

The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ's faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. They should be instructed by God's word and be nourished at the table of the Lord's body; they should give thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, they should learn also to offer themselves; through Christ the Mediator, they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all.

*(Sacrosanctum Concilium, #48)*

This relationship between creed and worship is evidenced in a particular way by the rich theological and liturgical category of beauty. Like the rest of Christian Revelation, the liturgy is inherently linked to beauty: it is *veritatis splendor*. The liturgy is a radiant expression of the paschal mystery, in which Christ draws us to himself and calls us to communion. As Saint Bonaventure would say, in Jesus we contemplate beauty and splendor at their source. This is no mere aestheticism, but the concrete way in which the truth of God's love in Christ encounters us, attracts us and delights us, enabling us to emerge from ourselves and drawing us towards our true vocation, which is love...

The beauty of the liturgy is part of this mystery; it is a sublime expression of God's glory and, in a certain sense, a glimpse of heaven on earth. The memorial of Jesus' redemptive sacrifice contains something of that beauty which Peter, James and John beheld when the Master, making his way to Jerusalem, was transfigured before their eyes (cf. *Mk 9:2*). Beauty, then, is not mere decoration, but rather an essential element of the liturgical action, since it is an attribute of God himself and his revelation.

*--Pope Benedict XVI, 2007, Sacramentum Caritatis, #35*

## MEETING JESUS IN THE MASS

*Msgr. Rick Hilgartner*



[A]ll must be deeply imbued with the spirit of the liturgy,  
each in his own measure...

*(Sacrosanctum Concilium, #29)*

**O God, who cause the minds of the faithful  
to unite in a single purpose,  
grant to your people to love what you command  
and to desire what you promise,  
that, amid the uncertainties of this world,  
our hearts may be fixed on that place  
where true gladness is found.**

**Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

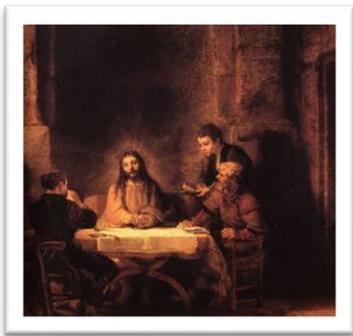
*(Collect for the 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time)*

For in the celebration of Mass, in which the Sacrifice of the Cross is perpetuated, Christ is really present in the very **assembly** gathered in his name, in the person of the **minister**, in his **word**, and indeed substantially and uninterruptedly under the **Eucharistic species**. (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, #27)

In the earthly liturgy we take part in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, a minister of the holies and of the true tabernacle; we sing a hymn to the Lord's glory with all the warriors of the heavenly army; venerating the memory of the saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them; we eagerly await the Savior, Our Lord Jesus Christ, until He, our life, shall appear and we too will appear with Him in glory. (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, #8)

The mystery of Christ is carried on and made actual in the mystery of worship. Here Christ performs his saving word, invisible, but present in Spirit and acting upon all men [sic] of good-will. It is the Lord himself who acts this mystery; not has he did the primeval mystery of the Cross, alone, but with his bride, which he won there, his Church.

--*Odo Casel*, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*



"Whenever the Church celebrates the Eucharist, the faithful can in some way relive the experience of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus: 'their eyes were opened and they recognized him.'"

--*Pope John Paul II*,  
*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, no. 6

Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows. For the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper.

The liturgy in its turn moves the faithful, filled with "the paschal sacraments," to be "one in holiness"; it prays that "they may hold fast in their lives to what they have grasped by their faith"; the renewal in the Eucharist of the covenant between the Lord and man draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ and sets them on fire. From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, as from a font, grace is poured forth upon us; and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God, to which all other activities of the Church are directed as toward their end, is achieved in the most efficacious possible way.

(*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, #10)

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.

(*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, #14)

