

## **Understanding Pope Benedict the 16th on the sacred liturgy**

In 1999 then Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger prefect of the congregation of the doctrine of the faith wrote a book entitled the *spirit of the liturgy*. This work has often been referred to as his 'Marshall plan' for reform of the reform of the sacred liturgy. This work offers us profound insights on then Cardinal Ratzinger's thoughts of the liturgy which focus on the true meaning of the sacramental mystery of the Eucharist-- a cosmic liturgy, as he describes it the culmination of which is nothing less than the union of God with man, with all that that implies. No one has written more extensively, compellingly or clearly on the subject of the sacred liturgy.

As early as 1966 while then a priest Father Ratzinger wrote a series of essays based on the Council sessions of the second Vatican Council. In one of these he observes---“ very much indeed did the church need renewal from within in the new situation of today. Yet it must not be forgotten that the church is always remain the church, and that at any time in history the way of the Gospel could be found it was found in it....”

Later in what came to be published as the Ratzinger report the Cardinal noted “Vatican II in its official publications, in its authentic documents, cannot be held responsible for this development which, on the contrary, radically contradicts both the letter and the spirit of the Council fathers”. The Cardinal was also equally empathetic that the Council did not represent a rupture, but expressed continuity with the church's history: “there is no ‘pre-‘ or ‘post-‘ conciliar church”, he writes “ There is but one, unique church that walks the path towards the Lord...”

What does the Cardinal mean by restoration--- he states very clearly if restoration means a recovery of lost values, with in a new totality, then I would like to say that this is precisely the task that imposes itself today in the second phase of the post-conciliar...In reality it {restoration} literally means the same as the word reform.

Cardinal Ratzinger deplored that after Vatican II the new missal was published as if it were a book put together by professors, not a phase of a continual growth process. Such essay has never happened before. It is absolutely contrary to the laws of liturgical growth.

Ratzinger has made specific observations about what the Constitution on the Liturgy did and did not say here is an example-----

The Constitution on the liturgy itself does not say a word about celebrating Mass facing the altar or facing the people. And on the subject of language it says Latin ought to be preserved while giving greater space to the vernacular especially in the readings and directives and some of the prayers and chants [quoting SC 36.2]. As for the participation of lay people, the council insists first in general that the liturgy concerns the entire body of Christ-- head and members-- and that for this reason it belongs to the entire body of the church; "and, consequently, the liturgy is to be celebrated in community with the active participation of the faithful" [again quoting SC]. And the text specifies, "in the liturgical celebrations, each person, whether as a minister or as one of the faithful, should perform his role by doing solely and totally what the nature of things and the liturgical norms require of him". [SC 28] "by way of promoting active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamation, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures and bodily attitudes. And at the proper time, all shall observe a reverent silence". [SC 30] these are the directives of the council: they can provide matter for reflection of all. The Cardinal also noted that "a number of modern liturgists" have tended towards a one sided development of the directives, which result in "reversing the intentions of the council"-- and he notes "a dangerous tendency to minimize the sacrificial character of the mass, causing mystery and the sacred to disappear" in order to make the liturgy more easily understood. He cautions against fragmenting the liturgy by emphasizing only its communal character, and allowing the "assembly" to determine the way it--- liturgy should be celebrated.

The Cardinal also remarked that the old liturgy was flawed. In particular, he notes that the celebration the old liturgy had slipped too much into the domain of the individual and the private, and that the communion between priests and faithful was insufficient"--- that people privately recited prayers from their prayer books during most of the mass.

We know very well that in the Liturgy the ministry of our salvation is made present in the sacramental way. He who is risen from the dead, the living one, renews his redemptive sacrifice through the power of the Holy Spirit. And where is the mystery of the death and the resurrection of Christ that brings about salvation? In Christ's action through the church, and in particular in the sacrament of the Eucharist, which makes the redemptive

sacrificial offering of the son of God present. So the liturgy deals with the celebration by which we truly enter into a relationship with the ministry of our salvation, with Christ the Lord, the Savior, who communicates his very own life to us-- his grace. Thus the past is rendered present, the beautiful truly manifest the beauty of the living God, and new fraternal relations are the fruit of the work of the Lord in the heart of man.

