

FORTY HOURS DEVOTION

What is the Forty Hours Devotion?

The Forty Hours Devotion is an opportunity for us to gather as a parish community before the Blessed Sacrament and to pray before the Lord in solemn adoration. It gives us time to deepen our appreciation of the importance of the mystery of the Eucharist in our lives. Traditionally it begins with a celebration of Mass. At the end of this opening Mass the Blessed Sacrament is exposed and over a period of a few days the faithful are given the opportunity to pray before the exposed Blessed Sacrament. The form of prayer can be done in diverse ways. The celebration then will end with the celebration of Mass.

In the celebration of the Forty Hours Devotion we are able to witness a fuller expression of our theology of the Eucharist. It is first and foremost about our participation in the Paschal Mystery through our celebration of Mass. In the celebration of Mass we participate directly in the saving acts of Christ and by the grace of the Holy Spirit unite the sacrifices of our lives with the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross. It is in this way that we give praise and thanksgiving to God the Father for Jesus and participate in the true worship of our God by which we are sanctified as His holy people. This leads us then to live out our lives more fully in Christ. This devotion also gives an opportunity to give voice to our belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharistic elements. As the community gathers in prayer before the exposed Blessed Sacrament, it witnesses to our belief, as a Church, that what is before us is bread no longer but truly the Body of Christ.

What is the history of this devotion?

For several centuries, the traditional Forty Hours Devotion has been celebrated in parishes as a time of annual

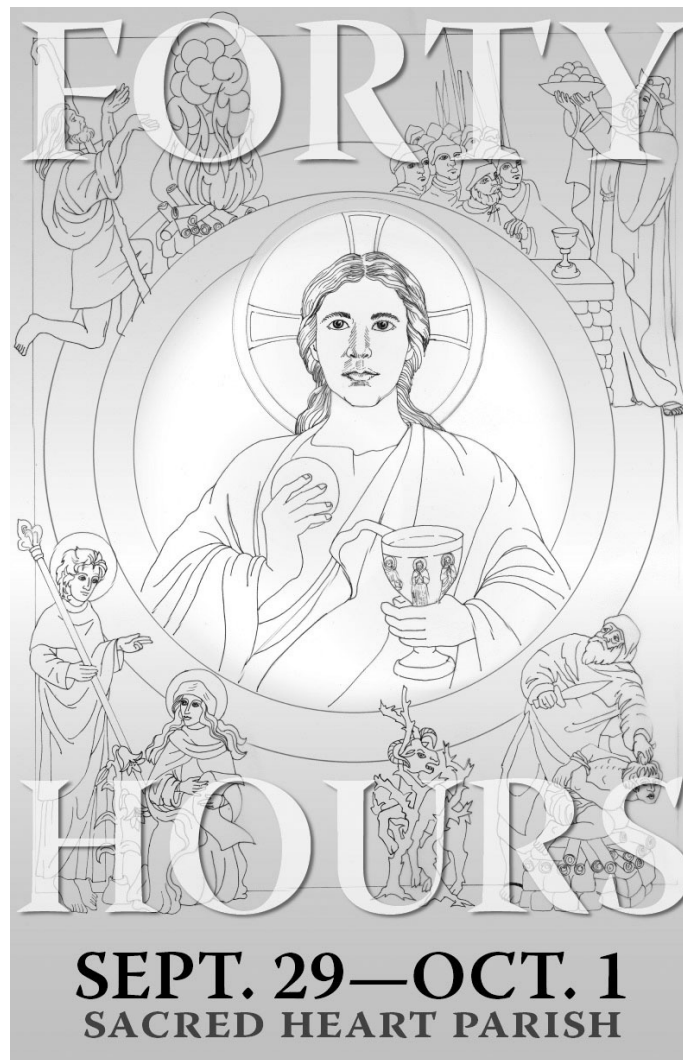
renewal and prayer. It originated in the early part of the sixteenth century at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Milan, Italy, probably as a commemoration of the forty hours that Christ's body lay in the tomb between his death and resurrection. The first clear attestation for the Forty Hours Devotion comes from Milan in 1527. It was celebrated as reparation for the sins of the community and was motivated to offer prayers to God for protection during the crisis of war. The practice of celebrating Forty Hours Devotion spread rapidly from this point. This

may be attributed to various causes such as the quick approval granted to it by Pope Paul III in 1539. Furthermore, the support of St. Anthony Maria Zaccaria and Saint Philip Neri, who introduced its celebration into Rome in 1550, helped to extend its celebration beyond Milan. Finally, as it was introduced to more places this practice rapidly became popular with the lay faithful.

