

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

*Dogmatically,
Liturgically, and Ascetically Explained*

By
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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

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PREFACE

As the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the center of Catholic worship and life, a more profound knowledge of the Mass is considered essential and most desirable for all the faithful, but especially for the priest. Although literature on this subject is rather abundant, the present volume, which has been drawn from every available source at the author's command, may not be deemed superfluous.

Its object is, in the main, both practical and ascetical: not only to appeal to the understanding, but also to inflame the heart and to move the will. The selection and the treatment of the matter have necessarily been directed to this object. It is not our intention to present a purely scientific and exhaustive treatise on the Eucharistic sacrifice, but to build, upon the foundation of scientific studies and inferences, a work useful and practical for the clergy. Hence certain questions of a scientific and historic nature may receive scarcely more than a brief mention. Says Denis the Carthusian: "In this writing it was not my intention in expounding the words of the Mass as devoutly as I could, to raise any question or touch on anything but what might move the heart and excite to devotion." Therefore all polemical, critical quotations and statements open to contradiction have, as much as possible, been avoided. In disputed points we have always seriously and carefully weighed the reasons pro and con; but in the book itself we have merely stated what seemed to us the most solidly grounded.

As edification and devotion must at all times rest on theological truth and emanate from it, it became necessary to present the dogma and rite of the Eucharistic sacrifice clearly, thoroughly, and correctly, according to the spirit and intention of the Church; thus only do the ascetical considerations and applications find a solid foundation to rest on. Suarez says: "Without truth, piety is feeble; and without piety, truth is sterile and void." In the explanation of the rite we have adhered strictly to the words and actions of the

liturgical formulas, endeavoring at the same time, in accordance with approved ecclesiastical tradition, to avoid all subjectivism and artificiality.

A correct and clear understanding of the Mass, as well as a frequent consideration of its profound and mystical rite, will, in all probability, be the best means enabling the priest to refrain from a thoughtless, habitual mannerism, and lead him to celebrate the adorable mysteries of the altar with becoming attention, devotion, and reverence. The priest who studies this book will, moreover, find manifold reasoning and argument with which to direct the faithful according to their capacity in the proper understanding of the divine sacrifice and in their fervent recourse to the Eucharistic fountain of grace. The authorities of the Church have often impressed upon pastors that such instruction is a chief duty of directors of souls, for the conscientious discharge of which they will have to render an account before God. Although this volume is principally intended for the use of the clergy, it has been so arranged that the educated laity may also peruse it with profit.

May God grant His blessing and success to this work, especially in our days, when the Church and her faithful children are more or less constrained to lead a life of sacrifice. May it awaken and foster in many hearts love for the Eucharistic sacrifice as well as a cheerful and courageous spirit to undergo willingly the trials and contradictions that self-immolation demands.

THE AUTHOR

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BOOK ONE

Dogmatical and Ascetical Part

SECTION I

Sacrifice in General

CHAPTER I

THE VIRTUE OF RELIGION

SACRIFICE is an act of religion; in fact, the supreme act of religion, for by the offering of sacrifice the divine Majesty is honored in the worthiest and most perfect manner. The virtue of religion is, so to speak, the very root whence sacrifice springs and develops as a most beautiful blossom and most precious fruit. Therefore we at once perceive that the way for a better understanding of sacrifice can be opened only by previously considering the Christian or supernatural virtue of religion in its principal characteristics.¹

1. Religion (*religio*)² is a special moral virtue which enables and

¹ We do not intend to treat here of religion as a natural virtue (*virtus acquisita*) which can be acquired, at least in an imperfect degree, by frequent acts, but of religion as a supernatural virtue (*virtus per se infusa*) infused into the soul by means of grace. Religion is, in the first place, an abiding disposition inclining us to render unto God the worship due Him. Ease and readiness in the performance of supernatural acts of religion are the fruit of faithful exercise and are obtainable by our own exertions assisted by divine grace. Charity and all the infused moral virtues are inseparably united with sanctifying grace; the two theological virtues of faith and hope (*habitus fidei et spei*) can still exist even after sanctifying grace has been lost. Cf. Mazzella, S.J., *De virtutibus infusis*, disp. I, a. 3-12.

² The word *religio* comes principally from *religare* (to bind, i.e., to God). *Diximus nomen religionis a vinculo pietatis esse deductum, quod hominem sibi Deus religaverit et pietate constrinxerit, quia servire nos ei ut domino et obsequi ut patri necesse est* (Lactant., *Divin. institut.*, IV, 28). The thought underlying this explanation is assuredly true; yet the derivation from *religere* (from *relègere*) would grammatically be more correct. In Gellius (IV, ix, 1) is found the participle, used adjectively, *religens* = God-fearing. The term *religio* (from *religere* = to take carefully into consideration, to ponder over,

inclines the will to give to God the supernatural honor and adoration due to Him as the Creator and Supreme Ruler as well as the last end of all things, and particularly of man. The Holy Ghost plants this virtue in the garden of the soul; it is our duty, with the help of grace, so to nourish this noble and precious gift of heaven that it may bear abundant fruit for the honor and glory of God and our own blessing and ultimate salvation.

The virtue of religion makes us courageous and willing to offer to the divine Majesty due veneration.³ By means of this virtue we honor the Lord our God inasmuch as we acknowledge and proclaim His greatness, majesty, and dominion over us, and at the same time confess our own littleness, lowliness, and dependence upon Him. Religion, consequently, includes in itself two requisites: first, lively acknowledgment of His infinite perfection and dignity; and then, a humble subjection to His unlimited power and dominion. This cheerful submission, this humbling of self under the power of God (I Pet. 5:6), is required and commanded by the fundamental relation that exists between us as creatures and God as our Creator. And this relation is one of the most absolute and entire dependence upon God, for He is our first beginning and last end, our Redeemer and Sanctifier. We belong entirely to God, and it behooves us to consecrate our being wholly to God; "in Him we live and move and are" (Acts 17:28).⁴

"All my bones shall say: Lord, who is like to Thee?" (Ps. 34:10.)
 God is a fathomless and shoreless sea of the most perfect being and

to weigh conscientiously and reflect upon with due care, especially that which is divine and holy) would, according to its original signification, be intimately connected with *cultus* (careful nursing and waiting upon, honor, veneration; from *colere*, cherishing and caring for, esteeming and regarding as holy). *Religiosus*, ait Cicero, a *relegendo* appellatur, qui retractat et tamquam relegit ea quae ad cultum divinum pertineant (S. Isid., *Etymolog.*, X, 234). Of this explanation Suarez remarks: *Est probabilis deductio, sive vocum similitudinem sive munus ipsum religionis spectemus* (cf. *De religione*, Tr. I, Bk. I, chap. 1). Cf. Gutberlet, *Lehrbuch der Apologetik*, I., 6 f.

³ *Nomine virtutis religionis hic non intellegitur habitus aliquis acquisitus et naturalis, sed habitus supernaturalis, per se et quoad substantiam infusus, quo disponimur ad cultum sacrum praestandum in ordine supernaturali et relate ad nostrum finem supernaturalem* (Bouquillon, *De virtute religionis*, Bk. I, Part I, chap. 2).

⁴ *In officio religionis quatuor actus spectari possunt, qui quo perfectiores sunt, ea perfectior est hujus virtutis functio. Primus est consideratio infinitae majestatis Dei, et omnia ab ipsa pendere. Secundus est consideratio nostri nihili, i.e. nos ex nobis nihil esse, nihil habere, sed quidquid sumus et habemus*

life: His perfections are inexhaustible and incomparable, surpassing and excelling all things, incomprehensible and unspeakable. God possesses infinite grandeur and dignity. Therefore all rational creatures, being immeasurably below Him, owe Him the profoundest respect and veneration. God is not only inconceivably exalted above heaven and earth; but by His creative power He is also the source of all things, for they absolutely depend on Him as to their being, their existence, their activity. Since God is the Creator of all things visible and invisible, He is the sovereign Master and Lord of all that lives and moves in the universe; consequently He is "the King of kings and Lord of lords" (I Tim. 6: 15), to whom all beings owe unconditional and constant service. Since the almighty God has made all things and since all creatures are the work of His hands, they belong to Him as His property; He has, then, the highest and the most absolute dominion over all creatures, because they exist only for Him, and must act only for Him, and serve Him alone. Most beautifully does the Church express this thought in the Invitatory of the Office of the Dead: *Regem, cui omnia vivunt, venite adoremus*: "Come, let us adore the King unto whom all things live."

Holy Scripture frequently delivers these truths in most vivid and striking descriptions. "The Lord is terrible and exceeding great, and His power is admirable" (Ecclus. 43: 31). "The Lord's ways are in a tempest and a whirlwind: and clouds are the dust of His feet" (Nah. 1: 3). God is the Supreme Master and proprietor of the universe, because it has come forth from His creative hand and is His work. Hence the Psalmist joyfully sings: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof: the world and all they that dwell therein. For He hath founded upon the seas and hath prepared it upon the rivers" (Ps. 23: 1 f.). "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and weighed the heavens with His palm? Who hath poised with three fingers the bulk of the earth? . . . Behold, the Gentiles are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the smallest grain of a balance: behold the islands are as a little dust. . . . It is He that sitteth upon the globe of the earth. . . . He that stretcheth out the heavens as nothing, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.

Dei esse et a Deo assidue pendere. Tertius, profunda mentis submissio et inclinatio coram Deo, quo mens haec ipsa interius testetur. Quartus, eorundem professio exterior, verbis, gestu corporis vel aliis modis (Lessius, *De justitia ceterisque virt. cardin.*, II, xxxvi, 1).

. . . Who bringeth out their host by number, and calleth them all by their names. By the greatness of His might and strength and power, not one of them was missing" (Isa. 40: 12-26). "And the stars have given light in their watches, and rejoiced. They were called and they said: Here we are; and with cheerfulness they have shined forth to Him that made them" (Bar. 3:34 f.). "Lord, greatest art Thou, and glorious in Thy power, and no one can overcome Thee. Let all Thy creatures serve Thee; because Thou hast spoken, and they were made: Thou didst send forth Thy spirit, and they were created. And there is no one that can resist Thy voice. The mountains shall be moved from the foundations with the waters: the rocks shall melt as wax before Thy face" (Judith 16:16-18). "He looketh upon the earth, and maketh it tremble: He toucheth the mountains, and they smoke" (Ps. 103:32).

And what is man in comparison with the Most High, with the almighty Creator and powerful King, greatly to be feared, who sitteth upon His throne and is the God of dominion? (Ecclus. 1:8.) "Man's days are as grass; as the flower of the field so shall he flourish. For the spirit shall pass in him; and he shall not be: and he shall know his place no more" (Ps. 102:15 f.). "All men are earth and ashes" (Ecclus. 17:31); he is a leaf and a dry straw carried about by the wind; like a flower he cometh forth and is destroyed and he fleeth as a shadow (Job 13:25; 14:2). Now, should not man, a weak, frail, miserable creature, bow down and humble himself to the dust, should he not tremble with awe, reverence, and astonishment before the power, grandeur, and majesty of God, whose throne is the heavens and whose footstool is the earth (Isa. 66:1)? The pillars of heaven tremble at His beck; the morning stars praise Him, and the sons of God make a joyful melody to Him (Job 26:11; 38:7). The choirs of holy spirits sing in the highest heavens to the Lord day and night their never-ceasing "Holy, holy, holy"; the glorified saints prostrate themselves before Him that sitteth on the throne and adore Him that liveth forever and ever; they lay down their crowns before the throne, saying: "Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power; because Thou hast created all things; and for Thy will they were and have been created" (Apoc. 4:10 f.). In this jubilation of eternal praise and adoration man also should unite, according to his ability, in glorifying God, who is justly exalted above all.

