

How beauty and sobriety in the Liturgy can evangelize

We celebrate in the Liturgy the Paschal Mystery of Christ – His Passion, Resurrection and the glorious Ascension into Heaven. As Jesus shed his blood for love, the Church was born. And it was to the apostles that Christ entrusted the mission to continue the work begun by Him. All that Jesus accomplished on earth continues to happen at all times through the liturgy – in the Mass, in the sacraments, in the celebration of the Word, in the prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours and in so many other moments of ecclesial life.

“All that in the life of our redeemer was visible, passed into the sacramental rites,” Pope Leo the Great explained (Sermons for Ascension, No. 3, AL 4340) in the fifth century. And since the Liturgy is the extension of the actions of Christ, it contains in itself a unique and sacred value of singular beauty.

Still on the dimension of what is beautiful, John Paul II, in the Letter to Artists, says that “beauty is the visible expression of good.” That is, in the Liturgy, God’s action in people’s lives is deeply connected to his beauty and goodness. In other words, although it is not the main role of the Liturgy, people are evangelized and touched by the love of the Lord when they contemplate the beauty and sobriety of liturgical actions.

What the Liturgy causes in the faithful people

Celebrating the liturgy is not only to repeat the gestures or the words of Christ, for the sole purpose of remembering them, but it is to make present the reality of the

profound Paschal Mystery, thanks to the action of the Holy Spirit, so that we may be in life communion with this mystery and let us be touched and transformed by it.

A well-lived and celebrated liturgy facilitates the communion of people with God. The Liturgical Rites celebrated in the splendor of their beauty and naturalness encourage the faithful "... to the veneration of sacred things, elevate the mind to the supernatural reality, nourish piety, foster charity, increase faith, strengthen devotion, instruct the simple, adorn God's cult, preserve the religion and distinguish the true from the false Christians "(Encyclical Letter Mediator Dei, 20).

The beauty of the Liturgy

The Liturgy is naturally beautiful: beautiful in the aesthetic aspect of sacred objects and vestments, through the zeal and care in regard to the preparation of celebrations and liturgical times and beautiful in the sanctity that inspires through the gestures of the priest – who is a minister in Person Christi (in the place of Christ).

The concern and care for the beauty and uniqueness of the Liturgy, in all rites, still is a sign of respect for God. For this reason, the Church takes care so that the liturgy fulfills its function of, through it, accomplish beautiful symbolic actions through which not only God manifests and relates, but also people can come to him.

References

***Sermons for the Ascension, Pope Leo the Great
Letter to the Artists, Saint John Paul II***

Encyclical Letter Mediator Dei, Pope Pius XII (1974)