

# The Liturgy of the Hours and Exposition of the Holy Eucharist

## Introduction

During Exposition of the Holy Eucharist one of the options for the period of Adoration is the recitation of part of the Liturgy of the Hours.

This liturgy extends the praise and thanksgiving offered to God in the eucharistic celebration to the several hours of the day; it directs the prayers of the Church to Christ and through him to the Father in the name of the whole world. [HCWE 66]

The celebration of one of the Hours would be appropriate either as part of a short period of exposition or a prolonged one. Preference should be given to the 'hinge hours' of Morning and Evening Prayer which are considered the chief hours (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 89), though hours may be celebrated.

## Structure

### Exposition

Entrance of Ministers  
Exposition (Procession from the place of Reservation)  
Incensation  
Eucharistic (or Office) Hymn

### Adoration

Introduction  
Office Hymn (omitted if a Hymn has previously been sung)  
Psalmody  
Reading  
(Homily)  
Responsory  
Gospel Canticle (e.g. Magnificat)  
Intercessions  
Lord's Prayer

### Benediction

Incensation and Eucharistic Song  
Prayer  
Blessing

### Reposition

Reposition (Procession to the place of Reservation)  
Acclamation  
Departure of ministers.

## Choice of Texts

The liturgy of the day may always be celebrated, e.g. Evening Prayer of Thursday, Psalter Week I.

The *General Introduction to the Liturgy of the Hours* (GILH) allows for a 'votive Office' to be celebrated either in whole or in part for a public or devotional reason. This may happen on any day except:

- Solemnities
- Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Eastertide
- Ash Wednesday
- Holy Week and the Paschal Triduum
- the Octave of Easter
- 2 November

[GILH 245]

For Exposition of the Holy Eucharist it is appropriate to use the Office of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (*Corpus Christi*). The Office was originally composed by St Thomas Aquinas at the request of Pope Urban IV who had instituted the feast for the whole Church. The celebration of the Office of *Corpus Christi* allows those who pray it to reflect on the mystery of the Eucharist, in the context of Exposition. This gives their contemplation an extra dimension, which in turn will lead to a deeper participation in Mass leading to a profound engagement with Christ in the world.

Consideration might be given to the faithful who will gather for Exposition, if they are familiar with the Liturgy of Hours and pray it regularly it may be appropriate to use the Office of the day. For a group less familiar with the Liturgy of the Hours the Office of *Corpus Christi* might be a better initial choice. In the notes below some of the adaptations given in GILH are highlighted so that any possible changes may help the prayer of the people and their participation in the mystery of the Eucharist.

On the Liturgy Office website the following texts are available as A5 leaflets.

- Office of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ
  - Evening Prayer I
  - Morning Prayer
  - Prayer during the Day
  - Evening Prayer II

Where only one Evening Prayer is celebrated Evening Prayer II should be used.

# Celebrating the Liturgy of the Hours during Exposition

The different names given to the Office: the Liturgy of the Hours and the Prayer of the Church are reminders that even if, for many people, the experience of the Office is as an individual it is prayer with and of the whole Church. So its normative form is to be celebrated liturgically with a group of the faithful. Liturgically suggests that rather than just being read through attention is given to elements such as posture, space, pacing, silence, music, ministry and symbols such as light and incense.

## Posture and Gesture

The normal postures followed in the celebration of the Office are also used when the celebration is part of period of Adoration.

- All stand for the Introduction and Hymn.
- Sit for the Psalmody and Reading.
- Stand for the Gospel Canticle, Intercessions and Lord's Prayer.
- Kneel for the following Benediction.

Gesture is part of how the Office is celebrated: a Sign of the Cross at the beginning and at the Gospel Canticle, a bow when the doxology (*Glory be*) is sung at the end of psalms and canticles.

## Pacing and Silence

When a celebration of an Hour is chosen for a period of Adoration it is important that there is time to celebrate it well with significant periods of silence. If this is not possible it would be better to choose a scripture reading rather than have a rushed celebration of the Hour and no space around it. It is arguable that silence is the most important element in the time of Adoration. This suggests that not only are there periods of silence before and after the Office but that it is also integrated into the celebration itself. There can be pauses for silence after each psalm or canticle so that people have an opportunity to reflect on the text. There could be an extended period of silence after the scripture readings. The intercessions could be spoken to allow personal prayer between each one.

## Music

In addition to the songs and hymns usually sung at a service of Exposition (Opening Song, Eucharistic Hymn and Acclamation) various elements of the Office should usually be sung. These include:

- Office Hymn
- Psalms and Canticles
- Gospel Canticle

Priority should be given to singing the Gospel Canticle (Magnificat or Benedictus). Further ideas are given in the notes below.

