

M A S S

M A S S
A P R I M E R



Dozenal numeration is a system of thinking of numbers in twelves, rather than tens. Twelve is much more versatile, having four even divisors—2, 3, 4, and 6—as opposed to only two for ten. This means that such hatefulness as “0.333 . . .” for $\frac{1}{3}$ and “0.1666 . . .” for $\frac{1}{6}$ are things of the past, replaced by easy “o;4” (four twelfths) and “o;2” (two twelfths).

In dozenal, counting goes “one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, elv, dozen; dozen one, dozen two, dozen three, dozen four, dozen five, dozen six, dozen seven, dozen eight, dozen nine, dozen ten, dozen elv, two dozen, two dozen one . . .” It’s written as such: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 17, 18, 20, 21 . . .

Dozenal counting is at once much more efficient and much easier than decimal counting, and takes only a little bit of time to get used to. Further information can be had from the dozenal societies (<http://www.dozenal.org>), as well as in many other places on the Internet.



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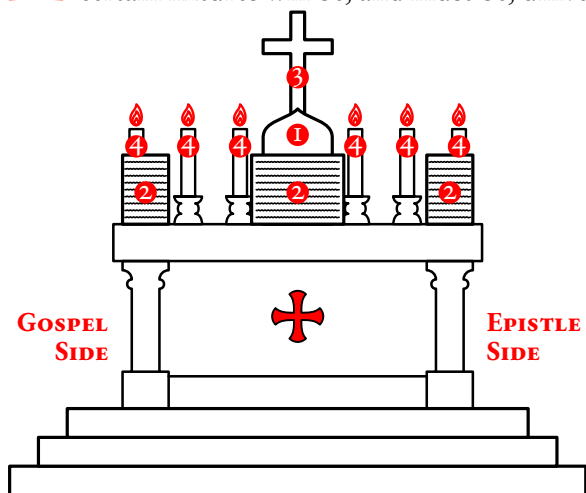
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THE CHURCH AND ITS FURNITURE

A CATHOLIC CHURCH WILL VARY somewhat from place to place, but certain fixtures will be, and must be, universal.

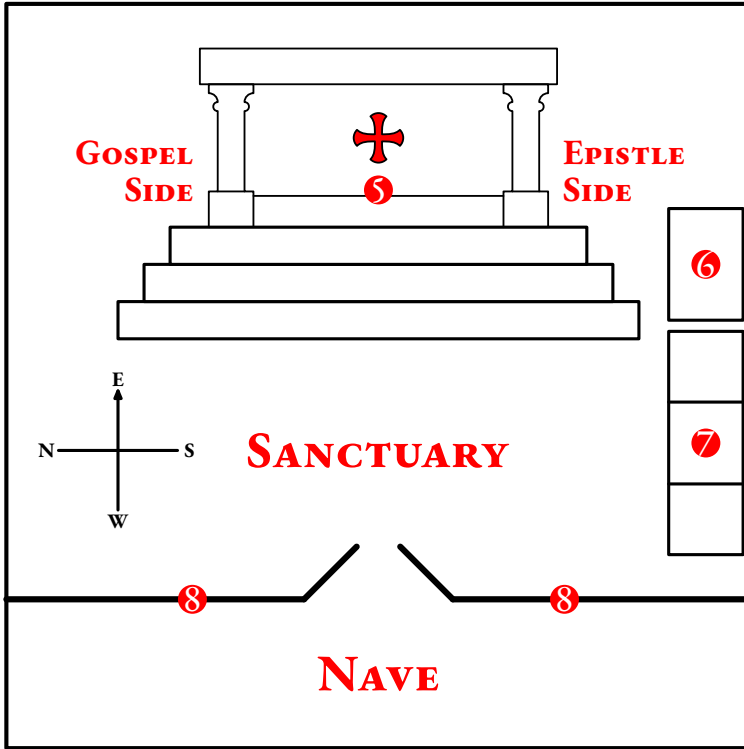


Always, of course, there is an **ALTAR**, on which the Sacrifice is offered. There may, in fact, be many Altars in a church; but there will always be a **HIGH ALTAR**, the main and central Altar of the church, which will be elevated (typically on three steps) in the sanctuary. This is because the Altar is a mys-

tical Mount Calvary, where Christ will renew His death for us; it is fitting that we must climb to it, as He once climbed with His Cross. The Altar should be made of stone, if at all possible; if of wood, then there should be at least a stone placed on it, on which the Sacrifice will be offered, and which should contain the relics of saints, especially martyrs. If even this is impossible, often a cloth with some relics sewn into it will be placed upon it. This derives from the practice, in the catacombs during persecutions, of celebrating Mass using the coffins of the martyrs as the Altar. The Altar must contain six high candlesticks (4) and a crucifix (3).

The Altar also contains a **TABERNACLE** (1) in most parish churches, which holds the Blessed Sacrament when Mass is not occurring. This must be veiled, in the same color as the Mass of the day. It also contains three **ALTAR-CARDS** (2), which contains some of the prayers which the priest must say. These are typically very beautifully typeset.

A simple diagram of a normal parish church is depicted in Figure 1 on page 2. The church, as a whole, should point toward the East; that is, the Altar (5) should be so situated that Mass takes place facing the East. When

Figure 1: *Plan of a Small Church*

this is not physically possible, we say that we are facing *liturgical east*, as the symbolism of this is very important. The East is the direction of the sunrise; just as the sun rises in the East to give physical light to the world, so the Son rises on the Cross (as happens in an unbloody way at every Mass) to give spiritual light to the world. To show this, we always face the East when we are offering the Sacrifice.

The left, or northern, side is the **GOSPEL SIDE**, because the Gospel is read on that side; and the right, or southern, side is the **EPISTLE SIDE**, because the Epistle is read there. The North symbolizes the unsaved regions of darkness, cold, and barbarity; hence, the Gospel is always read facing to the North, to remind us that we are always preaching to those who have

not yet heard. The South represents the regions of warmth and sunlight, which have received the Light; hence the Epistle is read on that side, facing directly East, and all the accoutrements needed for Mass (the Credence Table, the incense, and so forth) are kept on that side.

On the Epistle side there is a **CREDENCE TABLE** (6) holding several vessels. Namely, the **CRUETS**, one for water and one for wine, which will be used for the Sacrifice; a small dish for the *Lavabo* (glass for a priest, silver for a bishop); the acolytes' candles when they are not being used; and, at High Mass, the veiled Chalice until it is set up on the Altar at the end of the Mass of the Catechumens.



There is also the **SEDILIA** (7), a bench containing three seats; the center is for the priest, to his right one for the deacon, and to his left one for the subdeacon. The ministers sit here at certain points of the Mass.

The Altar itself is also vested with **ALTAR-CLOTHS** or *alter linens*. The custom of using at least one Altar-cloth goes back to the very primitive Church; the use of three goes back over a thousand years. The two lower cloths must cover the whole of the top of the Altar, both length and width; sometimes a single whole cloth, folded from Epistle to Gospel end, is used. The top cloth must be separate, and must cover the entirety of the top of the altar and hang down, on both sides, to the floor.

