

doesn't need to be a special occasion for Benediction, but it's never allowed during Mass or during other devotions, such as the Stations of the Cross.

Sacred Scripture is read, a homily may be preached, the Rosary may be said, and silent prayer is offered. At the end, the priest, his shoulders enveloped in a special stole called a *humeral veil*, blesses the faithful kneeling in attendance, making the sign of the cross, with Jesus exposed in the monstrance.

During Mass, a priest wears a *chasuble*, a coloured outer garment, but during Benediction, the priest wears the humeral veil over a cope, the gold or white full-length liturgical cape worn for Eucharistic devotions. By covering his hands with the humeral veil, the priest or deacon symbolises that the blessing being given isn't his own as a sacred and ordained minister (as at the end of Mass), but the blessing of Christ Himself present in the Holy Eucharist contained in the monstrance.

Bells are normally rung three times as the blessing is given with the Blessed Sacrament. Candles surround the monstrance that holds the Blessed Sacrament resting on the altar. That same Blessed Sacrament is *incensed*: As a sign that the people are now in the presence of divinity, incense is burned in a container and waved in front of the monstrance. Benediction also consists of the singing of certain hymns (often in Latin) and litanies, such as the *Divine Praises*, that follow:



Blessed be God.

Blessed be His Holy Name.

Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

Blessed be the name of Jesus.

Blessed be His most Sacred Heart.

Blessed be His most Precious Blood.

Blessed be Jesus in the most holy Sacrament
of the Altar.

Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.

Blessed be the great Mother of God,
Mary most holy.

Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.

Blessed be her glorious Assumption.

Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.

Blessed be St Joseph, her most chaste spouse.

Blessed be God in His Angels and in His Saints.

Adoring the Blessed Sacrament



CATHOLICISM FOR DUMMIES

(3rd Edition - 2017)

It's no secret that the Holy Eucharist, or the bread and wine that become Jesus's Body and Blood, is central to Catholicism. Other terms for the Holy Eucharist are the *consecrated Host* and the *Blessed Sacrament*. To understand what adoring the Blessed Sacrament is all about, you first need to understand Catholicism's perspective on the Holy Eucharist. So we're going to take a roundabout way of getting to the tradition itself. Bear with us.

Catholicism has three perspectives on the Holy Eucharist:

SACRIFICE

The same sacrifice of Jesus' death on the Cross for the remission of sins occurs during Mass at the Consecration in the form of the Holy Eucharist. The *Consecration* is the moment



during Mass when the bread and wine are changed into the real Body and Blood of Christ. This is called a *sacrifice*, because Jesus, the Son of God, is being offered by the priest to God the Father.

SACRED BANQUET

After the Consecration of the Mass, the faithful walk up to the altar to receive the Holy Eucharist. Entering a person's body, soul, mind, and heart all at once, Jesus – really, truly, and substantially – in the Holy Eucharist is placed on the tongue or in the hand. This is called a *sacred banquet* because the Holy Eucharist is food and nourishment for the soul.

REAL PRESENCE

Catholics believe that the Holy Eucharist is Christ Himself – His real, true Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, and substantial presence under the appearances of bread and wine. Some Christian religions regard it as a symbolic, spiritual, or moral presence, but Catholic Christianity and Eastern Orthodoxy staunchly hold to His Real Presence in the Eucharist. So the Holy Eucharist warrants the same adoration and worship given only to God. This sacrament is called the *Blessed Sacrament* because of all the seven sacraments, this one not only gives divine grace but is also God Himself.

When you're adoring the Blessed Sacrament, you have the opportunity to just worship the Real Presence and do nothing else. At Mass, the emphasis is on the sacrifice and the sacred meal, but simply adoring the Holy Eucharist outside of



Mass is a time to just focus on Jesus. You can do this by celebrating Benediction, or observing a holy hour.

The Eucharist should never be exposed at home. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament can only take place in a church, a chapel, or an oratory, but adoration and Benediction can't take place during Mass.

Participating in Benediction

A formal service, Benediction takes place while adoring the Blessed Sacrament and can only occur if a priest or a deacon leads it. Many parishes have Benediction once a month, perhaps on the First Friday of the month, or maybe weekly on a Sunday afternoon or evening. There