## Ministry

The presider at the celebration of the Office will be the same person who presides at the whole of liturgy of Exposition. Usually this will be a priest or a deacon however where a layperson leads the liturgy of Exposition (without Benediction) they may also lead the celebration of the Office.

Other ministers, in addition to those needed for Exposition, may include: musicians (psalmists/cantors), readers for the scripture reading, deacon for the intercessions (or another minister).

## Entrance of Ministers

The ministers approach the altar either in silence or while instrumental music is played.

The Blessed Sacrament is brought to the altar and placed in the monstrance. It is then incensed by the presider.

## Song

In Exposition a Song usually accompanies the incensation. When the celebration of the Liturgy of Hours immediately takes place it is suggested that two hymns do not follow one another (e.g. this Song and the Office Hymn). If there is a good period of silence at the beginning of Adoration before the beginning of the Hour it would be possible to have both in place.

Where there is a proximity between Exposition and the Hour the following are all possible:

- Song accompanying Exposition (suitably Eucharistic); omit Office Hymn.
- Song accompanying Exposition — the Office Hymn is sung at this point.
- Omit Song accompanying Exposition; the Office Hymn is sung at the beginning of the Hour following the Introduction.

## Introduction

All stand for the Introduction (*O God, come to our aid*) and the Sign of the Cross is made.

The 'Alleluia' is omitted in Lent.

## Office Hymn

See notes above about the relationship with the Song accompanying Exposition.

In the leaflets English translations by James Quinn SJ of the hymns written by St Thomas Aquinas for the Office of *Corpus Christi* (*Pange Lingua, Verbum Supernum*). A feature of these texts is that the last two verses of both have been used separately (*Pange Lingua — Tantum Ergo; Verbum Supernum — O Salutaris Hostia*). This suggests that these texts are not repeated at another point of Exposition.

Another suitable Eucharistic Hymn could be sung at this point.

## Psalmody

The psalms and canticles are intended to be sung. The most familiar way will be to a psalm tone. This can be done in a variety of ways: antiphonally with 2 sides or groups, antiphonally with a cantor and all, or everyone together.

Another possible way might be to find a suitable Responsorial Psalm setting with everybody singing the antiphon/response. Where time is short or people are unfamiliar with singing and praying the psalms together it may be possible to use just one psalm.

There should be a pause for silence between each psalm.

## Scripture Reading

A short text, from the Office, is given in the leaflet. This may be replaced by a longer (non-Gospel) reading, if desired. This can be taken from the list of readings given in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, which can be found on the Liturgy Office website.

The reading may be followed by a brief homily. After the reading or homily there should be a period of silent prayer.

## Responsory

Two responsories are given the leaflet; the second for use during Lent. The responsory, which responds to the Word of God, may be replaced by another suitable chant or can be omitted.

## Gospel Canticle

At Evening Prayer, the Magnificat is sung; at Morning Prayer, the Benedictus. All stand and priority should be given to singing this above all else in the Office.

## Intercessions

Intercessions from the Office are given in the leaflet. The introductory invitation to pray is said by the presider; the intentions by a deacon or other minister. An indication is given where additional intentions, if desired, can be added.

## Lord's Prayer

The Our Father is introduced by the presider.

## Benediction

If Benediction follows the order is:

### **Benediction**

Incensation and Eucharistic Song  
Prayer  
Blessing

### **Reposition**

Reposition (Procession to the place of Reservation)  
Acclamation  
Departure of ministers.

If Benediction does not follow, or when a layperson presides the order is:

### **Reposition**

Prayer  
Reposition (Procession to the place of Reservation)  
Acclamation  
Departure of ministers.

## Prolonged period of Exposition

The following changes are made where the celebration of the Prayer of the Church takes place within a longer period of exposition.

- At the beginning, where the Blessed Sacrament has already been exposed, the ministers approach the altar, genuflect and go to their places.
- At the end,
  - If benediction has taken place, after a period of silent prayer the ministers genuflect and leave.
  - If benediction has not taken place, after the Lord's Prayer the Concluding Prayer is said, then there is a period of silent prayer the ministers genuflect and leave.

## Resources

On the Liturgy Office website the following further resources are available:

- Exposition of the Holy Eucharist — Music
- Readings on the Eucharist — list of readings in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*

*Celebrating Sunday Evening Prayer* was a resource produced by the Liturgy Office to assist parishes to celebrate Evening Prayer on Sundays which includes a variety of musical settings.