

PERPETUAL EUCHARISTIC ADORATION OBJECTIONS AND REPLIES

Mother Teresa of Calcutta writes in a letter: "Perpetual Adoration with exposition needs a great push. People ask me: 'What will convert America and save the world?' My answer is prayer. What we need is for every Parish to come before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in Holy Hours of Prayer."

**1. Objection: "Perpetual adoration in parish churches is not permitted."
(*Dictionary of the Liturgy*, Rev. Jovian P. Lange, OFM, p. 17)**

Reply: This is incorrect. Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration in parishes with Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament exposed is not only permitted, but encouraged by the Holy Father.

The Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, opened a chapel of Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration with Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament exposed in a monstrance in St. Peter's Basilica on December 2, 1981. In his opening prayer, "Stay with us, Lord," the Pope urged all parishes to begin Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration.

Upon his arrival in Korea on October 7, 1989 for the 44th International Eucharistic Congress the Holy Father went to Good Shepherd Parish in Seoul. This is one of seventy-five parishes in Korea that has Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration. During a period of Eucharistic Adoration there, the Holy Father gave a homily in which he said: "It is most fitting that my first stop among the Korean people should be in a Church such as this, where the minds and hearts of the faithful are constantly raised up in adoration before Christ in the Most Holy Eucharist." (See *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 16 October 1989).

In his homily in June 1993 at the 45th International Eucharistic Congress in Seville, Spain the Pope expressed this wish: "I hope that this form of perpetual adoration, with permanent exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, will continue into the future. Specifically, I hope that the fruit of this Congress results in the establishment of Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration in all parishes and Christian communities throughout the world." (*Signs of the Times* 6, 2, p. 10).

In addition, many bishops throughout the world have begun Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration in their dioceses and have presided in the opening ceremonies. There

are bishops in the United States and elsewhere who have had priests working in their dioceses devoted to helping parishes start Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration. Such is the case, for example, in the dioceses of Corpus Christi, TX; Baton Rouge, LA; Lafayette, LA; Lake Charles, LA; Alexandria, LA; and in the archdiocese of Manila in the Philippines.

2. Objection: Liturgical directives indicate that there should not be Perpetual Adoration of the exposed Blessed Sacrament in parishes.

Reply: Neither the Code of Canon Law nor the *Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* (HCWEOM) forbid perpetual exposition in parishes. Article 90 of HCWEOM, used by some liturgists to deny permission for Perpetual Adoration with exposition, is not concerned with granting or denying permission for Perpetual Adoration. It simply gives guidelines for its proper implementation to religious communities, institutes, and pious associations that practice it according to their constitutions and regulations. Also, the Holy See recognizes that many parishes have started perpetual adoration and explicitly approves of it.

3. Objection: Not enough people in a parish would be willing to support Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration. Also, the question of absences from the parish for vacations, days off, etc. pose a serious problem.

Reply: This objection is answered by the facts of experience. There are 168 hours a week to be filled. In most parishes several hundred people respond to the appeal to spend an hour a week with our Eucharistic Lord. In larger parishes 700 to 900 people often sign-up. Those pastors who have the great faith to start Perpetual Adoration are always surprised at the many people who respond and remain faithful to it. Parishes that attracted only a few people to Adoration on a limited basis now attract many people to Adoration on a continuous, perpetual basis. The reason for this is threefold. First and foremost, it is obvious that the Holy Spirit is moving the People of God to a love for this "devotion of devotions". Even the opponents of Perpetual Adoration admit that there are requests for Perpetual Adoration from large numbers of people. Second, since the chapel is open all the time, everyone can participate because everyone can find at least one hour a week to spend with Jesus, either as a scheduled adorer or as a substitute. Third, Perpetual Adoration is a message in itself of the importance of Eucharistic Adoration. The commitment involved in Perpetual Adoration challenges and moves people to do something that is really worthwhile and important in their

lives. A substitute system is incorporated into each Perpetual Adoration program to allow an adorer who will not be able to keep his or her hour in any particular week to easily find a substitute.

4. Objection: People who want Adoration do not understand the connection between Eucharist and community. Adoration represents going backward - an effort to separate the Eucharist from the Mass.

Reply: The Mass and Eucharistic Adoration are complementary. At Mass the sacrificial and communal aspects of the Eucharist are emphasized. In Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration the Real Presence is emphasized. Pope John Paul II says that our communal worship at Mass must go together with our personal worship of Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration in order that our love may be complete. Article 80 of HCWEOM states: "The same piety which moves the faithful to Eucharistic adoration attracts them to a deeper participation in the Paschal mystery." Many pastors have experienced significant increases in both daily and Sunday Mass attendance after they started Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration in their parishes.

