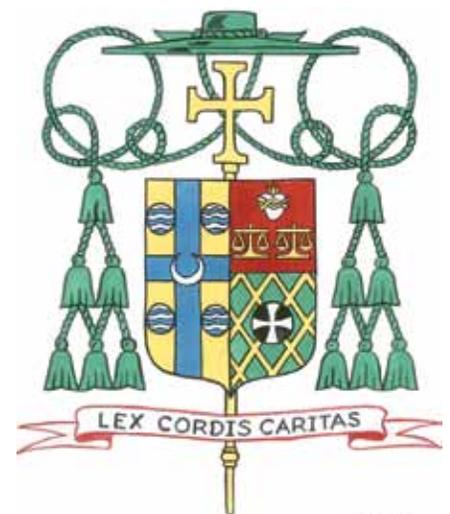




**His Excellency
Most Reverend
Thomas John Paprocki**
By the Grace of God
and
the Favor of the Apostolic See
Bishop of Springfield
in Illinois

*Ars
celebrandi
et adorandi*

A Pastoral Letter
To the Clergy and Faithful
of the Diocese of Springfield
in Illinois
On the Art of Celebrating the
Eucharistic Liturgy Properly
and
Adoring the Lord
in the Eucharist Devoutly



Introduction

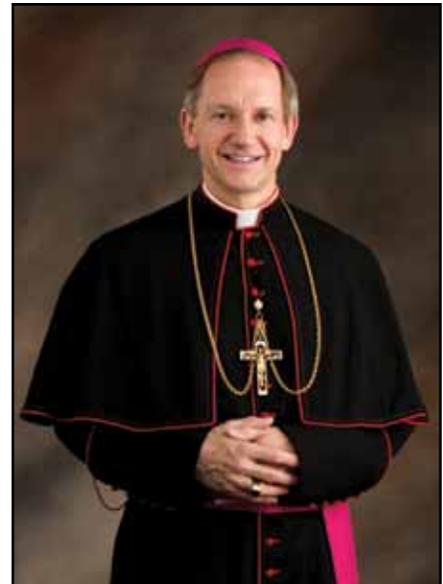
**Reverend Monsignors and Fathers,
Deacons,
Consecrated men and women,
Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,**

1. The art of celebrating the liturgy properly and adoring the Lord in the Eucharist devoutly (*ars celebrandi et adorandi*) is the key to fostering the active participation of the People of God in divine worship. Pope Benedict XVI, in his 2007 *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church's Life and Mission, Sacramentum Caritatis*, wrote, "For two thousand years, faithful adherence to the liturgical norms in all their richness has sustained the faith life of all believers, called to take part in the celebration as the People of God, a royal priesthood, a holy nation (cf. 1 Pet 2:4-5, 9)."¹ As "the chief steward of the mysteries of God in the particular Church" entrusted to my care as Diocesan Bishop,² I wish in my first pastoral letter to the faithful of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois to address this "principal duty" of bishops, priests, and deacons in which the Christian faithful actively participate and carry out the Lord's command.³

The Presence of Christ in History

2. Sacred Scripture attests time and again to God's loving presence in human history. At the time of Creation, before the Fall, God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden (Genesis 3:8). He remained with Adam and Eve's descendants, walking with Enoch for 300 years and, through the covenant with Abraham, promising "to be God to you and to your offspring" as part of "an everlasting covenant" (cf. Genesis 5:21; Genesis 17:8).

3. When his people Israel wandered through the desert on the way to the Promised Land, the Lord God was present among them in the Dwelling Tent, the Tent of Meeting (cf. Exodus 40). His presence was shown in the pillar of cloud that descended upon the tent and by the presence of the sacred bread – the Bread of the Presence – placed outside the Holy of Holies (cf. Exodus 40:34; 25:30).



