

LITURGICAL THEOLOGY

Eucharistic Adoration

The Rt. Rev'd Chandler Holder Jones, SSC

THERE ARE TWO ISSUES INVOLVED which are related but distinct:

Adoration of Our Lord present under the form of bread and wine during the course of the Mass or Divine Liturgy: such adoration is universal in the Undivided Church. Every Eucharistic Liturgy from Apostolic Constitutions and SS. Addai and Mari forward contains devotions to Our Lord in the Mysteries. The Latin Rite has the Agnus Dei (O Lamb of God) and Ecce Agnus Dei (Behold the Lamb/I am not worthy). The Anglican Rite adds the Prayer of Humble Access. In the Western Rite, the priest and people genuflect in adoration. The Orthodox Liturgy has the blessing of the people with the Holy Gifts before and after Communion (With love and faith draw near/One is Holy). The Liturgy of the Presanctified, held on Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, involves the procession and adoration of the Consecrated Gifts in the Church. From

the Byzantine period forward, Orthodox Christians have practiced outward gestures of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in this Liturgy. At the usual Divine Liturgy, the people bow to the unconsecrated elements at the procession of the Great Entrance; in the Liturgy of the Presanctified, the people prostrate themselves on the ground before the Consecrated Gifts as They pass in procession. The Orthodox solemnly bow or prostrate in worship. No liturgy in the primitive, ancient, and Undivided Church excludes some gesture or prayer of adoration of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament within the context of the Eucharistic Celebration.

Specific extra liturgical devotions to Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament outside of Mass or the Divine Liturgy: these evolved in the Western Church beginning as early as the 8th century, when Eucharistic processions with the ciborium began in Spain. Archbishop Lanfranc of Canterbury instituted exposition of the ciborium and processions of the Blessed Sacrament in Canterbury Cathedral at the turn of the 11th century. Other devotions

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