New permanent Altars must be consecrated by a bishop in a special ceremony. New Altar-cloths must also be consecrated for that purpose by the bishop, or one to whom he has given the faculty to do so.

Each church will have a **NAVE**, where the people stay for Mass and other services, and a **SANCTUARY**, where the Sacred Mysteries unfold. The two should be separated by an **ALTAR RAIL** (8), which is also where the people will kneel for Communion, along with Confirmation and other blessings (such as the blessing of the throats on St. Blaise's day). A particularly large church may also have a **CHOIR**, where the clergy and male singers for the Mass will sit; this will be in the Sanctuary, just beyond the Altar Rail. Traditionally, women are *not* permitted to enter the Sanctuary, except for two occasions: a bride during her Nuptial Mass, and a woman taking religious vows.

VESTMENTS FOR THE MASS

BEFORE BEGINNING TO VEST for Mass, the priest is wearing his **CASSOCK**, a long, black robe without other color, typically in the “Roman collar”. He will then begin vesting for Mass.



The **AMICE** is a piece of white linen which is wrapped around the shoulders and upper torso. *History:* A covering or hood for the head when outdoors. When indoors, it was lowered over the shoulders; now, it is worn exclusively in this way. *Relation to Christ:* Recalls the cloth with which He was blindfolded and mocked. *Meaning to Us:* Touched to the head to protect us against idle or evil thoughts at Mass; tucked around the neck to restrain the use of the tongue before and after Mass. Recalls the “helmet of salvation”

(Eph 6:17). *Prayer While Vesting:* Place, O Lord, the helmet of salvation on my head to resist the attacks of the devil.



The **ALB** is a full, flowing robe of white linen reaching to the feet and covering the entire body. *History:* “Alb” is from the Latin word for “white”. It is to this day an ordinary outer garment in parts of the Near East and other warm climates. It was also a full-sleeved white tunic worn by those having any dignity or authority in ancient Rome. *Relation to Christ:* Herod placed the garment of a fool around Jesus, making Him the sport of his indecent court. *Meaning to Us:* Symbolizes the darkness being changed into the Light of Jesus. *Prayer*

While Vesting: Make me white, O Lord, and purify my heart, so that being made white in the Blood of the Lamb, I may deserve an eternal reward.



The **CINCTURE** is a cord made of silk, linen, or cotton, with tassels at the ends. *History:* Used to gird up the long, loose-flowing Alb, so as not to interfere with walking or working. *Relation to Christ:* Symbolizes the cord that bound Jesus to the pillar when he was being scourged. *Meaning to Us:* A symbol of girding ourselves for hard service, keeping the passions in check; it binds us to purity and spiritual strength. *Prayer While Vesting:* Gird me, O Lord, with the cincture of purity and extinguish in my heart the fire of concupiscence, so that, the virtue of continence and chastity always abiding in my heart, I may the better serve Thee.



The **MANIPLE** is a band of cloth, of the same material and color as the Stole and Chasuble, worn on the left arm; it is about four inches wide and thirty inches long. *History:* It is customary in hot climates to wear such a cloth on the arm to wipe away both dust and perspiration; also its folds were used as a purse. Also it is a garment of service, like the towel worn on a waiter's arm, and the towel worn by Christ when He washed His disciples' feet (Jo 13:4). *Relation to Christ:* Recalls the manacles with which the Hands of Jesus were bound; also the rope by which He was led away to death. *Meaning to Us:* The word "maniple" comes from two Latin words, *manus plena*, meaning "full hand". Hence it symbolizes a hand full of patient work and service, which are precious things to earn the reward of salvation. Suggests also wiping off all sloth or fear of labor from the mind and the heart. *Prayer While Vesting:* May I deserve, O Lord, to carry this maniple of sorrow and penance, so that I may one day enjoy the reward of all my labors.



The **STOLE** is a long strip of cloth about three or four inches wide and seven or eight feet long; it is of the same material and color as the Maniple and Chasuble. It is worn around the neck, across the shoulders and crossed over the breast, fastened in place with the Cincture. A deacon wears it over his left shoulder and across his breast, fastening the ends beside his right leg. *History:* A scarf or neck-piece; later, a badge of honor for those enjoying any dignity, or a distinctive mark of duty for those exercising authority. *Relation to Christ:*

Reminds us of the cross of Christ resting and carried on His Shoulders.

Meaning to Us: Covering the neck, shoulders, and breast, naturally it reminds us of the daily dignity and duty of working joyously and zealously for the cause of Christ while keeping our immortality in mind.

Prayer While Vesting: Restore unto me, O Lord, the Stole of immortality which I lose through the sin of my first parents and, although unworthy to approach Thy sacred Mystery, may I nevertheless attain to joy eternal.

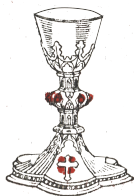


The **CHASUBLE** is an outer garment, covering nearly all the other vestments in the back and front, with a large cross on its back. *History:* A practical outdoor garment of protection against the weather. Called “chasuble” from the Latin word *casula*, meaning a “little house”. *Relation to Christ:* Recalls the seamless garment of Christ, believed to have been woven by Mary. On Calvary, the soldiers cast dice for it. *Meaning to Us:* Symbolizes the yoke of His commandments, made possible by love for Christ. *Prayer While Vest-*

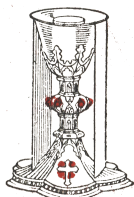
ing: O Lord, Who hast said, “My yoke is sweet and My burden light,” grant that I may so carry it as to merit Thy grace.

THE CHALICE AND ITS VESTMENTS

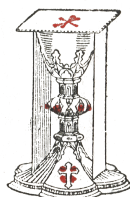
JUST AS WE make sure that the priest is properly vested before embarking on offering the Sacrifice to the Father, so also we must prepare and vest the vessels we use for that Sacrifice.



The **CHALICE** should be the finest vessel in the church; it should be made of gold or silver, but the inside, which will hold the Blood of Christ, must at least be lined with gold. The Chalice holds the Blood of Christ, and is thus so sacred that traditionally only consecrated hands—that is, the hands of a deacon, priest, or bishop—are permitted to touch it. Frequently, however, lay ministers such as sacristans are permitted to do so in limited circumstances. A new Chalice cannot be used at Mass until consecrated for that use by a bishop.



The **PATEN** is the dish which holds the Body of Christ, and is, like the Chalice, sacred for that reason. So sacred, indeed, that only subdeacons, deacons, priests, and bishops are traditionally permitted to touch it. Like the Chalice, it must be made of gold or silver; and if of silver, the surface on which the Host rests must be at least gold plated. The **PURIFICATOR** is a cloth made of linen which is used for cleaning and drying the Chalice, as well as the fingers and mouth of the priest. The purificator is folded and laid over the top of the Chalice as shown, and the Paten placed on top.