Bishop Thomas John Paprocki



Cathedral Church of the Immaculate Conception

4. In our own day, too, the Lord is present to his people, no longer in the form of a pillar of cloud or of fire as in the days of old, but in manifold ways (cf. Exodus 40:38). The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* reminds us that to accomplish the great work of salvation, “Christ is always present in his Church, especially in its liturgical celebrations.”⁴ He is present in Mass both in the person of his minister and in the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine. He is present in all the sacraments. He is present when his word is proclaimed aloud. He is present in the gathered assembly, the People of God, when they pray and sing (Matthew 18:20). He is also, in a particular way, present in the humble appearance of bread, worshipped and adored by the faithful in his tabernacle – a word which means “tent” – in the churches and chapels of the world as the very Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, in keeping with his promise to “be with you always, to the close of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

5. “Do this in memory of me” (Matthew 22:19). These words, first spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ, have echoed through the centuries on the lips of his priests, to whom he entrusted his own mission, in every part of the world. Speaking *in persona Christi*, priests have called down the Holy Spirit upon humble offerings of bread and wine over which they have spoken these words in keeping with the Lord’s command. Through a marvelous exchange, these gifts are changed and given to us by the Lord, no longer as bread and wine but as his very Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity.

6. Through these words the promise of the sole Redeemer of all mankind to be with us always is fulfilled (cf. Matthew 28:20). Saint Francis of Assisi recognized this tremendous reality in a profound way and called upon his spiritual sons and daughters to say, whenever they passed a church, “We adore You, Lord Jesus Christ, in all Your churches throughout the world, and we bless You, for through Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.”⁵

7. The Church has never tired of proclaiming the Lord’s closeness to his people. We are never far from Jesus. In our diocese, the faithful have opportunities every day to receive the Lord into their hearts at daily Masses celebrated in our various parish churches and chapels. Outside of Mass, all we need do is go to a Catholic church or chapel and kneel down before the tabernacle, where the Lord of heaven and earth dwells among us in his tent and is ever ready to receive us.

8. Near the tabernacle the sanctuary lamp gently burns, kept alight to indicate and honor the presence of Christ and to call our attention to the Eucharist reserved in the tabernacle.⁶ There he waits for us. At times in our lives we ask with those two disciples, “Where are you staying” (John 1:38)? From his tabernacle he calls out to us: “Come, and you will see” (John 1:39).

9. Heeding the Lord’s own invitation, the faithful have long made their own the words of the Magi, saying, we “have come to do him homage” (Matthew 2:2). Kneeling before the tabernacle, much like the Magi who “prostrated themselves and did him homage,” the faithful have offered their prayers and praise to the Bread of Life (Matthew 2:11; cf. John 6:35).

Growth in the Church through Beauty in the Liturgy

10. “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). The command of Our Lord to increase the number of his followers everywhere is clear, but we do not always know exactly how to go about doing that. Father Robert Barron, Rector of Mundelein Seminary in the Archdiocese of Chicago, often speaks about the role of beauty in attracting people to the Church, using an analogy from baseball to make his point. He notes that you will not get people interested in baseball by explaining the “infield fly rule” to them before doing anything else. What attracts people to baseball initially is the beauty of the game, the skill of pitching, hitting and catching the baseball and running the bases. The infield fly rule and all the other intricate and sometimes arcane rules of any sport only have interest and relevance for people who already know and love the game.

11. The same is true with attracting people to the Church. We do not start by listing rules. The beauty of our church edifices, magnificent works of religious art and the graceful celebration of the liturgy, accompanied by harmonious music, inspiring homilies and the active participation of the faithful, are the foundational elements that attract people to the liturgy. Attention to the liturgical norms only comes after one has an appreciation for the art of the celebration.



Blessed Sacrament Church, Springfield

The tabernacle was first intended for the reservation of the Eucharist in a worthy place so that it could be brought to the sick and those absent outside of Mass. As faith in the real presence of Christ in his Eucharist deepened, the Church became conscious of the meaning of silent adoration of the Lord present under the Eucharistic species.

