

“Living the Mystery”

by Fr. Augie Gothman

Likely you have heard from your pastor or other leaders about an initiative to establish perpetual exposition and prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the deaneries of our diocese. This is a brief introduction.

Returning to the Cenacle

Bishop Hoepfner addressed the priests of the Diocese with the idea of perpetual exposition of the Blessed Sacrament with the particular intention of prayer for an increase in vocations to the ministerial priesthood and the vowed religious life. His idea was given encouragement with a publication by the Prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Clergy, Claudio Cardinal Hummes announcing a new initiative encouraging perpetual Eucharistic adoration following the recommendations of Pope Benedict XVI in his February 2007 Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis*.

What is a “Cenacle?”

The “Upper Room” or Cenacle, is the place where Jesus gathered on the night of the Last Supper to celebrate the Passover meal (Mk 14:15). There the resurrected Christ appeared to the disciples and those with them (Lk 24:33; Jn 20:19). It was the place Matthias was chosen to be Judas’ replacement by the laying on of the Apostles’ hands (Acts 1:13). It was the place where the first Christians gathered for prayer and the “breaking of bread”(Acts 2:42), and where the descent of the Holy Spirit happened on Pentecost (Acts 2:1). This is the metaphor the Congregation for Clergy uses in its letter, where Cardinal Hummes writes: “We are asking, therefore, all diocesan Ordinaries... to take an active role and promote—true and proper cenacles in which clerics, religious and lay people—may devote themselves to prayer, in the form of continuous Eucharistic adoration in a spirit of genuine and authentic reparation and purification.”

“What is being asked of parishes?”

This pastoral initiative seeks to create within local parish communities such ‘cenacles of prayer’ centered on the Eucharist. It is there that we will seek to do what those first Christians did in the Cenacle: gather for personal & communal prayer, hear the Word of God proclaimed, ‘feel the room shake’ in the power of the Holy Spirit, and experience again the Holy Spirit through the Church calling men for the laying on of hands by the Apostles and their successors. At heart, we are asking parishes to renew the effort to be schools or centers of prayer where God’s people may come together to “grow in wisdom and grace before God and before all” (see Lk. 2:52).

