

## Liturgy We Live *by Dr. Gil Haas*

From the earliest days, Christians adopted ceremonial benedictions into their worship's conclusion. The Anglican Church continued post-Reformation benedictions, but not without some liturgists grumbling that nothing should follow the reception of Christ at Eucharist. They believed that it was impossible to add to that gift. When benediction is pronounced, the celebrant often makes the sign of the cross over the people. One of the generally popular afternoon or evening services in Anglo-Catholic parishes is Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The service consists of hymns emphasizing Christ's real presence at Eucharist, litanies before the Blessed Sacrament, and then exposure of a large Host upon the altar in the "luna" of an often bejeweled container called a monstrance. The monstrance is often surrounded by candles. At the service's conclusion, while the hymn, *Tantum ergo*, is sung (Therefore We Before Him Bending; #330 in our hymnal), the priest, after censing the monstrance, takes the monstrance into his hands, and with it makes the sign of the cross in silence over the kneeling congregation while the sanctus bell is rung three times. Our BCP makes no provision for this service, but it is described in A Priest's Handbook.

***If you have a liturgical question or an inquiry about anything that transpires during or around our worship service, please forward the question you would like researched to: [gghaas@aol.com](mailto:gghaas@aol.com), or drop the question in the offering basin. Please note whether we can credit you as the source of the question.***