

Adoration is key attitude toward Eucharist, even at Mass, pope says

VATICAN CITY - Because Christ is truly present in the Eucharist, adoration must be a Catholic's primary attitude toward the Blessed Sacrament at Mass as well as when praying before the tabernacle, Pope Benedict XVI said.

"Our task is to perceive the very precious treasure of this ineffable mystery of faith both in the celebration of the Mass as well as during worship of the sacred species," the pope told members of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

Members of the congregation met the pope March 13 at the end of their plenary meeting, which was devoted to discussing ways to promote eucharistic adoration.

Pope Benedict said he hoped the meeting would result in the identification of "liturgical and pastoral means through which the church in our time could promote faith in the real presence of the Lord in the holy Eucharist and secure for the celebration of the holy Mass the entire dimension of adoration."

The Greek word for adoration includes the concept of submission, the pope said, while the Latin word "denotes physical contact, the kiss, the embrace that is implicit in the idea of love."

Together, he said, they highlight the fact that in adoring the Eucharist Catholics submit to and seek union with God who is love.

Pope Benedict told congregation members that especially during Lent with its emphasis on prayer, almsgiving and fasting, Catholics should be encouraged "to rediscover fasting and live it with renewed fervor, not only as an ascetic practice, but also as a preparation for the Eucharist."

Cardinal Antonio Canizares Llovera, the new prefect of the congregation, told Vatican Radio, "The liturgy is, first of all, adoration."

In the life of the church, "the Eucharist is the center of adoration; it is the

recognition of God, the recognition that everything comes from him," the cardinal said in an interview March 10.

"In this moment of strong secularization - when people tend to forget God, to maintain that he is not important in human life - it is necessary to reaffirm that adoration comes first, in other words, that God comes first," he said.

"The liturgy does not recount things that happened in the past, but is the manifestation today of God's salvation through Jesus Christ," Cardinal Canizares said.