It is for this reason that the tabernacle should be located in an especially worthy place in the church and should be constructed in such a way that it emphasizes and manifests the truth of the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1379*



Cathedral Church of the Immaculate Conception

The *ars celebrandi*

12. We must seek to be found fully aware of our actions in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament lest we fail to pay him the homage that is due him. This desire to come and adore the Lord must flow also into everything that pertains to the liturgical celebration of the Eucharist. As noted at the beginning of this Pastoral Letter, Pope Benedict XVI, in union with the Fathers of the Synod on the Eucharist, directed our attention to the *ars celebrandi*, the art of celebration, in his 2007 *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist, Sacramentum Caritatis*. He said:

In the course of the Synod, there was frequent insistence on the need to avoid any antithesis between the *ars celebrandi*, the art of proper celebration, and the full, active and fruitful participation of all the faithful. The primary way to foster the participation of the People of God in the sacred rite is the proper celebration of the rite itself.⁷

13. In his desire for an ever-greater reverence and devotion throughout the offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Pope Benedict XVI was not alone. His predecessor, the great Pope Saint John Paul II, also called our attention to the *ars celebrandi* in his Encyclical letter on the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, in which he said: “No one is permitted to undervalue the mystery entrusted to our hands: it is too great for anyone to feel free to treat it lightly and with disregard for its sacredness and its universality.”⁸

14. With these words he returned to what he spoke of in his 1986 Holy Thursday Letter to Priests, which he devoted to the example of Saint John Marie Baptist Vianney, patron saint of all parish priests. There Pope Saint John Paul II recalled the words of the Curé of Ars: “The cause of priestly laxity is not paying attention to the Mass.”⁹

15. This important theme was addressed by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council in their *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium*, where they taught: “The liturgy must favor and make shine brightly the sense of the sacred. It must be imbued with reverence, adoration and glorification of God. ... The Eucharist is the source and summit of all the Christian life.”¹⁰ The sense of the sacred is fostered by a reverent *ars celebrandi*, an art of celebrating, one of humble devotion, not of laxity or of rigidity.

16. Marking the Fiftieth anniversary of the *Sacred Constitution "Sacrosanctum Concilium" on the Sacred Liturgy* – the first document promulgated by the Second Vatican Council – Pope Francis stated that it is necessary to unite “a renewed willingness to go ahead on the path indicated by the Council Fathers, as there remains much to be done for a correct and complete assimilation of the Constitution of the Holy Liturgy on the part of the baptized and ecclesial communities. I refer, in particular, to the commitment to a solid and organic liturgical initiation and formation, both of lay faithful as well as clergy and consecrated persons.”¹¹

17. With our minds and hearts turned toward an intentional and ongoing renewal of the *ars celebrandi*, I wish to offer the following observations and directives regarding the reservation and adoration of the Holy Eucharist because, as Saint Thomas More once wrote, “the Sacrament ought to be honored with Divine honor.”¹²



The Reservation and Adoration of the Holy Eucharist

The Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life.” “The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch.”

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church*,
1324

18. While the Holy Eucharist is reserved in the tabernacle of every parish church in our diocese, the faithful in some places do not frequently come to pray before the tabernacle to be in the presence of the Lord. Several reasons for this certainly exist, but one among them is the reality that the tabernacle is not always easily found in many of our churches today. Over the past few decades, tabernacles all too often were moved from prominent places in the sanctuary to obscure and remote rooms that in some cases were previously supply closets.

19. The present legislation of the Church concerning the placement of the tabernacle states, “In accordance with the structure of each church and legitimate local customs, the Most Blessed Sacrament should be reserved in a tabernacle in a part of the church that is truly noble, prominent, conspicuous, worthily decorated, and suitable for prayer.”¹³ Regrettably, this is not always followed.

20. In some churches and chapels, the tabernacle is set on a “side” altar in such a way that the tabernacle, though noble, is neither prominent nor readily visible. The same is often the case with the location of some Eucharistic chapels, whether they be in the nave itself, behind the sanctuary, or in another room. They are not always prominent or readily visible.

