'S CHURCH. In the liturgical reforms of the *Second Vatican Council* [1962-1965], the *Council Fathers* stressed our need to learn - or relearn - the importance of regularly receiving and properly honoring the great gift of *Eucharist*. In the weeks to come, based on the 6 orations offered at *Eucharistic Adoration* or *Benediction*, I will reflect on the 6 various aspects of the *Most Blessed Sacrament*.

In His holy Name,

Rev. Thomas J. Serafin, KCHS