



From the Pastor
25th Sunday in
Ordinary Time - C
Sept. 25, 2022

**WHY IS EUCHARISTIC
ADORATION A RITE?**

In part 7 of our series on **The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church** Bishops' document, we offer a history of **Eucharistic Adoration**. Past articles

on this **Revival**, the whole document, and a free study guide, are on our Parish website: stjusstin.org; click on **National Eucharistic Revival Bulletin Articles**. We 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 our patron, **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 required 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**, we will reflect on the 6 various aspects of the **Most Blessed Sacrament**.

In Christ,

Father Mark