

Twenty-Eighth Liturgical Symposium *Eucharistic Awareness Yesterday and Today* (Łąd on the Warta, October 17, 2014)

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On the feast day of St. Ignatius of Antioch, bishop and martyr, on October 17, 2014 the Twenty-Eighth Liturgical Symposium was held in the Major Seminary of the Society of St. Francis de Sales in Łąd on the Warta under the patronage of the Academic Society of St. Francis de Sales and Rev. Dr. Marek Chmielewski, SDM, inspector of the Pila province of the Salesians. The motto of this year's meeting was: *Eucharistic Awareness Yesterday and Today*.

The symposium gathered clergy and laypeople representing various academic centers, young priests, and seminarians representing four seminaries. Approximately seventy people took part in the symposium. The honorary guest of this year's symposium was Bishop Dr. Stefan Cichy, archbishop-emeritus of Legnica and member of the Committee on Divine Worship and Sacramental Discipline of the Polish Episcopal Conference, of which he was chairman for two terms (between 2001 and 2011).

The conference was inaugurated by Rev. Dr. Hab. Mariusz Chamarczuk, SDB, of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, rector of the Major Seminary of the Society of St. Francis de Sales in Łąd on the Warta, after which the organizer greeted all the guests, presented the speakers' academic accomplishments, and introduced the participants to the topic of the symposium. Rev. Dr. Hab. Andrzej Źądło, professor of the Silesian University in Katowice, spoke during the first session on *Wpływ uwarunkowań kulturowych na pobożność eucharystyczną* ("The Influence of Cultural Conditions on Eucharistic Devotion"), as did Prof. Dr. Hab. Helmut Sobeczko of the University of Opole on *Pełne, czynne i owocne uczestnictwo w Eucharystii* ("Full, Active, and Fruitful Participation in the Eucharist").

In his lecture, the first speaker summarized the development of Eucharistic devotion over the centuries. Initially, this devotion was expressed in respect for consecrated hosts. Starting in the fifth century, the consecrated Eucharist

was stored in tabernacles in sacristies and was used as a viaticum for dying persons. The speaker noted that the tabernacle became the link to the move towards public Eucharistic devotion in the universal Church. The turning point in its development was the Fourth Lateran Council, which spoke of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the consecrated host. The audience learned that the following positive and negative factors influenced the quality of Eucharistic devotion: the constantly changing mentality of the faithful, the situation of the Church, the understanding of the liturgy as *mysterium tremendum*, and the foundation of the feast of Corpus Christi in Belgium in the twelfth century. The last factor became nourishment for the immediate development of Eucharistic devotion in the universal Church. Theophoric processions, Eucharistic fraternities, adoration of Jesus present in the Sacred Sacrament, and Eucharistic congresses, all of which continue to flourish up to this day, were all introduced. The speaker concluded his presentation with the important statement that all Eucharistic devotions should be in accordance with the liturgy; that is, they should flow from it and lead to it.

The next speaker discussed the possibility of practically applying the directives of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the conciliar constitution on the liturgy, which encourages the faithful who participate in the liturgy to take part in it in a full, active, and fruitful way. In order for that to happen, priests' concern for the development of Eucharistic awareness beginning with terminology (awareness of Christ's individual presence in the Eucharist is slowly declining) is necessary, and priests should explain its meaning and be encouraged to experience it more deeply in the liturgy of the word. The priests who attended the lecture were encouraged to thank God for the many good things He constantly brings us along with the faithful. The preface to the liturgy, which is a valuable source of motifs of thanksgiving, could be helpful. An important element of pastoral influence on the faithful is the development of the awareness that the Eucharist that they participate in does not end with the priest's saying: "Go in peace," but lasts and should persist in their lives. This is tied to the development of a habitual capacity consisting of a permanent attitude of readiness for the radicalism of life in accordance with God's will and according to God's commandments. According to the speaker, the Eucharist, during which all the faithful offer their will along with the host on the paten, is helpful in this regard.

A discussion that gave the participants of the symposium an opportunity to discuss certain pastoral matters related to the celebration of the Eucharist

along with the awakening and reviving the Eucharistic mentality among the faithful was planned to follow the two lectures. Some of the topics that were brought up included: the use of audiovisual tools such as smartphones and tablets during the liturgy; unique situations resulting from the insufficient amount of one form of the Eucharist for the celebrants concelebrating the Holy Sacrifice; and Holy Communion given to infants in the Eastern Churches.

The central moment of the liturgical symposium was the concelebrated Eucharist led by His Excellency Bishop Dr. Stefan Cichy. The Eucharist was offered for the late Rev. Prof. Adam Durak, the initiator and organizer of the liturgical symposia in Łąd. The liturgy was graced by the singing of the seminary choir directed by Rev. Marcin Balawander, SDB.

The following papers were presented during the second session, which followed lunch: Rev. Dr. Janusz Nowiński, SDB, about *Teologia Eucharystii w sztuce sakralnej* ("Theology of the Eucharist in Religious Art"); Rev. Dr. Hab. Erwin Mateja of the University of Opole about *Teologiczna odnowa znaków w Eucharystii* ("Theological Renewal of Symbolism in the Eucharist"); Rev. Dr. Radosław Błaszczuk, SDB, on *Liturgia jako ars celebrandi* ("The Liturgy as Ars Celebrandi"); and Bishop Dr. Stefan Cichy on *Aktualne prace Komisji Liturgicznej przy Konferencji Episkopatu Polski* ("Ongoing Projects of the Liturgical Committee of the Polish Episcopal Conference"). In his presentation, the first speaker of the second session focused on the presentation of the theology of the Eucharist in religious art. He demonstrated to the audience that awareness of the sacredness of bread and wine rooted in the mentality of Christians starting with the first centuries presupposes respect given to the hosts consecrated during the Eucharist. This also results from the fact that in addition to the beauty of the art of religious structures devoted to the celebration of the liturgy, the beauty of the form of liturgical vessels was also emphasized across the centuries. The speaker presented the audience a series of photographs presenting liturgical vessels belonging to the category known as *vasa sacra*. They included: an ivory pyx from the fifth century held in the Berlin State Museums, a casket from the late fourth or early fifth century, and many others. The speaker used these examples to show that throughout Church history, liturgical vessels contained Christian typology reserved for *Corpus Christi*. He also noted that liturgical vessels often symbolized the Holy Sepulchre. According to the speaker, the motif of *dextera Dei* ("God's right hand"), which presents the Cross and thus indicates the offertory aspect of the aspect as well as the raising of Jesus Christ's hand ready to bless during

