

**Highlights from *Desiderio Desideravi*, Pope Francis
June 29, 2022**

4. No one had earned a place at that Supper. All had been invited. Or better said: all had been drawn there by the burning desire that Jesus had to eat that Passover with them.

5. The world still does not know it, but everyone is *invited to the supper of the wedding of the Lamb* (Re 19:9). To be admitted to the feast all that is required is the wedding garment of faith which comes from the hearing of his Word (cf. Ro 10:17). The Church tailors such a garment to fit each one with the whiteness of a garment *bathed in the blood of the Lamb*. (Re 7:14). We must not allow ourselves even a moment of rest, knowing that still not everyone has received an invitation to this Supper or knowing that others have forgotten it or have got lost along the way in the twists and turns of human living.

9. From the very beginning the Church had grasped, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, that that which was visible in Jesus, that which could be seen with the eyes and touched with the hands, his words and his gestures, the concreteness of the incarnate Word — everything of Him had passed into the celebration of the sacraments.

10. Christian faith is either an encounter with Him alive, or it does not exist.

11. The Liturgy guarantees for us the possibility of such an encounter. For us a vague memory of the Last Supper would do no good. We need to be present at that Supper, to be able to hear his voice, to eat his Body and to drink his Blood. We need Him. In the Eucharist and in all the sacraments we are guaranteed the possibility of encountering the Lord Jesus and of having the power of his Paschal Mystery reach us. The salvific power of the sacrifice of Jesus, his every word, his every gesture, glance, and feeling reaches us through the celebration of the sacraments.

16. I want the beauty of the Christian celebration and its necessary consequences for the life of the Church not to be spoiled by a superficial and foreshortened understanding of its value or, worse yet, by its being exploited in service of some ideological vision, no matter what the hue. The priestly prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper that all may be one (Jn 17:21) judges every one of our divisions around the Bread broken, around *the sacrament of mercy, the sign of unity, the bond of charity*.

19. If Gnosticism intoxicates us with the poison of subjectivism, the liturgical celebration frees us from the prison of a self-referencing nourished by one's own reasoning and one's own feeling.

20. If neo-Pelagianism intoxicates us with the presumption of a salvation earned through our own efforts, the liturgical celebration purifies us, proclaiming the gratuity of the gift of salvation received in faith.

22. The continual rediscovery of the beauty of the Liturgy is not the search for a ritual aesthetic which is content by only a careful exterior observance of a rite or is satisfied by a scrupulous observance of the rubrics. Obviously, what I am saying here does not wish in any way to approve

the opposite attitude, which confuses simplicity with a careless banality, or what is essential with an ignorant superficiality, or the concreteness of ritual action with an exasperating practical functionalism.

23. Let us be clear here: every aspect of the celebration must be carefully tended to (space, time, gestures, words, objects, vestments, song, music...) and every rubric must be observed. Such attention would be enough to prevent robbing from the assembly what is owed to it; namely, the paschal mystery celebrated according to the ritual that the Church sets down. But even if the quality and the proper action of the celebration were guaranteed, that would not be enough to make our participation full.

26. Wonder is an essential part of the liturgical act because it is the way that those who know they are engaged in the particularity of symbolic gestures look at things. It is the marveling of those who experience the power of symbol, which does not consist in referring to some abstract concept but rather in containing and expressing in its very concreteness what it signifies.

31. It would be trivial to read the tensions, unfortunately present around the celebration, as a simple divergence between different tastes concerning a particular ritual form. The problematic is primarily ecclesiological. I do not see how it is possible to say that one recognizes the validity of the Council — though it amazes me that a Catholic might presume not to do so — and at the same time not accept the liturgical reform born out of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, a document that expresses the reality of the Liturgy intimately joined to the vision of Church so admirably described in *Lumen gentium*.

33. It is the community of Pentecost that is able to break the Bread in the certain knowledge that the Lord is alive, risen from the dead, present with his word, with his gestures, with the offering of His Body and His Blood.

36. Let us always remember that it is the Church, the Body of Christ, that is the celebrating subject and not just the priest. Obviously, to be able to lead their brothers and sisters, the ministers who preside in the assembly must know the way, know it from having studied it on the map of their theological studies but also from having frequented the liturgy in actual practice of an experience of living faith, nourished by prayer — and certainly not just as an obligation to be fulfilled.

39. Only the action of the Spirit can bring to completion our knowledge of the mystery of God, for the mystery of God is not a question of something grasped mentally but a relationship that touches all of life.

41. Rather, Liturgy is about praise, about rendering thanks for the Passover of the Son whose power reaches our lives. The celebration concerns the reality of our being docile to the action of the Spirit who operates through it until Christ be formed in us. (Cf. Gal 4:19) The full extent of our formation is our conformation to Christ. I repeat: it does not have to do with an abstract mental process, but with becoming Him.

43. The Liturgy gives glory to God because it allows us — here, on earth — to see God in the celebration of the mysteries, and in seeing Him to draw life from his Passover.

44. Every symbol is at the same time both powerful and fragile. If it is not respected, if it is not treated for what it is, it shatters, loses its force, becomes insignificant.

46. If created things are such a fundamental, essential part of the sacramental action that brings about our salvation, then we must arrange ourselves in their presence with a fresh, non-superficial regard, respectful and grateful. From the very beginning, created things contain the seed of the sanctifying grace of the sacraments.

48. The *ars celebrandi* cannot be reduced to only a rubrical mechanism, much less should it be thought of as imaginative — sometimes wild — creativity without rules.

54. In visiting Christian communities, I have noticed that their way of living the liturgical celebration is conditioned — for better or, unfortunately, for worse — by the way in which their pastor presides in the assembly. We could say that there are different “models” of presiding. Here is a possible list of approaches, which even though opposed to each other, characterize a way of presiding that is certainly inadequate: rigid austerity or an exasperating creativity, a spiritualizing mysticism or a practical functionalism, a rushed briskness or an overemphasized slowness, a sloppy carelessness or an excessive finickiness, a superabundant friendliness or priestly impassibility.

57. To preside at Eucharist is to be plunged into the furnace of God’s love. When we are given to understand this reality, or even just to intuit something of it, we certainly would no longer need a *Directory* that would impose the proper behavior.

60. The priest cannot recount the Last Supper to the Father without himself becoming a participant in it. He cannot say, “Take this, all of you and eat of it, for this is my Body which will be given up for you,” and not live the same desire to offer his own body, his own life, for the people entrusted to him.