Then as a Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger on July 3, 1988 made the following explanation “we ought to get back the dimension of the sacred in the liturgy. The liturgy is not a Festival; it is not a meeting for the purpose of having a good time. The liturgy is what makes the Thrice-Holy God present among us; it is the burning bush; it is the alliance of God with man in Jesus Christ. The essential in the liturgy is the mystery, which is realized in the common ritual of the church; all the rest diminishes it. Men experiment with it in lively fashion, and find themselves deceived, when the mystery is transformed into distraction, when the chief actor in the liturgy is not the living God but the priest or the liturgical director. The liturgical norms, in fact, serve as the closest Guardian of the mysteries been celebrated. The rubrics of firm and equally guarantee ritual unity and, consequently, are capable of giving expression to the catholicity of the churches liturgy. At the same time, norms serve as a vehicle for liturgical and doctrinal content that is centuries old tradition and proven experience have transmitted to us in which it is wrong to treat with superficiality and to pollute with our poor and limited subjectivity. Here in lies the foundation of this observation that time and again has been re-proposed by the papal magisterium, past and present. Since liturgical celebrations are not private acts but celebrations of the church the sacrament of unity affirmed John Paul the second there are regulations dependent solely upon the hierarchical authority of the church. The liturgy belongs to the whole body of the church. It is for this reason that is not permitted to anyone, even the priests, or any group, to subtract or change anything whatsoever on their own initiative.

Holy Mass, celebrated with respect for the liturgical norms and with appropriate appreciation of the richness of the signs and gestures, affirms Benedict the 16th encourages and develops growth in Eucharistic Faith. “ In the Eucharistic celebration we do not invent something but rather enter into a reality that precedes us, indeed that embraces heaven and earth and therefore also past, future and present. This universal openness, this encounter with all God's sons and daughters is the greatness of the Eucharist: let us go to meet the reality of God present among us in the body and blood

of the risen one. Therefore, the liturgical prescriptions dictated by the church are not external appendices but express in practice this reality of the revelation of Christ body and blood, and thus prayer reveals faith, according to the ancient principle *lex orandi, lex credendi*.

The Constitution on the sacred liturgy of the second Vatican Council states--the church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there if strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred actions conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. Cardinal Ratzinger affirms this in his book *The Spirit of the liturgy* when he states but what does the active participation come down to? What does it mean that we have to do? Unfortunately, the word was very quickly misunderstood to mean something external, entailing the need for general activity, as if as many pupils possible, as often as possible, should be visibly engaged in action. However, the word participation refers to a principal action in which everyone has a part. We participate, therefore, to the extent that the action of the Lord and of his church also becomes our action, his obligation of love becomes our obligation of love, his filial and obligation of abandonment to the father becomes ours as well-- if the sacrifice of the Redeemer becomes our own sacrifice.

The liturgy should transcend the activity of every man and of every activity of humanity by the act of Christ himself.

So now as for Pope Benedict the 16th let us look at some of the important liturgical points that the Holy Father has made so far in his pontificate.

1] **noble beauty**-----in *Sacramentum Caritatis*--- this relationship between creative and worship this evidence 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 truest beauty is the love of God who definitively revealed himself to us in the Paschal mystery. Beauty that is not mere decoration, but rather an essential element of the liturgical action, since it is an attribute of God himself and his revelation. These considerations should make us realize the care which is needed, if the liturgical action is to reflect its innate splendor. No. 35] the church teaches us that, her long history she has never feared to surround the liturgical celebrations with the highest expressions of art: from

architecture to sculpture, to music, to sacred objects. The Saints, despite their personal poverty have always taught us to desire that only the best things be set aside for divine worship. For nothing could be too beautiful for God who is himself infinite beauty. Our earthly liturgies will never be more than a pale reflection of the liturgy celebrated in the Jerusalem on high, the goal of our pilgrimage on earth. Marilyn celebrations nonetheless resemble that liturgy as closely as possible and grant us a foretaste of it !

**2] the crucifix at the center of the altar**----- in another book written as a cardinal in 1981 entitled feast of faith he presented the problem of the orientation of the altar in the context of the liturgical celebration. Quoting from his writings for the true location of the true context of the Eucharistic celebration is the whole cosmos. Facing East makes the cosmic dimension of the Eucharist present through liturgical gesture. Because of the rising of the sun, the East was naturally both a symbol of the resurrection and the presentation of the hope of Paradise. So what has come down to us in the altar cross as a relic of the ancient East word orientation. It maintains the ancient tradition of praying to the Lord who is to come under the sign of the cross, a tradition with strong associations, in former times, with the cosmic symbol of the East. Even now, when the priest faces the people, the cross could be placed on the altar in such a way that both priests and people can see it. At the Eucharistic prayer they should not look at one another; together they all to behold him, the pierced Savior. But the cross only altar is not obstructing the view; it is the common point of reference. The Cardinal goes on to say I would even be so bold to suggest that the cross of the altar is actually a necessary precondition for celebrating towards the people. It would help in clarifying the distinction between the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the Eucharist. The first is concerned with proclamation and hymns with a direct, face to face situation, whereas the second is a matter of all of us worshiping together in response to the call *Conversi ad Dominum*--- let us turn to the Lord' let us be converted to the Lord!

The idea that priests and people must look at each other while they are at prayer are a novelty of modern Christianity and is completely foreign to ancient Christianity. Priest and people certainly **do not pray facing one another, but facing the one Lord.** Therefore, during prayer they look in the same direction: or towards the East is a cosmic symbol and expectation of the Lord who is coming, or, where this is not possible, towards an image of Christ in the apps, towards a cross, or simply towards heaven, as the Lord did in his high priestly prayer on the night before his passion.