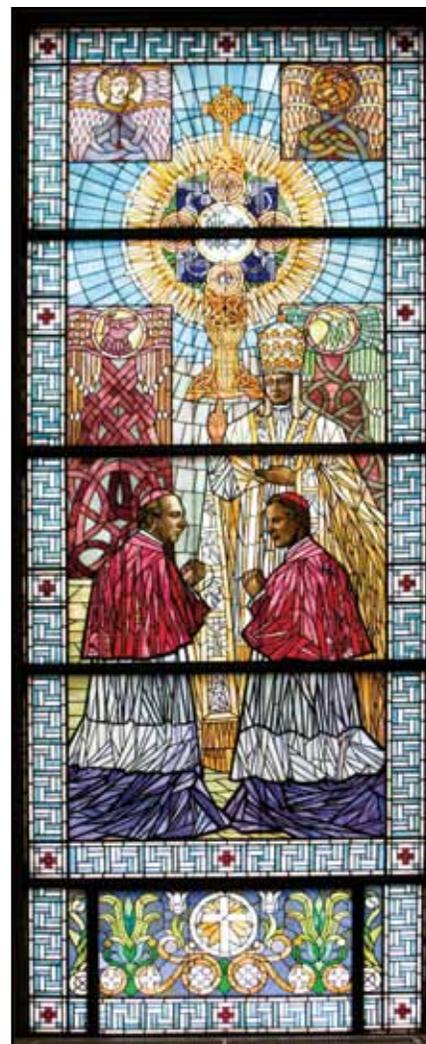


21. The great majority of our parish churches and chapels were designed to house the tabernacle in the center of the sanctuary; removing the tabernacle from these sanctuaries has left a visible emptiness within the sacred space, almost as though the building itself longed for the return of the tabernacle. With the removal of the tabernacle from the center of the sanctuary, the architectural integrity of many churches and chapels has been severely compromised.¹⁴

22. Pope Benedict XVI wrote in his *Post-Synodal Exhortation on the Eucharist* in 2007, "The correct positioning of the tabernacle contributes to the recognition of Christ's real presence in the Blessed Sacrament. Therefore, the place where the Eucharistic species are reserved, marked by a sanctuary lamp, should be readily visible to everyone entering the church. ... In any event, final judgment on these matters belongs to the Diocesan Bishop."¹⁵

23. With this in mind, in order that more of the faithful will be able to spend time in adoration and prayer in the presence of the Eucharistic Lord, I direct that in the churches and chapels of our diocese, tabernacles that were formerly in the center of the sanctuary, but have been moved, are to be returned as soon as possible to the center of the sanctuary in accord with the original architectural design. Tabernacles that are not in the center of the sanctuary or are otherwise not in a visible, prominent and noble space are to be moved to the center of the sanctuary; tabernacles that are not in the center of the sanctuary but are in a visible, prominent and noble space may remain.

24. Some may object to this directive and point, by means of example, to the Basilica of Saint Peter in Rome to suggest that tabernacles should not be located in the sanctuary. Saint Peter's, of course, is different from the average church or chapel in many respects. Chief among these differences is the number of tourists who visit the Basilica each day, with no intention of praying to the Lord therein. These tourists enter this remarkable edifice built to the honor of the Prince of the Apostles simply to look around, to see the architectural beauty and perhaps to see some aspect of Catholic worship, but not to pray. The Eucharist is reserved in a special chapel into which tour groups are not permitted so that the reverence and adoration due the Eucharist can be properly accorded him by pilgrims seeking to speak with him.



Cathedral Church of the Immaculate Conception
Window: 1926 Eucharistic Congress

To contemplate Christ involves being able to recognize Him wherever He manifests Himself, in His many forms of presence, but above all in the living sacrament of His body and His blood. The Church draws her life from Christ in the Eucharist; by Him she is fed and by Him she is enlightened.

