

ADORATION 101

The Sacrament of Love: *The Holy Spirit and the Eucharist*

We pick up again this week with Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI's Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentus Caritatis* (The sacrament of Charity). We left off two weeks ago speaking about Jesus as the true sacrificial Lamb, offered to His Father for our redemption and physically remaining with us under the veil of bread and wine. This week, we will examine the relationship between the Holy Eucharist and the Holy Spirit.

What specific role does the Holy Spirit have in the Eucharist? To begin with, it is through the working of the Holy Spirit that Christ Himself continues to be present and active in His Church, starting with the vital center which is the Eucharist. During the life of Christ, the Holy Spirit acted in many and various forms in and through Jesus, the disciples and the people abroad. Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary (Mt. 1:18), the Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove at His baptism by John (Mt. 3:16), Jesus acts, speaks and rejoices in the Holy Spirit (Lk. 10:21), and He speaks of His (the Spirit's) coming a multitude of times. In brief, the Holy Spirit is present and active all throughout not only creation since the beginning, but all throughout the life and mission of Christ.

Now, before Jesus ascended to the Father, He commissioned the Apostles to, "*Go ... and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, (and here the Church Father's testify that Christ is speaking of the Eucharist) I am with you always, to the close of the age.*" (Mt. 28:19-20)"

We are told by the Master that He has "... yet many things to say to us, but they (the disciples) could not bear them then (John 16:12)." But, as promised, "[W]hen the Spirit of truth comes" He continues, "*He will guide you into all the truth ...*" (John 16:13). This includes, as testify the Church Fathers, our understanding of transubstantiation (when the substance of bread and wine, by the Holy Spirit, becomes the Body and Blood of Christ). Pope Benedict says, "*The Spirit invoked by the celebrant upon the gifts of bread and wine placed on the altar is the same Spirit who gathers the faithful 'into one body; and makes of them a spiritual offering pleasing to the Father.'*" Thus, giving us all the strength to continue to fulfill Christ's mission on earth to baptize and evangelize the whole world.

The Holy Spirit animates the life of the Church. He gives the Church, as God, working in cooperation with the Father and the Son, mysteriously as One, the ability to flourish and thrive despite centuries of oppression. The Spirit works in our own lives personally, in the life of Church as a whole, and most importantly, within the Holy Eucharist, making It for us the true source and summit of our Christian faith!. NEXT WEEK – The Eucharist and the Church – Paul A. Ray