

Apostolic Letter

DESIDERIO DESIDERAVI

ON THE LITURGICAL FORMATION OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD



Pope Francis

CCBI Commission for Liturgy

Desiderio Desideravi

- ❖ It is an Apostolic Letter on the liturgical formation of the People of God
- ❖ An invitation from Pope Francis to all Catholics to overcome forms of aestheticism that appreciate only outward formality or allow sloppiness in liturgy.
- ❖ Pope Francis: “A celebration that does not evangelize is not authentic”.
- ❖ The Apostolic Letter reaffirms the importance of *ecclesial communion* around the rite that emerged from the post-conciliar liturgical reform.
- ❖ It is *not a new instruction or a directive with specific norms*, but rather **a meditation on understanding the beauty of liturgical celebration and its role in evangelization.**
- ❖ **It concludes with an in appeal:** "Let us abandon our polemics to listen together to what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Let us safeguard our communion. Let us continue to be astonished at the beauty of the Liturgy" (65).



“Encounter Christ”

Encounter with Christ (7)

Pope Francis highlights: Christian faith is either an encounter with the living Jesus or it is not.

The emphasis of the Holy Father: “The Liturgy guarantees for us the possibility of such an encounter. For us a vague memory of the Last Supper would do no good. We need to be present at that Supper.”

We are exhorted to be on the guard against - "spiritual worldliness" and the Gnosticism and neo-Pelagianism that fuel it.

Pope Francis explains that “Participating in the Eucharistic sacrifice is not our own achievement, as if because of it we could boast before God or before our brothers and sisters” and that “the Liturgy has nothing to do with an ascetical moralism.

Participation in the Eucharist is the gift of the Paschal Mystery of the Lord which, received with docility, makes our life new.

The Cenacle is not entered except through the power of attraction of his desire to eat the Passover with us” (20).

Encounter with Christ (7)

- ❖ Attention: To heal from spiritual worldliness, we need to rediscover the beauty of the liturgy, but this rediscovery “is not the search for a ritual aesthetic which is content by only a careful exterior observance of a rite or is satisfied by a scrupulous observance of the rubrics.”
- ❖ The Holy Father does not wish in any way “to approve the opposite attitude, which confuses simplicity with a careless banality, or what is essential with an ignorant superficiality, or the concreteness of ritual action with an exasperating practical functionalism” (22).
- ❖ The Pope explains that “every aspect of the celebration must be carefully tended to (space, time, gestures, words, objects, vestments, song, music...) and every rubric must be observed.”
- ❖ Scope of careful attention: to prevent robbing from the assembly what is owed to it; namely, the paschal mystery celebrated according to the ritual that the Church sets down.

Encounter with Christ (7)

- ❖ But even if the quality and the proper action of the celebration were guaranteed, that would not be enough to make our participation full
- ❖ In fact, if “astonishment at the fact that the paschal mystery is rendered present in the concreteness of sacramental signs, we would truly risk being impermeable to the ocean of grace that floods every celebration.” (24).
- ❖ This amazement has nothing to do “the vague expression ‘sense of mystery’ [which is] sometimes among the presumed chief accusations against the liturgical reform.”
- ❖ This amazement is not a kind of bewilderment before an obscure reality or an enigmatic rite, but is, “on the contrary, marvelling at the fact that the salvific plan of God has been revealed in the paschal deed of Jesus” (25).



Living liturgy to the fullest

Desiderio Desideravi: ON THE LITURGICAL FORMATION OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

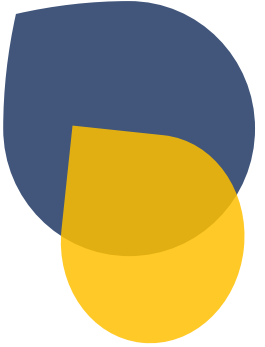
LIVING LITURGY TO THE FULLEST

Question: How, then, can we regain the ability to live liturgical action in its fullness?

The problematic is primarily ecclesiological (31) > different conceptions of the Church.

Contradiction: The Pope points out he does not see how it is possible to say that one recognizes the validity of the Council, and at the same time not accept the liturgical reform born out of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

Pope Francis, quoting the theologian Romano Guardini affirms that without liturgical formation, “ritual and textual reforms won’t help much” (34).





