

Weekly Message from Fr William for Fourteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time 2022

Dear People of St Mary's, in his latest Apostolic Letter, just published, Pope Francis teaches us that 'Liturgy' is something very specific, and fundamental to our Christian lives. What is Liturgy? It is first and foremost an action of Christ. It is Christ's self-offering to the Father in his death and resurrection. (DD 7).

Then in our Baptism we are plunged into this action, plunged into his death and resurrection. (DD 12, 13). From this moment, our Baptism, we are joined to him. From this moment we are plunged into the Liturgy: plunged into Christ (Baptism) then into his self-offering to the Father (Eucharist). 'The subject acting in the Liturgy is always and only *Christ-Church*', - He + We acting in the Liturgy together as one. (DD 15).

In his letter Francis re-issues the Second Vatican call for our 'full, conscious and active participation' in the celebration of the Liturgy. (DD 16). This is the 'full, conscious and active participation' that I referred to in my last weekly message.

'The action of the celebration' he writes 'does not belong to the individual but to the *Christ-Church*, to the totality of the faithful united to Christ'. (DD 19) We are taken into the celebration of the Liturgy not by any kind of mental effort or by trying to envisage what is happening with the 'mind's eye', but by allowing the liturgical actions to speak for themselves, 'by means of the symbolic actions of the body' (DD 19). These may be symbolic actions we witness, or symbolic actions we make ourselves (eg receiving Holy Communion), symbolic actions that Francis terms 'the symbolic language of the body'.

'The Liturgy is the priesthood of Christ', Christ offering himself to the Father, and us with him. This self-offering is made present and active in the celebration of the Liturgy 'by means of signs addressed to the senses'. (DD 21). These signs are symbolic actions to be seen and witnessed and experienced.

Francis writes: 'This encounter with God in the Liturgy is not the fruit of an individual interior searching for Him. It is an event given.' (DD 24). We simply allow ourselves to become part of the Liturgy by a participation that engages our bodies, our senses, and in general our experience of the liturgical actions.

Nor is our awe and wonder 'some sort of being overcome in the face of an obscure reality' or some vague 'sense of mystery' (DD 25). Our awe and wonder is in the 'power of symbol' (DD 26) and in our experience of the symbolic actions of the Liturgy that speak of Christ's self-offering to the Father, and our self-offering with him.

'With this letter' Francis writes 'I simply want to invite the whole Church to rediscover the power of the Christian celebration of the Liturgy'. (DD 16).

The Apostolic Letter is called *Desiderio Desideravi* (DD). Link to the full text on the homepage for you.



Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 3 July 2022