In time the purpose for celebrating the Forty Hours Devotion was transformed. This change is witnessed in 1560 by a bull promulgated by Pope Paul IV. He states that the devotion is an imitation of the forty days of fasting of the Lord in the desert, and the time of unceasing prayer called for in scripture and by the early church. This transformation continued such that by the time of the eighteenth century this devotion became primarily Eucharistic in nature and centered on

thanksgiving for the mystery and gift of the Eucharist.

From the eighteenth century onward the rules for celebrating the Forty Hours Devotion were heavily influenced by Pope Clement XII who published in 1731 the *Instructio Clementina*. This document gave detailed instructions for how this devotion was to be celebrated in the city of Rome. The *Instructio* became the basis for the further development of Forty Hours throughout the



Church. It was very detailed in how the celebration was to occur and what the expectations around its celebration would entail. Other dioceses used this as the foundation for their celebration of the devotion. Such was the case in the United States. These rules for celebration did not change until after the Second Vatican Council. The present rules for celebrating the Forty Hours Devotion can be found in the *Order for the Solemn Exposition of the Holy Eucharist* published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1992. This document is an adaptation of *The Roman Ritual: Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*.

Why are we celebrating the Forty Hours Devotion now?

Pope John Paul II has designated this year as the *Year of the Eucharist*. With this declaration, he presented the Church with a wonderful opportunity to explore, develop, and deepen our appreciation of the Eucharist. The primary setting for the promotion of a life centered in the Eucharist is, of course, the celebration of Mass, but the Church also offers other means of deepening a Eucharistic centered faith. One such practice is adoration where we gather to pray before the Lord as his presence is revealed to us in the mystery of the Eucharistic bread which is truly the Body of Christ. The Forty Hours Devotion gives us the opportunity to come as a community to pray before the Lord in solemn adoration. The Church recommends such solemn adoration at least once a year for each parish. We have, in a sense, a special impetus to do such this year with the Pope declaring this the *Year of the Eucharist*.

How does the parish celebrate the Forty Hours Devotion?

A general outline for this devotion includes:

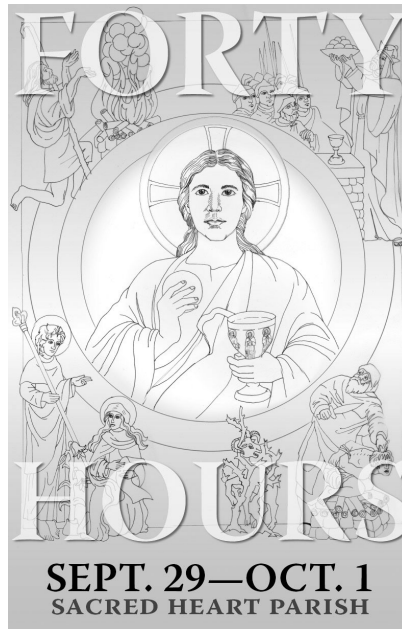
- Mass with a homily centered on the Eucharist.
- Extended period of exposition, including:
 - Liturgy of the Hours
 - Liturgy of the Word with hymns
 - Quiet time of meditation on Scripture
 - Public praying of the rosary
- Closing celebration of Mass

Our specific schedule will be posted soon. Watch upcoming bulletins or the parish website for details on liturgy times.

How can I participate in the Forty Hours Devotion?

All are invited to spend at least an hour in private prayer. The church will be open throughout the forty hours, day and night, for anyone to visit and to pray.

Specifically, we need at least two people to sign up for each hour during the forty hours of devotion. For safety, we hope that many more will sign up during the nighttime hours. A sign up poster will be available in the back of the church and Our Lady Chapel beginning September 1st. We ask that you sign your name on the poster, and submit the following contact information form, so we can remind you of your designated prayer time.



Yes, I/we would like to participate in the Forty Hours Devotion by signing up to pray during the circled hour(s)

NAME(S) _____ CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: _____

SEPT 29: 8PM 9PM 10PM 11PM

SEPT 30: 12AM 1AM 2AM 3AM 4AM 5AM 6AM 7AM 8AM 9AM 10AM 11AM

12PM 1PM 2PM 3PM 4PM 5PM 6PM 7PM 8PM 9PM 10PM 11PM

OCT 1: 12AM 1AM 2AM 3AM 4AM 5AM 6AM 7AM 8AM 9AM 10AM 11AM

12PM 1PM 2PM 3PM

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE PARISH OFFICE, OR PLACE IN THE COLLECTION BASKET AT MASS. THANK YOU!