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Promotion of Greater Inculturation

Propositions of the Synod on the Eucharist, Nos. 26-30



VATICAN CITY, OCT. 31, 2005 (Zenit.org).- Here is a translation of Propositions 26-30 given to Benedict XVI by the recent Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist. The text is based on a provisional translation in Italian. ZENIT is publishing translations of all 50 propositions.

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Proposition 26 Inculturation and Celebration

For a more effective participation of the faithful in the Eucharist, this Synod backs the promotion of greater inculturation in the realm of the Eucharistic celebration, taking into account the possibilities of adaptation offered by the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, the criteria established by the 4th Instruction of the Congregation for Divine Worship for an appropriate application of the conciliar constitutions on the liturgy, of 1994, and the directives contained in the postsynodal Exhortations "Ecclesia in Africa," "Ecclesia in Asia," "Ecclesia in Oceania" and "Ecclesia in America." With this objective, the Episcopal Conferences must assume full responsibility for increasing attempts at inculturation, fostering the appropriate balance between criteria and directives already issued and the new adaptations.

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Proposition 27 The Art of the Eucharistic Celebration

Of great importance in the history of the celebration of the Holy Mass and of Eucharistic adoration is the function of sacred art in its different expressions, beginning with architecture. The latter translates the spiritual meaning of the Church's rites in comprehensible and concrete forms, which enlighten the mind, touch the heart and form the will. Moreover, the study of the history of liturgical architecture and of sacred art in general by the laity, seminarians and above all priests, can illuminate theological reflection, enrich catechesis and awaken that

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taste for symbolic language that facilitates sacramental mystagogy.

Finally, a profound knowledge of the forms that sacred art has been able to produce through the centuries, can help those who are called to collaborate with the architects and artists to design appropriately, at the service of Eucharistic life and of the present communities, both the areas of celebration as well as the iconography.

In the case of conflict between the artistic and celebratory aspects, priority must be given to the liturgical needs of the celebration, according to the reform approved by the Church.

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Proposition 28 The Tabernacle and Its Location

In conformity with the Roman Missal's General Instruction (cf. n. 314), the Synod reminds that the tabernacle for the custody of the Blessed Sacrament must have a noble place in the church, of consideration, very visible, looked after under the artistic aspect and appropriate to prayer. With this objective, consult the Bishop.

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Proposition 29 Eucharist and Means of Social Communication

The means of communication, including the Internet, offer a good service to those who cannot participate in the Mass, for example, for reasons of health or age. Moreover, they can also reach baptized persons who have fallen away or even nonbelievers. When the means of communication are used, it is important to celebrate the Eucharist in worthy, appropriate and well-prepared places. It must be remembered that, in normal conditions, to fulfill the obligation, physical presence is necessary in the celebration of the Eucharist, and that it is not sufficient to follow the rite through the means of communication. The language of image is representation and not the reality in itself.

The liturgy must be devout and invite to prayer because it celebrates the paschal mystery. The liturgical norms of the Church must always be observed, value must be given to the sacred signs, attention must be given to the artistic expression of the place, objects and liturgical vestments. It is necessary to ensure that the singing and music correspond to the mystery celebrated and to the liturgical time.

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"Actuosa Participatio"

Proposition 30
"Dies Domini"

As fruit of the Year of the Eucharist, the Synod strongly recommends that significant efforts be made to give value to and to live the "Dies Domini" in the whole Church. It is necessary to affirm anew the central character of Sunday and of the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist in the different communities of the diocese, especially in the parishes (cf. "Sacrosanctum Concilium" 42). Sunday is truly the day in which one celebrates with others the risen Christ, sanctified day and consecrated to the Creator, day of rest and availability. The Sunday Eucharistic celebration is a humanizing grace for the individual and the family, because it nourishes the Christian identity with contact with the Risen One. Therefore, the duty to partíciple is triple: with God, with oneself and with the community.

It is intended to help the faithful to consider as paradigmatic the experience of the primitive community and that of the generations of the first centuries. Christian must be given the opportunity, through catechesis and preaching, to meditate on the "Dies Christi" as the day of the Lord's Resurrection and, therefore, as a feast of deliverance, a day given to enjoy the goods of the Kingdom of God, day of joy because of the encounter with the Living, present among us.

We hope therefore that the Day of the Lord will also become the day of Christians, respected by the whole society with rest from work. Manifestations proper to the Christian community should be organized around the Eucharistic celebration, such as friendly get-togethers; formation of children, young people and adults in the faith; pilgrimages; works of charity; and different moments of prayer.

Although Saturday afternoon belongs already to Sunday (First Vespers), and it is permitted to fulfill the Sunday obligation with the pre-festive Mass, it is necessary to remember that it is the day of Sunday in itself which must be sanctified so that there is no "void of God."

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