

















## EXPRESSING FAITH

In the liturgy of the Mass we express our faith in the real presence of Christ under the species of bread and wine by, among other ways, genuflecting or bowing deeply as a sign of adoration of the Lord. “The Catholic Church has always offered and still offers to the sacrament of the Eucharist the cult of adoration, not only during Mass, but also outside of it, reserving the consecrated hosts with the utmost care, exposing them to the solemn veneration of the faithful, and carrying them in procession.”

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1378

Pope John Paul II, as already noted, wrote of Eucharistic adoration in a tender and loving manner, suggesting that it was the same as resting on Jesus’ breast. But he too noted the balance the faithful must have between participating in the Eucharist and contemplating the divine presence:

*The worship of the Eucharist outside of the Mass is of inestimable value for the life of the Church. This worship is strictly linked to the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The presence of Christ under the sacred species reserved after Mass ... derives from the celebration of the sacrifice and is directed towards communion, both sacramental and spiritual” (EE, 25; emphasis in original).*

Pope Francis has also encouraged Eucharistic adoration and emphasizes that adoration of God should lead the believer to spread the Gospel and to serve one’s brothers and sisters.

Adoration of Jesus in the Eucharist as practiced well by believers has the potential to attract other people to Christ, not only in the practice itself but in its

fruits, which include communion with Christ. “In his Eucharistic presence he remains mysteriously in our midst as the one who loved us and gave himself up for us” (CCC 1380). May we who believe in him adore him in his presence and join him in his mission.

## TANTUM ERGO (ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

Down in adoration falling,  
Lo! the sacred Host we hail,  
Lo! o’er ancient forms departing  
Newer rites of grace prevail;  
Faith for all defects supplying,  
Where the feeble senses fail.

To the everlasting Father,  
And the Son who reigns on high  
With the Holy Spirit proceeding  
Forth from each eternally,  
Be salvation, honor blessing,  
Might and endless majesty. Amen.

consecrated bread and wine at the celebration of the Eucharist. The concern was that people were becoming simply spectators and not participants.

The Second Vatican Council, in its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, picked up on this concern and urged that the faithful at Mass “should not be there as strangers or silent spectators;

on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 48).

## PAPAL SUPPORT

That document was not proscribing Eucharistic adoration; rather, it was bringing balance to the faithful’s participation at Mass. But lest there be any misunderstanding, Pope Paul VI followed two years later with his encyclical *Mysterium Fidei*, which focuses on the Eucharist more directly. In his teaching, Pope Paul recommends that people should receive Communion at Mass, even daily, and remember to pay a visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament where it is reserved in churches (see 66).

*“It is not to remain in a golden ciborium that he comes down each day from heaven, but to find another heaven, the heaven of our soul in which he takes delight.”*

— *Saint Thérèse of Lisieux*