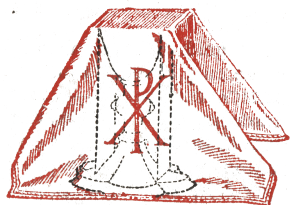
The **PALL**, or cover, is a piece of cardboard covered on both sides with linen, about six inches square. It is placed on top of the Chalice from time to time at Mass, to prevent anything from falling into the Precious Blood. After the Consecration, the priest genuflects when removing or replacing it as a sign of his worship of the Precious Blood, which it protects. When vesting the Chalice, it is placed on top of the Paten.



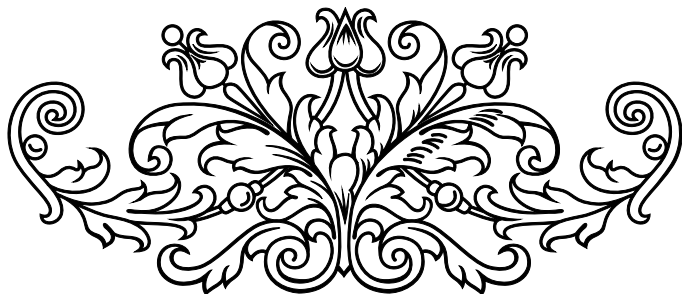
The **CORPORAL** is a cloth, linen like the others, about fifteen inches square. It is named from the Latin word *corpus*, which means “body”, because the Body of Christ rests on it from time to time at the Mass. It often has a small cross on one side, to designate the side which will face the priest.



The **BURSE** is a square pocket made of two pieces of cardboard, typically covered in linen. It is the liturgical color of the day, and is designed to hold the Corporal when the Chalice is being carried to and from the altar. When vesting the Chalice, the Corporal is placed in the Burse, which is then placed on top of the Chalice, which itself is veiled. When the Corporal is laid on the altar, the Burse is placed behind it until it is needed again.



The **CHALICE VEIL** reminds us that Christ is so holy, so sacred, and so pure that even the vessels that hold Him must be venerated and veiled, like holy things. The Chalice Veil will be the liturgical color of the day, with the Burse (containing the Corporal) on top of it when it is being carried to and from the altar. The Chalice is set up, veiled, on the Corporal at the center of the altar in preparation for Low Mass; it is kept on the Credence Table until the beginning of the Mass of the Faithful, at which point it is moved to the Altar, at High Mass.



THE MASS

THE MASS, THE GREAT SACRIFICE offered by Christ to His Father on the altar, is divided into two principle parts. The two parts have very different contents and purposes, even though together they make a unified and beautiful ceremony, so it is important to understand them.

THE MASS OF THE CATECHUMENS is the first part. In ancient times, catechumens—those who had not yet been baptized, but were preparing to enter the Church—would be permitted to this part of the Mass, but asked to leave afterwards. The Mass of the Catechumens consists of prayers of praise and supplication, as well as readings from the Scriptures for our edification; however, the Sacrifice, and the Sacrament, do not occur.

THE MASS OF THE FAITHFUL is the second part, and is itself divided into three parts: the Offertory, the Consecration, and the Communion. In ancient times, only the baptized were permitted to be present. This is when the Sacrifice occurs.

THE MASS OF THE CATECHUMENS

IN THE MASS OF THE CATECHUMENS, we begin by begging the mercy of God, to forgive us and make us worthy for what we are about to do. We proceed to prayers of praise and of supplication, then we hear the words of the Scriptures. Finally, at the end, there may be a sermon from the priest designed to edify and assist us.

As the diagram on page 7 shows, the first half of the Mass of the Catechumens has our prayers and praises climbing up to God; the second half has God's Wisdom and Truth coming down to us.

The **PRAYERS AT THE FOOT OF THE ALTAR** open the Mass. In this, we pray Psalm 42, *Judica me*, and beg God to justify us and lead

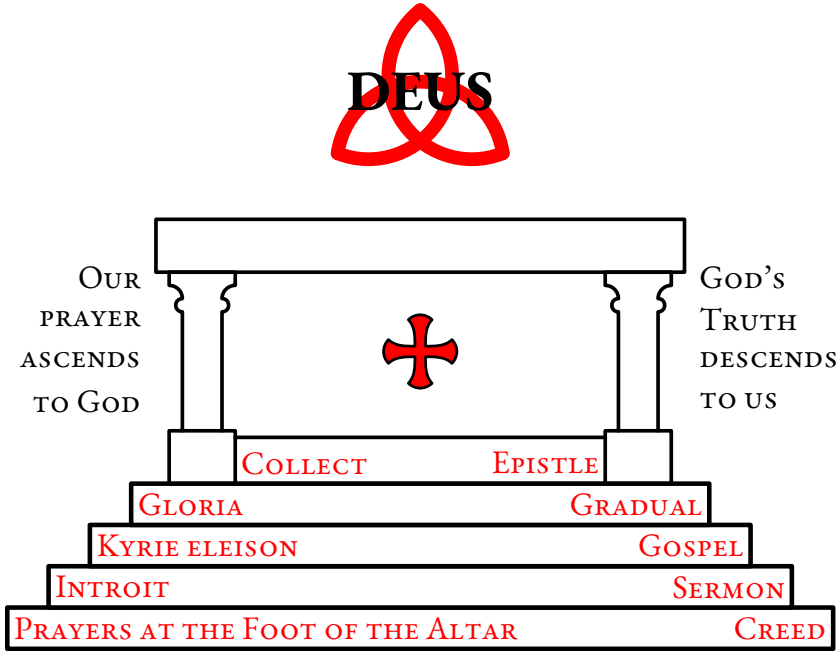


Figure 2: *Diagram of the Mass of the Catechumens*

us to be worthy to come to the altar and prepare to offer the Sacrifice. The priest bows down to say the *Confiteor*, confessing to God, the saints, and to all present that he has sinned; the people pray that God might have mercy on him, and the priest stands upright. The people then say the Confiteor bowing down, as well, confessing to God, the saints, and the priest the same. The priest prays that God have mercy on the people; the people then kneel upright from their bows, and make the sign of the cross while the priest grants absolution to them (not sacramental absolution, of course, but sufficient to cleanse the people who sincerely make confession from venial sin), so that all may be pure before beginning the ascent to God.

In each Confiteor, the one confessing does so bowing down, as a

sign of sorrow and humility, and strikes his breast three times when saying, *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*, “through my fault, my fault, my most grievous fault”, in token of his sorrow and penance, as the contrite publican did in the parable of Christ (Luke 18:13).

The priest then prays the *Aufer a nobis*, asking God to take away his sins, as he walks up to the altar; and when he arrives, he prays the *Oramus te, Domine*, asking that He apply the merits of the saints to him to make him worthy; and he kisses the altar stone, which contains a relic of a saint, to show the saints the honor that is their due.

