

# Society of St. Catherine of Siena

## *Ecclesia de Eucharistia Vivit* Research Project to be Undertaken in the Years 2004–2007

The Church lives from the Eucharist.<sup>1</sup> The Holy Father's announcement that the Synod of Bishops to be held in October 2005 will reflect on the Eucharist follows from his recent Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*. Already the Society has organised an international colloquium on this Encyclical, held at Heythrop College in early February 2004, with participants from many European institutions and from North America. This in turn builds upon the fidelity to the Eucharist which the Society has always sought to promote, beginning with the Conference in Cambridge in 2002 *Ite Missa Est: Transubstantiation and Living Eucharist*.

As part of our mission to promote the intellectual apostolate, and of supportive co-operation with the Hierarchy, we propose a three-year research project on the Holy Eucharist, the fruits of which will be made available to the Bishops of England and Wales as a gift, and as a sign of the vitality of theological life in these countries.

We propose a two-stepped research project, arising out of our initial colloquium. The first step will be an examination of the Eucharist with special reference to England and Wales, the fruits of which will be compiled into a research report and presented to the Bishops of English and Welsh dioceses who will attend the Synod. The second step will be the development of that report in response to the Apostolic Exhortation which the Holy Father will publish after the Synod, with final versions of the various contributions, and made available for publication, we would hope, by a reputable theological press. In addition it is hoped that the extension of the colloquium until 2007 will result in a variety of further studies on various aspects of the Eucharist and the Sacred Liturgy of the Church: theological, philosophical, historical, æsthetic, musicological, pastoral, and œcumenical.

The colloquium will take as its point of departure the statement of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*): "Attamen liturgia est culmen ad quod actio ecclesiæ tendit et simul fons unde omnis eius virtus emanat".<sup>2</sup> It will seek to examine by study in whatever appropriate areas, how and to what extent this is true with particular reference to the situation in England and Wales. It will also attend to how the desire of the Council has been carried out, that this truth be effected "ad nostræ ætatis necessitates melius accomodare" under the various disciplinary

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<sup>1</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, §1 "the Church lives from the Eucharist".

<sup>2</sup> Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, §10 "at one and the same, the Liturgy is the pinnacle towards which the activity of the Church is directed, and the source from which all its strength emanates".

headings above.<sup>3</sup> The project will keep in view the reflections of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger on the sacred liturgy, that thought be given and a means be found, “daß die maßlose Übersteigerung des Subjekts überwunden und wieder erkannt wird, daß gerade die Beziehung auf den am Anfang stehenden Logos auch das Subjekt, nämlich die Person, rettet und sie zugleich in die wahre Beziehung der Gemeinschaft hineinversetzt, die letztlich in der trinitarischen Liebe gründet”.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, §1 “better to accommodate the requirements of our times”.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Der Geist der Liturgie: eine Einführung*, Freiburg, Herder, 2000, p. 133 f. “to overcome the boundless superiority of the [philosophical] subject and to recognise once more that a relationship with the Logos, who is from the beginning, saves the subject, that is the person, and at the same time puts us into a true relation of communality which is ultimately grounded in the Trinitarian life”.