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On the Solemnity of the Apostles Peter and Paul (29 June 2022), Pope Francis published the Apostolic Letter *Desiderio desideravi* on the liturgical formation of the people of God. It is a text addressed to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons, consecrated persons and lay faithful.

It is a document that brings together and reworks in an original way the Propositions that resulted from the Plenary Session of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (12-15 February 2019) on the same theme.

This *Letter* follows the one addressed solely to bishops on the occasion of the publication of the Motu Proprio *Traditionis custodes*, the purpose of which was to continue “in the constant search for ecclesial communion”, based on the unique expression of the *lex orandi* of the Roman Rite as expressed in the books of liturgical reform desired by Vatican Council II.

The tone of the document is not that of an instruction or a directive: it is, rather, a text of meditation, with a vivid biblical, patristic and liturgical imprint, which offers many motivations for understanding the beauty of the truth of the liturgical celebration. This gave rise to and strengthened communion lived in fraternal charity, which is the first and most effective witness to the Gospel. Pope Francis writes (no. 37): “A celebration that does not evangelize is not authentic, just as a proclamation that does not lead to an encounter with the risen Lord in the celebration is not authentic. And then both of these, without the testimony of charity, are like sounding a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. (1 Cor 13: 1)”.

Several times the Holy Father states that he does not have the intention of dealing exhaustively with the questions under consideration: nevertheless, many insights are offered on the theological meaning of the liturgy, on the need for a serious and vital liturgical formation of all the people of God, and on the formative importance of an *ars celebrandi* that concerns not only those who preside.

The text warns against the pitfalls of individualism and subjectivism (which yet again recall Pelagianism and agnosticism), as well as abstract spiritualism: we are required to recover the capacity – fundamental for the liturgy – for action and symbolic comprehension.

Faced with Jesus' burning desire (*Desiderio desideravi*, Lk 22:15) to make us partakers of his body and blood, we cannot but accept the Holy Father's invitation to all God's people: "Let us abandon our polemics to listen together to what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Let us safeguard our communion. Let us continue to be astonished at the beauty of the Liturgy. The Paschal Mystery has been given to us. Let us allow ourselves to be embraced by the desire that the Lord continues to have to eat His Passover with us" (no. 65).
