

ADORATION 101

THE SACRAMENT OF CHARITY:

Eucharistic Participation in the Social Communications Media

Moving ahead once again in Pope Benedict XVI's 2007 Apostolic Exhortation (¶57) on the Eucharist we arrive at the topic of Eucharistic Participation and the Social Communications. The rampant advancement of the social communications media within the last three or four decades has caused the Church to think anew it's various ways that she can communicate to people; never before in Church history has the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ been given such widespread avenues to be proclaimed.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass has been made available through television and the internet; something which, in light of its nearly 2000 year history, is a new concept. *"This requires specific preparation and a keen sense of responsibility on the part of pastoral workers in this sector."* Mass which is broadcast on television or the internet sets a particular example. Many people who are either not Catholic or non-religious may tune-in to watch and they have the right to see the Holy Mass the way the Church proclaims it ought to be celebrated. This is key to conversions.

As regards those who are Catholic, watching the Holy Mass via television or the internet, under normal circumstances, **does not** fulfill the obligation of attending Mass. Pope Benedict reminds us that *"visual images can represent reality, but they do not actually reproduce it."* Many, especially among the elderly around the world, physically cannot attend Holy Mass and faithfully watching on television or the internet is praiseworthy and they are encouraged to participate spiritually if unable to receive Jesus in the Sacrament.

(The following is my own commentary on social media and the Eucharist. When Pope Benedict wrote his Exhortation it was written in 2007, and the internet and social media has grown tremendously since then. As a result, there was little commentary from him on the subject) Catholics should be reminded that they represent Christ on social media. Whether that means through video (i.e. YouTube), audio (i.e. Podcasts, radio) or the written word (Facebook, Twitter, etc), Catholics need to be aware that what they say and do directly affects the entire Body of Christ and reflects the Church which Jesus founded. We are commissioned to lead people into the loving arms of God and never to create division which will lead people away. Therefore, prudence, temperance and fortitude must be observed; for we will be held accountable for everything that we say and do. – Paul A. Ray **NEXT WEEK:** Eucharistic Participation for the Sick and for Prisoners