

# Maundy Thursday

## Transfer of the Blessed Sacrament

### Watching at the place of repose

#### Introduction

At the end of the Mass of the Lord's Supper the Eucharist is taken in procession from where Mass has been celebrated to the place of repose. After the Blessed Sacrament has been placed in the tabernacle there is period of watching and adoration which continues until midnight with due solemnity. After midnight the adoration takes place without solemnity.

The Blessed Sacrament is reserved so that Holy Communion may be distributed at the end of the Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday. Where the Good Friday celebration does not take place in the same church, the Blessed Sacrament is not reserved and Mass ends in the usual way (e.g. with the Concluding Rites).

The time of watching is one of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament but is not a celebration of Exposition and Benediction. The consecrated host is not exposed in a monstrance and no words are said by the Priest following the Prayer after Communion. Though there may be elements celebrated communally during the period of adoration (see below) it is as much a time of personal prayer.

The Church's celebration of the Paschal Triduum is a remembering (anamnesis) of the events of Jesus' Passion, Death and Resurrection but it is not a historical re-enactment nor the telling of a story where the ending is not known. The events are both ritualised and celebrated from the perspective of Christ's Resurrection. In the period of watching it is both remembering the events following the Lord's supper and adoration of the Risen Christ, present in the Blessed Sacrament.

#### Overview

##### **After Communion**

Ciborium with consecrated hosts for the next day is placed on the altar

Prayer after Communion

Incensation

##### **Procession**

Singing of *Pange Lingua* (*Hail, our Saviour's glorious body*) or other eucharistic song

##### **Arrival the place of repose**

Ciborium placed in the Tabernacle (doors open)

Incensation, and singing of *Tantum ergo* (*Come, adore the wondrous presence*) or other eucharistic song

Tabernacle door closed

Silent adoration

Priest and ministers leave

##### **Watching**

With solemnity until midnight

Without solemnity after midnight

## Preparation

The following notes are derived from a number of sources, including the *Roman Missal*, *Paschale Solemnitatis* and the *Ceremonial of Bishops*.

## Tabernacle & Communion

At the beginning of Mass the tabernacle should be entirely empty; but a sufficient amount of bread should be consecrated in this Mass for the Communion of the clergy and the people on this and the following day.

Maundy Thursday evening makes particularly clear the meaning of eucharistic reservation. It is derived from the celebration of the sacrifice: thus, previously reserved elements will have been consumed and the tabernacle is empty when the Mass of the Lord's Supper begins. The primary purpose of eucharistic reservation is the reception of communion in special situations outside the eucharistic celebration: usually viaticum for the dying, in this case communion on Good Friday. Its secondary purpose is to allow for the adoration of the Lord present in the sacrament: thus, the faithful are invited to continue adoration before the reserved sacrament for a suitable period of time after the Mass of the Lord's Supper until midnight.

It is appropriate that the Eucharist be borne directly from the altar by the deacons or acolytes, or extraordinary ministers, at the moment of Communion for the sick and infirm who must receive at home, so that, in this way, they may be more closely united to the celebrating Church.

## Place of repose

The rites presume that the Eucharist is normally reserved in churches in a separate Blessed Sacrament chapel. The procession with the Eucharist therefore leaves from the altar and goes to the reservation chapel, where the liturgy ends. If a church does not have a blessed sacrament chapel, one should be set up for the occasion in the best way possible.

The chapel should be prepared and adorned in such a way as to be conducive to prayer and meditation; the sobriety appropriate to the liturgy of these days is encouraged. The principle from *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass* that there should be due proportion between the celebration of Mass and the worship of the Eucharist outside Mass should be followed.

The place where the tabernacle or pyx is situated must not be made to resemble a tomb, and the expression tomb is to be avoided: for the chapel of repose is not prepared so as to represent the Lord's burial but for the custody of the eucharistic bread that will be distributed in communion on Good Friday.

Care should be taken that the processional route is clear and safe.

## After Communion

The Priest says the Prayer after Communion standing at the chair.

After the Prayer after Communion, the Priest puts incense in the thurible while standing at the chair and blesses it. He then goes to the altar and kneeling, incenses the Blessed Sacrament three times. Then, having put on a white humeral veil, he rises, genuflects, takes the ciborium, and covers it with the ends of the veil.

(Where the Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday is not celebrated in the same Church there is no procession or place of repose and Mass concludes in the usual way.)

## Procession

A procession is formed in which the Blessed Sacrament, accompanied by torches and incense, is carried through the church to a place of repose.