At High Mass, the priest then incenses the altar, as a sign of reverence before that which will see the Sacrifice of Christ. The priest is also incensed, to show respect for his sacred office. The smoke of the incense also provides a sign of our prayers, and especially those of the priest who is individually incensed, rising up to heaven before God.

Next, making the sign of the cross, the priest prays the **INTROIT**; the first of the *changeable* parts of the Mass, the Introit is a portion of Scripture, usually a psalm, expressing the points of that day’s Mass.

The **KYRIE** comes next. The only Greek in the Mass (except on Good Friday, which has a small bit more), *Kyrie, eleison* means “Lord, have mercy”, and *Christe, eleison* means “Christ, have mercy”. We say *Kyrie* three times for the Father; *Christe* three times for the Son; and *Kyrie* three times for the Holy Spirit. This is a prayer both of praise and of humility, in our complete dependence upon the mercy of the Divine Persons.

The **GLORIA** is an ancient hymn of praise to God, when the Church bursts forth in her joy at the glories of God and the salvation He offers us. The first line is what the angel said upon the coming of Christ (Luke 2:14); the rest praises and thanks each Person of the Trinity, especially the Son Who took our nature. At various points during this prayer, we bow our heads to honor the God Who worked

these wonders: at *gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam* (“we give Thee thanks because of Thy great glory”); *Jesu Christe* (we always bow our heads at His Holy Name); *suscipe deprecationem nostram* (“take up our prayer”), to humble ourselves before Him when we ask Him to accept our supplication; and again at *Jesu Christe*, as always.

The Gloria closes with that great statement: *Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe, cum Sancto Spiritu in Gloria Dei Patris. Amen.* “For Thou alone art Holy; Thou alone art Lord; Thou alone art the Most High, O Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen.” We make the sign of the cross at *cum Sancto Spiritu*, as we do whenever we mention the Blessed Trinity. Because it is so joyous, the Gloria is omitted during Lent, Advent, and other penitential or sorrowful times.

After the Gloria (or Kyrie, if the Gloria is omitted), the priest kisses the altar, turns to the people, extends his hands, and says to them, *Dominus vobiscum* (“The Lord be with you”), to which the people respond,



Et cum spiritu tuo (“And with thy spirit”), at which time the priest says, *Oremus* (“Let us pray”). These words, repeated many times throughout the Mass, are the priest asking the Lord to accompany the people on this journey through the Mass, and the people asking the Lord to accompany the priest, at which time the priest invites all to pray together. This is a deeply important and meaningful prayer passed between the priest and the people, which should be expressed with full intention.

Finally we come to the **COLLECT**, in which we ask God for some

particular grace before we enter into the hearing of His Holy Word. This is the second *changeable* part of the Mass, from the Proper. This completed, our praise is fully before Him and His Wisdom and Truth can begin to come down to us.

The first of this Wisdom we hear is the **EPISTLE**. This is part of the Proper; that is, a *changeable* part of the Mass. It most often comes from one of the letters of the New Testament, hence its name, but sometimes



also comes from the Acts of the Apostles, Revelation, or the Old Testament. The priest reads this from the *right* side of the altar, the *Epistle* side, because this is to strengthen those who dwell within the Church.

Next we pray the **GRADUAL**, also from the Proper, or the *changeable* parts of the Mass. In Lent this is the **TRACT**, and in Eastertide the **ALLELUIA**. These are verses from Scripture, typically the Psalms, again focused on the theme for the Mass of the day. While these are, of course, prayers of praise (sorrowfully in Lent, joyously in Easter), they also continue to pass the Wisdom of God to us. During Easter, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, and their octaves, we also have the **SEQUENCE**, beautiful poems of praise matched in theme to the day. In Masses for the dead, the *Dies iræ* is the Sequence, a hauntingly beautiful hymn of praise for God and for mercy on the dead.

In preparation for the **GOSPEL**, the priest or deacon who will read the Gospel begs the Lord to cleanse him with the beautiful prayer *Munda cor meum*, “Cleanse my heart and my lips”, just as Isaiah’s lips were cleansed by a burning coal (Is 6:6–7). At High Mass, the Gospel will be incensed, and the smoke should remind us of our prayers rising to heaven; lights (candles) will accompany the Gospel,

to remind us that the Gospel is the light of the world. At High Mass the deacon will face the north to read the Gospel, at even at Low Mass or sung Mass without a deacon, the priest will turn the book to face slightly north. The north represents the areas of cold and darkness, which do not know Christ; we face north when reading the Gospel to show that we are bringing the light of Christ to all the world, especially those areas which do not yet know it.

When the priest or deacon announces the Gospel, all present sketch a cross on their foreheads, lips, and breast, to seal them all with the Cross and to show that we will receive the Gospel with our minds; praise it with our lips; and carry it in our hearts. This, too, is a deeply meaningful gesture that should be carried out with full knowledge and intention.



The priest may, and on Sundays will, speak to the people in the **SERMON**, to explain truths and build up the flock.

After the Sermon comes the **CREED**, in which all the people together express their faith in the words of the Councils of Nicea and Constantinople, hence its name the *Nicene* or *Niceo-Constantinopolitan* Creed. As at the Gloria, at several times during the Creed we bow our heads in humility and adoration for the God Who worked these wonders: at each time the Name of Jesus is mentioned, and at *simul adoratur*, when we mention that we adore the Holy Spirit just as we do the Father and the Son.

At the words *Et incarnatus est, de Spiritu Sancto, ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est* ("And He was made flesh of the Holy Spirit from the Virgin Mary, and became man"), all present kneel, in honor of this central mystery of our Faith: the Incarnation, that

God Himself became man for the love of us. The unfathomable love that made this miracle, unhopèd for throughout all the long ages of darkness, should fill us with such awe that we fall to our knees in adoration of Him Who did it.

At the end of the Creed, when we say *et vitam venturi sæculi* (“and the life of the age to come”), we make the sign of the cross, to show that only through the Cross do we come to that eternal life.

In ancient times, the catechumens would then be asked to leave, so that the Sacred Mysteries could begin. Nowadays, catechumens are permitted to remain; but here still closes the Mass of the Catechumens, and the Mass of the Faithful begins.

THE MASS OF THE FAITHFUL

THE MASS OF THE FAITHFUL begins at the Offertory and continues until the end of Mass, and is really the Mass proper, where the Mass itself—the unbloody renewal of the Sacrifice of Calvary, when Christ offers Himself to the Father—occurs. The diagram on page 14 demonstrates its general structure: from the Offertory (the left side of the diagram) to the Consecration (the top three steps), we send our offerings up to God and beg Him to accept them; in the Consecration (the top three steps of the diagram), we stand in awe while the priest, in Christ’s place, offers Christ to the Father; and in the Communion (the right side of the diagram), Christ sends the benefits of His Sacrifice to us.

