

ADORATION 101

THE SACRAMENT OF CHARITY:

The Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Word

We move ahead this week and take a look into Pope (Emeritus) Benedict XVI's 2007 Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, ¶44-45) and begin to uncover the correlation between the structure of the Mass and the Holy Eucharist.

The Holy Father desires to remain faithful to the underlying intention of the liturgical renewal called for by the Second Vatican Council. Therefore, this outline will be focused on the Ordinary Form of the Holy Mass as opposed to the Extraordinary Form.

To start with, Pope Benedict stresses the importance of combining catechesis with the Mass. The two go hand-in-hand and complement one another. We cannot separate the two as if they are two distinctly different aspects of our faith – one intellectual (academic) and the other spiritual. With emphasis on the Liturgy of the Word (the Mass readings) in mind, the Pope expresses how the Word of God leads to the Eucharist as its connatural end. Hence, Christ is found both in His living Word, and through His Flesh and Blood in the Holy Eucharist.

“Knowledge and study of the Word of God” he explains, *“enables us to better appreciate, celebrate, and live the Eucharist.”* Consequently, he suggests that the Liturgy of the Word be carefully prepared for and celebrated. He quotes the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (the book which tells us how Mass is to be said) and says, *“when the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church, God Himself speaks to His people, and Christ, present in His own word, proclaims the Gospel.”* The Word of God must be listened to and accepted in a spirit of communion with the Church and with a clear awareness of its unity with the Sacrament of the Eucharist. This way, the faithful can receive fully the grace the Church and Christ make available to them.

The Holy Father then shifts to proposing an increase in our participation in the Word of God by admonishing us to pray the Liturgy of Hours, read Scripture at home in the context of prayer (*lectio divina*), praying the Psalms, praying the Church's morning and evening prayers. All of this is meant to deepen our love for God, hear Him speak to us, and increase our devotion to and love of, Christ truly present in the Eucharist. Our experience at Holy Mass and during Eucharistic Adoration will then begin to flourish and blossom in ways we never thought possible. **NEXT WEEK:** The Eucharist and the homily and the presentation of the gifts. – Paul A. Ray