2. Moreover, the virtue of religion quickens our zeal and spurs us on to the performance of acts calculated to render to the divine Majesty due honor and glory; and these acts may be divided into two classes.⁵

a) In the first class are comprised all acts which in themselves refer to the honor of God and promote it, that is, those which by their nature are intended and calculated to render to the greatness of God due acknowledgment and worship.⁶ We perform such acts when, for instance, we pray and offer sacrifice, make and fulfill vows, adorn churches and decorate altars.⁷

b) The second class includes the acts of all the other virtues, so far as they are performed by command of God, that is, by an inspiration from Him and from a motive of honoring Him, consequently made with a view and intention of giving glory to God.⁸ The virtue of religion can and must direct to the glory of God all the works and exercises of a Christian life, that it may become a perpetual divine service. "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31).⁹

To this effect St. Augustine says: "God is to be honored by faith, hope, and charity" (*Manuale*, I, 3). The acts of faith, hope, and charity are in themselves acts, not of the moral virtue of religion, but of the three essentially different theological virtues; yet they

⁵ Religio habet duplices actus: quosdam quidem, quos elicit per quos homo ordinatur ad solum Deum, sicut sacrificare, adorare et alia hujusmodi; alios autem actus habet, quos producit mediantibus virtutibus, quibus imperat, ordinans eos ad divinam reverentiam, quia sc. virtus ad quam pertinet finis, imperat virtutibus, ad quas pertinent ea quae sunt ad finem. Et secundum hoc actus religionis per modum imperii ponitur esse, "visitare pupillos et viduas in tribulatione eorum," quod est actus elicitus a misericordia; "immaculatum autem se custodire ab hoc saeculo" imperative quidem est religionis, elicitive autem temperantiae vel alicujus hujusmodi virtutis (S. Thom., IIa IIae, q. 81, a. 1 ad 1).

⁶ These are, according to their distinctive characteristic, acts of religion in the strictest sense: *actus elicitus religionis*.

⁷ Ipsius patriae est sacrificium offerre Deo, et hoc sacrificium soli Deo debetur; et patria dicit cultum soli Deo debitum (S. Bonav., III, dist. 9, a. 2, q. 2).

⁸ These are acts *imperati religionis*, that is, acts of other virtues, the practice of which is commanded by religion, whereby, without losing their particular character, they become likewise acts of religion.

⁹ Ad religionem pertinent non solum oblationes sacrificiorum et alia hujusmodi, quae sunt religioni propria, sed etiam actus omnium virtutum, secundum quod referuntur ad Dei servitium et honorem, efficiuntur actus religionis (S. Thom., IIa IIae, q. 186, a. 1 ad 2).

may be elicited with the intention of acknowledging the divine truth, fidelity, and goodness, and God is thereby greatly honored and glorified. In believing, hoping, and loving, we give ourselves to God with all the powers of our soul, we lean upon God and rest in God as our last end; in other words, we render to the divine perfections and majesty due homage and submission. The three divine virtues also condition the development and completion of the Christian life, which is founded on faith, nourished by hope, and animated by charity. Faith enlightens the understanding with celestial light, hope endows the soul with supernatural strength, and love inflames the heart with divine fire. Thus these three virtues enable us by a new and holy life to announce to men the glorious prerogatives and perfections of God, that they may see our works and glorify our Father who is in heaven (I Pet. 2:9; Matt. 5:16). They give rise to the virtue of religion, and excite us to glorify God through works of piety, mercy, and penance.¹⁰

We read in the Epistle of St. James (1:27) these words: "Religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father is this; to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world." The meaning of the above is that, if we would honor God the Father in a sincere and proper manner, we must be assiduously intent upon assisting the poor, the abandoned, and the distressed, upon consoling and comforting them, and at the same time endeavor, amid the corruption of the world, to serve God alone and to please Him by purity of heart and the righteousness of our ways. Thus the virtue of religion will produce abundant fruits, "that in all things and above all things God may be glorified."¹¹

3. Religion holds the first place among the moral virtues. Although, like all other moral virtues, the virtue of religion is inferior in merit and dignity to the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity, it is most intimately connected with them, for it regulates the conduct of man toward God. It holds the first rank among the moral

¹⁰ Dicit S. Augustinus Deum soli fide, spe et caritate, non quod religio eliciat actus fidei, spei et caritatis, sed quia vel eos imperat vel ab eis imperatur (Billuart, *De religione*, dissert. I, art. 2).

¹¹ Omnia secundum quod in gloriam Dei fiunt, pertinent ad religionem, non quasi ad elicentem, sed quasi ad imperantem; illa autem pertinent ad religionem elicentem, quae secundum rationem suae speciei pertinent ad reverentiam Dei (S. Thom., *Ila Ilae*, q. 81, a. 4, ad 2).

virtues, because it approaches nearer to God than the others, so far as it produces and has for its primary object those acts that refer directly and immediately to the honor of God, that is, whatever acts pertain to the divine service.¹² The sublime virtue of religion ennobles man precisely in this, that it completely subjects him to the will and dominion of God and brings him into the closest communication with the primal source of all holiness. "For in offering honor and homage to God we submit our mind to Him, and it is in this submission that its perfection consists. An object is perfected by its submitting to its superior. Thus the perfection of the body consists in its being vivified by the soul; and the perfection of the atmosphere in its being thoroughly illumined by the light of the sun."¹³ The fervent honoring of God renders man truly great and exalted, and imparts to him abundant gain and blessing for his spiritual life.

4. The worship due to the divine Majesty consists principally in acts of adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and propitiation.

As we have seen, God immeasurably excels all creatures, even the highest and sublimest of the heavenly spirits; He excels them not merely by His infinite dignity and perfection, but also by reason of His boundless power and dominion. Hence at all times and in all places every creature is dependent upon God. It behooves man as a rational creature consciously and freely and actively to acknowledge his absolute dependence upon God; in a word, to adore God. By adoration (*latria, adoratio latreutica, cultus latreuticus*) we understand that supreme and most perfect homage due, not to any mere creature, but only and solely to God on account of His infinite perfection, majesty, and sovereign authority.¹⁴ God alone is adorable; ¹⁵ He alone is the Most High, the almighty Creator and

¹² Religio magis de propinquo accedit ad Deum, quam aliae virtutes morales, in quantum operatur ea, quae directe et immediate ordinantur in honorem divinum. Et ideo religio praeeminet inter alias virtutes morales (S. Thom., IIa IIae, q. 81, a. 6).

¹³ S. Thom., IIa IIae, q. 81, a. 7.

¹⁴ Cum obsequium diversis possit exhiberi, speciali quodam et supremo modo Deo debetur, quia in eo est suprema ratio majestatis et domini; et ideo servitium vel obsequium, quod ei debetur, speciali nomine nominatur et dicitur latria (S. Thom., III, dis. 9, q. 1, a. 1, sol. 1).

¹⁵ To the whole humanity of Christ as well as to its single parts, for example, the Sacred Heart, the precious blood, the five wounds,—and also to the Eucharistic body and blood of Jesus Christ—supreme adoration is due. But at the same time it is to be observed that the human nature of Christ in itself

Ruler of creation. Those rights and perfections which belong exclusively to God are also to be acknowledged and honored by a special worship, the worship of adoration. Hence to adore God is at the same time to acknowledge, admire, and praise His majesty and sovereign power; it is profoundly to humble ourselves and, in a manner, to annihilate ourselves in the presence of His infinite grandeur and dignity; it is to submit, to consecrate, and to resign ourselves unreservedly to Him as our first beginning and our last end. Consequently adoration is the most excellent and the most precious homage that God can receive from creatures endowed with reason, man included.

Two other religious duties and acts are connected with adoration: namely, thanksgiving and petition. Because God is adorable, that is, because He possesses infinite perfections, unlimited power, and boundless goodness, He is the inexhaustible fountain from which proceeds every good and perfect gift in heaven and upon earth.¹⁶ All that we are, that we have and can do, in the order of nature and in the order of grace, is the outpouring of the overflowing love of God. With respect to the numberless gifts and graces that we have already received and daily yet receive, we owe heartfelt thanks for them, one and all, to God, our greatest benefactor. Moreover, all the good that we may expect, hope for, and implore, can likewise come to us only by the infinitely bounteous hand of God. Hence it behooves us to turn to Him in humble supplication.

To adore God, to thank Him, and to implore His gifts is a three-fold duty incumbent on man, for the simple reason that man is altogether dependent upon God. But in consequence of his having fallen away from God and become corrupt by sin, there devolves upon him, now laden with iniquity and deserving of punishment, still another obligation, namely, that of appeasing an offended and irritated God by appropriate propitiation or satisfaction.

(*in se*), but not on account of itself (*propter se*), is adorable. The foundation of this absolute adoration of the humanity of Christ lies in the hypostatic union; that is, the Son of God has made this human nature His own and is thereby truly man. Consequently, the one and entire Christ, that is, Christ also as man or in His human nature, must be adored. "By the grace of union He was worthy not only of the bliss of glory but also of laudative adoration, which is the worship of reverence due to God alone" (S. Bonav., *Brevil.*, IV, chap. 5).

¹⁶ Deus a quo bona cuncta procedunt; Deus virtutum, cujus est totum, quod est optimum (= bonum). *Orat. Eccles.*

5. The acts of religion must especially be interior, that is, be performed with mind and heart; they must also reveal themselves externally, appear visibly and in a manner become corporeal. Therefore the virtue of religion, as it must be exercised by man, comprises interior and exterior acts. At the same time we must not forget that exterior acts of divine worship, to be pleasing to God and conducive to His honor, should always be animated and enlivened by the interior. The exterior acts of religion should proceed from the heart, should express the interior life of the soul, and practically show forth the mind's religious reverence and submission, according to the words of the royal prophet: "My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God" (Ps. 83:3).¹⁷ Why is man commanded to honor God by outward acts?

a) Man is not, as the angels, purely spiritual; he is a creature composed of spirit and body. As such he must honor and glorify God in a manner appropriate to his corporeal and rational nature. But man renders the homage of his whole nature only when his body also takes part in his acts of divine worship, so that the interior worship is manifested by outward acts.¹⁸ Man in his entire being, created by God and dependent on Him, belongs in body and soul to God; therefore man is bound to serve and to worship God, his Creator, Preserver, and Lord, with the powers of his soul and body, by spiritual and corporal acts. Moreover, the body of a Christian is

¹⁷ Deo reverentiam et honorem exhibemus non propter seipsum, quia ex seipso est gloria plenus, cui nihil a creatura adici potest; sed propter nos, quia videlicet per hoc quod Deum reveremur et honoramus, mens nostra ei subicitur, et in hoc perfectio consistit: quaelibet enim res perficitur per hoc quod subditur suo superiori, sicut corpus per hoc quod vivificatur ab anima, et aer per hoc quod illuminatur a sole. . . . Mens autem humana indiget ad hoc quod conjungatur Deo, sensibilibus manuductione . . . et ideo in divino cultu necesse est aliquibus corporalibus uti, ut eis quasi signis quibusdam mens hominis excitetur ad spirituales actus, quibus Deo conjungitur. Et ideo religio habet quidem interiores actus quasi principales et per se ad religionem pertinentes; exteriores vero actus quasi secundarios et ad interiores actus ordinatos (S. Thom., IIa IIae, q. 8, a. 7).