And these mark the three parts of the Mass of the Faithful: the Offertory, the Consecration, and the Communion.

THE OFFERTORY

WE BEGIN THE OFFERTORY, after the Creed, with that great exchange of prayers between the priest and the people: *Dominus vobiscum; Et cum spiritu tuo; Oremus*. Here, especially, the

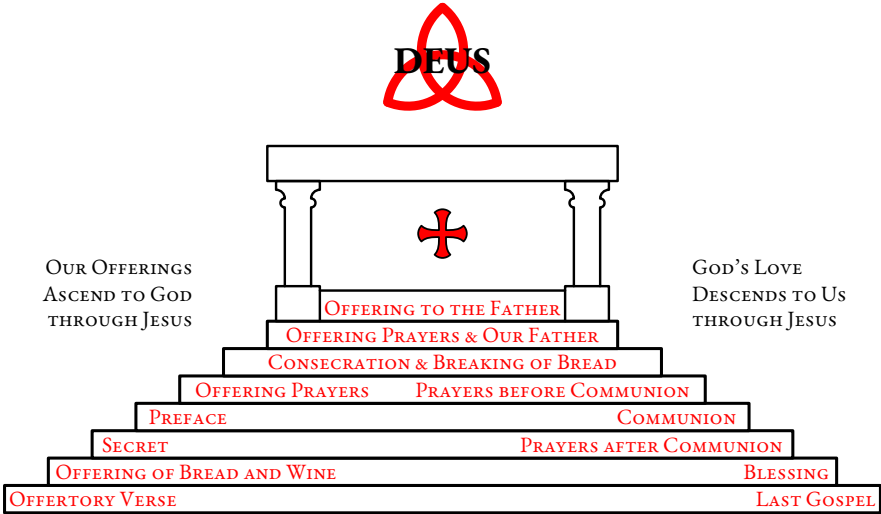


Figure 3: *Diagram of the Mass of the Faithful*

prayer is meaningful: the priest and people unite in the offering of the Sacrifice to the Father.

The priest then turns back to the Altar and prays the **OFFERTORY**, one of the *changeable* parts of the Mass, a short verse appropriate to begin the preparation of the offering.

The priest then uncovers the Chalice, and, placing the Host upon the Paten, offers it up, praying God graciously to accept this immaculate Host for the present needs and eternal salvation of all the faithful. The elevation of the bread signifies the complete surrender we make of it and of ourselves into the hands of God. The priest raises his eyes to heaven to show that the oblation is made to God; he drops them again in token of his own unworthiness. Then, making the sign of the cross with the Paten, in memory of the sacrifice of the cross, about to be renewed in the Mass, he places the Host upon the Corporal.

Going to the Epistle side of the Altar, he pours wine and water from the Cruets into the Chalice. He blesses the water before it is mixed with the wine, praying that by the mystery of this water and wine we



may be made partakers of Christ's divinity, since He became a partaker of our humanity. The wine is not blessed, because it represents Christ, the Eternal Son of the Father, the source of all blessing. The water represents our human nature, which stands in great need of blessing. The mixture of the wine and water is said by theologians to represent the union of the divine and human nature in Our Lord.

Returning to the middle of the Altar, the priest offers up the Chalice, and, lifting up his eyes, he entreats the Father to accept that Chalice of salvation for the salvation of the whole world. He then makes the sign of the cross over the Corporal with the Chalice, places it upon the Corporal, and covers it with the Pall.



The reason why the priest designates the oblation as "this immaculate Host" and "the Chalice of salvation" is because it is destined to be changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. This offering of the oblation must be distinguished from the offering of the Holy Sacrifice itself; for this does not indeed consist in an oblation of bread and wine, but of the Body and Blood of Christ, and it cannot take place until the Consecration.

Bowing down over the Altar, the priest humbly prays God to accept the offering; he then blesses the elements and invokes the Holy Ghost to descend and sanctify them. At High Mass the elements, the Altar, and the celebrant are all incensed. We should see in the

cloud of incense veiling the Altar an emblem of the divine majesty, for the Lord is soon to come down from above, as He did once of old on the occasion of the dedication of the temple at Jerusalem, filling the whole house with a visible cloud (3 Kings 8:10). By this He manifested His approval of the place chosen for the offering of prayer and holocausts.

The Offertory concluded, the priest goes to the epistle side of the Altar, where he washes his fingers while he recites the twenty-fifth Psalm, the **LAVABO** ("I will wash"). This



is to remind both priest and people of the cleanness and purity of soul and body with which we ought to appear before the Lord. Returning to the middle of the Altar, and bowing down, with joined hands in all humility he entreats the Most Holy Trinity to vouchsafe graciously to receive this oblation. Then, kissing the Altar, he turns to the people, and with the words: "*Orate fratres*" ("Brethren, pray"), invites them to join with him in imploring the same grace. The people respond with the prayer *Suscipe, Domine* ("Take up, O Lord").

Turning again to the Altar, the priest begins the **SECRET**, so called because it is said in a low voice. These prayers are a *changeable* part of the Mass, and correspond in number and arrangement to the Collects. The concluding words: "*Per omnia secula seculorum*" ("world without end"), are said audibly, and are the beginning of the Preface.

The **PREFACE** forms the introduction to the second part of the Mass, the Consecration. After the *Dominus vobiscum*, to which the usual answer is given, the priest solemnly uplifts his hands to denote the elevation of his heart, saying: "*Sursum corda*" ("Lift up your hearts"), to which the people reply: *Habemus ad Dominum* ("We have lifted them up to the Lord"). With these words he calls upon all who are present to unite with him in giving thanks to the Father

Almighty, the Eternal God, to the glory of Christ Our Lord. And since the praise of mortal lips is only too weak and imperfect, he expresses the desire that their voices may be permitted to join in the triumphant song of the angelic choirs, and with them he exclaims in holy exultation: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts: heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.” When we say “Blessed is He”, we make the sign of the cross, a sign that He Who comes in the Name of the Lord is Christ, Who is about sacrifice Himself on the Altar.

This prayer is called the **SANCTUS**, after its first word in Latin.

With the end of the Preface, we have come to the end of the first part of the Mass of the Faithful, the Offertory; and we now move on to the Consecration, the Sacrifice itself.

THE CONSECRATION

THE PRAYERS FROM the *Sanctus* to the *Pater noster* are called the **CANON OF THE MASS**. This word, “canon”, means a fixed rule, the prayers being the same for every day in the year, whereas a large portion of the prayers and ceremonies in the other parts of the Mass vary according to the different ecclesiastical seasons, the festival of the day, or other circumstances. The prayers of the Canon are read in a low voice, to indicate to the congregation the vast solemnity of this tremendous mystery. The words of Consecration form the central point of the Canon.

When the priest begins the Canon, he raises his eyes and his hands to heaven. This is in imitation of Our Lord, Who, before performing His miracles, looked up to heaven. He then drops them again, kisses the Altar, and recites the prayers with extended hands, like Moses when interceding for the people (Ex. 17:8–12).

