



Nine Mini-Points on Co-Responsibility and Devotions (Called & Co-Responsible: Summer Seminars for Church Life Renewal, June 24, 2020)

1. Why talk about “Co-responsibility” and “Devotions” together? Devotions are a domain of Catholic life that has been, is now, and can be in the future, a domain of lay leadership, especially insofar as it can be a domain of evangelization.
2. This is because the domain of devotions is one which can be especially suited for exercising the vocation of the baptismal priesthood *to declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light* (1 Pet. 2.9).
 - a. “Through the sacraments of Christian initiation, the faithful become part of the Church, a prophetic, priestly and royal people called to worship God in spirit and in truth (cf. John 4, 23). The Church exercises this task through Christ in the Holy Spirit, not only in the Sacred Liturgy, especially in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, but also in other forms of the Christian life, among which are numbered the various forms of popular piety. ... On this priestly basis, popular piety assists the faithful in persevering in prayer and in praising God the Father, in witnessing to Christ (cf. Acts 2, 42-47), and in sustaining their vigilance until He comes again in glory” (Congregation for Divine Worship, *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, 2001 (available at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20020513_vers-direttorio_en.html), Prefatory Letter of JP II, #5).
3. “The Eucharist is ‘the source and summit of the Christian life’ (*Lumen Gentium* 11). “The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch’ (*Presbyterorum Ordinis* 5)” (CCC #1324).
4. The proper relationship between the Eucharistic liturgy and other devotions (so-called “popular devotions”) flows from this principle, correctly understood.
 - a. “The correct relationship between these two expressions of faith must be based on certain firm principles, the first of which recognizes that the Liturgy is the centre of the Church’s life and cannot be substituted by, or placed on a par with, any other form of religious expression. Moreover, it is important to reaffirm that popular religiosity, even if not always evident, naturally culminates in the celebration of the Liturgy towards which it should ideally be oriented. This should be made clear through suitable catechesis” (*Directory on Popular Piety*, #85).

5. We can tend to forget that the Eucharist itself includes a devotional element.
 - a. Note Thomas's hymn, *Adoro te devote* and the related hymn and verse, "O Sacrament Most Holy" (see Texts 1 & 2 below).
6. This means, in part, that participation in the devotional life of the Church can be a "lower stakes" way of participating in the Eucharistic life than actually receiving the Eucharist for those, who for some reason, cannot or feel that they cannot (example: the public veneration of the relics of the martyrs).
7. The seeming dichotomy between "devotions" or the "devotional life" and embracing the apostolic action of Catholic Social Teaching is a false dichotomy and a false choice.
8. This is because all devotion flows from and is ordered to Eucharistic devotion and "the Eucharist commits us to the poor" (CCC #1397).
9. Adoration of the Eucharist, Eucharistic devotion, is devotion to the mystery of the greatest disvestment imaginable, the Incarnation, Passion and Death of the Lord: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though **He was rich**, yet for your sakes **He became poor**, that you through His poverty might **become rich**," (2 Cor. 8.9).
 - a. The whole of Catholic life is thus seamlessly devotional and Eucharistic and enliven and are nourished by our embrace of the preferential option for the poor.
 - b. Examples abound. One that comes to mind: devotion to Mary, Mother of the Church, as decreed by Pope Francis, in May, 2018. An excerpt from the decree is attached below as Text 3.

Text 1: Adoro Te Devote

I adore you devoutly,
 Godhead unseen,
 who truly lies hidden under these sacramental forms.
 My soul surrenders itself to you without reserve,
 for in contemplating you it is completely overwhelmed.

Sight, touch, and taste
 are no guide in finding you,
 and only hearing is a sure guide for our faith.
 I believe everything that the Son of God has said,
 and nothing can be truer than this Word of the truth.

Only the Godhead was hidden on the Cross,
 but here the humanity is hidden as well.
 Yet I believe and acknowledge them both
 and make the same request as did the repentant thief.
 I do not see the marks of the wounds, as Thomas did,
 and yet I, too, own you as "My God."

Grant that I believe in you more and more,
that I put my hope in you and that I love you.
Living Bread, that ever recalls the Lord's death
and gives life to his servants,
grant to my soul to live by you
and always to taste your sweetness.

Lord Jesus, loving Pelican of heaven,
cleans me, a sinner, with your Blood;
for a single drop can save the whole world from all its sin.
Jesus, as I look on your veiled presence,
I pray that what I long for so ardently may come about,
and that I may see your face unveiled and be happy in the vision of your glory.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) Prayer taken from Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers,
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Text 2:

O Sacrament Most Holy!
O Sacrament Divine!
All Praise and All Thanksgiving
Be Every Moment Thine!

Text 3:

...the Mother standing beneath the cross (cf. Jn 19:25), accepted her Son's testament of love and welcomed all people in the person of the beloved disciple as sons and daughters to be reborn unto life eternal. She thus became the tender Mother of the Church which Christ begot on the cross handing on the Spirit. ...

This celebration will help us to remember that growth in the Christian life must be anchored to the Mystery of the Cross, to the oblation of Christ in the Eucharistic Banquet and to the Mother of the Redeemer and Mother of the Redeemed, the Virgin who makes her offering to God.

From the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 11
February 2018, the memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Lourdes.