

“GIVING VISIBLE WITNESS TO OUR FAITH”: EUCHARISTIC PROCESSIONS

A Eucharistic procession gives visible manifestation to our faith. While we may march behind a symbol to express unity (e.g. walking behind an **American flag** in a parade), we do not kneel down in adoration before a symbol— that would be **idolatrous**. In this context, Trent clearly states: “If any one shall say, that, in the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is not to be adored with even the worship external of latria, and is, consequently, neither to be venerated with a special festive celebration, nor to be **solemnly** borne about in **processions**, according to the laudable and universal rite and custom of the holy Church; or, is not to be proposed publicly to the people to be worshipped, and that the worshippers thereof are idolaters; let him be anathema.” (Session XIII, Canon VI, Oct. 1551 A.D.) The charge of **idolatry** was obviously **extreme**, but such was the tense climate during this period of church history.

In response, Trent vigorously defended both the holding of eucharistic **processions** and the practice of **reserving** the Blessed Sacrament for the purposes of bringing it to the sick. In the Anglican communion’s Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, article XXVIII states: “The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was not by Christ’s ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.” Trent taught that “The custom of reserving the holy Eucharist in the sacarium is so ancient, that even the age of the Council of Nicaea recognized that usage.” It was referring to the first Council’s teaching in 325 A.D. about the dying. **Nicaea** had taught in Canon #13: “Concerning the departing, the ancient canon law is still to be maintained namely that those who are departing are not to be deprived of their last, most necessary viaticum.”

The Church places a special priority on bringing Holy Communion to those who are dying, reserving the term **viaticum** specifically for Communion given to those actively dying. My **father** received Holy Communion for the last time on Christmas Day 2018, after which he could no longer take solid food. He died shortly after the new year. When it is possible to do so, Viaticum is very **special moment** in one’s spiritual life. It comes from the Latin *viaticus*, i.e. “of or pertaining to a journey.” Think of **via** as in street or way, e.g. Via della Conciliazione leading to the Vatican. Here, the “way” is the final journey, so this “food for the journey” is the food of eternal life for which we long. So many Catholics recall with **nostalgia** that special day of their 1st Holy Communion. But we rarely consider the significance of receiving while close to death. But it was not only to the dying that the Church provided the Eucharist.

Even in the **5th century**, there is evidence that the Eucharist was carried by deacons from the bishop’s Mass to other churches, signifying the **communion** of the Churches with the bishop. The fragment would be placed in the chalice and consumed. Remnants of this may be found when the priest **breaks off** a small piece of the Host, placing it in the chalice before the Agnus Dei. Eucharistic Adoration traces its history to the Middle Ages. Expressions of faith the Real Presence, like many aspects of Church piety, **developed** over time. Some customs and traditions endure, while others fade slowly over time. Art and architectural styles enjoy their moments of popularity, as do clothing fashions. Yet, some Catholic customs have endured for centuries and are **perennially valid**. An example includes displaying the Sacred Host for adoration in a **monstrance**.

Coming from the Latin word *monstrare*, meaning “to show” the monstrance developed over time. Eventually, it contained a center section with a glass container (called a luna) made to fit a particular size host, and surrounded by rays, like the sun. The Saint Paul Seminary is loaning us a special monstrance for today’s procession, used in the **1941 National Eucharistic Congress** which

Saint Paul proudly hosted. It was one of the **highlights** of Archbishop John Murray's tenure. A **chalice** gifted for the Congress was retrieved from the Cathedral rectory safe and polished for today's Mass. (See page 7) The Cathedral added a special three-stepped platform behind the altar with a canopy for this specific purpose. It even includes space for **six special candles** that will be lit, perhaps for the first time in many, many years. When I saw brackets on the side of the canopy, I had surmised it was for some reason. One day, when rummaging through a closet, I found the candle holders and immediately **connected** the dots.

It is rare for Canon Law to make note of **devotions**, but we read in Canon 944: "When it can be done in the judgment of the diocesan bishop, as a **public witness** of the veneration toward the Most Holy Eucharist, a procession is to be conducted through the public **streets**, especially on the solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ." We'll stick to the sidewalks! Beginning in the center aisle, the procession heads out the front doors and down the steps. It continues towards Dayton Ave. proceeding to the back courtyard, where our first Benediction occurs. The procession route moves to Selby Ave. and turns at the sidewalk leading to the plaza area on the main steps. Holding the monstrance, **Archbishop Hebda** will bless all present and the **city of St. Paul** from the front doors. All process back into Church for the Divine Praises and closing hymn. Then, it's **ice cream** time!

- Due to persistent issues with his knee, the Holy Father **canceled** his trip to **South Sudan**. He is still scheduled to visit **Canada** next month, but again, it appears that such travel would be dicey. International travel is taxing for anyone; add an uncooperative knee to the mix and it presents unique challenges. The pope is currently using a wheelchair. May the Lord grant him relief from his pain.
- I feel horrible for Twins SS prospect **Royce Lewis**, out again with a season ending injury. I still believe he is going to be a star someday for the Twins, but his progress has been hampered by injury. May he enjoy a speedy and full recovery.
- **Attacks** on pro-life pregnancy centers continue throughout the country. A man was arrested outside the residence of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who while experiencing mental health issues, nonetheless admitted that he had **intended to kill** the Justice! That is just one reason why we have recently added a special petition **for judges** in our Sunday Masses.
- Capt. John Sax, son of former L.A. Dodger 2B Steve Sax, was one of five **U.S. Marines** accidentally killed during a military training flight in California. We should never fail to appreciate the dangers for our military, even in peacetime. Their training is challenging and often dangerous.
- Any sacrificial stewardship gift that you can make **before June 30** will help with our fiscal year end finances. **Expenses** this year were significantly up, especially with respect to added security (not budgeted) and heating expenses, not foreseen to such an extent. **Thank you** for your support!

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. John L. Ubel,
Rector