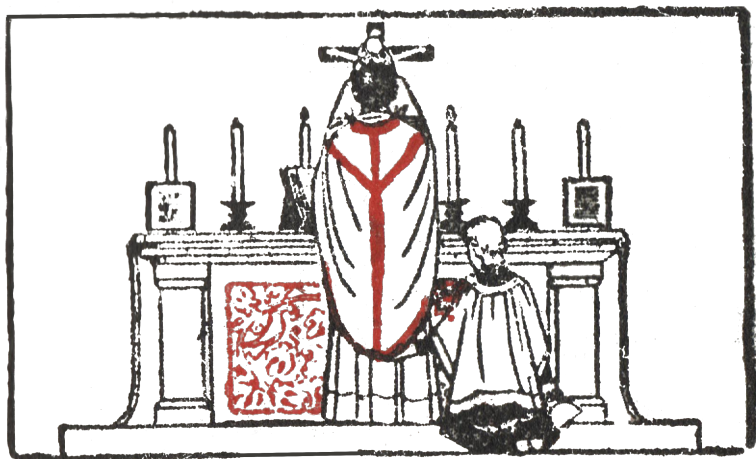
As in the Offertory prayers, so in the prayers immediately preceding the Consecration, we mark the twofold supplication: first, that God would mercifully accept the oblation and grant us peace and salvation; and second, that for the sake of this unspotted Victim He would protect and bless the holy Catholic Church, the Pope, the bishops, and all orthodox believers. Furthermore, some persons are mentioned by name, whom God is entreated to remember in mercy: those who offer this sacrifice, or for whom it is offered, with their families and friends.

After thus praying for the members of the Church Militant here upon earth the priest honors the memory of the blessed in heaven, the Church Triumphant, beseeching God that by their merits and prayers we may be defended by the help of His protection. Foremost among the saints whose names are introduced here he mentions the ever-blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the same Lord Jesus Christ Who is soon to appear as our victim upon the Altar. He also, however, names St. Joseph; Sts. Peter and Paul; and a great litany of powerful martyrs, whose prayers cannot help but benefit us.

Under the Old Dispensation it was customary for the officiating priest, before immolating the sacrificial victims, to lay his hands upon the head of each, beseeching the Most High to grant forgiveness of sin, and to bestow upon him what was salutary and needful for soul and body. In imitation of this ancient ceremony the priest of the New Testament extends his hands over the oblation, before the mystic immolation of the Victim of atonement, the Lamb of God, in his own name and that of the people, and prays that God, reconciled with him and with the congregation, would grant them peace in this life, deliver them from eternal damnation, and number them in the flock of His elect.

The scene now changes to the cenacle in Jerusalem, where Jesus

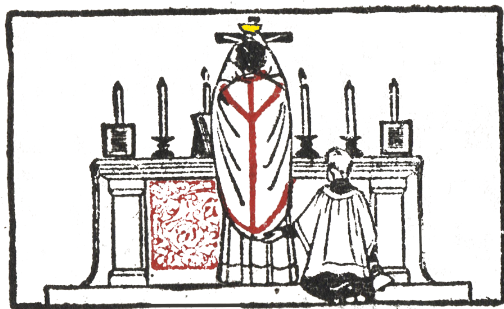
on the night before He suffered instituted and celebrated the holy sacrifice of the Mass. The priest, His representative, reenacts what Christ did then. After the Transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Sacred Body and Blood of Christ, the priest kneels and adores the God before him; then he elevates them, holding them on high for the veneration of the faithful. The bell is rung as a signal that the solemn moment has come, that Christ, God and Man, to Whom be glory and worship in all eternity, is actually present upon the Altar.



HOC EST ENIM CORPUS MEUM

As the priest genuflects, all present, already kneeling, also bow low in humble adoration, striking their breasts in penance, since His death, which He has just renewed, is due to our own sins.

When the Body of Christ is held up for our adoration, we gaze at it and say internally, with a simple and absolute faith, "My Lord and my God," with St. Thomas the Apostle (Jo 20:28).



HIC EST ENIM CALIX SANGUINIS MEI, NOVI ET ÆTERNI
TESTAMENTI; MYSTERIUM FIDEI; QUI PRO VOBIS ET PRO
MULTIS EFFUNDETUR IN REMISSIONEM PECCATORUM.
HÆC QUOTIESCUMQUE FECERITIS, IN MEI MEMORIAM
FACIETIS

When the Blood of Christ is held up for our adoration, we gaze at it and say internally, with a simple and absolute faith, "Remember, O Lord, thy creature, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy most precious Blood," in the famous prayer of St. Ambrose.

From this point forward, the priest's conduct is different, as he is now in the real and true presence of Christ. Whenever he uncovers the Chalice by removing the Pall, he genuflects reverently before the Blood of Christ. His thumb and index finger, on both hands, will not be separated until specially cleansed after Communion, lest Particles of His Sacred Body fall away and be subject to disrespect or sacrilege. The Body and Blood of Christ, literally and truly, sit before him on the Altar.

Slain without the shedding of blood, Christ now lies upon the Altar in a state of mystic death. With profound humility and heartfelt fervor, the priest beseeches Almighty God to look kindly upon this sacred oblation, and, accepting it, to grant blessing and grace to the living, and a place of refreshment, light, and peace to the dead.

Here, striking his breast, the priest breaks the solemn stillness, saying the only three words spoken aloud in the entire Canon: “*No-bis quoque peccatoribus*” (“And to us also, sinners”), continuing the prayer in his customary low voice. He begs God to grant him and all sinners a place with the apostles and martyrs, proceeding to name several of each, powerful saints and holy martyrs to serve as intercessors and examples for us. It is very significant that the only three words in the Canon spoken aloud identify the priest himself, and all the people present, as sinners; it is an expression of profound humility, as we near the end of the Consecration and approach the Communion, when humility alone can prepare us to receive His Body and Blood.

This prayer, the **MINOR ELEVATION**, closes with the words: “Through Christ Our Lord,” and is connected with what follows by this ascription of blessing, honor, and glory: “By Whom, O Lord, Thou dost always create, quicken, sanctify, bless, and give us all these good things. Through Him, and with Him, and in Him, is to Thee, God the Father Almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory. Amen.” While this is said, the sacred Host is held over the Chalice, and both are slightly elevated, that the act of veneration may accompany the spoken ascription of praise. Here the Canon ends, and the third part of the Mass commences.



THE COMMUNION

AS THE PREFACE FORMS the introduction to the Canon, so with the **PATER NOSTER** we enter upon the third part of the Mass, the Communion. Christ has made the sacrifice of Himself for us by the Consecration: we can now call God our Father, we may proffer

our petitions to Him with filial confidence, we are entitled to partake of celestial food at the Communion. In the petition of the Lord's Prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread," we express our longing for the bread of angels, given to us in holy Communion.