5. Objection: While the Pope may be expressing a personal opinion, he is not acting as a lawgiver.

Reply: Who in the Church has the authority to say that what the Pope says is not allowable in matters of sacramental discipline?

6. Objection: Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration is not possible because exposition must be discontinued during the Easter Triduum.

Reply: This interruption of Eucharistic Adoration does not interrupt the perpetuity of Adoration any more than death interrupts the perpetuity of life. Christ's Eucharistic absence during Good Friday and Holy Saturday symbolizes His physical absence from earth between His death and resurrection.

7. Objection: One or two adorers at a time would not fulfill the general directives of the Church.

Reply: Which directives or directive would not be fulfilled? Nowhere in the Code of Canon Law or in the HCWEOM does it specify how many adorers must be present during exposition. In fact, article 90 of HCWEOM states: "The form of adoration in which one or two members of the community take turns before the Blessed Sacrament is also to be maintained and highly commended."

8. **Objection:** Extended exposition on a regular basis might be interpreted as **diminishing the importance of exposition at special times such as Forty Hours and Holy Thursday evening.**

Reply: Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration leads people to Jesus in the Eucharist and shows the importance of Eucharistic Adoration. The natural consequence of this is increased attendance and fervor at other Eucharistic devotions.

9. **Objection:** **It is not advisable to have exposition in a side chapel or a room somewhere. If exposition is to be carried out it should be in a specially constructed chapel or on the main altar.**

Reply: It is not the place where Jesus is adored that is important, but the love and devotion that is given to Him. He was first adored in a manger in a stable, and it cannot be said that anything lacked in that adoration. Sacristies, cry rooms, usher rooms, storerooms, daily Mass chapels, and even basement rooms and garages have been converted into beautiful Perpetual Adoration chapels which are very conducive to prayer. The love and sacrifices that have gone into preparing these as worthy places for adoring our Eucharistic Lord is very inspiring and is to be commended. It is not a good idea to have Perpetual Adoration on the main altar because the parish church is a very busy place, with weddings, funerals, etc. taking place. There would be too many interruptions of adoration. Furthermore, the cost of heating or cooling a church around the clock would be prohibitive. And, third, the intimate atmosphere of a small chapel is preferable for adoration.

10. **Objection:** **It is not necessary to have exposition to have Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration. Jesus is just as present in the tabernacle.**

Reply: The difference between spending time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament exposed in a monstrance and spending time with Him in the tabernacle is the same as the difference between conversing with a friend face-to-face and conversing with them with a closed door between both of you. Many adorers feel that seeing Jesus visibly under the appearance of the small white host is much more conducive to intimacy than hidden away in tabernacle. Moreover, it helps adorers to be faithful to their hours for which they are scheduled because they know that Jesus cannot be left alone in the Blessed Sacrament exposed in a monstrance, whereas He can be left alone in the tabernacle. With exposition, the scheduled adorers are

guardians of the Blessed Sacrament as well as adorers, so their presence is necessary.

11. Objection: It is appropriate that our parishes never have exposition concurrent with Mass. This is true even in cases where the chapel is divided from the church by a glass wall or even a brick wall.

Reply: Neither the Code of Canon Law nor HCWEOM forbids the celebration of Mass concurrent with Eucharistic adoration. Canon 941-2 simply states: "Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament may not take place while Mass is being celebrated in the same area of the Church of oratory." The only times that it is necessary that the Blessed Sacrament be reposed during Mass is if that is the only Mass of the day, and those who were adoring would not be able to participate in another one; and when Mass is celebrated in the chapel itself.

12. Objection: The Lord's presence among us is not limited to His presence in the Eucharist. He is with us in other ways as well. To mention a few: He is with us when we gather together for prayer, celebrate the sacraments, and read Sacred Scripture. Clearly, the Eucharist is the most celebrated presence of those presences of Christ. But, nonetheless, it needs to be kept in proper context.

Reply: In the ways mentioned, Jesus is present in His power, in His authority, in His Spirit. But in the Eucharist, Jesus is present in His Person - Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. The Eucharist is the literal fulfillment of His words: Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world. Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration is a bit of heaven on earth because in perpetual adoration Jesus is continuously adored by the faithful here on earth, just as He is continuously adored by the angels and saints in heaven.

*Pope John Paul II tells us in *Dominicae Cena*: "Jesus waits for us in this sacrament of love. Let us be generous with our time in going to meet Him in adoration and in contemplation that is full of faith and ready to make reparation for the great faults and crimes of the world. May our adoration never cease." And that is what Perpetual Adoration is: adoration that never ceases!*