3] **adoration**----- this could be defined as the full recognition of wonder before the omnipotence of God, of his intangible ministry, of his providence and merciful lordship, of this incident beauty that is coming together of truth and love. And adoration, when it is authentic, leads to adherence or to the reunification of man and creation with God, to man's exit from a state of separation from God towards a communion of life with Christ. All this is what the church, the spouse of Christ, experiences the celebration of the liturgy.

Therefore everything in the liturgical action must lead to adoration: the music, the chant, the silence, the way of proclaiming the Word of God and of praying, the gestures, the liturgical vestments and sacred vessels; likewise, too, the entire complex of the sacred edifice should lead us to adoration.

4] **chant and music**----- there is an intrinsic bond among word, music, and chant in the liturgical celebration. Music and chant, in fact, cannot be separated from the word of God, of which, indeed, music and chant ought to be a faithful interpretation and revelation. Chant and music in the liturgy stemming from the depths of the heart, that is, from Christ who dwells therein-- and they return to the heart, that is, to Christ. Chant and liturgical music should never be consigned to the superficial and extemporaneous nature of our sentiments and fleeting emotions, which do not correspond to the greatness of the Mystery being celebrated.

And so, it is right to affirm that chant and music in the liturgy are born from prayer and lead to prayer. Therefore, they permit us to enter into the mystery.

The Pope believes that many celebrations of the new liturgy lie a raft of disastrous theological, cultural, sociological and aesthetic assumptions, linked to the unsettled time in which the liturgical reforms were carried out. In particular, he believes that 20th century theologies of the Eucharist plays far too much emphasis on the notion that the fundamental form of the Eucharist is that of a meal, at the cost of underplaying the cosmic, redemptive, and sacrificial character of the mass. For the Pope the sacrificial character the Eucharist has to be evident in the manner of its celebration, and the failure to embody this adequately in the actual performance of the new liturgy seems to him one of the central problems of the post- conciliar

reforms-. In his view, the liturgy is meant to still and calm human activity, to allow God to be God, to quiet our chatter in favor of attention to the word of God and in adoration and communion with the self gift of the Word incarnate.

The call for active participation and instant accessibility seem to him to of dumb down the mystery we celebrate, and left us with a banal inadequate language and music of prayer. The active participation of the liturgy for which Vatican II called, he argues, emphatically does not mean participation in many acts. Rather, it means a ***deeper entry by everyone present into the one great action of the liturgy, it's only real action, which is Christ self giving on the cross.*** For Ratzinger we can best enter into the action of the mass by a recollected silence, and by traditional gestures of self offering and adoration-- the sign of the cross, folded hands, reverent kneeling etc.

For the Pope liturgical practice since the council has taken a wrong turn Aesthetically impoverished, creating a rupture in the continuity of Catholic worship, and reflecting and even fostering a defective understanding of the divine and our relationship to it.

Apropos is Ratzinger strong criticism of certain forms of contemporary music which take on the character of performance; the very spirit of which runs counter to that of authentic liturgy.

The pope's decision in 2007 to permit the free celebration of the Tridentine liturgy, was done to both repair the rupture and to issue a call to the recovery of the theological, spiritual and cultural values that he sees as underlying the old Mass.

In the book Benedict the 16th of the sacred liturgy originally published in 2010 in the section talking about the liturgical reform of the Pope---- Dr.Alcuin Reid, who holds a doctorate of philosophy from Kings College London and has written extensively on the liturgy having published in 2005 the book the organic development of the liturgy which carries a preface by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger makes some very good observations. The following are some of these observations-----

Joseph Ratzinger is a priest, a Bishop and a theologian for whom the consummate importance of the sacred liturgy in every aspect of the life of the theology of the church is paramount, and to whom the liturgical crisis

that the Western church is been suffering in recent decades is all too apparent. We need to understand this man who in April of 2005 became the 264th successor of St. Peter himself. Upon taking possession of the Lateran Basilica the Pope said--- the Pope is not an absolute monarch whose thoughts and desires are long. On the contrary: the Pope's ministry is a guarantee of obedience to Christ and to his word. He must not proclaim his own ideas, but rather consistently binds himself and the church to obedience to God's word, in the face of every attempt to adapt it or water it down and every form of opportunism.

It is the duty of any Pope to faithfully protect conserve and develop the Sacred Liturgy which the Church has received in Tradition. Also as we know, the exercise of the papal ministry involves prudential judgments in respect of policy: different Pope said different priorities according to their lights. For this Pope the sacred liturgy is an area of high priority.