The Importance of formation in seminaries

positive effects in pastoral action.



The Importance of formation in seminaries ---- (25)

“A liturgical-sapiential plan of studies in the theological formation of seminaries would certainly have positive effects in pastoral action.

There is no aspect of ecclesial life that does not find its summit and its source in the Liturgy.

Nucleus of Formation: More than being the result of elaborate programs, a comprehensive, organic, and integrated pastoral practice is the consequence of placing the Sunday Eucharist, the foundation of communion, at the centre of the life of the community.

Attention: The theological understanding of the Liturgy does not in any way permit that these words be understood to mean to reduce everything to the aspect of worship.

Objective of any Liturgical Celebration: “A celebration that does not evangelize is not authentic, just as a proclamation that does not lead to an encounter with the risen Lord in the celebration is not authentic. And then both of these, without the testimony of charity, are like sounding a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal” (37).

There is a need to educate in the understanding of symbols, which is increasingly difficult for the modern person.

One way to do this is to care for the “art of celebrating”, which “cannot be reduced to only a rubrical mechanism, much less should it be thought of as imaginative — sometimes wild creativity without rules.

The rite is in itself a norm, and the norm is never an end in itself, but it is always at the service of a higher reality that it means to protect.” (48)

The art of celebrating cannot be learned by “frequenting a course in public speaking or in persuasive techniques of communication”, it requires “a diligent dedication to the celebration, allowing the celebration itself to convey to us its art” (50).

4. The Value of Silence... (35)

Among the ritual acts that belong to the whole assembly, silence occupies a place of absolute importance” which “moves to sorrow for sin and the desire for conversion. It awakens a readiness to hear the Word and awakens prayer. It disposes us to adore the Body and Blood of Christ” (52).

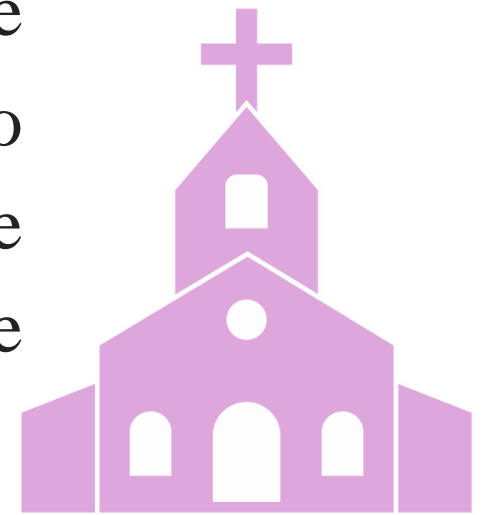


- ▶ The Pope observes that in Christian communities their way of living out the celebration “is conditioned by the way in which their pastor presides in the assembly”
- ▶ The Holy Father lists several “*models*” of *inadequate presiding*, albeit of contrasting features: “rigid austerity or an exasperating creativity, a spiritualizing mysticism or a practical functionalism, a rushed briskness or an overemphasized slowness, a sloppy carelessness or an excessive finickiness, a superabundant friendliness or priestly impassibility.”

5. Liturgy about Christ, not celebrant ... (36)

The root cause of these inadequacies: “a heightened personalism of the celebrating style which at times expresses a poorly concealed mania to be the centre of attention” (54), amplified when celebrations are broadcast online.

Role of Presiding: “to preside at Eucharist is to be plunged into the furnace of God’s love. When we are given to understand this reality, or even just to intuit something of it, we certainly would no longer need a Directory that would impose the proper behaviour” (57).



- ▶ **Conclusion with an Exhortation:** Pope Francis asks “all bishops, priests, and deacons, the formators in seminaries, the instructors in theological faculties and schools of theology, and all catechists to help the holy people of God to draw from what is the first wellspring of Christian spirituality,” reaffirming what is established in “Traditionis custodes” so that “the Church may lift up, in the variety of so many languages, one and the same prayer capable of expressing her unity”.
- ▶ The Holy Father intends that this unity be re-established in the whole Church of the Roman Rite.

Conclusion with an Exhortation

“Thank you”

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