

Eucharistic Processions

from *Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass.*

72. When the Eucharist is carried through the streets in a solemn procession with singing, the Christian people give public witness of faith and devotion towards the sacrament.

It is for the local Ordinary, however, to judge whether this is opportune in today's circumstances, and to determine the time, place, and order of such processions, so that they may be conducted with dignity and without loss of reverence to the sacrament.

73. The annual procession on the feast of Corpus Christi, or on an appropriate day near this feast, has a special importance and meaning for the pastoral life of the parish or city. It is therefore desirable to continue this procession, in accordance with the law, when today's circumstances permit and when it can truly be a sign of common faith and adoration.

In the principal districts of large cities there may be additional Eucharistic processions for pastoral reasons at the discretion of the local Ordinary. If the procession cannot be held on the feast of Corpus Christi, it is fitting to hold some kind of public celebration for the entire city or its principal districts in the cathedral church or other appropriate places.

74. It is fitting that a Eucharistic procession begin after the Mass in which the host to be carried in the procession has been consecrated. A procession may also take place, however, at the end of a lengthy period of public adoration.

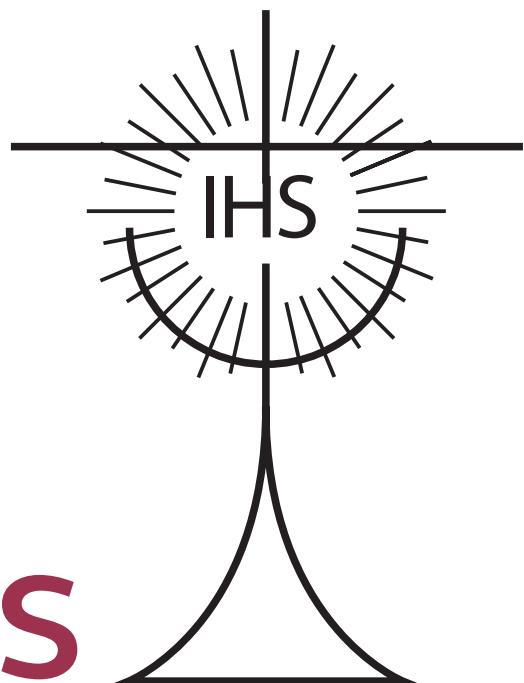
75. Eucharistic processions should be arranged in accordance with local customs concerning the decoration of the streets and the order followed by the participants. In the course of the procession there may be stations where the Eucharistic blessing is given, if this custom is in effect and is of pastoral advantage. Songs and prayers should be so directed that all proclaim their faith in Christ and direct their attention to the Lord alone.

76. The priest who carries the Blessed Sacrament may wear the vestments used for the celebration of Mass if the procession takes place immediately afterward, or he may vest in a white cope.

77. Lights, incense, and the canopy under which the priest carrying the Blessed Sacrament walks should be used in accordance with local customs.

78. It is fitting that the procession should go from one church to another. Nevertheless, if local circumstances require, the procession may return to the same church where it began.

79. At the end of the procession Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament should be given in the church where the procession ends or at another appropriate place. Then the Blessed Sacrament is reposited.



ADOREMUS

Notes

Introduction

May this action of the Eucharistic procession, which we will carry out shortly, respond to Jesus' command. An action to commemorate him; an action to give food to the crowds of today; an act to break open our faith and our lives as a sign of Christ's love for this city and for the whole world. (Pope Francis, *Corpus Christi* 2016)

We bring Christ, present under the sign of bread, onto the streets of our city. We entrust these streets, these homes, our daily life, to his goodness. May our streets be streets of Jesus! May our houses be homes for him and with him! May our life of every day be penetrated by his presence.

With this gesture, let us place under his eyes the sufferings of the sick, the solitude of young people and the elderly, temptations, fears — our entire life. The procession represents an immense and public blessing for our city: Christ is, in person, the divine Blessing for the world. May the ray of his blessing extend to us all!

In the *Corpus Domini* procession, we walk with the Risen One on his journey to meet the entire world. (Pope Benedict, *Corpus Christi* 2005)

Documents

A Eucharistic Procession ‘is a prolongation of the celebration of the Eucharist: immediately after Mass, the Sacred Host, consecrated during the Mass, is borne out of the Church for the Christian faithful to make public profession of faith and worship of the Most Blessed Sacrament’ (*Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, 162)

Wherever it is possible in the judgement of the diocesan Bishop, a procession through the public streets should be held, especially on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ as a public witness of reverence for the Most Holy Sacrament, for the devout participation of the faithful in the Eucharistic procession on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ is a grace from the Lord which yearly fills with joy those who take part in it’. (*Redemptionis Sacramentum* 143)

Processions following the celebration of Mass

It will normally begin immediately after the celebration of a Mass. It should normally go from one church to another, but may return to the same church where it began.¹

After the communion of the faithful, the deacon places the monstrance on the altar, then reverently places the consecrated host in it. The principal celebrant genuflects and returns to the chair where he says the Prayer after Communion.