¹⁸ Non est mirum, si haeretici, qui corporis nostri Deum esse auctorem negant, hujusmodi corporalia obsequia Deo fieri reprehendunt. In quo etiam apparet, quod se homines esse non meminerunt, dum sensibilibus sibi repraesentationem necessariam non judicant ad interiorem cognitionem et affectionem; nam experimento apparet quod per corporales actus anima excitatur ad aliquam cognitionem vel affectionem; unde manifestum est, convenienter etiam corporalibus quibusdam nos uti ad mentis nostrae elevationem in Deum (S. Thom., *Contra gentiles*, III, chap. 119).

the temple of the Holy Ghost, for it becomes sanctified by grace and is to be transfigured by glory. Hence the Church implores God to grant "that we may serve and please Him not only with the soul, but also with the body."¹⁹

b) The most intimate reciprocity exists between man's interior and exterior acts; they proceed from each other, they mutually assist and complete each other. Those things which stir man's inmost soul, such as joy and sorrow, love and anger, hope and fear, involuntarily betray their presence in his exterior: and this is especially the case with regard to the interior acts of religion. The fervent interior life, the ardent devotion and divine love of a pious soul, should be spontaneously manifested in the outward man. It should so take possession of his entire being as to impel him, not only "to sing in grace in his heart to God," but furthermore to pour himself out "in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles" (Col. 3:16), to join his hands, bend his knees, and prostrate his form upon the earth before the face of the Most High. "My heart hath been glad, and my tongue hath rejoiced" (Ps. 15:9), exclaims the royal prophet. "Let my soul be filled with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips" (Ps. 62:6). The exterior, on the other hand, affects the interior man: outward signs and acts arouse the affections of the spirit, inflame and nourish the fervor of devotion, refresh and invigorate the life of the soul. The interior acts of religion grow in perfection, become durable and constant, when they thus live and exercise their activity in the body, that is, when, so to speak, they assume flesh and blood. But when exterior divine worship is neglected, the interior soon languishes and dies.

c) Man is lord and master of irrational creatures, which also must be led to glorify the Creator. But it is principally by exterior worship that man can and must lead the visible creation to serve and praise the Creator. The use of creatures in religious service imparts to external nature a higher consecration and activity. For the building up and the adornment of the temple, the earth presents its treasures and precious metals; the ocean, its pearls; and spring, the magnificence of its flowers.

d) Not the individual man alone, but society also, as a religious body, must render to God due homage and submission. A common

¹⁹ Ut corpore tibi famulemur et mente; ut corpore tibi placeamus et mente.
Orat. Eccles.

public service (*cultus socialis*) requires external acts. Hence visible, outward worship is necessary as the bond of the religious community, the Church.

In accordance with our own nature and the express divine commandment, we should, then, honor God with our mental and bodily powers, that is, not merely by interior but also by outward acts we must adore Him, thank Him, beseech and propitiate Him.

This fourfold duty is fulfilled principally by prayer and sacrifice, which are intimately connected with each other, which permeate and complete each other. The interior acts of divine worship manifest themselves outwardly, in the first place, by vocal prayer, then in the offering of sacrifice, which, as the most sublime act of religion, is far more excellent and meritorious than any other prayer.

6. The virtue of religion is exceedingly precious and rich in blessings. It teaches us humbly to acknowledge our own littleness and misery and to render to God, of whose goodness there is no end (Ps. 144:3), due honor in all things, thereby winning for us the richest blessings. A spirit of reverential homage should, as a heavenly spice and consecration, pervade our whole life in order to render it daily more and more pleasing and meritorious in the eyes of God. To worship God should be our joy and happiness. "Come let us praise the Lord with joy, let us joyfully sing to God our Saviour. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving and make a joyful noise to Him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God and a great king above all gods. For in His hand are all the ends of the earth, and the heights of the mountains are His. For the sea is His, and He made it; and His hands formed the dry land. Come let us adore and fall down; and weep before the Lord that made us. For He is the Lord our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand" (Ps. 94:1-7). A true knowledge of God and a correct understanding of ourselves furnish the solid basis on which rest the virtue of religion and the spirit of the most submissive adoration. Ever seeking to know God and ourselves more perfectly is the higher wisdom and the science of the saints, and after this we should incessantly strive. St. Augustine prayed: "O God, grant that I may know Thee."²⁰ Give me an intimate knowledge of Thy adorable perfections, which are without measure or number: of Thy infinite grandeur and glory, Thy inconceivable power, wisdom, and good-

²⁰ *Soliloquies*, II, chap. 1.

ness, Thy unspeakable beauty, sweetness, and amiableness; penetrate me with a deep knowledge of the profound things of Thy divinity, which only the Holy Spirit searcheth (I Cor. 2:10), that is, the works and riches of Thy grace and glory, Thy infinitely just and merciful decrees, the wonderful and inscrutable dispensations of Thy providence. Grant me, moreover, a wholesome knowledge of myself. "O my God, enlighten my darkness" (Ps. 17:29) that Thy light may permit me to look down deeply into the abyss of my nothingness, my misery, my helplessness, my frailty, and my sinfulness.

CHAPTER II

THE MEANING OF SACRIFICE

SACRIFICE IN ITS PROPER SENSE

THE interior acts and affections of the virtue of religion, that is, of adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and satisfaction, manifest themselves in many ways, but find their supreme and most solemn expression in sacrifice. Sacrifice is a special act of divine service and differs essentially from all other acts of worship. To form a correct idea of sacrifice, we must inquire what is properly meant by sacrifice, and in what its essence consists. By sacrifice we understand the offering of a visible object, effected through any change, transformation, or destruction thereof, in order effectually to acknowledge the absolute majesty and sovereignty of God as well as man's total dependence and submission.

Among the requisites of sacrifice, the gift and its presentation, as well as the object and meaning of the outward act, chiefly deserve consideration.

1. Sacrifice is the offering of a visible object; hence, in the first place, a visible gift is necessary as an offering to God. This gift ought to correspond to the object in view and should, therefore, be selected with due regard to this purpose. Consequently the offering most appropriate to God is that which is the noblest in the visible creation, human life. Therefore Christ, to present the most perfect sacrifice, offered His precious life on the cross, according to the will of His Father. In no other case did God wish that human life should be sacrificed to Him, but rather contented Himself with the interior offering of the heart and its symbolical expression: namely, with the offering of an irrational creature substituted for human life and offered in its stead.¹ It is at once evident that especially the

¹ This substitution for man and human life is, as seen in the rite of the Old Testament for the offering of sacrifices, expressed and commanded in the

living and inanimate things which serve directly for the support of man, and thus may represent his life, may be appropriately substituted as offerings for man himself. Before Christ such offerings consisted, for example, of lambs, heifers, doves; bread, wine, oil, salt, incense.

As such gifts were offered to give honor to God, of course they had to be as perfect as possible, without blemish or defect.² So far as sacrifice is an external act of worship, its value depends chiefly on the dignity and interior disposition of the person who offers; the value of the gift presented also contributes to make the sacrifice more acceptable to God. Hence when proper sentiments animate the heart, only precious gifts will be selected as offerings for an action so exalted and holy. On the other hand, to make choice of indifferent, trifling, or imperfect objects as offerings is a sign that the proper spirit of sacrifice and respect for the divine Majesty are wanting (cf. Mal. 1:7 f.).

2. Not every gift offered to God is a sacrifice. It greatly depends on the manner of offering. Some change or destruction of the gift must take place to constitute a sacrifice. An entire destruction of the gift, or such as is at least morally equivalent, pertains essentially to the idea of sacrifice; hence it must have an outward form. Whatever has not been liturgically transformed (e.g., destroyed), cannot be a real sacrifice (*sacrificium*), but is only a religious gift (*oblatio*), essentially different from sacrifice.³ Thus we find in all sacrifices

clearest manner (compare the ceremony of laying hands on the head of the animal to be slain, the sacrifice of the two goats on the great Feast of Atonement). Recall also the sacrifice of Abraham. The patriarch was commanded to sacrifice his only son Isaac; but, in accordance with the will of God, he took a ram and offered it "for a holocaust instead of his son" (Gen. 22:13). The Fathers teach the same. Cum Patriarchae . . . quasi divino spiritu illustrati viderent, magno sibi opus esse obsequio ad suorum humanorum delictorum purgationem, pretium pro salute sua ei, qui vitam atque animam praeberet, se debere putabant. Sed cum nihil praestantius aut pretiosius anima sua haberent, quod dicarent, pro hac interim brutorum animalium vitam offerebant; pro sua anima sacrificia suae vitae vicaria offerentes (Euseb., *Demonstr. evang.*, I, chap. 10).

² Omne, quod est optimum, Deo est attribuendum (S. Thom., Ia IIae, q. 102, a. 3 ad 4).

³ Actus, quo res externas ad Dei cultum consecramus, dividitur in oblationem et sacrificium; omnes enim actus, quibus res externas Deo offerimus, sub aliquo ex illis duobus membris constituuntur. Et quamvis oblatio large dicta comprehendat sub se sacrificium; istud enim quaedam oblatio est, et sub genere oblationis continetur: tamen oblatio specialiter dicta (licet nomen

mentioned in Holy Writ, that there was always some mode of destruction or dissolution appropriate to the nature of the matter of the sacrifice. Thus the animals were slain and their blood poured on the altar, incense was consumed by fire, and wine was poured out. The intrinsic and more weighty reason why such a transformation, or destruction, of the gift is requisite for the act of sacrifice lies in the peculiar meaning and in the special object of sacrifice.

3. Sacrifice, that is, the transformation of the gift offered, is intended to represent symbolically that God possesses absolute authority and dominion over all things, and consequently that man is essentially dependent upon God, belongs to Him, and is subject to Him, and therefore that man is bound and is ready to give and dedicate his life entirely to God. God is the Supreme Ruler, infinitely holy, the primal source of all being, and the last end to which all being should return, "that God may be all in all" (I Cor. 15:28). And how could this grandeur and sovereignty of God over all that is and that can be outside of Him, be more appropriately expressed than by the destruction of a visible object, as is done in sacrifice? How could man's dependence on God and his obligation to serve God be more suitably made apparent than in sacrifice, in which a tangible, material object is destroyed in the place of a human life?

If the exterior rite of sacrifice is in reality to have this meaning and be a worship acceptable to God, it must also be an expression of the interior and spiritual sacrifice, and be animated and vivified by the essential sentiments of sacrifice.⁴ "The visible sacrifice," says St. Augustine, "is a holy sign of the invisible offering."⁵

generis retineat) a sacrificio distinguitur. Nam *oblatio* dicitur, quando res integra et immutata offertur; *sacrificium* vero vocatur, cum res immutatur in ipsa oblatione. . . . Res, quae sacrificantur, debent in ipso sacrificio (quod in hoc a simplici oblatione distinguitur) immutari vel mactatione vel combustione vel fractione vel divisione vel alio modo (Salmant., *De Incarn.*, disp. XXX, dub. 1, n. 1).

⁴ Oblatio sacrificii fit ad aliquid significandum. Significat autem sacrificium, quod offertur exterius, interius spirituale sacrificium, quo anima seipsam offert Deo (Ps. 50:19), quia exteriores actus religionis ad interiores ordinantur. Anima autem se offert Deo in sacrificium sicut principio suae creationis et sicut fini suae beatificationis. Secundum autem veram fidem solus Deus est creator animarum nostrarum; in solo etiam eo animae nostrae beatitudo consistit. Et ideo sicut soli Deo summo debemus sacrificium spirituale offerre, ita etiam soli ei debemus offerre exteriora sacrificia (S. Thom., *Ila Ilae*, q. 85, a. 2).

⁵ *De civit. Dei*, X, chap. 5.

