

ADORATION 101

THE SACRAMENT OF CHARITY:

The Eucharistic Celebration (the Holy Mass) is the Christus Totus (a total work of Christ's)

Last week, continuing through Pope (Emeritus) Benedict XVI's 2007 Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist, (¶ 34-35) we learned of the beauty of the Liturgy and how when we have the correct understanding of what the Church teaches, coupled with a true and sincere faith, the beauty of the Liturgy manifests in all its eternal glory before us. This week, we will look into how the Liturgy, or the Eucharistic celebration, is an act on God's part, for us (¶ 36-37).

Pope Benedict quotes the Doctor of the Church St. Augustine to drive home a very significant point which touches upon the very heart of the subject of the Eucharist, the Mass, and our response. The bishop from Hippo says, "*The bread you see on the altar, sanctified by the Word of God, is the body of Christ. The chalice, or rather, what the chalice contains, sanctified by the Word of God, is the blood of Christ. In these signs, Christ the Lord willed to entrust to us His body and the blood which He shed for the forgiveness of our sins. If you have received them properly, you yourselves are what you have received* (Sermon 227; 1)."

Here, the mystery of *how* God works in us takes place. The grace from receiving the Sacrament not only enables us to live according to the command of Christ to "*go, and sin no more* (Jn. 5:14)", but it causes us to become *like* Christ Himself. During Holy Mass, the beauty of God unfolds, through the participation of the Holy Spirit, through His Church. He (Jesus Christ) is the Head of His mystical body, the Church (us), and the Eucharistic celebration is where we meet. In a crude simulation, it is as when food enters the body; it enters through the head and travels down to the rest of the members of the body, to nourish it, strengthen it, to do the will of the head.

The Eucharistic Celebration implies and involves the living Tradition of the Church. As such, it is a command by our Risen Lord, an "act of God", and the structure cannot change, nor can it be held hostage by the current trends. It is celebrated on Sunday, the first day of the week, the day Christ rose from the dead, so that through it and by it we can always have a "new beginning" or "new creation", a day of liberation from sin. This, my friends, is why missing Holy Mass without a valid reason is a mortal sin. NEXT WEEK: We look into the celebrants of Holy Mass and the liturgical books used and how they amplify the Eucharist. – Paul A. Ray