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger has been involved in liturgy from his youth he attended the second Vatican Council as an expert for the German bishops he was a profound theological enthusiasts for the liturgical reform proposed by the council. Joseph Ratzinger new the council to intimately to reject it but for precisely the same reasons, he found himself deeply disturbed by what was frequently being carried out in its name, especially in the field of the sacred liturgy. He has noted that after the council... In the place of liturgy as the fruit of development came fabricated liturgy. We abandoned the organic, living process of growth and development over centuries, and replaced it-- as in a manufacturing process-- with a fabrication, a banal on-the-spot product.

Two years before ascending to the throne of Peter Cardinal Ratzinger wrote—

the liturgical movement had in fact been attempting... To teach us to understand the liturgy as a living network of tradition that had taken concrete form, that cannot be torn apart into little pieces, but that has to be seen and experienced as a living whole. Anyone who, like me, was moved by this perception in the time of the liturgical movement on the eve of the second Vatican Council can only stand, deeply sorrowing, before the ruins of the very things they were concerned for. It is the Cardinal's conviction that the liturgical reform following the second Vatican Council went seriously astray both in its official and in its local implementation, a



conviction that has annoyed the liturgical establishment for decades and which is more than worried not a few amongst them since 19 April 2005.

Rounded upon this conviction, he called for nothing less than a new liturgical movement, a movement towards the liturgy and towards the right way of celebrating the liturgy, inwardly and outwardly. In his writings is Cardinal, we can identify three complementary strands of such a movement.

The **first** is the faithful celebration of the modern liturgical rites, in accordance with the prescriptions of the liturgical books: he was, of course, one of the driving forces behind the March 2004 instructions *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, which sought to restore greater discipline to the celebration of the modern liturgy.

The **second** is the free use of the pre-conciliar liturgical rites

The **third** is the prospect of a reform of the liturgical reform whereby the modern liturgical books would be revised so as once again to include some of the treasures they had previously discarded.

Pope Benedict the 16th the liturgical reformer-----  
having literally the world as his stage there was not one iota of personal performance to be seen as then the Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as Dean of the sacred College celebrated the solemn funeral mass for Pope John Paul II. Indeed he seemed embarrassed after his homily invoked applause. Despite the enormity of the location and of the environs in which he celebrated, he nonetheless preserved and communicated a recollection which reflected the divine realities that are within our reach in the sacred liturgy. The Cardinal acted so transparently at the humble and faithful servant of the church's liturgy on that occasion enabled it, outdoors and under the glare of the world's media, to be just that: the church's liturgy and no one shall.

### **The first of four pillars**

the **Pope's own personal liturgical example** he is an exemplary liturgical celebrant: one whose recollection points beyond himself towards the one true God and his incarnate son whom we worship.

The **second pillar** hermeneutics of continuity and discontinuity. Without doubt of this discourse provides the key to understanding the reforms of his pontificate, liturgical or otherwise. The hermeneutics of discontinuity risk ending in a split between the pre-conciliar church and the post conciliar

church. In the Pope's 2007 apostolic exhortation he notes the changes which the Council called for needed to be understood within the overall unity of the historical development of the rite itself, without the introduction of artificial discontinuities adding in a footnote: I'm referring here to the need for a hermeneutics of continuity also with regard to the correct interpretation of the liturgical development which followed the second Vatican Council. We have seen the practical application of this in papal ceremonies since Pope Benedict replaced the former papal Master of pontifical ceremonies in late 2007. Papal liturgies now look much more like they always did. There is an importance of ritual and visual continuity with the past that is now perceptible in papal liturgies cannot be underestimated in our media saturated age-- nor can three profoundly theological elements of the ceremonial reform of papal liturgies.

**The first** is that on every altar at which the Pope now celebrates, the crosses are at the very center. This reform is never been decreed, it is simply occurred-- it requires no permission. Pope Benedict teaches by personal example that Christ is to be at the center of every liturgical celebration, not man.

The **second reform** in this vein was personally to celebrate the modern use of the mass in the Sistine Chapel on the feast of the baptism of the Lord in January 2008 and make use of the ancient eastward facing altar. Again, this was not done by decree-- facing East has always been permitted for the modern mass. However for the Pope to set an example by doing so stated definitively that this option is not only legitimate but apposite in the celebration of the modern liturgy, for Cardinal Ratzinger taught: **looking at the priest has no importance. What matters is looking together at the Lord.**

The **third theological** aspect of the reform of papal liturgies is found in the **manner of distribution or reception of holy Communion**. The profound adoration and respect for the blessed sacrament that is entered into the Catholic faith was witnessed in the banishment of that true liturgical plate of recent decades-- the overrunning of our sanctuaries by the ordinary use of extraordinary ministers-- on the feast of Corpus Christi 2008 the holy father set the example without doubt hoping that it would be followed-- of distributing holy Communion to the faithful, clergy and laity alike, who knelt and received on the tongue. The papal master ceremonies explained highlights the truth of the real presence in the Eucharist, helps the devotion of the faithful, and introduces them more easily to the sense of the mystery.