Raising his voice, with hands uplifted, the priest recites the *Pater noster*, inviting all who are present to take part in his supplications. At its close, the *Amen* having been said, in a low voice he beseeches God the Father to deliver him and all who pray with him from all evils, past, present, and future, through the intercession of the saints, and to grant peace in their days. He makes the sign of the cross with the Paten, and places the sacred Host upon it; then, kneeling down, he adores the Host, and in remembrance of Christ, Who broke bread at the Last Supper, he breaks it, and puts a particle into the Chalice.

As the separation of the two species is significant of Our Lord's death, so the reunion of His Body and Blood is intended to remind us of His resurrection. It is good to contemplate these things at this time, as we prepare to rise to grace in Communion.

Hitherto the prayers said by the priest have been addressed to God the Father; he now calls upon Christ our Redeemer, saying three times the **AGNUS DEI**: "Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us." At the third time of repetition the words "Grant us peace" are substituted as the conclusion. The next prayer is one for peace. At High Mass the kiss of peace is here exchanged between the celebrant and those amongst the clergy who may be assisting at the Altar. In early times, when the men and women occupied separate places in the church, and all who were present took part in the Communion, it was customary for all the congregation to exchange this salutation. Only those who observe mutual charity and kindness are worthy to receive the God of peace. Then the priest, bending low, his eyes reverently fixed upon the sacred Host, prepares

by fervent prayer to receive the Adorable Sacrament. Taking the Host in his hand, he says three times, devoutly and humbly, the words of the centurion: “Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed.” He then reverently consumes the sacred Body and Blood of the Lord, thus uniting himself intimately with Him in that close intercourse which is the meaning of the word “Communion.”

The priest will then turn around and hold the Host, the Body of Christ, up to the people, saying, “Behold, the Lamb of God; behold Him Who taketh away the sins of the world.” The people then strike their



breasts three times, each time saying the **CENTURION'S PRAYER**: “Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed.”

Any of the congregation who desire to communicate then approach to receive the Adorable Body of Our Lord, and thus participate in the holy Sacrifice.

After the Communion the priest takes the ablutions: a little wine and water are poured over the fingers which have touched the sacred Host, and which he holds over the Chalice. In this way he specially cleanses those fingers which touched the Body of Christ, to ensure that not the slightest Particles of His Body will be lost. He now may separate his thumb and index finger as needed. Meanwhile he recites prayers relating to the reception of the Blessed Sacrament.

He then goes to the book, which has been moved to the Epistle side of the Altar, and reads a versicle of Holy Scripture called the **COMMUNION**; this now replaces the canticle which was formerly sung during the Communion of the people. Turning to the people,

he repeats the salutation, “*Dominus vobiscum*,” and proceeds to read the concluding prayers.

These concluding prayers are called the **POST-COMMUNION**, because they come after the Communion. In them the priest and the people return thanks for their participation in the holy mysteries, and pray that God would preserve in them the fruit of this sublime oblation, of this celestial food. The Post-communions generally recall the leading idea of the festival of the day or of the season; they correspond in number to the Collects and Secrets. Before beginning them the priest says: “Let us pray”; he reads them with extended hands.

Once more he greets the people with: “*Dominus vobiscum*,” and then from the middle of the Altar he announces to them that the service is at an end, letting them depart with the words: “*Ite, missa est*” (“Go, the Mass is ended”). Whenever the Gloria is omitted, as in Advent and in Lent, “*Benedicamus Domino*” (“Let us bless the Lord”), is substituted for “*Ite, missa est*”.

The priest next gives his blessing to the people, and concludes the whole ceremony by reading from the Gospel side of the Altar the beginning of St. John’s Gospel, the so-called **LAST GOSPEL**. All present sketch the cross on their foreheads, lips, and heart, just as before the Gospel earlier in the Mass, for the same reason, and say as there, *Gloria tibi, Domini*. During the last Gospel, near the end, is the verse, *Et Verbum caro factum est*, “And the Word was made flesh”; in reverence to this great mystery, the Incarnation, both priest and people genuflect at this phrase, falling to the ground in adoration of the unfathomable love God has shown for us.

At the end the congregation express their heartfelt gratitude for the benefit of the divine revelation and the mystery of redemption, which are expounded in the Gospel according to St. John, by the response: “*Deo gratias*” (“Thanks be to God”).

OTHER SIGNS IN THE LITURGY

EVERYTHING IN THE liturgy means something; the Church places an endless wealth of symbolism, knowledge, and lessons before us that can never be fully plumbed. We will look at just a few of these symbols here.

MATERIALS

THE ALTAR MUST BE MADE of stone, if at all possible. In the early Church, of course, Altars were often temporary and made of wood, since Christians were rarely able to find permanent places of worship due to the persecution they faced (other than in the catacombs); but when Christianity became a legal, public religion, stone Altars almost immediately became the norm. Even in the early Church, under persecution, stone Altars were preferred; Pope Evaristus, who died in 105, ordered stone Altars, and Mass was frequently celebrated on the tombs of the martyrs, also made of stone. A stone Altar serves as a reminder of the stone on which the Body of Christ rested in the tomb, just as He will rest, having renewed His death, at the Mass. Furthermore, the Altar represents Christ Himself, and Christ, as we know, is our Rock; and the Altar also represents the mountain of Calvary, the place of the skull, Golgotha. Stone is clearly, then, the most appropriate material for an Altar.

Altar-stones, whether the whole *mensa* (the “table-top” part) of a permanent Altar, or the stone rested in a wooden Altar, have five crosses cut into them, one in each corner and one in the center. These, of course, represent the Five Wounds—two in the Hands, two in the Feet, and one in the Side—of Christ.

The relics of saints, especially martyrs, should be embedded in any Altar-stone. The martyrs, of all saints, are the closest to Christ,

having united their sufferings to His, and thus it is fitting that we honor them, and that they honor Him by standing at the foot of the Cross.

Altar-cloths and Corporals must be made of white linen, though they may be embellished with embroidery of other colors as appropriate. The white, of course, represents purity and spotlessness, as is appropriate for the clothing of what represents Christ. Only linen, made from flax or hemp, may be used; other materials, such as cotton or silk, may not. This applies also to albs, amices, the towels used to dry the priest's fingers for the *Lavabo*, and so forth. The Altar-cloths represent the linen cloths with which the Body of Christ was wrapped when He was placed in the tomb. For this reason, on Holy Thursday and Good Friday the Altar is stripped of its vestments, just as Christ was stripped of His.

The Corporal, especially, carries deep symbolism, reminding us of the swaddling-clothes with which the infant Christ was wrapped, stained with the Blood of His Circumcision, as well as the burial cloths in the tomb.