— *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*
(*Church from the Eucharist*),
Saint Pope John Paul II, 2003

25. At the same time, it should be noted that the Eucharistic chapel in Saint Peter's is itself larger than many of our parish churches. There is more than enough room to accommodate all those who wish to pray in the presence of the Eucharistic Lord in the chapel; it is not always so with every Eucharistic chapel in this Diocese.

26. This deep-seated desire to be in the presence of the Lord resounds in the heart of every person, even if they cannot at first name this desire for what it truly is. We should therefore do all that we can to help them encounter the Lord who waits for them to seek and find him. In this regard, I strongly encourage keeping our churches open to the public in so far as can be done with the safety of people and the building in mind. Pope Francis spoke about this in his Apostolic Exhortation on the *Joy of the Gospel, Evangelii Gaudium*: "The Church is called to be the house of the Father, with doors always wide open. One concrete sign of such openness is that our church doors should always be open, so that if someone, moved by the Spirit, comes there looking for God, he or she will not find a closed door" (no. 47).

27. Regularly scheduled times for exposition of the Most Holy Eucharist in a monstrance or pyx, as well as an annual solemn and lengthier exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament, are highly commended as ways to stimulate the faithful to spiritual union with Christ which culminates in sacramental communion. The norms in the liturgical books for Eucharistic exposition and benediction are to be observed.¹⁶

To bend the knee

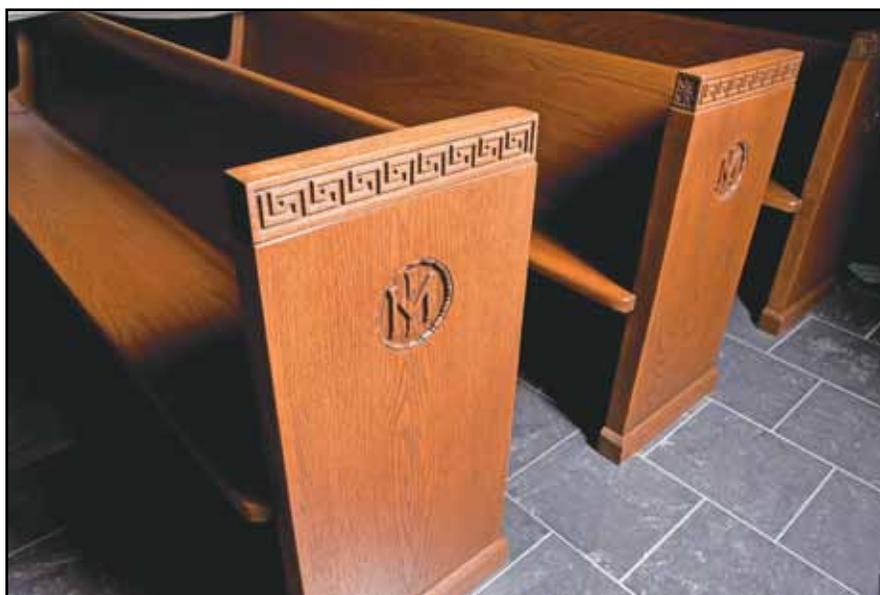
28. In recent years, there has arisen the practice of bowing to the Lord present in the tabernacle, rather than genuflecting before him. Such a profound bow — made purposefully and reverently from the waist — can be a fitting way to reverence the Divine Majesty, but only if one cannot genuflect, which is not always the same as having some difficulty genuflecting.

29. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* provides that "if, however, the tabernacle with the Most Blessed Sacrament is situated in the sanctuary, the Priest, the Deacon, and the other ministers genuflect when they approach the altar and when they depart from it, but not during the celebration of Mass itself. Otherwise all who pass before the Most Blessed Sacrament genuflect, unless they are moving in procession. Ministers carrying the processional cross or candles bow their heads instead of genuflecting."¹⁷

30. To genuflect means, literally, “to bend the knee.” In the ancient world the knee symbolized the strength of a man. If a man is struck in the knee, he stumbles and falls; his strength is taken from him. When we genuflect before the Lord, our strength is not taken from us; rather, we willingly bend our strength to the Lord and place ourselves humbly in his service. When we bend our knee to the Lord of heaven and earth we should hear the words of the Psalmist ever in our hearts, “Lord, I am your servant,” remembering that before the Lord every knee must bend (Psalm 116:16; cf. Philippians 2:10).