Hence the offering of sacrifice essentially aims at glorifying God as the absolute Lord and Supreme Lawmaker of all creatures; and this is to adore God. This meaning is inseparably connected with sacrifice; it holds the first place, and is always an act of worship due to God alone, an act of adoration.⁶ With this main object thanksgiving and petition are naturally combined, inasmuch as the gift is presented also to honor and acknowledge God as the omnipotent and merciful dispenser of all good gifts, that is, to show oneself grateful for benefits received and to supplicate for new graces. In consequence of the fall of man, sacrifice assumes the additional characteristic of atonement. It is offered to express the need and desire of appeasing the irritated justice of God and of being thereby freed from sin and its punishment. Atonement for sin is made by sacrifice, since the offended majesty of God is thus glorified. Atonement restores to God the honor which He had been deprived of and makes satisfaction for the outrage done to Him. The destruction of the offering is especially suitable to this end. How can sinful man more worthily and more strikingly acknowledge himself deserving of death on account of his fault and profess his willingness to undergo death in satisfaction for it, than when, by the laying of his hands on the victim, he transfers to it his sins and, slaying it and shedding its blood, offers it to God instead of his own life? ⁷

History shows us atonement as always accompanying adoration and holding the rank next to it in the idea of sacrifice. The first and greatest want and desire of fallen man was to appease the anger of an offended God, to obtain mercy and forgiveness for sin; hence it is quite natural that among the guilty, unredeemed generations living before Christ the character of atonement should have been impressed in a marked manner upon their sacrifices.⁸ In whatever

⁶ Illo cultu, qui graece *λατρεία* dicitur, latine uno verbo dici non potest, cum sit quaedam proprie divinitati debita servitus, nec colimus nec colendum docemus nisi unum Deum. Cum autem ad hunc cultum pertineat oblatio sacrificii, nullo modo tale aliquid offerimus aut offerendum praecipimus vel cuiquam martyri vel cuiquam sanctae animae vel cuiquam angelo (S. August., *Contra Faust.*, XX, chap. 21).

⁷ Per occisionem animalium significatur destructio peccatorum, et quod homines erant digni occisione pro peccatis suis, ac si illa animalia loco eorum occiderentur ad significandam expiationem peccatorum (S. Thom., Ia IIae, q. 102, a. ad 5).

⁸ Aeterne Deus, qui post offendicula lapsus primi hominis instituisti tibi offerri propitiatorii delibamenta libaminis, ut culpa quae praecesserat per

necessity sinful man presents himself before God, whether to adore, to thank, or to petition Him, man's first and deepest conviction is that he is a poor sinner, unworthy of being heard and answered by God. Hence it is most natural that precisely in the most ardent acts of worship, such as sacrifice, he will always, and at the very start, feel deeply conscious that he is laden with sins and debts to God. How can he, a sinner, more worthily acknowledge the divine Majesty of the infinitely holy and just God, show his gratitude towards Him in a more appropriate way, and approach Him with greater confidence of being heard?

It is for this fourfold end that sacrifices are offered: hence there are sacrifices of adoration, of thanksgiving, of petition, and of propitiation.⁹ These divisions are not made according to the exclusive object of sacrifice, but only with reference to its predominant end. This means only that in the rite of celebration and in the intention of the person offering, one of these ends is chiefly intended, without, however, excluding the others. Every sacrifice has in itself a fourfold signification: it serves at one and the same time to glorify the divine Majesty (*sacrificium laetiticum*), to return thanks for benefits received (*sacrificium eucharisticum*), to petition for new benefits (*sacrificium impetratorium*), and lastly, to satisfy for sin and its punishment (*sacrificium propitiatorium*).

4. Since sacrifice has a symbolical meaning and is a constituent part of public worship, it must positively be instituted by a legitimate authority.¹⁰ The sacrificial service of the Old Law was regulated and ordained by God Himself in its most minute details. In the New Law the essential elements and features of worship proceed directly from Jesus Christ. First of them all is sacrifice, which constitutes the fundamental and central act of divine service. Neither to the Synagogue nor to the Church did God impart the right or the power to institute sacrifices: in His infinite mercy He Himself condescended to prescribe the sacrifices by which He would be honored and

superbiam, futuris temporibus expiaretur per munera, quibus honorarentur altaria, honorificarentur et templa (*Pontif. Roman., De alt. port. consecrat.*).

⁹ Maxime obligatur homo Deo propter ejus majestatem (*sacrifice of adoration*), secundo propter offensam commissam (*sacrifice of propitiation*), tertio propter beneficia jam suscepta (*sacrifice of thanksgiving*), quarto propter beneficia sperata (*sacrifice of petition*) (S. Thom., Ia IIae, q. 102, a. 3 ad 10).

¹⁰ Oblatio sacrificii in communi est de lege naturali; sed determinatio sacrificiorum est ex institutione humana vel divina (S. Thom., IIa IIae, q. 85, a. 1 ad 1).

propitiated. No mere man, but our divine Saviour alone could institute so sublime and so excellent a sacrifice as we possess in the Mass.

5. Sacrifice is an act of worship which cannot be performed by anyone but a priest. He alone who has been especially called and empowered, that is, only the priest, can and may perform the office of sacrificer. Sacrifice and priesthood are inseparably connected: no sacrifice can exist without a priesthood, and no priesthood without a sacrifice. A special priesthood is, therefore, required by the very nature of sacrifice, which, as a public and solemn act of worship, must be performed in the name and for the welfare of the religious body by a duly authorized person. Consequently it is highly proper that only he who is, at least by his office and dignity, especially separated from sinners and sanctified, should present himself in sacrifice as mediator between an offended God and sinful man. "For every high priest taken from among men," so writes the Apostle, "is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. 5:1). Evidently it belongs to God alone to bestow the honor of the priestly vocation and office, and to determine "who belong to Him, and the holy He will join to Himself; and whom He shall choose, they shall approach to Him" (Num. 16:5).

6. Nor is it less evident that for the celebration of so holy and solemn an act of worship it is especially becoming to make choice of a sanctified place; such a place, where sacrifice is offered, is called an altar. Wherever sacrifice and priesthood are found, there also is an altar.

7. Thus it follows that sacrifice is the most exalted and perfect manner of honoring God, and therefore excels all other acts of worship. It also constitutes the principal act and is the central point of the whole divine service. In this all agree that man by the offering of sacrifice renders to God the highest possible honor and homage. In sacrifice the interior adoration of the divine Majesty attains its fullest expression. Sacrifice is essentially an act of adoration and therefore always includes the acknowledgment of the divinity of Him to whom it is offered. Among all acts of worship it is the prerogative of God, and may be offered only to the one true God.¹¹

¹¹ *Sacrificium certe, nullus hominum est, qui audeat dicere deberi nisi Deo . . . quis vero sacrificandum censuit nisi ei, quem Deum aut scivit aut putavit aut finxit?* (S. August, *De civit. Dei*, X, chap. 4.) *Populus christianus*

To offer it to a creature, even to the greatest saint or the most exalted of the angels, would be heinous idolatry. At all times sacrifices have been offered to God¹² to acknowledge in the most perfect and solemn manner His sovereignty, to express gratitude for favors, to implore fresh blessings from Him, and especially to avert the scourges of His avenging justice.

SACRIFICE IN A FIGURATIVE SENSE

1. Only such acts of divine worship as contain in themselves all the essential requisites and characteristics of the idea of sacrifice, as explained above, are and may be called sacrifices in the proper sense. In the religious, ascetical life, virtuous acts, differing essentially from sacrifice, are often called by that name. "Sacrifice" applied to such acts is not to be taken in its original and strict meaning, but is to be understood in a derivative and improper sense: acts of virtue are sacrifices in a broader sense and are called such. The word sacrifice, for example, is often used figuratively to designate good, meritorious actions, since they bear a certain resemblance and relationship to true and real sacrifices.¹³ This resemblance and relationship consist chiefly in two points: sacrifice serves to glorify God, and is ac-

memorias martyrum religiosa solemnitate concelebrat et ad excitandam imitationem et ut meritis eorum consocietur atque orationibus adjuvetur, ita tamen ut nulli martyrum, sed ipsi Deo martyrum, quamvis in memoriis martyrum, constituamus altaria. Quis enim antistitum in locis sanctorum corporum assistens altari aliquando dixit: Offerimus tibi, Petre aut Paule aut Cypriane, sed quod offertur, offertur Deo, qui martyres coronavit (*Idem., Contra Faust., XX, chap. 21*).

¹² Many theologians assert that sacrifice is strictly required and commanded by the very law of nature, that it is a natural necessity. Others do not grant this, but say that sacrifice only in an eminent degree accords with the law of nature, i.e., that it corresponds to the law of nature; that not only the interior but also the exterior worship of God is assuredly commanded by the natural law, but that this obligation may be fulfilled by performing other acts, for example, by vocal prayer, by the joining of the hands and the bending of the knees. Undoubtedly sacrifice is necessary in order to make exterior worship perfect. The Church teaches that human nature calls for a visible sacrifice (*Trid., Sess. XXI, cap. 1*).

¹³ Sicut cultus Dei multipliciter dicitur, sic et sacrificium. Est enim sacrificium bonae operationis, et sacrificium devotae orationis, et sacrificium immolationis. Primum est virtutum omnium; secundum virtutum theologiarum; tertium spectat ad ipsam latriam. Ipsius enim latriae est sacrificium offerre Deo, et hoc sacrificium soli Deo debetur, et latria dicit cultum soli Deo debitum (*S. Bonav., III, dist. 9, a. 2, q. 2*).

complished by the destruction of a sensible object. The various acts of virtue, therefore, resemble sacrifice if they are performed with the right disposition and intention of giving glory to God,¹⁴ and if they require a certain destruction, that is, the mortification of the perverse and sensual nature of man.¹⁵ The base, sensual, earthly, material life must be curbed and overcome; it must die, so that the higher, spiritual, heavenly life of grace may be vigorously and fully developed in man. But mortification is painful to man and costs labor and exertion. We are accustomed to think of this necessary renunciation and self-denial chiefly when we designate as a sacrifice individual acts of virtue and a life that is wholly Christian and perfect.¹⁶ Some examples may throw light on this explanation and confirm what has been said.¹⁷

2. Acts of charity, works of mercy, by which the poor and needy are assisted and consoled, are called sacrifices by the Apostle, since

¹⁴ According to St. Augustine, our works are sacrifices only when we perform them in order to be closely united to God, that is, when we refer them to that Supreme Good in whom consists our happiness. Unde ipsa misericordia, qua homini subvenitur, si propter Deum non fit, non est sacrificium. Etsi enim ab homine fit vel offertur, tamen sacrificium res divina (*something divine*) est: unde et hoc quoque vocabulo [*sacrificium from sacrum facere*] id Latini veteres appellaverint (S. August., *De civit. Dei*, X, chap. 6). Omne opus virtutis dicitur esse sacrificium, in quantum ordinatur ad Dei reverentiam (S. Thom. IIa IIae, q. 81, a. 4 ad 1).

¹⁵ Mortification (*mortificatio*) is, as Alvarez de Paz aptly says: mors quaedam specialis, qua id, quod Deo displicet et homini nocet, corrumpitur, ut mens nostra jucundiori vita vestiatur (*De exterminat. mali et promot. boni*, Bk. II, Part III, chap. 3). Bona mors, quae vitam non aufert, sed transfert in melius, bona, qua non corpus cadit, sed anima sublevatur (S. Bernard., *In Cantica serm.*, LII, n. 4).

¹⁶ In Holy Scripture where the word sacrifice is simply used, that is, without modification or explanation, sacrifice is to be understood in its strict sense; but when good works are called sacrifices, that is, when the word is taken in a broader sense, this is, as a rule, indicated by additional words, or at least by the context. When sacrifices in the strict sense are enumerated together with such acts of virtue, or rather placed in contrast with them, they are called simply sacrifices, e.g., Misericordiam volui et non sacrificium, et scientiam Dei plus quam holocausta (Osee 6:6).

¹⁷ Triplex est hominis bonum: primum quidem est bonum animae, quod Deo offertur interiori quodam sacrificio per devotionem et orationem et alios hujusmodi interiores actus; et hoc est principale sacrificium. Secundum est bonum corporis, quod Deo quodammodo offertur per martyrium et abstinenciam seu continentiam. Tertium est bonum exteriorum rerum, de quo sacrificium offertur Deo: directe quidem, quando immediate res nostras Deo offerimus, mediate autem, quando eas communicamus proximis propter Deum (S. Thom., Ia IIae, q. 85, a. 3 ad 2).

the Christian intends, in the person of the poor, to give something to God Himself by the alms which he bestows: "Do not forget to do good and to impart; for by such sacrifices (*talibus hostiis*) God's favor is obtained" (Heb. 13:16).¹⁸ The same apostle called the alms sent to him by the Christians of Philippi, "an odor of sweetness, an acceptable sacrifice (*hostia*), pleasing to God" (Phil. 4:18).¹⁹

To renounce sensual pleasures, to treat the body with rigor and austerity, is still more difficult than to forego worldly goods and possessions; hence St. Paul exhorts the Christians "by the mercy of God that you present your bodies [through mortification] a living sacrifice (*hostiam*), holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1).²⁰

A sacrifice which God does not reject but graciously accepts, is "an afflicted spirit," "a contrite and humbled heart," that is, a spirit and a heart which, wounded with love and sorrow, penitently detests the sins and transgressions of its past life (cf. Ps. 50:19).

