

Tridentine Community News

February 28, 2010

Introduction to the Spirit of the Liturgy by Msgr. Guido Marini, Part 4 of 6

On January 6, 2010 a landmark speech was given by Msgr. Guido Marini, the Pontifical Master of Liturgical Ceremonies, at the Year For Priests Clergy Conference in Rome. There is no need to speculate on what Rome believes is suitable liturgy when clear direction such as this is given. Msgr. Marini was appointed by Pope Benedict XVI to reform papal liturgies according to our Holy Father's thinking. We believe Msgr. Marini's words speak for themselves, and so we are presenting his speech in its entirety.

3. Adoration and union with God.

Adoration is the recognition, filled with wonder, we could even say ecstatic, (because it makes us come out of ourselves and our small world) the recognition of the infinite might of God, of His incomprehensible majesty, and of His love without limit which he offers us absolutely gratuitously, of His omnipotent and provident Lordship. Consequently, adoration leads to the reunification of man and creation with God, to the abandonment of the state of separation, of apparent autonomy, to loss of self, which is, moreover, the only way of regaining oneself.

Before the ineffable beauty of God's charity, which takes form in the mystery of the Incarnate Word, who for our sake has died and is risen, and which finds its sacramental manifestation in the liturgy, there is nothing left for us but to be left in adoration. "In the Paschal event and the Eucharist which makes it present throughout the centuries," affirms Pope John Paul II in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, "there is a truly enormous capacity which embraces all of history as the recipient of the grace of the redemption. This amazement should always fill the Church assembled for the celebration of the Eucharist." (n.5)

"My Lord and my God," we have been taught to say from childhood at the moment of the consecration. In such a way, borrowing the words of the apostle St. Thomas, we are led to adore the Lord, made present and living in the species of the Holy Eucharist, uniting ourselves to Him, and recognising Him as our all. From there it becomes possible to resume our daily way, having found the correct order of life, the fundamental criterion whereby to live and to die.

Here is the reason why everything in the liturgical act, through the nobility, the beauty, and the harmony of the exterior sign, must be conducive to adoration, to union with God: this includes the music, the singing, the periods of silence, the manner of proclaiming the Word of the Lord, and the manner of praying, the gestures employed, the liturgical vestments and the sacred vessels and other furnishings, as well as the sacred edifice in its entirety. It is under this perspective that the decision of His Holiness, Benedict XVI, is to be taken into consideration, who, starting from the feast of Corpus Christi last year, has begun to distribute holy Communion to the kneeling faithful directly on the tongue. By the example of this action, the Holy Father invites us to render visible the proper attitude of adoration before the greatness of the mystery of the Eucharistic presence of our Lord. An attitude of adoration

which must be fostered all the more when approaching the Most Holy Eucharist in the other forms permitted today.

I would like to cite once more another passage from the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*: "During the early phases of the reform, the inherent relationship between Mass and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was not always perceived with sufficient clarity. For example, an objection that was widespread at the time argued that the Eucharistic Bread was given to us not to be looked at, but to be eaten. In the light of the Church's experience of prayer, however, this was seen to be a false dichotomy. As Saint Augustine put it: 'nemo autem illam carnem manducat, nisi prius adoraverit; peccemus non adorando - no one eats that flesh without first adoring it; we should sin were we not to adore it.' In the Eucharist, the Son of God comes to meet us and desires to become one with us; Eucharistic adoration is simply the natural consequence of the Eucharistic celebration, which is itself the Church's supreme act of adoration. Receiving the Eucharist means adoring Him Whom we receive. Only in this way do we become one with Him, and are given, as it were, a foretaste of the beauty of the heavenly liturgy." (n.66)

I think that, among others, the following passage from the text I just read should not go unnoticed: "[The Eucharistic celebration] is itself the Church's supreme act of adoration." Thanks to the Holy Eucharist, His Holiness, Benedict XVI, asserts once more: "The imagery of marriage between God and Israel is now realised in a way previously inconceivable: it had meant standing in God's presence, but now it becomes union with God through sharing in Jesus' self-gift, sharing in His Body and Blood." (*Deus Caritas Est*, n.13) For this reason, everything in the liturgy, and more specifically in the Eucharistic liturgy, must lead to adoration, everything in the unfolding of the rite must help one enter into the Church's adoration of her Lord.

To consider the liturgy as locus for adoration, for union with God, does not mean to lose sight of the communal dimension in the liturgical celebration, even less to forget the imperative of charity toward one's neighbour. On the contrary, only through a renewal of the adoration of God in Christ, which takes form in the liturgical act, will an authentic fraternal communion and a new story of charity and love arise, depending on that ability to wonder and act heroically, which only the grace of God can give to our poor hearts. The lives of the saints remind and teach us this. "Union with Christ is also union with all those to whom He gives Himself. I cannot possess Christ just for myself; I can belong to Him only in union with all those who have become, or who will become, His own. Communion draws me out of myself towards Him, and thus also towards unity with all Christians." (*Deus Caritas Est*, n. 14)