31. I must note here, that as important as the Eucharist is to the Church, and that the proper reverence to the Blessed Sacrament is “to bend the knee,” to genuflect, it does not replace another reverence made by all between the opening and the closing processions. During Liturgy between these processions, all who enter or leave the sanctuary, or who pass before the altar, make a deep bow, a bow from the waist toward the altar. Neither a deep bow or a genuflection is made to the tabernacle within the Mass between the opening and closing processions.¹⁸

32. In order to keep these words in our hearts and put them into practice, it is helpful to be purposeful and deliberate in the moment of genuflection. One may avoid a hasty and irreverent slide through an attempted genuflection by consciously touching the right knee to the ground and humbly pausing momentarily before rising again. In doing so, we not only pay proper respect to the Lord, but we also remind ourselves in whose presence we are.



Cathedral Church of the Immaculate Conception

Processions with the Blessed Sacrament

33. As a young boy, it was the custom in my home parish of Saint Casimir to have an Easter sunrise Mass at 5:30 a.m. which included a solemn procession of the Blessed Sacrament around the church. At the parish where I served as Pastor on the north-west side of Chicago, Saint Constance Parish, this custom was observed with a standing room only crowd of over a thousand people overflowing the church at daybreak on Easter morning. On the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ (*Corpus Christi*), our procession with the Blessed Sacrament carried by the priest in the monstrance went around the block of our parish grounds, with stops at four altars set up by the faithful for Benediction.



Ss. James and Patrick Parish, Decatur

34. Pope Benedict XVI spoke eloquently about the meaning of the *Corpus Christi* procession for contemporary Catholics in his homilies for the feast. The procession is a profession of faith: the Solemnity of Corpus Christi developed at a time when Catholics were both affirming and defining their faith “in Jesus Christ, alive and truly present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist,” and the procession is a public statement of that belief. The sacrament of the Lord’s Body and Blood always “goes above and beyond the walls of our churches.” The procession blurs the separation between what we do inside the church, and what we do outside: we immerse Christ, so to speak, “in the daily routine of our lives, so that he may walk where we walk and live where we live.” Pope Benedict declared, “The procession represents an immense and public blessing for our city.”¹⁹

35. The *Code of Canon Law* encourages liturgical processions outside the church, “When it can be done in the judgment of the diocesan bishop, as a public witness of the veneration toward the Most Holy Eucharist, a procession is to be conducted through the public streets, especially on the solemnity of the Body and the Blood of Christ.”²⁰ The leading of processions outside the church is among the specific liturgical functions especially entrusted to the pastor.²¹

36. I highly encourage and give permission for pastors to conduct processions with the Blessed Sacrament through the public streets, especially on the solemnity of the Body and the Blood of Christ, as a witness to our faith in the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist and as an expression of our belief that God is in our midst even in our everyday lives. Suitable arrangements are to be made with public authorities and local law enforcement officials for the safety of the participants.

Jesus said to his disciples, “I myself am the living bread come down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread he shall live forever; the bread I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.”

– John 6:51



Conclusion

37. In a sermon preached on Easter Sunday, Saint Augustine, one of the great doctors of the Church, said the following regarding our reception of the Body and Blood of Jesus: "If you receive them well, you are yourselves what you receive."²² What we receive is Christ who himself is God, and as St. John tells us: "God is love" (1 John 4:8). What we therefore become in receiving the Eucharist well is love, a love which is meant to be shared with others in imitation of him whom we receive.