Prayer stands in intimate relation with sacrifice; for the spirit of prayer and the sentiments of the heart constitute the intrinsic being of sacrifice, the soul of the exterior rite of sacrifice. Hence, as sacrifice is called effective or real prayer (*oratio realis*), on the other hand, prayer is also called sacrifice. Thus the Prophet designated the prayer of praise and thanksgiving as "the calves [sacrifice] of the lips" (Osee 14:3). Referring to this, the Apostle writes: "Let us offer the sacrifice of praise (*hostiam laudis*) always to God, that is to say, the fruit of lips confessing His name" (Heb. 13:15). In the Psalms we are invited "to offer to God the sacrifice of praise (*sacrificium laudis*)" (Ps. 49:14).

A life that is entirely consumed amid suffering and struggle, in labor and fatigue, for God and His honor, is a holocaust: "As gold

¹⁸ The annex *talibus* (such) shows that the word *hostia* (sacrifice) is here used not in its strict sense.

¹⁹ Beatus Apostolus Paulus in necessitate pressuræ adjutus a fratribus opera bona quæ fiunt, sacrificia Dei dixit esse (Phil. 4:18). . . . Nam quando quis miseretur pauperis, Deum foenerat (*lends to God with interest*); et qui dat minimis, Deo donat, spiritualiter Deo suavitatis odorem sacrificat (S. Cyprian., *De orat. domin.*, chap. 33).

²⁰ Exhibet homo Deo corpus suum ut *hostiam* tripliciter: *uno* quidem modo, quando aliquis corpus suum exponit passioni et morti propter Deum. . . . Secundo per hoc quod homo corpus suum jejuniis et vigiliis macerat ad serviendum Deo. . . . *Tertio* per hoc quod homo corpus suum exhibet ad opera justitiæ et divini cultus exsequenda (S. Thom., *In ep. ad Rom.*, 12:1).

in the furnace He hath proved them, and as a victim of a holocaust He hath received them" (Wisd. 3:6). "The man also who in God's name consecrates himself wholly to God is a sacrifice, so far as he dies to the world, to live to God" (St. Augustine, *City of God*, X, 6).

A sacrifice most perfect and acceptable to the divine Majesty is pre-eminently the renunciation and consecration of religious persons, who, by the three perpetual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, freely and cheerfully renounce the earth and its goods, the world and its pleasures, to devote and dedicate themselves in body and soul to the service of God.²¹

Sacrifice in a broader sense made up the unspeakably humble and painful life of the poor, virginal, and obedient Jesus, while His death on the cross for the redemption of the world is a sacrifice in the strictest sense. The same cannot be said of the bloody death of the martyrs, however precious it was in the sight of the Lord; their martyrdom had not the character of a real sacrifice. The martyrs indeed (as the Church sings in the Divine Office) loved Christ during life and imitated Him in their death; for God's sake they indeed offered their bodies to the torments of death and shed their blood gloriously for the Lord, thereby obtaining unfading crowns. Still they were destined neither as sacrificing priests nor as sacrificial victims to consecrate their lives to the adoration and propitiation of the divine Majesty, but they suffered a violent death only in testimony and defense of the truth, holiness, and divinity of the Catholic faith.²² "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" (Ps. 115:15), yet none of these innocent victims accomplished the redemption of the world. The just received crowns of victory, but they did not bestow them; from the fortitude of the faithful proceeded models of patience, not gifts of justice."²³

3. To sacrifice taken in a broad or figurative sense corresponds the figurative or general priesthood of all the faithful. Hence the

²¹ Religionis status est quoddam holocaustum, per quod aliquis totaliter se et sua offert Deo (S. Thom., IIa IIae, q. 186, a. 7). Totum Deo dedit, qui seipsum obtuli (S. Hieron., *Epist. 53 ad Paulin.*, n. 11).

²² It is only in a wider sense that the Church speaks of an *odoriferum martyrii sacrificium* (*Martyrol. Roman.*, Feb. 18). Etsi fratres pro fratribus moriantur, tamen in fratrum peccatorum remissionem nullius sanguis martyris funditur. quod fecit ille [Christus] pro nobis: neque in hoc quid imitemur, sed quid gratularemur contulit nobis (S. August. *In Joann.*, LXXXIV, 2.)

²³ S. Leo, *Serm.*, LXIV (LXI), *de Passione Dom.* XIII.

Prince of the Apostles called all Christians "a holy priesthood," chosen and qualified "to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 2:5).²⁴ The faithful constitute "a holy priesthood" in so far as they have, by the sacramental character and the sacramental grace of baptism, separated themselves from sinners, being dedicted and sanctified, that by the "spiritual sacrifices" of a new and virtuous life, that is, by prayer, fervor, piety, self-denial, patience, compunction, benevolence, and charity for their neighbor, they may honor and glorify God. As often as we perform a good act, with an upright intention directed to God, especially if in the midst of temptation and struggle, we offer a sacrifice to God.²⁵

4. With sacrifice and priesthood the altar is inseparably connected. The word altar is also often used in a broader, figurative sense. Thus St. Augustine writes: "We are the temple of God, because He deigns to dwell in us. Our heart is His altar when it is raised toward Him; to Him we immolate bloody sacrifices when we combat unto blood for His truth; to Him we burn most fragrant incense when we are on fire in His presence with devout and holy love; to Him we present the sacrifice of humility and praise upon the altar of our heart in the fire of inflamed love."²⁶

THE MEANING AND EFFICACY OF THE SACRIFICES OF THE OLD LAW

1. By the sin of our first parents, in whom all mankind fell, the original plan of salvation was frustrated. But God did not wish the unhappy world to perish in an abyss of temporal misery and eternal death. In the excess of His goodness and love, He determined to raise man from his fall and again to enrich him with gifts of grace and glory. This restoration was to be effected in the fullness of time, "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24). Jesus Christ, by His sacrifice on the cross for the redemption of the world, is the salvation of all ages; from the beginning there was no

²⁴ Sancti non dicuntur sacerdotes ab oblatione corporis Domini, sed sui, quia unusquisque corpus suum offert hostiam viventem (Rom. 12:1). (S. Bonav., IV, dist. 13, a. 1, q. 2 ad 4.)

²⁵ Quisquis igitur omnibus praeceptis coelestibus obtemperavit, hic cultor est verus Dei, cujus sacrificia sunt mansuetudo animi et vita innocens et actus boni. Quae omnia qui exhibet, toties sacrificat, quoties bonum aliquid ac pium fecerit (Lactant., *Divin. instit.*, VI, chap. 24).

²⁶ *De civit. Dei*, X, chap. 3.

name under heaven given to men whereby they were to be saved, other than the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). Already before the Christian era no one could obtain the life of grace and eternal salvation except by adhering to Christ; this adherence could then be effected only by supernatural faith in the promised and coming Redeemer. That this faith, necessary to salvation, as well as the hope and charity springing from it, might be within reach of all men, God always imparted His supernatural help and grace.

The mystery of the redemption was at no time inefficacious, not even in the Old Testament. It was not by a new decree or through a later mercy that God cared for the welfare of man, but from the beginning of the world He opened and designated for all one and the same fountain of salvation. For the grace of God, whereby all the saints have ever been justified, was merely increased at the birth of Christ, and not then first imparted. This mystery of ineffable love, which at present fills the world, was so powerfully efficacious even in all its figures that they who believed in the promised redemption did not receive less than they who have received the gift.²⁷

2. Among the means of bringing man into supernatural communication with God and the expected Redeemer, sacrifices already before the coming of Christ held a prominent place; indeed, the very first place. As Abel even at the threshold of Paradise, so during the patriarchal age, Noe, Melchisedech, Abraham, Jacob, offered sacrifices to God, and God graciously accepted them. Then God Himself through Moses most precisely and minutely regulated and prescribed the entire sacrificial rite of the Old Law. As the Mosaic sacrifices were celebrated by the express will and command of God, thus also were sacrifices in patriarchal times undoubtedly offered up in consequence of a clearer light and by divine inspiration. Hence the Apostle writes: "By faith Abel offered to God a sacrifice exceeding that of Cain" (Heb. 11:4).

In the ceremonial of the Old Law there were bloody and unbloody sacrifices. The bloody sacrifices were the principal ones and the most frequent. They were divided into various kinds. (a) Holocaust: in this the animal to be sacrificed was entirely consumed by fire; it was chiefly a sacrifice of praise and worship in acknowledg-

²⁷ S. Leo, *Serm.*, XXIII (XXII), *de Nativitate Dom.* III.

ment of the divine Majesty.²⁸ (b) Peace offering, in which a portion of the flesh was burned, another part was eaten at the sacrificial meal by those who had offered it, and the third part was reserved for the priests; the same had pre-eminently the character of thanksgiving or petition.²⁹ (c) Offering of propitiation, called also sin offering: in this a portion of the flesh was burned, and the remainder was consumed by the priests.³⁰ Whenever the offering was made for the sins of the whole people, or in a particular manner for the sins of the priests, then all was burned. The sacrifice of propitiation had principally for its object to appease the wrath of God and to obtain the pardon of sin.

3. These sacrifices previous to the Christian era had chiefly the meaning and object essential to every sacrifice: they were acts of adoration, gratitude, petition, and atonement. But to be truly acceptable to God, to possess value and merit in His sight, they were to be offered with the proper dispositions, that is, the exterior rite was to be the true expression of the interior act of sacrifice, of submission, resignation, homage, worship, praise, gratitude, sorrow, and compunction.

In consequence of the divine dispensation, the sacrifices of the Old Law had a still higher meaning, inasmuch as they were typically to prefigure and represent the approaching sacrifice of Christ on the cross.³¹ In this consisted their chief object and value.³² The typical

²⁸ Totum comburebatur, ut, sicut totum animal resolutum in vaporem sursum ascendebat, ita etiam significaretur, totum hominem et omnia quae ipsius sunt, Dei dominio esse subjecta et ei esse offerenda (S. Thom., Ia IIae, q. 102, a. 3 ad 8).

²⁹ Hostia pacifica offerebatur Deo vel pro gratiarum actione, vel pro salute et prosperitate offerentium, ex debito beneficii vel accipiendi vel accepti. Et ista dividebatur in tres partes; nam una pars incendebatur in honorem Dei, alia pars cedebat in usum sacerdotum, tertia vero pars in usum offerentium, ad significandum quod salus hominis procedit a Deo dirigentibus ministris Dei, et cooperantibus ipsis hominibus, qui salvantur (*Ibid.*).

³⁰ Una pars comburebatur, altera vero cedebat in usum sacerdotum, ad significandum, quod expiatio peccatorum fit a Deo per ministerium sacerdotum (*Ibid.*).

³¹ Per illud singulare sacrificium, in quo Mediator est immolatus, quod unum multae in Lege victimae figurabant, pacificantur coelestia cum terrestribus et terrestria cum coelestibus (S. August., *Enchirid.*, chap. 16, n. 62).