A lay minister with a cross, standing between two other ministers with lighted candles leads off. Others carrying lighted candles follow. Before the Priest carrying the Blessed Sacrament comes a thurifer with a smoking thurible.

Meanwhile, the hymn *Pange, lingua* (exclusive of the last two stanzas) or another eucharistic chant is sung.

## Music

*Pange lingua* will be a familiar choice in many places either in Latin to the chant melody or in an English translation (*Hail our Saviour's glorious Body* or *Of the glorious body telling*) which might be sung to the chant melody or an 87 87 87 hymn tune. Only the first four verse are sung during the procession. An alternative setting to consider is by Ricky Manalo CSP which uses the Latin *Pange lingua* text as an ostinato chant with verses over the top.

Psalms are often used in the Roman Rite to accompany processions. Another possibility would be to use an alternative setting of the Responsorial Psalm setting from the Mass or the Communion Antiphon and Psalm or another Communion Psalm the community is familiar with. An example of a Communion Psalm would be *This is my Body* from *Psallité*. Two psalms to consider, therefore, would be Psalm 22 (23) or 115 (116a).

In addition to a hymn or a psalm with antiphon to accompany the procession another option would be a Taizé chant or similar. If *Pange lingua* is the guide to the textual content of any setting this suggests three connected ideas: praise of Christ, the mystery of the incarnation and reflection on the Lord's supper. While shaped overall by the Paschal Mystery the text is not about ideas of watching or being put to the test.

## Arrival at place of repose

When the procession reaches the place of repose, the Priest, with the help of the Deacon if necessary, places the ciborium in the tabernacle, the door of which remains open. Then he puts incense in the thurible and, kneeling, incenses the Blessed Sacrament, while *Tantum ergo Sacramentum* or another eucharistic chant is sung. Then the Deacon or the Priest himself closes the door.

After a period of silent adoration, the Priest and ministers rise, genuflect and return to the sacristy.

As noted in the Introduction this is not Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The ciborium is placed within a closed tabernacle there is not a monstrance.

The simple exit of the Priest and ministers for some commentators shows the unity of the Triduum celebrations with no formal ending or dismissal here, or formal beginning or greeting at the start of the Good Friday liturgy. This exit does point towards the nature of the watching which is simple, predominantly silent and more individual prayer than corporate devotion.

## After the liturgy

At an appropriate time, the altar is stripped and, if possible, the crosses are removed from the church. It is expedient that any crosses which remain in the church be veiled (with a red or purple veil). Votive lights before the images of saints are extinguished. If it has not already

been done, the baptismal font and holy water stoups are emptied. The church and sanctuary are being prepared for the celebrations of Good Friday and the Easter Vigil.

## Watching

### General

The faithful are invited to continue adoration before the Blessed Sacrament for a suitable length of time during the night, according to local circumstances, but after midnight the adoration should take place without solemnity.

Such an invitation is to be made at a time prior this moment. Prayer at this time is usually personal in nature and done predominantly in silence.

### John's Gospel

There is a tradition, commended in *Paschale Solemnitatis*, of reading from St John's Gospel chapters 13–17 — John's account of the Last Supper with the washing of the feet and Jesus' discourse with his disciples. Copies could be made available for personal reflection and/or passages might be proclaimed at intervals with suitable periods of silence in between.

PDFs of the text for copying are available on the Liturgy Office website. The scripture version used is the *English Standard Version* which is a text being considered for further liturgical use.

### Night Prayer

Those who have attended the Mass of the Lord's Supper do not celebrate Evening Prayer.

Night Prayer may be celebrated. If enough people are present it could be a fitting way to end the period of watching before midnight or it could be celebrated at an earlier point. A PDF of Night Prayer (of Sunday II) is available for download on the Liturgy Office website.

### Other options?

There might be the occasional piece of music. Anything chosen should taken into account that note about the personal nature of this prayer and the place of silence. Possibilities might include the Taizé chant *Stay with me* or a sung refrain after passages from St John's Gospel, such as *A new commandment*. The psalm and canticle of Night Prayer might be sung to a simple tone. A hymn is given (*O thou who at thy Eucharist did pray*) alternatives might include *What wondrous love* or *Before heaven and earth*.

### After midnight

The *Roman Missal* indicates that adoration after midnight should take place without solemnity but the various sources do not expand on this. In some churches for safety and security the period of watching will end at midnight. It seems clear that if there are readings, prayers and music these do not take place after midnight when there is only silence. Consideration might also be given to reducing the number of lights etc.