

Day 165 – Tuesday, Sept 01

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

4--THE EUCHARIST BECOMES DISTANT FOR MOST

The widespread appearance of the stunning Gothic cathedrals in medieval Europe signaled a resurgence of faith. The colorful religious processions for feasts of saints, the enthusiasm for pilgrimages to holy shrines, the birth of new religious orders led some subsequent historians to call these centuries the "ages of faith." But alongside these events were troublesome declines in active participation in the Mass. The removal of the assembly from participating in the Eucharist was dramatized by screens of stone or iron that hid the choir and altar from public view. The monks and priests conducted their corporate liturgy away from the assembly. The Mass remained in Latin, even though people began using their local languages for most things in their lives. When the people complained of the Mass's remoteness, they were given side altar Masses where the priest faced the wall and prayed in Latin. The people compensated for their estrangement by asking the priest to hold up the host for their view and adoration: "Hold it higher, sir priest!" Meanwhile, Berengar of Tours taught that Jesus was not really present in the host, which was only a symbol of his presence. The Church repudiated his views at Lateran IV in 1215 by affirming Christ's Real Presence and introducing the concept of transubstantiation (the substance of bread becomes the substance or "being" of Christ) to support this doctrine. Because many Catholics had ceased receiving Communion, the Council also mandated going to Communion at least once a year at Easter time. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament became popular along with other forms of popular piety.

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