each Eucharist, were also worth noting. At the end of his lecture, the speaker presented the theological meaning of liturgical vessels used in the Major Seminary of the Society of St. Francis de Sales in Łąd on the Warta.

The second speaker during the second session focused on the presentation of the theological symbols present in the liturgy of the Eucharist after it was renewed by the Second Vatican Council. He noted that the topic proposed to him was very rich. Thus he treated it in a very fragmentary way. The lecture dealt with the need for Eucharistic formation not only among priests, but also among the faithful so that all the participants in the Eucharist would be aware of the mystery in which they take part. Thus it should be said that Christ exercises His priestly ministry through the liturgy and that it is in it that the Church becomes holy and the worship of God takes place in visible and invisible symbols. The speaker noted that the symbolism of the Eucharist pertains to these two dimensions. In the liturgy, everything is a sign, because it is in its nature the world of sacred symbols. The Second Vatican Council recommended the renewal of these signs, which throughout the centuries had ceased to be understood by people. The speaker presented the symbolic role of people celebrating the Eucharist, or the liturgical congregation, and among them people who have special functions, beginning with Christ, the main celebrant, up through the bishop, priest, and deacon. In the next part, he presented the symbolic significance of the place where the Eucharist is celebrated (the altar and the ambo) and their theological meaning. At the end of the paper, the speaker presented the theological meaning of some selected elements of the Mass, such as: the procession, the kissing of the altar, the sign of the cross, silence, the prayer of the faithful, and many others. The speaker encouraged the audience to explain these liturgical signs to the faithful and to be attentive that they are correct, so that the participation of the faithful is more active, aware, and fruitful.

The next speaker was Rev. Dr. Radosław Błaszczyk, SDB. In his presentation, he presented the topic of *Ars celebrandi*, or the art of celebration, which, as he noted, since the Second Vatican Council encompasses not only the celebrant, but also all the faithful participating in the liturgy. Thus the task of the priests is to make all who participate in the liturgy to do so in an active, conscious, and fruitful way, just as the conciliar constitution on the liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* spells out. The speaker did not elaborate on these topics, because they had already been discussed by those who preceded him. Next, the speaker presented the *ars praesidendi*, which is a part of the *ars celebrandi* and

only pertains to the celebrants. The negative attitudes of priests celebrating the liturgy of the Mass, which scandalize the faithful and even weaken their faith and relationship with the Church, were mentioned and presented. Next, the speaker presented the need for the celebrant to possess basic theological knowledge, which leads to specific behaviors and attitudes. Afterwards, he demonstrated to the speakers why it is important to celebrate the most important mystery of the faith that is the Eucharist in a correct and beautiful manner, as during the Eucharist every participant has the right to experience encounter with God and have a foretaste of the heavenly liturgy, which every Eucharist by its nature foreshadows and leads to.

The honorary guest of the symposium under discussion, Bishop Dr. Stefan Cichy, informed the participants of the current efforts of the Liturgical Committee of the Polish Episcopal Conference. Currently, their priority is the translation from Latin into Polish of the new edition of the Roman Missal that has been accepted by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. Presently, work on this has been accelerated. All that is left is to edit the formula of the ceremonial Masses as well as Masses for the deceased. Furthermore, the Liturgical Committee deals with editing other liturgical books, including the lectionary and the liturgy of the hours. The first volume of the lectionary is waiting to be accepted by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments for the second year. More volumes have also already been accepted by the Polish Episcopal Conference and have been sent to the congregation. With regards to the book of the liturgy of the hours, the second edition of the additional volume as well as the edited volume for summertime containing updated new liturgical feasts have been published. The second edition of the first volume has been published, while others have yet to be edited. Furthermore, the *Rite of Religious Profession* has been translated and sent to the congregation for acceptance. The *Book for the Ministries of Lector and Acolyte*, which has not yet appeared in Poland, will be published soon. Bishop Stefan Cichy reminded the participants of the guidelines published by the Polish Episcopal Conference regarding the Eucharist and encouraged them to put it into practice. Furthermore, the speaker familiarized the audience with two documents presently developed by the aforementioned committee: *Guidelines Regarding the Service of the Exorcist* as well as *Guidelines Concerning Mass Celebrated in Small Groups*. Furthermore, the text of the Christological litany has been translated. Another challenge facing the Liturgical Committee is the preparation of

texts for the Mass for the liturgical feast of St. John XXIII as well as the work *Martyrologium*.

The organizer of the Łąd Liturgical Symposium summed up the sessions. In his last presentation, he thanked all the speakers for helping the audience to become better acquainted with the proposed topic. He expressed words of recognition to all who had come to the symposium as well as to the hosts, who put much effort into preparing this undertaking. He also introduced next year's academic meeting, which will deal with the sacrament of reconciliation. We can hope that it will arouse as much interest among the clergy as among the faithful, for whom the liturgy is the most important moment of encounter with the invisible omnipotent God and His merciful love.