As mentioned, the Chalice and Paten must be made of gold or silver; if they are made of silver, those parts which touch the Divine Species (that is, the inside of the Chalice and the surface of the Paten) must at least be lined with gold. Often both, but especially the Chalice, will be intricately decorated with precious stones and jewels, as well. These sacred vessels represent the wood of the Cross as well as the tomb, since they, like the Cross and the tomb, hold the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

Candles must be made from natural beeswax; that is, they must be composed of more than half beeswax. This is often referred to as "51%" beeswax, which will sometimes even be stamped on the candle's side. Bees have long represented purity and virginity, and

thus their wax contains the same signification. Furthermore beeswax candles burn more cleanly and are finer than other forms of wax. The burning candle is itself a powerful symbol: the flame is the Divinity of Christ, the wick concealed within the wax a figure of His Soul, and the wax a figure of His Body. Since the wax represents His Body, the fact that it is produced by bees, themselves a symbol of virginity, is especially apt.

COLORS

COLORS IN THE LITURGICAL acts are all deeply meaningful. Only a few things are colored according to the feast; namely, the Chasuble, Stole, Maniple, Chalice Veil, and Burse. Often the veil on the Tabernacle will also match this color, and if there is a **FRONTAL**, a decorative cloth hanging in front of the Altar, this may also match. Only six colors are liturgically permitted for these items: white, red, green, purple, rose, and black.

WHITE is the color of light, purity, and holiness; it is the color of the robe of the baptized, and a sign of being washed spotless. It also symbolizes the virtue of faith. Thus, we wear white on feasts of Our Lord, Our Lady, and saints who are not martyrs.

RED is the color of fire and blood, and in a special way symbolizes the virtue of charity. Thus, we wear red on feasts of the Holy Spirit (symbolized, of course, by tongues of fire) and of the martyrs, who spilled their blood for Christ. It is also worn for feasts of the Holy Cross and of the Passion, including part of the time on Good Friday.

GREEN is the color of flourishing life, of maturity in nature, and symbolizes the virtue of hope. Thus, we wear green on days which carry no special character of either joy or mourning, primarily during the time after Pentecost.

PURPLE is the color of penance, and is worn during the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent, along with the Rogation Days and the special penitential Ember Days (except those during the Octave of Pentecost, when red is continued).

ROSE is like purple, but emphasizes the joy that must be mixed with penance for the Christian. It is worn only on two days of the year: the third Sunday of Advent, or *Gaudete* Sunday, and the fourth Sunday of Lent, or *Lætare* Sunday.

BLACK is the color of sorrow and mourning; it is worn on All Souls Day and in any Mass for the dead, and for part of the time on Good Friday. Priests are also required to wear black when not in liturgical functions (unless their order prescribes other habit), to remind them that they must be dead to the world and dedicated solely to the world to come.

For grave reasons, when the other colors are not available, white may be substituted for all colors but purple and black, while purple may be substituted for black. Hence, portable Mass-kits for priests in persecuted countries, or who are unexpectedly away from their normal supplies, will often include vestments which are white on one side and purple on the other, to ensure the ability to celebrate correctly.

LANGUAGE

FOR THE MOST PART, Latin has been the language of the Western Church for well over fifteen hundred years. There are very good reasons for maintaining the use of Latin; only a few will be given here. But the vast bulk of the liturgy (in normal Masses, excluding only the *Kyrie*), is, and for all practical purposes always has been, in Latin.

First, Latin is one of the holy languages, consecrated and sanctified by being nailed to the Cross itself (Jo 19:20; Lc 23:38). Latin, along

with Greek and Hebrew, have a significance from this fact alone that cannot be neglected. We regularly use many terms from the Greek tongue even in our Latin liturgy, though the words have long since become part of Latin proper—words like “apostle”, “Gospel”, and so forth are all derived, in Latin, from Greek. We use many words of Hebrew origin, as well—words like “Amen”, “Alleluia”, and “Sabaoth”. By being nailed to the Cross, these languages were sanctified for the use of the Church throughout the ages.

Second, a non-vernacular language is superior to vernaculars for dedication to sacred things. Using a non-vernacular language helps set the liturgical action aside from daily life as a special thing, removed from the day-to-day activities of life and not a part of them. Further, it stands as a bulwark against liturgical and doctrinal innovations, as the phrasing and meaning of terms can be better protected in a language which is not the mother-tongue of any particular people.

Lastly, Latin is a *neutral* language, as it belongs at the same time to all of us and none of us. No one today speaks Latin as a mother-tongue, and so no one can claim that the Church favors his particular culture over any other in the choice of its sacred language. Anywhere we go in the world, we may enter a Roman Catholic Church celebrating the Latin liturgy and be immediately at home, knowing each and every thing that is occurring, without respect to our own vernacular. Furthermore, even in multicultural parishes, all cultures can attend the Latin Mass, and a priest need not attempt to celebrate in two, three, or even more languages depending on the composition of his parish. All cultures, all languages, hear precisely the same Mass in precisely the same words. As such, Latin is a sign of universality for the Church, and a sign of unification for all peoples.

Much more could be said, but this will suffice for this little work.

SOURCES

THE CHURCH IS A SOURCE of endless wealth, and we have used that wealth from many sources in the process of producing this work. We have endeavored at every stage to ensure that we have the legal right to use what we have used here.

First and foremost was Fr. Martin Cochem's *Explanation of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, published by Benziger Brothers in New York in 1896. Fr. Cochem's work forms the basis for the outline of the parts of the Mass here, and much of the commentary is either verbatim or near-verbatim from his work. We have updated the language and punctuation, reformatted the matter, and added or removed parts as we have seen fit. Fr. Cochem's book is in the public domain, and much more wide-ranging than this one. Interested readers are encouraged to go there.

Next is Father Gihl's excellent book, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*. This book is *much* more in-depth than our little volume here, and covers not only ceremony but also theology, so it is well worth the perusal to an interested student. It, too, is in the public domain.

Many of the images of the work are derived from Fr. Joseph Stedman's *My Sunday Missal*, published by the Confraternity of the Precious Blood in 1944. A diligent search of the relevant copyright records showed that neither Fr. Stedman nor the Confraternity renewed the copyright at the appropriate time, which was necessary under the laws then in place. As a result, the work is in the public domain. Much of the comments on the Chalice vestments and the priest's vestments are either from or derived from Fr. Stedman's excellent little Sunday missal.

The diagrams of the structure of the Mass—one for the Mass of the Catechumens, one for the Mass of the Faithful—are also taken from those in Fr. Stedman's text. However, rather than being cut

and cleaned up from high-resolution scans of the original material, these diagrams were completely redone, in Metapost, for this work.

The plan of a parish church diagram and the image of the parts of the altar were made particularly for this publication, in Metapost.

The image of the Cruet and of the pelican are from Firkin on openclipart.org; they have generously been released into the public domain.



COLOPHON

This document is set in EB Garamond 7/10, with decorative initials in Linux Libertine. It was designed and produced using a variety of interlocked traditional Unix scripts, and imprinted using the \LaTeX document preparation system, specifically the Lua \LaTeX form.