³² Patet quare sacrificia placuerunt Deo tempore legis scriptae et spectabant ad cultum divinum, pro eo quod omnia erant signa profitentia et praefigurantia reparationem humanam, quae fuit per oblationem Agni immaculati et effusionem sanguinis Jesu Christi (S. Bonav., *De Myst. Trin.*, q. 1, a. 2).

character of these sacrifices, which rendered them figures of the sacrifice of Christ, is beyond all doubt most exalted, for St. Paul fully explains and proves this (Heb., chaps. 8-10). The Old Law was indeed "a bringing in of a better hope, by which we draw nigh to God" (Heb. 7:19), that is, the preparation for the New and Eternal Covenant. As St. Augustine teaches, "in the Old Law the New was hidden, and in the New Law the Old was unfolded." ³³ "In the Old Testament the New was prefigured; the former was the figure, the latter is the full expression of truth." ³⁴

Now, if the entire Old Testament, and especially its religious rite, was figurative for the future and preparatory for Christ, should not also the sacrifices which formed the essential part of the exterior service have borne the same character and have served the same end? The Old Law contained only "a shadow of the good things to come" (Heb. 10:1), that is, the heavenly gifts of grace which Christ acquired for us and which He entrusted to the Church. For this reason the ancient sacrifices were but shadows of the great atoning sacrifice of redemption on Golgotha.

4. If we inquire into the efficacy of these sacrifices prior to the time of Christ, their propitiatory character is most striking. This is more clearly and forcibly evidenced in the bloody sacrifices, which were also the most frequently offered, since in the Old Law the consciousness of unpropitiated and punishable guilt was still predominant. But these bloody sacrifices had not the power of appeasing an offended and irritated God and of releasing wretched man from the crushing burden of sin. The Apostle says, indeed: "It is impossible that with the blood of oxen and goats sin should be taken away" (Heb. 10:4). He therefore calls those sacrifices "weak and needy elements" (Gal. 4:9), which could by no means make the persons who offered them perfect (Heb. 10:1), that is, which could neither procure for man the pardon of sin nor effect interior purification and sanctification.

The carrying out and offering (*ex opere operato*) of the Mosaic sacrifices imparted only the exterior or legal purification,³⁵ that is, they caused the Israelite to be no longer regarded as legally unclean, and he was, consequently, again permitted to take part in

³³ *De catech. rud.*, n. 8.

³⁴ *Enarrat. in Ps.*, 84:4.

³⁵ The Apostle calls the same *emundatio carnis* (Heb. 9:13); the theologians style it *expiatio et sanctitas legalis*.

the public service of God. Thus these sacrifices expressed the necessity of real atonement and interior purification, and, at the same time, referred to the future sacrifice of the cross as the only source of reconciliation, forgiveness of sin, and sanctification. As these imperfect sacrifices foreshadowed, promised, and pledged the perfect redeeming sacrifice of Christ, they were capable of exciting and fostering true sentiments of sacrifice, that is, they animated the Israelites to faith and hope, and disposed them to contrition and penance, which are the necessary conditions of acquiring interior justification (*ex opere operantis*).³⁶ In the Old Law there was no sacrament which by its own power and efficacy (*ex opere operato*) could justify and sanctify the properly disposed recipient; perfect contrition was then the only means left to adults of obtaining true sanctity and becoming children of God. Only by a believing hope and contrite love could men (*ex opere operantis*) draw remission of sin and justification beforehand from the fountain of grace which was to be opened at the foot of the cross.

Thus "the old sacrifices were varied and manifold figures of the real sacrifice of Christ, inasmuch as this one sacrifice was prefigured by many, just as when one idea is expressed in many ways, in order to make a deeper impression."³⁷ Thus the eye of faith was directed to the future; the coming sacrifice of the Redeemer was confidently and eagerly grasped by the Jews, and thus the fruit of the sacrifice of the cross was won beforehand. For this the presentiment, the obscure knowledge of the higher meaning concealed in the sacrificial rite, was sufficient. Such an understanding of what these sacrifices prefigured could not have been unknown even to the mass of the people, still less could it have been wanting to the specially favored, to whom higher lights concerning the work of redemption were imparted.³⁸

³⁶ Poterat mens fidelium tempore legis per fidem conjungi Christo incarnato et passo, et ita ex fide Christi justificabantur, cujus fidei quaedam protestatio erat hujusmodi caerimoniarum (sc. sacrificiorum) observatio, in quantum erant figura Christi. Et ideo pro peccatis offerebantur sacrificia quaedam in veteri lege, non quia ipsa sacrificia a peccato emundarent, sed quia erant quaedam protestationes fidei, quae a peccato mundabat. . . . Peccatum dimittebatur non vi sacrificiorum, sed ex fide et devotione offerentium (S. Thom., Ia IIae, q. 103, a. 2).

³⁷ S. August, *De civit. Dei*, X, chap. 20. Cf. *idem., Enarrat. in Ps.*, 39: 12.

³⁸ Quamvis non omnes sciant explicite virtutem sacrificiorum, sciunt tamen implicite, sicut et habent fidem implicitam (S. Thom., Ia IIae, q. 85, a. 4 ad 2).

SECTION II

The Sacrifice of the Cross

CHAPTER III

JESUS CHRIST, PRIEST AND VICTIM

THE REPRESENTATIVE HEAD OF THE HUMAN RACE

1. In the sacrifices of the Old Law irrational creatures (objects of possession and enjoyment belonging to the animal or vegetable kingdom) were substituted for man and offered to God in place of human life. Such a substitution was imperfect, inefficacious, and consequently inadequate. The blood of animals could not atone for sin or relieve man of its debt; but rather kept the remembrance of unatoned sin continually alive in those who offered these sacrifices (Heb. 10:3 f.), thus awakening the desire of the promised sacrifice which would, in an incomparably more exalted way, take man's place with God and offer a perfect atonement for the guilt of all sin. This vicarious sacrifice the God-man, Jesus Christ, offered, inasmuch as He, the head of the human race, gave His life by a bloody death to present to God, not merely a strictly equivalent or fully sufficient, but even a superabundant and overflowing satisfaction for the sins of all mankind.

2. Jesus Christ answered for us and represented us before God, that is, He performed all that God demanded in order to grant us pardon and restore us to grace; and He indeed performed it for us, that is, in our stead. What we were obliged to do and yet were unable to accomplish, Jesus Christ, as our substitute, performed for us: He appeased the divine justice and majesty. The fruits of His

sacrifice were to redound to our benefit; His satisfaction and merits He wished to make over to us, to present them to us that we, being released from sin and its punishment, should also be enriched with the gifts of grace.

To become, in the most perfect manner imaginable, our substitute or representative, and to satisfy and merit for us, the Son of God assumed human nature by being born of our race. According to the flesh He was truly, though indeed in a supernatural manner, of our race; He was one of us, He was our brother. As Christ "gave Himself a redemption for all" (I Tim. 2:6), He did not give Himself for strangers, but for His own, for His brethren. "O wonderful exchange," exclaims the Church; "the Creator of mankind takes a body animated by a soul, and deigns to be born of the Virgin; and proceeding as man, supernaturally conceived, He imparts to us His divine being!" From this it follows that Jesus is the spiritual, supernatural head of mankind; this constitutes the mystical body, for which Christ, the head, offered satisfaction and gained merit. Christ is the second Adam; as such He superabundantly repaired what the first Adam had destroyed and corrupted. "Therefore as by the offense of one, unto all men to condemnation; so also by the justice of one, unto all men to justification of life" (Rom. 5:18); that is, as the sin of Adam has come by inheritance upon all his posterity, because God established him the head of the human family, so, in like manner, the merits and satisfaction of Christ are beneficial to all, because in the order of grace God placed Him at the head of the human race.

3. This consoling truth of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ is frequently alluded to in the writings of the Old and New Testaments; it is one of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion.

How clearly the Prophet beholds and announces (Isa. 53:1-11) the vicarious sacrifice of the sufferings and life of the coming Redeemer! He calls Christ "a man of sorrows," and says of Him that "He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows," and that "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins," and this because "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."¹ Our Lord voluntarily and with generous love subjected Himself to these torments and to death, in order to make satisfaction for us; hence the Prophet adds: "He was offered because it was His own

¹ Hic peccata nostra portavit et pro nobis dolet (*Resp. eccl.*).

will." The fruit of Christ's propitiatory sufferings consists in this, that "by His bruises we are healed."

The Prince of the Apostles had these prophetic words in view when he exhorted the Christians to endure even unjustly inflicted sufferings in silence and with cheerful resignation, looking up to Christ, who suffered not only innocently and patiently, but in our stead, on account of our sins. "Christ," thus he writes, "who His own self bore our sins in His body upon the tree [of the cross]; that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice" (I Pet. 2:24). Christ, the Apostle would say, perfectly innocent and sinless, laid the burden of our sins upon Himself and effaced them, inasmuch as He, by the sacrifice of His death on the cross, atoned and satisfied for them. This expiatory and healing power of the blood of Christ should urge and strengthen us to live hereafter a life of justice and holiness.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13); that is, the innocent Lamb of God took upon Himself the burden and punishment of sin in order to free us from it. "But God commendeth His charity toward us, because when as yet we were sinners . . . Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8 f.). "In this we have known the charity of God, because He hath laid down His life for us" (I John 3:16). "Christ died for all; that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them" (II Cor. 5:15). The excess of divine love is truly shown in this, that the eternal, the only-begotten Son of God, the King of Glory, died the most painful death of the cross, to rescue us poor sinners from the abyss of misery and eternal damnation.

4. This is that great "mystery of godliness, which was manifested in the flesh, was justified in the spirit, appeared unto angels, hath been preached unto the Gentiles, . . . is taken up to glory" (I Tim. 3:16). O adorable mystery! what unmerited, incomprehensible favor and mercy of God radiate toward us in this marvelous decree and work of the redemption! God's justice required a perfect, infinite satisfaction; and His mercy gave us the God-man, Jesus Christ, who as our mediator offered this satisfaction for us. God, who "spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with Him, given us all things?" (Rom. 8:32.) Thus hath God, whose mercies are without number and whose goodness is an inexhaustible treasure, Himself bestowed on us this great atoning sacrifice, which in return He deigned to accept from

us.² Let us, then, gratefully acknowledge this with the beloved disciple: "In this is charity: not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:10). Still more powerfully should we be penetrated with the desire to return love for love and with most joyful thanksgiving, when we, with full right, apply personally to ourselves what has been done for all; when we so consider the great benefit of redemption as if it had been conferred on ourselves only, as the Apostle so simply and so touchingly expresses it: "And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me. And that I now live in the flesh; I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).³ Thus everyone may and should exclaim: Christ has loved me, and for the love of me has sacrificed His blood and life for me, for my sins; for our Saviour in the Garden of Olives and on the cross had each one of us present to His mind and in His heart, for each one of us He suffered and died, as though each one of us had been alone in the world. This thought should inflame and inspire our heart to make every sacrifice in the service of God. *Quaerens me sedisti lassus, redemisti crucem passus, tantus labor non sit cassus. (Dies irae.)*

THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS CHRIST

As the representative of the whole human race, Jesus Christ rendered to the offended majesty of God a satisfaction equaling and far exceeding the guilt, in order to take away the sin which was the cause of the separation and enmity existing between heaven and earth. Hence, as mediator between God and man (I Tim. 2:5), He established peace, consummated the work of reconciliation, and that too, by the Cross, that is, by the bloody death of the cross, inasmuch

² Quid misericordius intellegi valet, quam cum peccatori damnato aeternis tormentis et unde se redimat non habenti, Deus Pater dicit: Accipe Unigenitum meum et da pro te; et ipse Filius: Tolle me et redde pro te? (S. Anselm., *Cur Deus homo*, chap. 9.)