The Concluding Rites are omitted and the procession takes place. The principal celebrant wears a chasuble as at Mass or a white cope. (When the procession does not follow immediately after Mass, the celebrant wears a cope. Where there are clergy who were not concelebrants of the Mass it is fitting they wear a cope over the cassock and surplice.)

The beginning of the procession

Either following the celebration of Mass (and the Prayer after Communion) or following a length period of adoration that has been held after Mass: incense is placed in the thurible and blessed. The celebrant, kneeling before the altar, incenses the Blessed Sacrament. He then, wearing the humeral veil, goes up to the altar, genuflects and takes the monstrance and holds it with hands covered by the two ends of the veil.

¹ The following notes are, in part, based on the *Ceremonial of Bishops* (389–394).

The order of the procession

To note that in the *Ceremonial of Bishops* a distinction is made between those clergy who have been concelebrants at the preceding Mass, and those who have not. Care should be taken that the vestments worn by the clergy are harmonious and, where possible, have a certain uniformity.

- The crossbearer, accompanied by acolytes carrying candlesticks with lighted candles.
- Clergy:
 - Deacons of the Mass
 - Canons and Priests wearing copes
 - Concelebrants
 - Visiting bishops wearing copes
- *The Blessed Sacrament*
 - [minister carry the bishop's crozier]
 - 2 thurifers
 - Bishop (or Priest) carrying the Blessed Sacrament
 - [2 deacons assisting the bishop]
 - [ministers carrying book and mitre]
 - Torchbearers escort the Blessed Sacrament
 - A canopy is held over the Blessed Sacrament according to local custom
- *Following*
 - Other bishops in choir dress
 - The faithful

Where the bishop does not carry the Blessed Sacrament he walks in front the Priest carrying the monstrance. The bishop is wears a cope and walks with head uncovered carrying his crozier, but not blessing as he walks.

As a rule those highest in rank are nearest in the procession to the Blessed Sacrament, whether before or behind.²

Stations

There may be stations in the course of processions where Eucharistic benediction is given. These pauses in the procession should include songs and prayers which express the faith of participants and keep their attention centred on the Lord alone.

At the end of the procession

The procession concludes with Benediction and Reposition following the form given in *Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*. It takes place in the church where the procession ends or another suitable place.

The clergy and ministers go directly to their places. The celebrant goes to the altar and remains standing. The deacon, on his right, takes the monstrance and places it on the altar. The celebrant and deacon genuflect and then, laying aside the humeral veil, kneels before the altar.

A hymn or other Eucharistic song is sung and the Blessed Sacrament is incensed. This is followed by the prayer. The celebrant puts on the humeral veil and takes the monstrance and gives the blessing in silence.

² Where Papal Orders, or Knights of Malta or the Holy Sepulchre are present, they should similarly process according to rank with precedence given to the Papal Orders of Pius IX, Knights and Dames of St Gregory, Knights and Dames of St Sylvester.

The deacon takes the monstrance and places it on the altar. The celebrant kneels in front of the altar. The deacon genuflects and then reverently takes the Blessed Sacrament to the chapel of reservation. An acclamation may be sung. The procession returns to the sacristy in the usual way.

Music

No particular songs are required to be used during the procession. Traditional hymns might most easily be sung at the beginning or end of the procession, or if there are stations when the congregation is stationary. But it may be found that some texts can be sung by heart and therefore are suitable for use in procession.

The practice of Lourdes of a strong familiar refrain and verses sung by a cantor or choir provides another successful model for the music. A Corpus Christi procession might be an opportunity to see whether different ethnic groups in the parish have songs and traditions which could be shared with the whole community.

Thought will need to be given to how instruments will be able to support the singing in the procession. At the various stopping points amplification might be used but care should be taken that it does not hinder the prayerful atmosphere.

Good order of the procession

As already noted the decision as to whether a public procession may proceed belongs to the Bishop. Matters that he is likely to take into consideration are the likelihood of the procession provoking reactions of disrespect of the Church or blasphemy towards Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament.

When a public procession cannot be held, the tradition of holding Eucharistic processions should not be allowed to be lost. Instead, new ways should be sought of holding them in today's conditions: for example, at shrines, or in public gardens if the civil authority agrees. (*Redemptionis Sacramentum* 144)

Well in advance of any planned procession, the appropriate permissions must also be obtained from any necessary civil authorities — for example the local council or police force for processions taking place on public roads. The civil authorities will indicate the necessary health and safety measures that should be observed for the well-being of worshippers and the general public.

Conclusion

In the procession we follow this sign and in this way we follow Christ himself. And we ask of him: Guide us on the paths of our history! Show the Church and her Pastors again and again the right path! Look at suffering humanity, cautiously seeking a way through so much doubt; look upon the physical and mental hunger that torments it! Give men and women bread for body and soul! Give them work! Give them light! Give them yourself! Purify and sanctify all of us! Make us understand that only through participation in your Passion, through “yes” to the cross, to self-denial, to the purifications that you impose upon us, our lives can mature and arrive at true fulfilment. Gather us together from all corners of the earth. Unite your Church, unite wounded humanity! Give us your salvation! Amen. (Pope Benedict, *Corpus Christi* 2006)

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