38. By letting the love of God, received in the Eucharist, flow through us in our care for others, we provide a light for others to see. When we leave the church after having received Holy Communion, we go to a world that is full of darkness. We encounter people who are struggling with the crosses of life in the forms of physical suffering, emotional anguish, or spiritual desolation. They can be tempted to follow the example of Judas and give in to despair. We have the opportunity to bring them the light of Christ and so encourage them to have hope in the midst of their trials and to trust in faith that the God who loves them has not abandoned them.

39. In order to further promote the art of celebrating the liturgy properly and adoring the Lord in the Eucharist devoutly, I direct the Office of the Chancellor in collaboration with the Master of Ceremonies to the Bishop and the Department of Catechetical Services, especially the Office for Worship and the Catechumenate, and in consultation with the Presbyteral Council, to review the diocesan liturgical norms and guidelines and formulate them as policies and procedures to be promulgated by me and posted for easily accessible reference on our diocesan website.

40. As we seek to pay fitting homage to our Eucharistic King through the devoted and careful celebration of the Holy Mass, may we come to an ever greater realization that the law of the heart is love. May God give us this grace. Amen.

Given at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Springfield, Illinois, on June 22, the Solemnity of Corpus Christi and the Feast Day of Saints Sir Thomas More and John Cardinal Fisher, in the year of Our Lord 2014, the fourth anniversary of my installation as Bishop of Springfield in Illinois.

NOTES

¹Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Exhortation on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church's Life and Mission, *Sacramentum Caritatis* (March 13, 2007), 38.

²*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 22; Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 41; cf. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Instruction Redemptionis Sacramentum* (March 25, 2004), 19-25.

³Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis* (March 13, 2007), 39.

⁴*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7.

⁵Saint Francis of Assisi, *The Testament*, 4. In *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1982), 154.

⁶Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 316. See also, *Code of Canon Law*, canon 940.

⁷Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 38.

⁸Pope Saint John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 52.

⁹Pope Saint John Paul II, 1986 Letter to Priests, 8.

¹⁰*Lumen Gentium*, 11.

¹¹Pope Francis, Message to Cardinal Antonio Canizares Llovera, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, on the occasion of the conclusion of the symposium "*Sacrosanctum Concilium: Gratitude for and Commitment to a Great Ecclesial Movement*," February 21, 2014.

¹²Saint Thomas More, *A Treatise to Receive the Blessed Body of Our Lord Sacramentally and Virtually Both*.

¹³*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 314.

¹⁴A misprint and transposition of numbers referenced in a key document translated from Latin to English appears to have "inadvertently encouraged and confirmed in the name of the Church a mistaken understanding of the liturgical principles and architectural norms involved in the placement of the

Eucharistic tabernacle." See Timothy V. Vaverek, "The Place of the Eucharistic Tabernacle: A Question of Discrepancy," *Antiphon: Journal for Liturgical Renewal*, vol. 4, no. 2 (1999), pp. 10-13. The correct paragraph reference states, "The Blessed Sacrament should be reserved in a solid, inviolable tabernacle in the middle of the main altar or on a secondary altar, but in a truly prominent place. Alternatively, according to legitimate customs and in individual cases to be decided by the local Ordinary, it may be placed in some other part of the church which is really worthy and properly equipped" (Sacred Congregation for Rites, *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, May 25, 1967, no. 54).

¹⁵Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis* (March 13, 2007), 69.

¹⁶See *Code of Canon Law*, Canon 941-943, and the *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, nos. 82-100.

¹⁷*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 274.

¹⁸See the *Ceremonial of Bishops*, nos. 69-73 and the *Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, II, nos. 16 and 62; III, no. 22; and IV, nos. 4 and 48.

¹⁹See Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI, Thursday, 7 June 2007, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2007/documents/hf_benxvi_hom_20070607_corpus-christi_en.html, and Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI, Thursday, May 26, 2005, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2005/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20050526_corpus-domini_en.html.

²⁰*Code of Canon Law*, Canon 944.

²¹*Code of Canon Law*, Canon 530.

²²St. Augustine, *Easter Sermon* 227.

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Blessed Sacrament Parish, page 5
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