³ Licet ego *in carne vivam*, non tamen secundum carnis inclinationes vivo, sed spiritualiter vivo in fide Christi, Filii Dei et veri Dei qui *dilexit me et tradidit semet ipsum* in mortem *pro me*. Dilexit me amore immenso et aeterno, et in tempore obtulit se in sacrificium pro me, et licet omnes dilexerit sitque pro omnibus mortuus, dico tamen, ipsum *me dilexisse et pro me esse mortuum*, qui adeo me dilexit, tantumque ei debeo, quantum si me solum dilexisset et pro me solo passus esset (Arias, *Thesaur. inexhaust.*, I, Tr. IV, chap. 18).

as He offered Himself and His life as a propitiatory sacrifice. Christ's death on the cross is, therefore, a sacrifice in the strictest sense of the word, truly a death offered in sacrifice and truly a victim. Hence, as Christ during His mortal life on earth exercised the priestly office, i.e., as He really and truly offered sacrifice, He must also be really and truly a priest; for only a priest can and may offer sacrifice. A closer consideration of the priesthood of Christ will prepare the way to a clearer understanding of the sacrifice of the cross.

1. Jesus Christ is the "great high priest" (Heb. 4:14) for the whole human race. The truth and dignity of the priesthood of Christ are circumstantially and diversely set forth in the Epistle to the Hebrews (chaps. 4-10). In what do the essence of the priestly office, the vocation and the mission of the priest consist? "Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. 5:1). Accordingly the priest is destined and qualified to be a mediator between God and the people: consequently to render to the divine Majesty, by sacrifice and prayer, due honor and suitable atonement for sin, and to purify and sanctify men by dispensing grace and heavenly blessings.⁴ The proper and essential office of the priest is the offering of sacrifice; the position, rank, and prerogatives of the priesthood are measured and judged by the nature of the sacrifice. Now, since Christ offered an infinitely precious sacrifice of adoration, propitiation, thanksgiving, and petition, whereby He procured to God all honor and glory, and to man grace and salvation, He is the great high priest of the whole human race. Therefore Christ is not a priest of the same order as those who before His coming were invested with the priestly office, or who after Him exercise that office. He is indeed the most exalted and most perfect priest; His priestly power is so extensive and complete that it can-

⁴ All these qualifications are indicated in the name *sacerdos* (= *sacrum vel sacra dans*). Therefore by a priest is meant a consecrated person (*persona sacra*) who by virtue of his ordination is empowered and called to impart that which is holy (*sacra dare* as *dispensator mysteriorum Dei* [I Cor. 4:1]). The priest is also a *sacra dans* (= *offerens Deo*) in so far as he performs the acts of divine worship (sacrifice and psalmody); he is also a *sacra dans* (= *ministrans vel distribuens hominibus*) in so far as he imparts grace to men by administering the sacraments and sacramentals. *Sacerdos . . . quasi sacrum dans: sicut enim rex a regendo, ita sacerdos a sanctificando vocatus est; consecrat enim et sanctificat* (S. Isid., *Etymolog.*, VIII, xii, 17). Cf. S. August., *Enarrat. in Ps.*, 44:17.

not be imparted to a mere creature. His divine human priesthood is the fountain of all the priestly powers and all the divine graces that ever were or may hereafter be imparted to a mere mortal; He is the eternal high priest, who at all times saves all those who by Him approach to God. He is the high priest for all men and for all times.

There were of course priests before Him and there are priests after Him. But the former were destined only to prefigure, by the sacrifices they offered, the one great sacrifice of Jesus Christ, in order thereby to preserve in mankind faith in the promised Redeemer. The priests of the New Law do not approach the altar in their own name and person, but in the name and in the person of Jesus Christ; and it is He who by them and in them exercises the priestly office, continually representing His great sacrifice to the Father. Thus He is, in truth, the one high priest for the whole human race.⁵

2. It is God Himself who imparts His powers to the priest. No one may venture to exercise the priestly office if he has not been chosen and invested therewith by God. "Neither doth any man take the honor [of priesthood] to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was" (Heb. 5:4). It is evident that Christ is a priest, not according to His divine nature, but according to His human nature; for it is only by acts of His sacred humanity that He can perform the part of mediator and priest. "So Christ also did not glorify Himself, that He might be made a high priest" (Heb. 5:5), but God has constituted Him a high priest forever, and that with a solemn oath: "The Lord hath sworn, and He will not repent: Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech" (Ps. 109:4).

The vocation and selection of Christ for the dignity of high priest was already contained in the eternal decree of God that His divine Son should redeem the world by the sacrifice of the cross. His installation into the office of high priest took place at the first moment of the Incarnation. Namely, as soon as the human nature was created and hypostatically (personally) united to the eternal Word, the God-man undertook, in cheerful obedience to the will and decree of His heavenly Father, the task and mission of offering His precious life on the cross as a sacrifice for the world, whereby the ancient sacrifices were not only replaced but far surpassed. This is touchingly expressed by St. Paul, quoting and explaining the words of

⁵ Kleutgen, *Predigten*, I, 81 f.

the Prophet (Ps. 39:7-9; Heb. 10:5-7). After depicting the impotency and the inadequateness of the priesthood of the Old Law and of its sacrifices, the Apostle continues: "Wherefore when He cometh into the world [that is, at the first moment of the Incarnation], He saith: Sacrifice and oblation [these empty figures of future goods] Thou wouldest not; but a body Thou hast fitted to Me [for sacrifice]. Holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then said I: Behold I come. In the head of the book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will, O God [by the sacrifice of Myself]." These words constitute the vow of Christ's sacrifice, the solemn formula in which He vowed to His heavenly Father, by the sacrifice of the cross "to re-establish all things . . . that are in heaven and on earth" (Eph. 1:10). Therefore the Apostle says: "In the which will, we are sanctified by the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ once," that is, by the one offering of His bloody atoning sacrifice, which was of infinite value and merit. Christ has acquired for us all grace and sanctification, in obeying with His human will the divine will of His Father, even to the death of the cross.

3. Jesus Christ was infinitely worthy of being clothed and adorned with the most eminent dignity of high priest. A priest, by his office, is mediator between God and man: it is chiefly by the offering of sacrifice that he is to glorify God and to reconcile man to Him, and to obtain for man in return the favor and friendship of God, applying to him the fruits and graces of the sacrifice.⁶ To exercise in a perfect manner the office of mediator, he must also take a medium position, that is, be related and united to God as well as to men, if he is to transact the affairs of both properly and successfully. The priest "is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God," to appease God's anger and to draw down His blessing upon the earth: therefore he must be pleasing in the sight of God by freedom from sin and by exalted sanctity; but he is also "ordained for men" to care for their salvation, to pray, to labor, and to suffer: hence he is taken "who can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err; because he himself also is encompassed with infirmity" (Heb. 5:1 f.). In this twofold relation Christ unites in His person, in the most perfect manner, all that can render the priest

⁶ *Offert Deo bonus mediator preces et vota populorum: reportans illis a Deo benedictionem et gratiam* (S. Bernard., *Tract. de morib. et offic. episcop.*, chap. 3, n. 10). Cf. S. Thom., *Ila Ilae*, q. 86, a. 2.

acceptable to God and powerful with Him, full of compassion and mercy toward men.

a) Jesus Christ is infinitely holy; therefore God the Father takes infinite pleasure in Him. "For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26). The whole fullness of the divinity, an inexhaustible treasure of grace and truth, of virtue and wisdom, of holiness and happiness, was bestowed on the soul of Christ, and that already in the first moment of its creation and hypostatic union with the eternal Son of the eternal Father. By virtue of the hypostatic union the humanity of Christ was deified, essentially and infinitely sanctified. At the same time this grace of union (*gratia unionis*) is to be considered the root and germ of all other supernatural privileges and perfections of the human nature of Christ: sanctifying grace, the infused virtues,⁷ the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the graces (in superabundance, in the fullest and richest conceivable measure) were the suitable, inamissible, and unaugmentable endowment of the soul of Christ, which by its mystical union with the divinity attained an infinite dignity. In all these privileges—in the hypostatic union, in the beatific vision of God, in the fullness of grace—is based the absolute freedom of Christ from sin: the soul of Jesus was not only actually free from all sin, but it was incapable of committing sin, and not susceptible of even the slightest breath or shadow of sin.⁸ Thus Christ as man is "the Saint of saints" (Dan. 9:24). From this infinite dignity and holiness of our high priest, Jesus Christ, proceeds the infinite value of all His labors and sufferings, of all His merits and satisfactions during His mortal life.

b) We therefore have "a great high priest, . . . Jesus the Son of God" (Heb. 4:14), who is most pleasing to God by His infinite majesty and fullness of grace. On the other hand, the perfection of His priestly life and labors was greatly enhanced, inasmuch as He voluntarily humbled Himself, taking the form of a servant, lovingly

⁷ Those virtues only are excepted which presuppose or include incompatibility with the *unio hypostatica* and the *visio beatifica*. With regard to the theological controversy in how far the *habitus fidei, spei et poenitentiae* may be ascribed to the soul of Christ, cf. Stentrup, S.J., *De Verbo incarnato*, I, Christolog. thes. 81.

⁸ *Dives est qui nec hereditario nec proprio unquam debito obnoxius, et ipse justus et alios justificat Christus* (S. August., *In Joann.*, LXXXIV, 2).

subjected Himself to the infirmities of fallen man, and cheerfully assumed our weaknesses. This self-renunciation He practiced as well for the sake of penance and atonement, as for our example and consolation, that, looking on Him "who, having joy set before Him, endured the shame" (Heb. 12:2), we may neither succumb to the labors and difficulties of our earthly pilgrimage nor despond amid the fears and anguish of death.⁹ The keen air, the cold and heat, affected His delicate body; His holy soul was filled with fear and anguish, with sadness and sorrow; He was hungry and thirsty, He traveled and was fatigued, He fled and concealed Himself; He groaned in spirit and was afflicted; He wept with us poor mortals in this vale of tears. Therefore, how animating and encouraging, how refreshing and consoling, it is to glance devoutly at our Redeemer, who so lovingly immolated Himself to the sufferings, infirmities, and wants of our mortal life. This the Apostle teaches when he says: "Wherefore it behooved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest before God, that He might be a propitiation for the sins of the people. . . . For we have not a high priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities: but one tempted in all things

⁹ Absque dubio congruum fuit, Christum assumere naturam nostram cum defectibus et poenaliatibus, et hoc triplici ex causa, principaliter videlicet propter *pretium* nostrae salutis, propter *exemplum* virtutis et propter *fulcimentum* nostrae fragilitatis. Propter *pretium* nostrae salutis, quia proposuerat nos redimere non corruptibilibus auro et argento, sed pretioso sanguine suo (I Pet. 1:18), et animam suam ponere pro animabus nostris. Ad hoc autem non esset idoneus, nisi naturam deficientem et passibilem assumpsisset, et propterea defectus nostros et poenaliatibus debuit in seipso habere. Alia etiam ex causa congruum fuit hos ipsum, videlicet propter *exemplum* virtutis, specialiter autem humilitatis, patientiae et pietatis, quibus mediantibus pervenitur ad coelum, et in quibus Christus voluit nos imitari ipsum secundum illud: "Discite a me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde" (Matt. 11:29). Tertia ratio est propter *fulcimentum* nostrae fragilitatis, ob quam natura rationalis habet in se difficultatem ad credendum vera, et irascibilis ad sperandum ardua, et concupiscibilis ad amandum bona. Et ideo voluit Christus non tantum nobis similari in natura, sed etiam in defectibus et poenaliatibus ut, manifestando in se veritatem humanae naturae, praeberet fulcimentum nostrae rationali ad credendum; ostendendo nihilominus immensitatem suae misericordiae per susceptionem nostrae miseriae, praeberet irascibili fulcimentum ad sperandum; ostendendo magnitudinem suae benevolentiae, praeberet concupiscibili incitamentum ad se amandum. Et ideo licet incongruum videatur, hujusmodi defectus reperiri in Christo, si per se considerentur; tamen, si ad finem referantur, magna reperitur congruitatis condecencia (S. Bonav., IV, dist. 15, a. 1, q. 1). Cf. S. Thom., IIIa, q. 14, a. 1.

like as we are, without sin. . . . For in that wherein He Himself hath suffered and been tempted, He is able to succor them also that are tempted. . . . Let us go, therefore, with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid (Heb. 2:17 f.; 4:15 f.).

