

THE CENTRALITY OF THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

AT CHRISTENDOM COLLEGE

The Church teaches that the Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life”¹ and that the celebration of the Mass “is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the Church can equal its efficacy.”² That is why “as a natural expression of the Catholic identity of the University . . . members of this community . . . will be encouraged to participate in the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, as the most perfect act of community worship.”³ Those central truths are taught and lived at Christendom College, a “Catholic coeducational college institutionally committed to the Magisterium”⁴ of the Church, in the following ways:

The Celebration of the Sacred Liturgy

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

- Mass is offered frequently: three times on Monday, twice daily Tuesday through Friday, twice on Saturday, and once on Sunday (the day on which we gather as one family).
- Mass in the Roman Rite is celebrated in all the ways offered by the Church: in the Ordinary Form in both English and Latin, and in the Extraordinary Form from one to three times per week, as circumstances permit.
- The Ordinary Form of the Mass is celebrated with the solemnity appropriate to each feast, utilizing worthy sacred vessels and vestments, and drawing upon the Church’s rich tradition of chant, polyphony, and hymnody.
- The Ordinary Form of the Mass is celebrated reverently and with rubrical fidelity.
- No classes or other activities are scheduled during Mass times.
- The majority of the College community attends daily Mass regularly and with great devotion.

In order to facilitate the proper disposition for the worthy reception of Holy Communion, the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation is offered three times daily Monday through Thursday; twice daily Friday and Saturday; and once on Sunday.

If a student is ill and unable to attend Mass, but requests Holy Communion, one of the college chaplains will provide Holy Communion according to the Rite of Pastoral Care of the Sick.

Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament

- The daily celebration of the Eucharist is complemented by regular exposition and adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament.
- Eucharistic exposition and adoration is celebrated daily Monday through Thursday when school is in session.
- A First Friday Holy Hour followed by all-night exposition and adoration occurs each month when school is in session.

¹Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, Second Vatican Council, 11.

²Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sancrosanctam Consilium*, Second Vatican Council, 7.

³Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, St. John Paul II, 39.

⁴Christendom College Mission Statement.

- A campus prayer group sponsors a monthly Holy Hour with exposition, meditative prayer, sacred song, and Benediction.
- There is an annual celebration of Forty Hours of continuous exposition and adoration.
- The annual celebration of the Solemnity of Christ the King, the patronal feast of our chapel, includes a procession of the Most Blessed Sacrament following Mass.

Christendom College is a fruit of the Second Vatican Council and has always recognized the centrality of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in Catholic life. The College, from its founding, has always striven to provide for its students a reverent and elevated liturgy in keeping with the mind of the Church and the teachings of the Second Vatican Council's document on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Consilium*.

Following up the construction of Christ the King Chapel, there has been an ever greater emphasis upon the beauty of the Sacred Liturgy. With respect to the role of *musica sacra* in the celebration of the Mass, there is special emphasis on preserving the Latin patrimony of plainchant and polyphony especially for the celebration of the Lord's Day.

The College's commitment to the beauty of the Eucharistic liturgy is clearly referenced in our Vision Statement (see in particular the section on *Musica Sacra*). One solemn and beautifully celebrated Mass on Sunday is intended to bring together the entire College community in a special way on the Lord's Day, the *dies Domini*, in order to foster the growth of each of its members in faith, hope, and charity (see the selection from the Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* of Pope Saint John Paul II cited at the end of this section).

The College has always sought to be an example of the authentic implementation of the Second Vatican Council and has always sought to be in full communion with the bishops of the Diocese of Arlington. In a particular way, the College recalls the late Bishop John Keating's *A Pastoral Letter on Reverence for the Eucharist* (<https://www.ewtn.com/library/BISHOPS/KEATEUCH.HTM>), promulgated on December 4, 1988, which advocates a reform of the reform in keeping with the true teaching of the Second Vatican Council. Over its forty year history, the College has always had an important role to play in bearing witness to the mind of the Church not least with respect to the reverent celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI's *motu proprio* of July 7, 2007, *Summorum Pontificum*, which allows all priests of the Roman Rite freely to celebrate the *usus antiquior* according to the Missal of St. John XXIII of 1962, now designated as Mass in the *Extraordinary Form*, has rightly been a cause for rejoicing for many of the faithful, both in the Church at large and at Christendom College.

All the same, it is important to recall that Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI himself, following the example of Pope St. John Paul II, continued to celebrate the public papal Masses in St. Peter's Basilica according to the Missal of 1970 of Blessed Paul VI, now designated as Mass in the *Ordinary Form*. Pope Emeritus Benedict understood the papal celebrations of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the Ordinary Form to set an example for the entire Church with respect to the Mass's reverent celebration, and Christendom College remains faithful to this understanding of things relative to its corporate celebration of the Holy Sacrifice.

Accordingly, as a matter of policy, the College will continue to follow the example of Pope Saint John Paul II, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis by opting for the Ordinary Form as the

primary manner of celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at Christendom College. Cognizant also, however, of Pope Emeritus Benedict's desire that the Extraordinary Form of the Mass also be celebrated freely and made available to the faithful, the chaplaincy of the College arranges for the celebration of Low Mass in the Extraordinary Form at least once during the week, and up to three times during the week, according to the availability of chaplains who are able to celebrate the *usus antiquior* with the full competence that reverence for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass requires. If at all possible, furthermore, the chaplaincy arranges for a Sunday *Missa Cantata* in the Extraordinary Form once each semester.

Visiting priests in good standing are welcome both as celebrants and as concelebrants at any of the College's public Masses in the Ordinary Form. Such priests are also welcome to celebrate Mass privately according to either Form of the Mass. The latter can be done either in the Chapel of Christ the King, outside of the hours of Mass and Eucharistic Adoration, or in Padre Pio Hall, the chaplains' residence. The chaplaincy arranges for servers for visiting priests who desire to celebrate Mass privately in the Extraordinary Form.

In these ways, then, the College seeks to integrate into its corporate life the celebration of Mass in the Extraordinary Form. All the same, in its own corporate celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, both daily and in particular on Sunday, the Day of the Lord, the College and its chaplaincy both remain committed primarily to the solemn celebration of the Mass in the Ordinary Form, both in fidelity to the practice of Pope Saint John Paul II, Pope Emeritus Benedict, and Pope Francis, and in accordance with the desire of our local ordinary, Michael Burbidge, the Bishop of the Diocese of Arlington.