

Liturgy Official Backs Return of Feast to Thursday

Notes Desire That Christians Proclaim Christ's Presence

VATICAN CITY, JUNE 28, 2011



The prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments says he thinks the feast of Corpus Christi should be returned to its traditional Thursday celebration, to better highlight the link with Holy Thursday and show how Christ is the centre of everything.

Cardinal Antonio Cañizares Llovera spoke to Vatican Radio about the feast, celebrated in many countries last Sunday, but traditionally marked on the Thursday before, as it still is in Rome.

"I think that to exalt the feast of Corpus Christi on its own, separate from Sunday, would be a very joyful and very hopeful reality, which would mean saying to all people in mid week that Christ is truly the centre of everything," he said.

Corpus Christi is lived as an obligatory day to attend Mass in countries where it is celebrated on Thursday, such as Mexico.

In countries where the feast is moved to the Sunday following, the celebration is combined with normal weekend Masses.

Shining more than the sun



Cardinal Canizares proposed that if the feast is lived intensely, even if on Sunday, the time will not be far off when "Corpus Christi will be celebrated again on Thursday, as it was historically, which evokes, in some way, Maundy (Holy) Thursday."

The 65-year-old Spanish cardinal also referred to an adage that reflects the popular tradition in Spain of celebrating the feast of the Eucharist: "There are three Thursdays in the year that shine more than the sun: Corpus Christi, Maundy Thursday and Ascension Thursday."

In the majority of Spanish cities today the feast of Corpus Christi is celebrated on Sunday; the preceding Thursday is a working day.

However, some local churches, such as Toledo, Seville and Granada celebrated the feast on Thursday.



"My personal wish has been for a long time that we return to Corpus Christi Thursday," said the former archbishop of Toledo and primate of Spain.

For the cardinal, this feast means "to recognize that God is here." To go out in procession through the streets with the Most Holy Sacrament is an invitation to adore the Lord, a public confession of faith in him and an acknowledgment that to go "with the Lord is what truly matters for the renewal and transformation of society."

"It is a day of very great joy, especially in Spain," he recalled. The cardinal noted his hope that all Christians would proclaim "that Christ is present in the Eucharist, that Christ is with us." (Zenit)

