

### THIRD EASTER SUNDAY

*Acts 3:13-15, 17-19 — 1 John 2:1-5*

*Luke 24:35-48*

#### HISTORY OF EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

This Sunday and next I will depart from the Sunday readings to reflect on Eucharistic Adoration. This is to address a felt need in the parish following a number of questions raised on the weekly Eucharistic Adoration which we have every Thursday in the parish. People have wondered what it is all about and some have wanted to join in but not knowing what to do with their time when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed in the Aldwin Room. I must say that the weekly Thursday Adoration is one of the strong points of St Joseph's parish. Eucharistic adoration in this parish is done with the Eucharist exposed in the monstrance for adoration by the faithful.

I thought our first reflection today should be from a historical perspective. Eucharistic Adoration has existed since early times. From the 3rd century, the early hermits (solitary monks) reserved for themselves Holy Communion very much conscious of the Real Presence. From as early as the Council of Nicea (325 AD) we know that the Eucharist began to be reserved in the churches of monasteries and convents. Towards the end of the 11th century the church entered a new era in the history of Eucharistic adoration. Until then, the Real Presence was universally accepted in Catholic belief and its reservation was the common practice in Catholic churches. Suddenly a revolution hit the Church when Berengarius (999-1088) archdeacon of Angers in France, publicly denied that Christ was really and physically present under the species of bread and wine. That began what is called the Church's "Eucharistic Renaissance." From the eleventh century on, devotion to the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle became more and more prevalent in the Catholic world. Perpetual Adoration which continued day and night became a strong feature from 1226 until 1792 during the French Revolution (5 centuries). In between, Pope Urban IV instituted the Feast of Corpus Christi in the thirteenth century stressing that "In the Eucharist, Christ is with us in His own substance. For when telling the Apostles that He was ascending into heaven, He said, *'Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.'* Therefore when we come before the Blessed Sacrament in the Aldwin Room we are aware of coming into a direct presence of Jesus himself. By the sixteenth century, every aspect of Catholic belief in the Holy Eucharist was challenged by the Reformers. The Council of Trent treated this subject exhaustively. Trent declared that, "*.. The Sacrament, ..... is to be honoured ..... to be publicly exposed for the people's adoration.*" The Code of Canon Law in 1917 (Pope Benedict XV) suggested that all churches should participate in a solemn exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at least once per year – we go once a week.

#### OUR TIMES

Building on the teaching of his predecessors, Pope John Paul II has come to be known as the 'Pope of the Real Presence.' In one document and address after another, he has repeated what needs repetition for the sake of emphasis: *"The Eucharist, in the Mass and outside of the Mass, is the Body and Blood*

*of Jesus Christ, and is therefore deserving of the worship that is given to the living God, and to Him alone"* (Opening address in Ireland, Phoenix Park, September 29, 1979).

Once this fact of faith is recognized, it is not difficult to see why prayer before the Blessed Sacrament is so important.

But prayer before the Blessed Sacrament is also so efficacious.

From this Thursday on, the exposition will take place in the main body of the Church and you are all welcome to it or if you wish to enrol a specific time for it please contact the office and we shall connect you with Emily who organises the weekly Rota.