

### Day 167 – Thursday, Sept 3

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

#### 6--MASS IN THE ERA OF VATICAN II

The first document approved by the Fathers of Vatican II (1962-65) was the Constitution on the Liturgy. But a century before this the stirrings of liturgical change had begun. Benedictines had begun to revive earlier liturgical practices, such as Gregorian chant (from the sixth century), and were studying the roots of Christian liturgy and the ways all Christians once had participated. Pope Pius X (1903-1914) encouraged the use of Gregorian chant, frequent Communion and lowering the age for First Communion to seven years.

With relatively little debate and very small opposition, the Constitution on the Liturgy was approved by the Council Fathers 2,147 favorable to 4 opposed. The sonorous words of the Constitution reached a high point when it declared, "The liturgy is the summit to which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows" (10). In the last part of the 20th century the application of the document began. A number of changes were introduced. The priest now faced the people. Vernacular languages replaced the Latin. People shook hands at the greeting of peace. The congregation was asked to participate actively in the Mass, to sing and pray at various times. People were invited to receive Communion either in the hand or on the tongue and to stand at its reception. They were offered the chalice so they could communicate under both species, the Eucharistic Bread and Wine. Laity and religious could serve Communion as extraordinary ministers. Married deacons appeared, to assist the priest at Mass and to preach homilies. Entrance processions were added. People brought up the gifts at the presentation of the offerings. Priests abandoned what some called the "fiddle-back" chasubles for robe-like replacements. Mass readings provided a three year series of Scripture in which large sections of the Bible would be heard. Homilies, which had become lectures or announcements on most anything, were expected to explain Scripture and apply it to everyday life. Church architecture became functional and minimalist in decoration, a sign of the times. Instead of the long "shoe box," a wider auditorium model appeared. Guitar Masses surfaced and new hymns were composed, leading to many arguments about taste and suitability. None of this happened without some anger and discomfort. Some experimentation went over the top. But in fact the amazing thing is how little disturbance actually happened. The dreams of the liturgical movement were fulfilled and expanded upon. People are realizing that they can enrich their spirituality mainly from the celebration of the Eucharist. What's striking is that the significant impact of all this is yet to be experienced. In Church years, we're very near the beginning of the Council's reforms.

*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