

## ADORATION 101

### THE SACRAMENT OF CHARITY:

#### *Books, Signs, Art, and Music in the Liturgy*

In this week's article, by way of Pope (Emeritus) Benedict XVI's 2007 Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist (¶ 40-41), we will look into the different books, signs, and art we see in the Liturgy at Mass. We spoke about the *ars celebrandi* (the art of [the] celebration) in last week's article which serves as prelude for this week's article.

The liturgy is sacred, and as such, in order to benefit from all its richness and grace, the Church has attached to it certain norms. These include, among others, the harmony of the rite, the vestments worn, the furnishings and sacred space. The Church has actually produced a book called the General Instruction of the Roman Missal which will tell us the norms of how the Holy Mass ought to be celebrated. By following these norms, the Church makes available the great richness of what she has to offer. To deviate away from these is to fail in giving the faithful what is rightfully theirs and therefore, deprive them of much needed grace.

*“By its very nature, the liturgy operates on different levels of communication which enable it to engage the whole human person.”* All of the books, words, music, gestures, silence, movements, and liturgical colors associated with the celebration of the Holy Mass serve together to make the encounter with our Eucharistic Lord that much more powerful. The Church has been doing this for 2000 years. All that is contained within the norm for Mass expresses the nature of the Eucharist and when received with a sincere heart, ordered correctly, inspires us to receiving this immense and ineffable gift.

Sacred art along with church architecture is very important as well in the life of a parish church. Sacred art in general, paintings, sculptures, the furnishings of the sanctuary, the altar, the crucifix, the tabernacle, statues and even the celebrants chair, all serve to showcase the profound beauty of the liturgy and should all be placed so as to be used as a service towards the celebration. It manifests the unity of faith among the people and strengthens devotion.

Music as well places a pivotal role in the life of the liturgy. Pope Benedict reminds us that he, *“... desires ...that Gregorian Chant be suitably esteemed and employed as the chant proper to the Roman Liturgy.”* However, our expression of joy which accompanies the worship and praise of God is, itself, an expression of love. This heritage must not be lost. Texts, music and execution ought to correspond to the meaning of the mystery being celebrated. Generic improvisation or the introduction of musical genres which fail to respect the meaning of the liturgy should be avoided. NEXT WEEK: The Structure of the Eucharistic Celebration – Paul A. Ray