

EUCHARISTIC PROCESSION FOR VOCATIONS

PREPARATION GUIDE

“Let us also celebrate with particular devotion the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, with its traditional procession. Our faith in the God who took flesh in order to become our companion along the way needs to be everywhere proclaimed, especially in our streets and homes, as an expression of our grateful love and as an inexhaustible source of blessings.” - Pope John Paul II

This guide is a companion to the booklet entitled “Eucharistic Procession for Vocations.” The procession begins in the church and continues along a pre-determined route. Along the way are set up four altars, or stations. At each station, the priest places the monstrance on the altar and leads the people in prayer and scripture reading, followed by benediction. The people then sing a hymn as they process to the next altar. After returning to the church, they kneel and pray a litany for vocations.

For detailed instructions for celebrating a Eucharistic Procession, see paragraphs 695-711 in *Ceremonies of the Modern Roman Rite* by Msgr. Peter J. Elliott, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1995. From paragraph 698:

“The route of the procession must be carefully defined. Well-placed loudspeakers and printed programs promote the full participation of the people and help those watching the procession to be drawn into the celebration. In some countries, it is customary to decorate the houses and other buildings along the route. If the procession is long, the celebrant may stop at "altars" set up at convenient places where Benediction is given. The procession terminates with solemn Benediction, given either in or outside the church where it began, at another church or at some suitable place where the people can gather conveniently.”

Notes for Altar Preparers

For the four altars to be prepared, four families or organizations in the parish should be selected to decorate their own altar and monitor it during Mass and the procession.

Materials Needed for each Altar

- Table
- White Cloth to cover the table
- Flowers
- Four glass candles (be sure they are lit on Thursday, or a day or two before so they burn down enough not to be blown out by the wind).
- An elevated area to serve as the throne for the Blessed Sacrament

- A prie-dieu (kneeler) for the priest in front of the altar (pad or covered board will serve)
- Plants or other things to worthily decorate the altar area.

Prepare the altar, setting it up at home to see how it will look.

Bring the materials for the church on Sunday morning, and set them up before the beginning of the last Mass.

If it is raining, or threatening to rain, check with those in charge. They will decide what to do such as set up the altars in the parish hall, parish school, or other locale.

If the procession will be outside, it is a good idea to have someone responsible for keeping an eye on your altar during the Mass – especially if there is anything of value on the altar. Light the candles only after Mass. It is also possible to wait until the very end of Mass to place the last touches on the altar, for there will be a little time before the procession arrives at the altars.

Notes for Ushers

At the end of Mass, when the priest goes to expose the Blessed Sacrament, the four (or six) ushers with canopy should go to the place of the canopy and be prepared to begin.

When the altar servers begin to move in procession, the other ushers must direct the people to follow behind the priests in the procession, if the procession will go outside. Otherwise, the people will remain in their places, and further instructions with regard to crowd management need not be regarded.

The ushers with the canopy move into place in the center aisle when the priest with the Blessed Sacrament leaves the front sanctuary gate. If it happens that the priest passes through a place where the canopy will not fit, allow the priest to go first, and then proceed behind him with the canopy until you come to an open place once more.

Upon arrival at the different altars, the canopy should move off to one of the sides to a place where it does not block the general view to the altar.

Immediately after the blessing at each altar, the ushers should direct the people to join the procession once more behind the priests. If it is at all possible, try to encourage the people to maintain some kind of orderly file in the procession.

At the end of the procession, the ushers direct the people to take once more their places in church.

The ushers with the canopy continue to accompany the priest until he arrives at the altar steps, at which time they retire to the side.

Notes for the Altar Servers

See above for the order of the procession.

Sequence of Events:

Mass goes as normal until after the purification of the vessels. When the altar is cleared, the monstrance should be placed near the tabernacle and the incense prepared.

After the announcements, (during the collection, if there is one) the priest changes his chasuble for the cope. This is done at his chair.

When the collection is taken, the priest will go up to the tabernacle to expose the Blessed Sacrament and place It on the altar. At that time, the altar servers should go down to kneel on the step in front of the altar, except the cross bearer, who should kneel on the lowest step of the altar. The priest will then incense the Blessed Sacrament.

After he incenses, one of the altar servers will place the humeral veil on his shoulders. He will then take the Blessed Sacrament.

At this time, the cross bearer should come down and get in position to start the procession, along with all the other servers.

When the priest starts to come forward the procession should begin. The M.C. must direct the priests to their proper position in the procession.

The server with the bells should ring them intermittently during the procession.

The cross bearer should lead the procession to the first altar, and stand off to the right side of the altar upon arrival. The candle-bearers should place their candles on the altar, and kneel off to the sides. The corporal-bearer should open the corporal on the stand which is on the altar for the monstrance.

When the priest places the Blessed Sacrament on the altar, he will then remove the humeral veil so a server must be ready to take it from him. He will then read the gospel and the prayer.

After the prayer he will incense the Blessed Sacrament as the Tantum Ergo is sung. After incensing, the altar server with the humeral veil will place it on his shoulders. Following the Tantum Ergo the priest will give the blessing, during which one thurifer should incense, and the bell ringer should ring the bells three distinct times.

After the blessing, the procession should begin again with the cross-bearer leading to the next altar. Be careful not to go too quickly such that a gap forms in the procession, nor too slowly such that it drags along.

At the end of the procession come back into the church. The priest will place the Blessed Sacrament on the altar. He will come down, remove the humeral veil, and incense the Blessed Sacrament. He will then pray the Divine Praises after which he will go up to repose the Blessed Sacrament if not followed by a period of Eucharistic Adoration. When he has placed the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, and the door is closed, then all the servers should come and flank the priests as they stand at the foot of the altar. After singing, genuflect and proceed directly to the sacristy, letting the priests enter last into the sacristy.

Notes for the Organist

At the end of Mass there will be no final blessing. After the announcements the priest will expose the Blessed Sacrament. When he is ready to incense the Blessed Sacrament begin the *O Salutaris Hostia* (O Saving Victim).

When the priest takes the Blessed Sacrament in his hands, begin a Eucharistic Hymn for the procession.

Continue to sing hymns until the priest arrives at the first altar. Pause slightly between the verses when you think that he may be approaching so that he may give a signal on his arrival, such as: "Oh Sacrament most holy..."

The priest will then read from the Gospel and after the Gospel, he will pray a short prayer. At the end of the prayer begin the *Tantum Ergo*.

After the *Tantum Ergo* there will be a Eucharistic Benediction. Wait until the blessing is over. Listen for the bells to ring three times, and pause a moment to make sure that it is over. Then announce the next hymn and sing as we process to the next altar.

Repeat the same pattern over again for the next three altars. Then, after the fourth altar, continue singing until the priest incenses the Blessed Sacrament on the altar in the church. (Do not sing the *Tantum Ergo* again at this time, for there will not be another blessing.) After he incenses, finish singing. He will then pray the Divine Praises. After that he will repose the Blessed Sacrament. Upon doing so, sing *Holy God We Praise Thy Name*.