

# Tradition in Continuity

*Considerations for the Development of Catholic Sacred Architecture*



## The Transfiguration and the Wellspring of Worship | Posted on 22 March 2011

In a recent post, I noted that we should all read more about the depth of the meaning in the Liturgy. But of course there are limits as to how much our lives and hearts can truly be transformed through such ‘studying,’ vs. participation in the sacred mysteries themselves. And the transformation of our hearts, along with the glorification of God are the two interrelated ends of the liturgical celebration. See [Sacrosanctum Concilium Par. 10](#).

*Sacrosanctum Concilium, Par. 10.*

*The liturgy [is] the renewal in the Eucharist of the covenant between the Lord and man [and] draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ and sets them on fire. From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, as from a font, grace is poured forth upon us; and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God, to which all other activities of the Church are directed as toward their end, is achieved in the most efficacious possible way.*

The encounter with Christ in the Mass is personal and communal and must be lived and embraced – above and beyond our study of the content. Not in the absence of such study; to the contrary, such study and formation in the meaning of the sacred mysteries serves to deepen our lived experience of them. And I believe that as Catholics we are desperately in need of a deeper knowledge and appreciation for the meaning, beauty, and power of the Mass. But whenever we are reading what someone else has written about an experiential reality, we are clearly a few steps removed from that reality itself. At the same time we hope that such reading will draw us nearer.

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All that being said, I do remain a great lover of books, particularly those which open up for us new meaning with regard to the Faith. And along these lines, the richest work I know of that seeks to unfold the mystical reality of the Liturgy is [The Wellspring of Worship](#) by Fr. Jean Corbon, OP.

The book is a penetrating reflection on the font of grace – the life of the Holy Trinity – that resides at the center of every liturgical celebration. Here is the publisher’s summary:

*The Sacred Liturgy, declares Vatican II, is the font from which all the Church’s spiritual power flows. In his modern classic work The Wellspring of Worship, Fr. Jean Corbon explores the meaning of the Liturgy as the “wellspring” or source of the Church’s life and worship of God.*

*The Liturgy itself is a sharing in the mystery of the Triune God and in the Incarnation, Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus. Corbon writes that it is “the mystery of the river of life that streams from the Father and the Lamb”, into which believers are to be drawn. In this way, the divine river waters their entire lives, renewing and transforming them.*

*The Wellspring of Worship is a masterful reflection on the mystery of God’s Trinitarian life and how the Church’s members participate in that life through the Liturgy.*

I cannot recommend it highly enough – particularly if you are seeking to enter into the Mass in a deeper way, and to live the fruits of the Mass in your daily life.

I bring the book to your attention in order to share an excerpt about the Transfiguration – that being the [Gospel](#) read at Mass this past weekend. Fr. Corbon stresses the unity of the Body of Christ.

*Some people imagine that Christ, as a sacrament of human salvation, is “up there”; that the Church is another sacrament, “down here”; and, finally, that there are the sacraments of the Church, which are celebrated from time to time. This schema, I suspect, is one of the reasons for the divorce of liturgy from life. No, there is but a single body of Christ that is a great and unique sacrament. The wonderful truth that we must constantly rediscover is that the same Lord who allowed his three disciples to participate in his divinizing light, at a time when his body was still mortal, continues now, with an infinitely greater exercise of power, to divinize men in his very body, which is the Church.*

*... Since his Ascension the Lord has been pouring out the river of life – the Liturgy – on men in his body, which is the Church. That is the transfiguration continuing today. ... It is thanks to the kenosis [the outpouring self-gift] of the Holy Spirit in the Church that faith can spring to life in our very weakness, and our eyes can be opened so*

*that we may recognize the Lord, and be transformed into him. ...The Liturgy creates in the Church the transfiguration of the “whole body.” (pp 96-97)*

At my home parish – Immaculate Heart of Mary in Northglenn, Colorado - Father Peter Mussett offered a beautiful homily on Sunday in which he drew upon this strong connection between the Transfiguration and the mystery made manifest at each and every Mass. One phrase worth repeating: “When you pass through those doors, you are climbing Mt. Tabor.” Indeed.

We are called to truly experience God in his glory, to offer him praise and right worship, and to be conformed more closely to his own image and likeness as Christ’s Body here on earth.

22 March 2011 – Feast of St. Basil, Priest and Martyr