He also reminds us that it remains the universal norm of the church in the manner of receiving holy Communion.

The idea of noble simplicity----and liturgical vesture and furnishings this event into the realm of the simply ugly. Pope Benedict's restoration of older liturgical styles is no rejection of modernity, it is a shifting of what is truly noble and beautiful from that which is simply unworthy of the sacred liturgy. It is noted that objects once made for the service of Almighty God and the sacred liturgy do not belong in museums their purposes rather to give glory to God in the sacred liturgy. as noted again by the papal master ceremonies just as Pope cites his predecessors and his documents, to show the continuity of the magisterium, a Pope also does the same in the liturgical sands when he uses the vestments and the sacred assess trees that previous popes have used to indicate the same continuity in the *lex orandi*.

The **third pillar** feel forte the of correction of erroneous practices. First direct application of this appeared in a letter of Cardinal Arinze, dated 1 December 2005, in which he conveyed the Holy Father's decision that, in short, the Neocatechumenal Way, in its celebration of the holy mass, should follow the approved liturgical books. Second example would be 12 October 2006 when it was conveyed to the president of the United States bishops conference the holy father's instruction that in accordance with article 279 of the general instruction of the Roman missal only a priest, deacon or instituted acolyte may purify the sacred vessels after holy communion.

This relatively minor ruling caused something of a furore in the United States largely because in many parishes of the Western church that truly extraordinary role of non-ordained ministers of holy Communion has been obscured but what can only be called an erroneous if not dangerous clericalization of the laity in the name of active participation whereby good laymen and women have been led to believe that their God-given vocation the church is ordinarily to minister the blessed Eucharist.

The **fourth pillar** his **fidelity to received liturgical tradition**.

The best example of this is found in the holy father's decision and directives as to the proper translation for the words *Pro multis*, handed down by the church, constitutes the formula that has been in use in the Roman rite in Latin from the earliest centuries. For the Pope the fact that the use of *Pro multis* is a constant element of our liturgical tradition at the heart of the churches daily fulfillment of our Lord's command to do this in memory of me was decisive, and accordingly he decided to correct the departure from

that tradition which has occurred in the vernacular translations in the past few decades.

***Thus we have the four pillars of the holy fathers liturgical reform: his personal liturgical example, his insistence on historical and intellectual honesty with regard to the liturgical life of the church in recent decades, his insistence on the correct celebration of the liturgy according to the liturgical books and his desire for fidelity to received liturgical tradition.***

The two major documents of this pontificate to deal with liturgical matters have been his apostolic exhortation on the Eucharist and the apostolic letter for the use of the 1962 liturgical books are built upon these pillars

The Holy Father makes clear that the post-conciliar changes are to be understood according to a hermeneutics of continuity. This is a clear statement that the modern liturgy is here to stay. Neither this Pope nor his successors will abolish it. But this is also a fairly frank admission that it must be reconnected with the liturgical tradition of the ages, understood with in the overall unity of the historical development of the rite itself, without the introduction of artificial discontinuities.

This is crucial. For if the rites promulgated by Pope Paul the six are indeed to serve the church of the fathers of the second Vatican Council intended the liturgical reform in fact to do, they must be celebrated in accordance with the received tradition they sought to reform. The modern rights are in place and they need to be celebrated correctly in a theological and liturgical continuity with Catholic liturgical tradition!

The art of celebrating----- the manner of celebrating the sacred liturgy Pope Benedict describes it as the fruit of faithful adherence to the liturgical norms and all their richness. He instructs us that it is the best way to ensure the active participation of the people of God. Indeed, he says for 2000 Years This Way is celebrating his sustained the faithful life of all believers. We can see the clear called here for a hermeneutics of continuity and liturgical practice. We can also see him and systems that the quality of the elements that make up liturgical celebrations be improved: everything... Should be marked by beauty. In the Pope's apostolic exhortation there can be no question that the Holy Father is seeking to reconnect-- and in places where the modern liturgy has gone down erroneous or even abusive past, to reconcile-- the celebration of the modern rights with the centuries old liturgical tradition of the church. The Holy Father reminds us the liturgy is not about us, but about God. Forgetting about God is the most imminent

danger of our age. As against this, the liturgy should be setting up a sign of God's presence. Yet what happens if the habit of forgetting about God makes itself hold in the liturgy itself and if in the liturgy we are thinking only of ourselves? In any and every liturgical reform, and every liturgical celebration, the primacy of God should be kept in view first and foremost. The Holy Father also notes just as a liturgy which no longer looks to God is already in its death throes, so to a theology which no longer draws its life breath from faith ceases to be theology; it ends up as an array of more or less loosely connected disciplines. But where theology is practice on bent need it will prove faithful for the church.

