

# *Catholic Mutual. . . “CARES”*

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## **PERPETUAL ADORATION CREATES EXPOSURE TO LOSS**

Having perpetual adoration can create additional security and safety exposures for the Church. Parishes will leave their churches unlocked around the clock so parishioners can enter the church to pray. During safety inspections across the country, Catholic Mutual Group's Loss Control Representatives routinely find parishes that do not even lock areas where the sacred vessels are kept! It is also important to note that many times, only one parishioner is left praying alone during the late evening and early morning hours of the day. This presents obvious security concerns.

It is also important to address safety concerns. The condition of the physical plant, walkways, lighting, fire protection equipment, and exits should be addressed. Listed below is a summary of loss control and loss reduction measures which can be implemented in order to enhance security and promote safety.

### **Security**

Given the time and opportunity, burglars or robbers can commit virtually any crime they wish. A parish's exposure is dramatically increased with the presence of perpetual adoration. By implementing specific loss control and loss reduction techniques, the Church can minimize exposure in this area. Some key areas to address are neighborhood watch programs, lighting, locks, doors, windows, and fostering what could be called the buddy system.

### **Neighborhood Watch Program**

A neighborhood watch program should be developed to identify any suspicious activity in your area.

Neighbors should be notified that 24-hour activities will be taking place at your church, and any suspicious activity should be reported.

Notify your local police department about the activities that will be taking place and request that they provide extra patrols for your area.

## **Lighting**

- Adequate interior and exterior lighting is essential for security.
- There should be a night light inside the building.
- All entry points should be well lit.
- All alleys and the rear of the church should be well lit.
- The perpetual adoration chapel should be illuminated.

## **Locks**

Good locks may deter many potential break-in efforts.

One-inch single-cylinder dead bolt locks should be installed on outside doors and double-cylinder dead bolts should be installed on all doors with glass panels.

**(IMPORTANT NOTE:** Dead bolt locks cannot be used in all situations, as they may be against fire code requirements. In these situations, approved panic hardware should be used.)

Key control is important. A labeling code of some type should be developed and “Do Not Duplicate” should be stamped on all keys except the master. The master key should never be loaned out. Keys should be given only to trustworthy individuals.

Consider installing an electronic keypad for access to the perpetual adoration area; all other areas of the church should be locked.

## **Doors**

Doors should be built using solid-core wood or steel construction.

## **Windows**

Windows should be designed to provide light, ventilation, and visibility... not easy access.

Entry-resistant plexiglass should be used where applicable.

All windows should be free of obstruction to allow clear visibility into the building.

Ground floor or easily accessible windows should be fitted with security grates or bars.

## **Buddy system**

A system should be developed requiring more than one person to adore during the late evening and early morning hours.

A written perpetual adoration schedule should be developed requiring that at least two people be present during the late evening and early morning time slots.

Only adorers who have signed up on the schedule should be allowed to participate.

The schedule should be updated regularly and distributed to all participants.

Ideally, participants should not leave until their replacement arrives.

A phone should be provided for emergency use.

## **Safety**

Extra efforts should be made to make sure all buildings are safe and in good condition.

## **Condition of grounds**

The condition of stairs, walkways, hand railings, lighting systems, and parking areas should be addressed in order to reduce the potential for slips, trips, and falls.

## **Fire safety**

Adequate fire safety equipment should also be present. A 5 lb., ABC dry chemical fire extinguisher should be accessible within 75 feet of the perpetual adoration chapel.

## **Candle safety**

Candles should have a fire restrictive mat or plexiglass sheet under them. This will reduce the risk of fire as well as protect the surface underneath from damage resulting from dropped matches and spilled candle wax.

**Exits**

Exits should be properly identified with exit signs and all exit pathways should be kept clear.

**Be Safe!**

By addressing these security and safety issues at your parish, perpetual adoration can be much safer for all parties involved.

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