

ADORATION 101

THE SACRAMENT OF CHARITY:

Authentic Participation

We turn our attention this week to what we call our *Authentic Participation* in the Eucharistic celebration; following once again, the 2007 Apostolic Exhortation written by Pope (Emeritus) Benedict XVI (¶52) with the Latin title: *Sacramentum Charitatis*, or “The Sacrament of Charity (love)”.

The Second Vatican Council emphasized the importance of all the faithful to have a full and fruitful participation in the Eucharistic celebration. But what does this mean? Many may attribute simply being present during Mass or responding to what the faithful are called to respond to during Mass (The Lord be with you ... and with your spirit, the Creed, the Penitential Rite, etc.), means participation in the Holy Mass. However, this is not so. Participation does not mean mere external activity, even if we’re an altar server or cantor. No, authentic participation in the Eucharistic Celebration is “... *having a greater awareness of the mystery being celebrated and its relationship to daily life.*”

Pope Benedict tells us, quoting the Vatican 2 council constitution of the liturgy (*Sacrasanctum Concilium*), that the faithful are not to be as “strangers or silent spectators” during Mass. But as participants, they are to be “conscious of what they are doing, actively and devout.”

The Sacred Council puts it eloquently: *They (the faithful) should give thanks to God. Offering the immaculate Victim (to the Father) not only through the hands of the priest, but also together with him, they should learn to make an offering of themselves. Through Christ, the Mediator, they should be drawn day-by-day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other.* This is what makes the Holy Mass stand out far above and beyond any other act of worship. This is why the Church has called it the *Source and Summit* of our Catholic faith.

As a Catholic it is our responsibility to take the time to understand exactly what takes place during Holy Mass and its impact on my life. Ask yourself *why* you go to Mass. Is it out of obligation? Is it out of love? Is it because it’s something you know you *should* do, but your heart isn’t in it? Take the time to learn and be brought to the source of love itself, to Jesus, and watch your life be transformed! – Paul A. Ray **NEXT WEEK:** The priest’s participation in the Eucharistic celebration.