The Pope has outlined a policy in his apostolic exhortation not as an opinion of Joseph Ratzinger but as what the supreme pontiff has judged to be appropriate for the whole church, liturgically, theologically and pastorally.

The liturgical reform a Pope Benedict the 16th is a work in progress they are in accordance with the four pillars, the Holy Father's personal example is the liturgical celebrant is continuing call for hermeneutics of continuity and not of rupture in respect of the sacred liturgy. He and his officials will assist upon the correct observance of liturgical discipline, not in order to bring about a legalistic rubricism, but out of a profound reverence for the churches liturgy for the sacred mysteries it handles. And he will take further opportunities to reconnect the church's life with received liturgical tradition. Because that tradition is living, we may also expect the enrichment of the extraordinary form of the of the Roman rite.

And so Pope Benedict the 16th has pointed out the good and if you will the bad points of both forms as he has put it of the Roman rite the ordinary and the extraordinary form. He has been very clear that in allowing open and free celebrations of the old Mass. has been done so that it may enrich the celebrations of the new mass. The Pope who may rightly be called a son of the second Vatican consult has made it clear that the modern right is here to stay however he has made it equally clear that it must be in continuity with the received liturgical tradition of the church. It is quite clear that certain practices, customs, and traditions of the past which were in either discarded or set aside in the implementation of the directives of the council need to be brought back. And there needs to be connection continuity between the modern liturgy and the older liturgy. The Pope himself and what he does and how he doesn't is a living example to the whole church. He has said many

times that how he celebrates the sacred liturgy in all of its aspects he does so as an example to the whole church.

It is good to point out that in continuity with the church Pope Paul the sixth John Paul the second and now Benedict the 16th have all as the Pope with the authority of the Pope had said that the liturgical law and rubrics are to be observed and followed by all. We are not the masters of the liturgy. The liturgy must always be focused on God and not on ourselves.

The above essay is composed predominantly of excerpts from church documents and scholarly works. These have been brought together to illustrate the liturgical thought mind and direction of Pope Benedict the 16<sup>th</sup>. These are then put together to serve as an outline and notes for talk/ lecture on Pope Benedict the 16th and the sacred liturgy.

Sources that have been using quoted in the above essay liturgical reflections of the papal master of ceremonies Benedict the 16th of the sacred liturgy understanding Pope Benedict the 16th on the liturgies crucifix at the center of the altar Adoremus Bulletin excerpts from the post apostolic exhortation on the Eucharist excerpts from the general instruction of the Roman missal excerpts from instruction on the Eucharist.

Particular liturgical works either by Joseph Ratzinger or about his liturgical points of view.

Book written by Joseph Ratzinger *feast of faith*  
book written by Joseph Ratzinger *spirit of the liturgy*  
the *Ratzinger report*  
and as Pope Benedict the 16th his *apostolic exhortation on the Eucharist*.

## **Handout notes for talk on Pope Benedict the 16th and the sacred liturgy**

- 1] In 1999 then as a Cardinal-- Joseph Ratzinger writes the book **the Spirit of the Liturgy** which now is often referred to as his Marshall plan for the reform of the reform of the sacred liturgy.
- 2] what came to be known as the **Ratzinger Report---** he notes and we quote “Vatican II in its official publications, in its authentic documents, cannot be held responsible for this development which, on the contrary, will radically contradicts both the letter and the spirit of the Council Fathers”.
- 3] He also notes that the council did not represent a rupture, but expressed continuity with the church's history that is there is no pre-or post council church. He notes there is but one, unique church that walks the path towards the Lord.
- 4] The Cardinal notes that after Vatican II the new missal was “published as if it were a book put together by professionals and not a phase of a continual growth process”. He notes that this is never happened before and that it is absolutely contrary to the laws of liturgical growth within the church.
- 5] Cardinal notes a “dangerous tendency to minimize the sacrificial character of the Mass, causing mystery and the sacred to disappear in order to make the liturgy more easily understood”.
- 6] Cardinal also remarked that the old liturgy was flawed in particular he notes the celebration had moved too much into the domain of the individual, the private.
- 7] July 3, 1988 the Cardinal noted and we quote we “ought to get back the dimension of the sacred and the liturgy. The liturgy is not a Festival is not a meeting for the purpose of having a good time. The liturgy is what makes the Thrice-holy God present among us; it is the burning bush; it is the alliance of God with man in Jesus Christ”.
- 8] Essential in the liturgy is mystery. The mystery is transformed into distraction, when the chief actor of the liturgy is not the living God but the priest or the liturgical director.

9] Liturgical norms in fact serve as the closest “Guardian of the ministries being celebrated”. Notes the Cardinal. The liturgy belongs to the whole body of the Church. Is for this reason that it is not permitted to anyone, even the priest, or any group, to subtract or change anything whatsoever on their own initiative.

