

SILENCE and REVERENCE HELP YOU RECOGNIZE THE DIVINE PRESENCE

KNOW YOUR FAITH SERIES

In the Office of Readings for November 4, feast of St. Charles Borromeo, we read from the sermon given during the last synod he attended. It is mainly addressed to the clergy of his Diocese.

In it he offers concrete suggestions in order to help us “practice what we preach”:

To the priest who may complain that “as soon as he enters church to celebrate Mass, many thoughts distract him from God”, the holy bishop asks: “But what was he doing in the sacristy before he came out for Mass? How did he prepare? What means did he use to collect his thoughts and to remain recollected?”

Further down he continues: “Avoid distractions as well as you can. Stay quiet with God. DO NOT SPEND YOUR TIME IN USELESS CHATTER.”

At a time when it has been reported that more than sixty percent of Catholics today do not believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, the Church is using various means to reawaken the faith and foster true devotion to the Eucharist, from Eucharistic procession to adoration chapels, etc.

As a way of natural reaction to the present Faith crisis situation, a good number of Catholics who are seeking a more authentic liturgical worship, and respectful reverence for Christ’s presence on the altar, are turning to the Latin traditional Mass, where they feel they find and experience what is missing in their parishes.

We can all do our part to reactivate and rekindle our faith in the Eucharistic Jesus: first of all, have a regular prayer life; join catechism programs and faith formation for adults; parish Bible groups; when in church, set a good example by observing a reverential silence, and avoid unnecessary talk; practice Christian charity; remember that the best way to lead others to believe and come closer to Jesus is by your personal witness.

The words of St. Charles Borromeo are also directed to the people in the pews: in order to prepare to participate in the Supper of the Lamb, avoid distractions, and maintain external and interior silence, so that you will be better disposed to listen to God’s voice in your heart, and recognize His presence when He comes on the altar.

It has been said by some saints that Mass begins in the sacristy, the place where priests silently put on the liturgical vestments before entering the Sanctuary.

It is desirable and strongly recommended that a spirit of prayer and silent recollection be maintained at this time by all present, particularly by those who, as a result of their liturgical tasks or ministry, make use of the sacristy: clergy, lectors, extraordinary ministers of communion, altar servers, ushers, volunteers, etc.

If we believe and act accordingly, the faith of our Catholic people will come alive again.