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My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Following the October 2 – 23 Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist, Our Holy Father Benedict XVI issued his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *The Sacrament of Charity, Sacramentum Caritatis* on February 22, 2007. This 138 page document complements the Pope's first encyclical "God Is Love". Among the many observations the Pope makes about the Eucharist in the life of the Church and in the life of every disciple, he includes several paragraphs about adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Eucharistic devotion.

He emphasizes in the letter the need for true reverence for the Blessed Sacrament since the Eucharist is Jesus present among us. He underlines the intrinsic relationship between Eucharistic celebration (the Mass) and Eucharistic adoration. He states that during the early phases of the liturgical reform following the Second Vatican Council, the inherent relationship between Mass and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was not always perceived with sufficient clarity.

The Holy Father writes: "For example, an objection that was widespread at the time argued that the Eucharistic bread was given to us not to be looked at, but to be eaten. In light of the Church's experience of prayer, however, this was seen to be a false dichotomy. . . . In the Eucharist, the Son of God comes to meet us and desires to become one with us; Eucharistic adoration is simply the natural consequence of the Eucharistic celebration, which is itself the Church's supreme act of adoration. . . . I heartily recommend to the Church's pastors and to the People of God the practice of Eucharistic adoration, both individually and in community. "

We are blessed in this diocese to have two parishes with perpetual adoration chapels, St. Eugene's Cathedral in Santa Rosa and St. John the Baptist in Napa. Also many of our parishes have a period of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament each week. I encourage all of our parishes to provide times for this important devotion and in this devotion to encourage prayers for vocations to the priesthood and religious life for our Diocese. Adoration of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament will bring many blessings to our Church and to each of us.

One of the greatest gifts that Christ gave his Church was the Eucharist in which He is present body and blood, soul and divinity. He comes to us to strengthen us and to make us one with Him. Our reverence and respect for this Sacrament reflect our belief in the Eucharistic presence of Jesus at the Mass and in the tabernacles in our churches. In the Eucharist, the Son of God comes to us; in Eucharistic adoration we go to meet the Son of God.

Our prayer should be: "O Sacrament most holy, O Sacrament divine, all praise and all thanksgiving be every moment thine!"

Your Brother and Servant in the Lord,

Most Reverend Daniel F. Walsh
Bishop of Santa Rosa