10] The Pope notes Holy Mass, “celebrated with respect for the liturgical norms and with the appropriate appreciation of the richness of the signs and gestures, affirms and develops growth in Eucharistic Faith”.

11] in the Eucharistic celebration we do not invent something but rather enter into a reality that precedes us--- indeed that embraces heaven and earth and therefore also past, future and present.

12] The Cardinal in his book *spirit of the liturgy* that active participation of the faithful refers to a principal action which everyone has a part. We participate, therefore, to the extent that the action of the Lord and of his church also becomes our action, his obligation of love becomes our obligation of love, his filial and obligation of abandonment to the Father becomes ours as well--- the sacrifice of the Redeemer becomes our own sacrifice. The liturgy should transcend the activity of every man and of every activity of humanity by the act of Christ himself

13] Noble beauty--- the relationship between creative and worship evidence in a particular way by the rich theological liturgical category of beauty. The liturgy is inherently linked to beauty. Beauty that is not mere decoration, but rather an essential element of the liturgical action, since it is an attribute to God himself and his revelation. The church in her long history has taught is that she never feared to surround the liturgical celebrations with the highest expression of art. The Saints despite their personal poverty have always taught us to desire that only the best things be set aside for divine worship. For nothing can be too beautiful for God who is himself infinite beauty.

14] the crucifix at the center of the altar as noted in his 1981 book entitled *feast of faith* then Cardinal Ratzinger presented the problem of the orientation of the altar in the context of the liturgical celebration. Facing East makes the cosmic dimension of the Eucharistic presence through liturgical gesture. So what has come down to us in the altar cross is a relic of the ancient East word orientation. It maintains the ancient tradition of praying to the Lord. Even now, when the priest faces the people, the cross



could be placed on the altar in such a way that both priests and people can see it. At the Eucharistic prayer they **should not look at one another----**  
**together they look towards the Lord.**

15] adoration----the Cardinal notes that everything in the liturgical action must lead to adoration----the music, the chant, the silence, the way of proclaiming the Word of God and of praying, the jesters, the liturgical vestments and sacred vessels. Likewise to the entire complex of the sacred edifice should lead us to adoration.

16] chant and music, in fact, cannot be separated from the word of God, of which, indeed, music enchain all to be a faithful interpretation and revelation. Chant and music of the liturgy streaming from the depths of the heart, that is, from Christ who dwells there in-- and they return to the heart, that is, to Christ. Chant of liturgical music should never be consigned to the superficial and the extemporaneous nature of our sentiments and fleeting emotions. These do not correspond to the greatness of the mystery being celebrated. Chant and music of the liturgy or born from prayer and lead to prayer. Therefore, they permit us to enter into the mystery.

17] For the Pope the sacrificial character the Eucharist has to be evident in the manner of its celebration, the failure to embody this adequately in the actual performance of the new liturgy seems to him one of the central problems of the post council reforms.

18] For the Pope--- liturgical practices of the council have taken a wrong turn creating a rupture in the continuity of Catholic worship, and reflecting and even fostering a defective understanding of the divine and our relationship to it.

19] The Pope's decision in 2007 to permit the free celebration of the old Latin Mass now referred to as extraordinary form of the Roman rite. Was done to both repair the rupture and to issue a call to the recovery of the theological, spiritual and cultural values that he sees as underlying the old Mass.

20] It is the duty of any Pope to safely protect conserve and develop the Sacred Liturgy which the church has received and with tradition.

21] Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger has been involved in liturgy from his youth he attended the second Vatican Council as an expert for the German bishops. He was involved in the early liturgical movements in Germany prior to the council he again laments the abandonment of the organic living process of growth and development over centuries having replaced it as if in a manufacturing process with the fabrication and on the spot product.

22] After having become Pope he notes the liturgical movement had in fact been attempting to teach us to understand the liturgy as a living network of tradition that had taken concrete form, that cannot be torn apart into little pieces, but that has to be seen and experienced as a living whole. It is his conviction that the liturgical reform following the council went seriously astray both its official and in its local implementation.

23] Within the reform of the reform there are three main points made. **First** point is the faithful celebration of the modern liturgical rites, in accordance with the prescriptions of the liturgical books. There must be discipline in the celebration of the liturgy. The **second** is the free use of the pre-conciliar liturgical reforms. That is allowing the free celebration of the old Mass.---- What is now known as the extraordinary form of the Roman rite. The **third** is a revision of the modern liturgical books which would be revised so as once again to include some of the treasures they had previously discarded.

24] The **four pillars** upon which rests the reform of the reform as seen by Pope Benedict. The **first** the Pope's own *personal liturgical example*--- that is one whose recollection points beyond himself towards the one true God and his incarnate son who we worship. The **second** pillar---the *hermeneutics of continuity and discontinuity*. Changes which the Council called for needed to be understood within the overall unity of the historical development of the Roman Rite itself, without the introduction of artificial items. There is an importance of ritual and visual continuity with the past. This is very evident in current papal ceremonies. Other examples the cross in the center of the altar & celebrating the Eucharistic prayer facing the altar. The Pope notes--- looking at the priest has no importance. What matters is looking together at the Lord. Another example is the manner distribution and reception of Holy Communion from the Pope. It is now the practice of the Pope to distribute Holy Communion only in the universal manner of the church that is kneeling and on the tongue.

