

Eucharistic Devotions

A number of rites and devotions focus on the Eucharist. They help us become closer to Jesus and to celebrate the Eucharistic liturgy. During these periods of adoration, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed on the altar in a monstrance, a special vessel in which the Eucharist can be viewed and adored.

Benediction

In this Eucharistic ceremony, the priest or deacon places the Blessed Sacrament in a monstrance. The assembly usually sings a hymn of praise. A time of silent prayer follows. Special devotions or Scripture readings are often part of the service. Typically the service ends with a hymn of adoration—often part of the *Pange Lingua* by Saint Thomas Aquinas—and then the priest blesses the assembly, making the Sign of the Cross over them with the monstrance.

Forty-Hours Devotion

This is a special period of continuous prayer during which the Eucharist is displayed in a monstrance for adoration. The devotion begins with a Mass followed by continuous adoration over a forty-hour period, and it ends with a Mass and benediction. Forty hours is significant because in the Bible the number 40 is associated with a sacred period of time: the number of days that it rained at the time of the flood of Noah, the number of years that the Hebrews wandered in the desert on the way to the Promised Land, and the number of days that Jesus fasted before beginning his public ministry.



Forty Intentions for Forty Hours

Imagine that your parish is hosting a Forty-Hours Devotion. You have been asked to come up with intentions to be prayed for over the period of adoration: one intention for each hour. Make a list of the intentions you would choose. Examples might include the following: for those who are hungry, those in prison, those who are sick. Write your list on the back of this page.