

Synod participants praise Pope's document

WASHINGTON - Pope Benedict XVI's post-synodal exhortation on the Eucharist reminds Catholics that "the Eucharist is a mystery to be believed and to be celebrated and to be lived," said Washington Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl, one of four representatives of the U.S. bishops at the 2005 world Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist.

"He (the pope) tells us that we need to reflect on the Eucharist in terms of how we experience and live out the Eucharist in our lives," Archbishop Wuerl told the Catholic Standard, Washington archdiocesan newspaper, March 13. He made the comments shortly after the Vatican released the apostolic exhortation, "Sacramentum Caritatis" ("The Sacrament of Charity").

Archbishop Wuerl was bishop of Pittsburgh when he was elected to represent the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops at the synod on the Eucharist.

He was chosen as a relator, or recording secretary, for one of the 12 discussion groups. Later, he was elected to serve on a council that prepared the draft text of the exhortation.

The other U.S. delegates were Bishop William S. Skylstad of Spokane, Wash., USCCB president; Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia; and Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Atlanta.

Bishop Skylstad said in a March 13 statement that the apostolic exhortation reflected "the authentic mind of the bishops" who attended the synod.

With the document, Pope Benedict shows “how the Eucharist is the source and summit of the church’s life in its relation to the other sacraments, especially the sacrament of holy orders and the sacrament of matrimony,” Bishop Skylstad added.

“By implementing the wise guidance of the synod and of the Holy Father, our eucharistic liturgies will not only be celebrated in a way that is beneficial to all who participate, but will also give glory and praise to the Father in Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit,” he added.

Archbishop Wuerl said that “Sacramentum Caritatis” “reminds us the bishop is the one who has a special responsibility to see that the celebration of the Eucharist is done in a beautiful, reverent manner that is faithful to the church.”

The faithful must live lives that show they believe in the Eucharist and celebrate the Eucharist, he said.

“Our eucharistic life, our spiritual life, our Christian life should be reflected in our daily life,” Archbishop Wuerl said. “Sacramentum Caritatis” teaches that “you can’t have a spiritual life cut off from daily life,” he added. “We must live out the Eucharist in a way that begins to transform ourselves and the world around us.”