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VATICAN - WORDS OF DOCTRINE by Rev Nicola Bux and Rev Salvatore Vitiello - Two theories born of Biblicism

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - Some say the post-Council Mass is richer in Readings and Eucharistic Prayers, compared with the Pius V Missal poorer and less accurate. The theory is anachronistic since it fails to consider four centuries of distance; it is as if we were to say the same about Sacramentaries some centuries earlier than the sacramentary of Pius V. What is more there is a tendency to forget that the pericopes of the Pius V Missal were formed on the basis of old capitularies with epistles, such as St Jerome's Liber comitis– dated 471 - or with Gospel pericopes ; a tradition in common with the Church of the East, as the Byzantine liturgy still shows today. Secondly, the brief readings help memorise the essential and express the sobriety of the Roman Rite. Some even go as far as to say that in its exceptional form the Latin Rite gives too little emphasis to the presence of Christ in the Word, when the latter is proclaimed in the assembly; in this case the liturgy loses its very essence, the 'two tables' (in Dei Verbum n. 21 it would appear to be “one”) forming one act of worship!
It is said that the Missal of the Council of Trent moves in a vision far from the tradition of the Church Fathers; that the Missal was planned for the priest only, not for the participation of the assembly because the congregation is merely pleonastic. In fact it is said that the priest celebrates on his own and so does the congregation; they say the Mass of Paul VI is quite different because it is not the priest who celebrates but the Church present sacramentally in the assembly of which the priest, by reason of order, is the natural president.
This discourse in a problematic manner, reduces everything to Word and Assembly. However “Jesus is not just the teacher, but also the redeemer of the whole person. The Jesus who teaches is at the same time, Jesus who saves ” (J.Ratzinger-Benedict XVI, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 65) and this comes about effectively only through the Eucharistic Sacrament.
Another theory, widespread due to the customary phenomenon of substitution and exchanging one thing with another, is to equal the presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament with the presence of the Word in the Book of the Scriptures: this is true only “ when the holy scriptures are read in the Church” (Sacrosanctum Concilium n. 7). It is necessary to reaffirm that Christ's presence in the Word exists on two conditions: when it is read out “in the Church assembly ”, not privately, and when Sacred Scripture is 'read'. Therefore the holy book placed on the lecturn or the altar is not sufficient for this presence. (Cf. Words of Doctrine: “The presence of the Lord Jesus, precedes the liturgical assembly and remains after it”, 10/07/08).
To conclude, it is more than ever urgent for preaching and catechesis to return to making the proper distinction between Revelation, Word of God and Sacred Scripture which, although closely connected, are not equivalent. At times in fact, not without surprise, we see in this regard considerable confusion and not only among the lay faithful. Some even think that the Bible is to be interpreted with the Bible and not, as the Catholic Church has always held, with Tradition and faithful listening to the Magisterium. (Agenzia Fides 2/10/2008)

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