

Day 164 – Monday, August 31

I came across this six part series on the history of the Eucharistic Liturgy. And I thought you might be interested

By Alfred McBride, O.Praem.; St. Anthony Messenger Press

3--THE GROWING BODY OF CHRIST The year 313 was a turning point for Christianity. Persecutions suddenly ended. Constantine gave freedom to Christians and spent great sums of money building basilicas for Eucharistic worship. Modest house churches gradually ceased to exist. Stately ceremonies suitable in a huge church emerged. Processions, courtly movement in the sanctuary, metered chant (composed by St. Ambrose) and sung litanies that galvanized the voices of thousands, incense and bells, kissing sacred objects and the use of genuflections became a pattern to accompany the ancient structure of the Eucharist. The celebrants wore clothes worthy of a Roman senator. Their robes eventually came to be called vestments, since they were retained long after fashions changed. The simple plates and cups of house worship became elaborate chalices and patens. This was an inevitable evolution due to social acceptance, organizing an empire-size Church and, indeed, ecclesial prosperity. This era witnessed the rise of extraordinary bishops, known now as Church Fathers, such as Augustine and Chrysostom, whose homilies were rich in theology and pastoral in application. Their genius was to work out theological development in the context of the light generated by the Eucharist and the prayerful hunger and faith of the people. Their theme was "The Body of Christ [Eucharist] builds the Body of Christ [Church]."

In the light of eternity, we're here for a very short time, really. We're here for one thing, ultimately: to learn how to love, because God is love. - James Finley

Sincerely,
Fr. Jim Kaptein