25] the **third pillar** *correction of erroneous practices* one example would be allowing only instituted acolyte and ordained ministers to purify the sacred vessels.

26] the **fourth pillars** *fidelity to received liturgical traditions* one example of this would be the Holy Father's decision and directives as to the proper translation of the words Pro multis. These words having been handed down by the Church, constitutes a formula that is been in use of the Roman Rite in Latin from the earliest centuries. It is a constant element of our liturgical tradition at the heart of the Church's daily fulfillment of the Lord's command to do this in memory of me. In doing this the Pope decided to correct the parts which are from the tradition which had occurred in the vernacular translations in the past.

27] Thus we have the four pillars of the Holy Father's liturgical reforms;

1-- his personal liturgical example

2-- his insistence on historical and intellectual honesty with regard to the liturgical life of the church

3--- his insistence on the correct celebration of the liturgy according to the liturgical books

4-- his desire for fidelity to received liturgical tradition

28] The Holy Father makes clear that the post councilor changes are to be understood according to a hermeneutics of continuity. This is a clear statement of the modern liturgy is here to stay. It is also a frank admission that it must be reconnected with the liturgical tradition of the ages, understood with in the overall unity of the historical development of the rite itself, without the introduction of artificial discontinuities.

29] The Mass of Pope Paul VI must be celebrated in accordance with the received tradition they sought to reform. The modern rights are in place and they need to be celebrated correctly in a theological and liturgical continuity with Catholic liturgical tradition.

30] The art of celebrating----- this is another very important item for the Pope. He describes it is the fruit of faithful adherence to the liturgical norms and all their richness. He instructs us that it is the best way to ensure the active participation of the people of God. In the Pope's apostolic exhortation there could be no question of the Holy Father is seeking to reconnect-- and in places where the modern liturgy has gone down erroneous or even abusive past, to reconcile-- the celebration of the modern rights with the

centuries old liturgical tradition of the church. The Holy Father reminds us the liturgy is not about us but about God.

31] The Pope has outline the policy in the apostolic exhortation as to that which he is the Supreme Pontiff is judged to be appropriate for the whole church, liturgically, theologically and pastorally proper.

So what is very important for us to remember--- is that the sacred liturgy is a gift given by God to the Church. In which God has laid out how he is to be worshiped and the manner in which we will come to know his Son through his Paschal Mystery and be strengthened in fortified by sacramental graces. The Sacred Liturgy of the Church has developed and grown in an organic manner down through the centuries. We as individuals, priests, deacons & laity do not own the Sacred Liturgy. We cannot do with it what ever we want no matter how good our intentions or the outcome. The Sacred Liturgy is regulated by the supreme magisterium of the Church, that is the Pope himself and those bishops in union with him as the law allows. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, a foundational document of the Second Vatican Council clearly stated that no one not even if he may be a priest may add omit or change anything within the sacred liturgy. We are certainly free to make liturgical choices to choose among proper options as the church is in allows. We are not free to create our own or to go further then the church allows.

Pope Benedict has rightly criticized the flaws in both the pre-Vatican II liturgy and in the post-Vatican II liturgy. He has been very clear that the second Vatican Council was not a break or a rupture with the tradition of the Church. This is very true and very clear by the fact that in reading any and all of the documents of the second Vatican Council one will find that they heavily quote and are footnoted from other councils of the Church and past Fathers and Doctors of the Church. Therefore when reading these documents as the Pope has pointed out they must be read in the light of the hermeneutics of continuity. As we seek to follow the proper reforms made in the liturgy this must be done in the continuity with past tradition and with great fidelity to the law and the norms of the church. As all three popes of the post-Vatican II era have said all liturgical abuse must stop the documents must be followed as written. Our current Pope as outlined a course for the reform of the reform. A work that must be undertaken within prayer and within time. The reform begins with us having a proper understanding of the

sacred liturgy and its relationships towards God and with us. It continues with our fidelity to the rubrics the norms and the liturgical documents. And it will continue with a fidelity to past tradition.

What I present in the above outline are excerpts taken from books written by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger namely *Spirit of the Liturgy* and *Feast of Faith*, excerpts are also taken from the *Ratzinger Report*. Additional information was taken from the book *Benedict the 16th and the Sacred Liturgy* and from *Liturgical Reflections of it Papal Master of Ceremonies*. The material pulled from these different sources give us an idea of the mind of the Pope in regards the Sacred Liturgy and possible directions that he is taking or will take in the future.