The heavenly privileges and prerogatives of the humanity of Christ, by which He approached so near to God, as well as the earthly infirmities and miseries which He compassionately shared with us, have contributed to give honor and glory to the Father,¹⁰ and also to redeem and sanctify mankind. Christ stooped to us in order to raise us up; His humiliation is our exaltation, His poverty our riches; His sufferings are our joys, His wounds our cure; His death is our life. Our Lord is not only great, holy, and powerful, and therefore infinitely worthy of praise; but also "for us men and for our salvation" He became little, poor, insignificant, and therefore infinitely deserving of love. *Tanto mihi carior, quanto pro me vilior!* We have such a Redeemer that the Church in ecstatic, overflowing exaltation of heart can sing: *O felix culpa, quae talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem!* "O happy fault, which has merited such and so great a Redeemer!" "Truly should we be exceedingly joyful over the happy change, in consequence of which we have been transferred from earthly lowliness to the glory of heaven, through the unspeakable mercy of Him who has descended to us in order to elevate us to Him; so that He assumed not only the form, but also the condition of our sinful humanity, and that His divinity, incapable of suffering, permitted all the misery of mortal humanity to come upon him."¹¹

THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST ON THE CROSS A TRUE AND REAL SACRIFICE

Jesus Christ was in His mortal life, as He is now sitting "on the right hand of the throne of majesty in the heavens" (Heb. 8:1),

¹⁰ Quoniam Deus est justus et beatus, impassibilis et immortalis, homo vero lapsus est peccator et miser, passibilis et mortalis: necesse fuit, mediatorem Dei et hominum, ut posset hominem reducere ad Deum, cum Deo communicare in justitia et beatitudine, cum homine vero in passibilitate et mortalitate, ut sic habendo mortalitatem transeuntem et beatitudinem permanentem, hominem reduceret de praesenti miseria ad vitam beatam (S. Bonav., *Breviloq.*, IV, chap. 8).

¹¹ S. Leo, *Serm.*, LXXI (LXIX), *de Resurrect. Dom.* I.

the perfect mediator, the true and great high priest of the human race. Hence it follows that He must have offered a real sacrifice on earth; for the offering of sacrifice is the first and essential duty of a priest. "For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is necessary that he also should have something to offer" (Heb. 8:3). Christ offered Himself as an unspotted sacrifice unto God (Heb. 9:14) on the cross, upon which He, as the Good Shepherd, gave His life for His sheep. To this end the Father had sanctified and sent Him into the world (John 10:36) at the moment of the Incarnation. God willed that the redemption and restoration of the human race should be accomplished by the sacrifice of the cross. Therefore, out of loving obedience to the will of His Father, when the hour had come, Jesus offered Himself, His body and blood, upon the altar of the cross for the life of the world, so that "He Himself was the priest offering the sacrifice as well as the sacrifice offered" (*ipse offerens, ipse et oblatio*).¹² The death of Christ on the cross, the offering of His body and the shedding of His blood for the human race, is a sacrifice in the strictest and fullest sense of the word, not in a merely wide or figurative sense, as was His whole life upon earth. This His life constituted the preparation for His sacrificial death and is justly designated, in a wider sense, as a sacrifice; for even in those mysteries of Christ which preceded His passion and death, we everywhere find the intention, will, and deeds of sacrifice.¹³

1. Holy self-sacrifice forms the seal of Christ's life on earth: His life was a continual martyrdom, a bloody sacrifice of mortification, an incense offering of devotion and prayer, a burnt offering of love for God and men. Truly, the whole earthly career of Christ, from the womb of His mother to the grave, was a sacrifice of abnegation and self-denial. A veil of mourning shrouded His entire life, bearing the character of severe penance and atonement for a world full of frivolity, sinful, sensual enjoyment, and horrible godlessness.

This painful way began in the crib, to end only on the cross:

¹² S. August., *De civit. Dei*, X, chap. 20.

¹³ *Tota vita et conversatio Christi in carne mortali a primo incarnationis instanti usque ad instans suae expirationis in cruce, fuit quasi una continua missa et celebratio, qua se indesinenter obtulit Patri pro nobis voluntate promptissima et affectuosissime oravit pro nobis, et quidquid deliberata voluntate precatus est, impetravit* (Dion. Carthus., *Elementat. theolog.*, propos. 119).

crib and cross are closely connected. In the crib Jesus lay as a meek infant God; on the cross He was suspended, His body torn and bleeding: but in the one situation as well as in the other, He is the Lamb sacrificed for the sins of the world. Calvary cast its shadow upon His hidden, silent life at Bethlehem and Nazareth. "Poor and sorrowful" (Ps. 68:30) He was throughout the whole course of His life. Privations, humiliations, sufferings were His companions: they surrounded Him on His entrance into the world, accompanied Him during His earthly pilgrimage, and ascended with Him on the cross. Whatever the world cherishes, seeks, and values, all its joys, riches, and glory, all its pomp and grandeur, He despised and disdained; in their stead He endured poverty, hardships, hostility, contradictions, vexations innumerable, such as only an unbounded love could choose and endure. As a stranger who had not whereon to lay His head, the Lord of heaven dwelt many years upon this earth, an earth yielding thorns and thistles. At the same time we must remember that His pure, delicate body and noble and holy soul were created peculiarly susceptible of suffering, and consequently experienced, a thousand times more than men can imagine, the severity, acuteness, and bitterness of all corporal and spiritual sufferings. His infancy, boyhood, and youth were passed in retirement and obscurity, in poverty and self-denial, in painful labor and austere penance; also the three years of His public life, His ministry among an "unbelieving and perverse generation" (Matt. 17:16), were filled with bitterness arising from the lack of appreciation, ingratitude, and persecution on the part of His own nation; and this was all the more painful to Him, since He had come but to seek and save those who were lost. He was repudiated, blasphemed, and calumniated by the obdurate Jews, so that, before leaving this world, He could apply to Himself these words of the Prophet: "They have hated Me without cause" (John 15:25; cf. Ps. 68:5); and He could say to His disciples: "If the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated Me before you" (John 15:18).

An offering of sweetest incensed prayer, ascending to God from the golden altar that stands before the throne of God (Apoc. 8:1-4), was the wonderful life of our Saviour under the form of a servant. The fire of devotion burned unceasingly with heavenly ardor and purity in His Sacred Heart. All the days and nights, all the hours

of His poor, humble, and painful life He consecrated by prayer, by the most sublime and powerful prayer that ever pierced the clouds and mounted to the throne of the Most High.

In fine, the life of Jesus was a most perfect holocaust of the purest love of God and man. His food was to do the will of His heavenly Father (John 4:34); at the close of His earthly career He could say to His Father: "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17:4). Like the flame of sacrifice, the zeal glowed in His breast for the house of God and for the honor of His Father, and consumed Him as the burning wick consumes the altar taper (John 2:17). From this fervent love of God proceeded the flame of His zeal for the conversion and the salvation of mankind.

What our Lord thus did and suffered in the days of His flesh, during His three and thirty years upon earth, would have been more than sufficient to redeem thousands of worlds, to amass untold treasures of grace and merits. But according to the adorable decree of God, this did not suffice to free us from the slavery of sin and purchase for us the liberty of the children of God; for this the price of the blood and life of Christ was required. God's justice required this ransom for our redemption, and Christ voluntarily, through love, offered Himself to pay it for us; Christ's death on the cross was to constitute the crown, the conclusion, and the completion of the work of redemption. That the death of Christ is a true and real sacrifice is especially taught by the word of God, and has at all times been believed and acknowledged by Christians.

2. From a multiplicity of proofs only a few will be given here.

a) The primary object of the sacrifices of the Old Testament, particularly the principal ones, that is, the bloody sacrifices, was to prefigure and to represent the offering of the life of Jesus by a violent death. Now, if these imperfect figures and representations of the only and truly redeeming death of Christ on the cross were, without doubt, real sacrifices, must not His death itself have been a real sacrifice, a sacrifice in every sense of the word? The reality, fulfillment, and consummation cannot and must not be inferior to the shadow, figure, and representation. The holy Pope St. Leo thus beautifully expresses this thought:

In the public sacrifice was to be fulfilled what in the figurative mystery had long been promised: that the true sacrificial Lamb was to sup-

plant the figurative (*ut uno expleretur sacrificio variarum differentia victimarum*), and that in one sacrifice the various, manifold sacrifices were to find their accomplishment: for all that which was ordained beforehand by God through Moses relative to the sacrifice of the lamb, predicted the Redeemer and explicitly announced the sacrificial death of Christ. That, therefore, the shadows might depart from the body, and figures cease at the appearance of truth, the old custom was abolished by the new mystery, the victim passed over into the Victim, (*hostia in hostiam transit*), blood replaced by blood, and the legal celebration found its fulfillment inasmuch as it was changed.¹⁴

b) What the sacrificial worship of the Old Law prefigured in a mystical sense, the Prophet, enlightened by God, announced beforehand in a precise and touching manner, prophesying the sacrificial character of the passion and death of Jesus Christ. Isaias says expressly (chap. 53) that Christ would suffer and die for our sins, and that the death which He would voluntarily undergo for us would be a true atoning sacrifice: "He was offered because it was His own will" (Isa. 53:7). Then the Prophet compares the Saviour to a sheep led to the slaughter and not opening its mouth, as well as to a lamb dumb before its shearer: these pathetic symbols are intended to signify that He, though innocent, would undergo the painful sacrificial death in quiet resignation and peace. An eternal spiritual generation is designated as the fruit of His atoning sacrifice, that is, the whole assembly of the predestined whom no one can number, all those whose names are written in the book of life: they were and they will be saved only by the redeeming blood of Christ shed for them.

c) In the Old Law a lamb was one of the animals most usually sacrificed: recall the paschal lamb, the daily morning and evening sacrifice. As Christ was prefigured by these lambs, it is quite natural that in the New Law He should often be represented and extolled as the true Lamb, the Lamb without blemish, as our Pasch, as the Lamb of God; in the Apocalypse of St. John there occurs in many places the word Lamb even as the very name of the God-man. The designation of Jesus as the Lamb is, then, characteristic, and is intended to express that His death is a sacrifice, a real propitiatory sacrifice, drawing attention at the same time to the heavenly meekness, resignation, and patience that He displayed during His pas-

¹⁴ *Serm., LVIII (LVI), de Passione Dom. VII.*

sion. The Prince of the Apostles reminds us of this when he says that the Lord “did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. Who, when He was reviled, did not revile: when He suffered, He threatened not: but delivered Himself to him that judged Him unjustly” (I Pet. 2:22 f.). St. John Baptist alludes to Christ as “the Lamb of God . . . who taketh away the sin of the world,” that is, who reconciles Heaven and earth by shedding His blood. St. Paul exhorts us to celebrate the true spiritual Pasch, since “Christ our Pasch is sacrificed” (I Cor. 5:7). St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, encourages and exhorts Christians to lead a holy life in view of the glorious ransom by which they have been redeemed: “Converse in [holy and wholesome] fear during the time of your sojourning here. Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as gold or silver . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled” (I Pet. 1:18 f.). Therefore Christ, absolutely sinless and holy, is the Lamb, the victim perfectly faultless and infinitely pleasing to God, whose blood effaces all sin and effects true reconciliation.

Writing on these texts of Scripture, St. Leo remarks that “the reconciliation of the immaculate Lamb and the fullness of all the sacraments were imparted to us,” and then adds: “Christ offered Himself to the Father as a new and truly reconciling sacrifice; not in the Temple . . . nor within the limits of the city, . . . but outside the camp He was crucified, that after the old, figurative, immolated sacrifices should cease, a new sacrifice would be placed upon the new altar, and the cross of Christ should be the altar, not of the Temple, but of the world.”¹⁵

d) Our Lord Himself declared that He had come “to give His life a redemption for many” (Matt. 20:28).¹⁶ Vicarious bloodshedding or the giving up of life is, indeed, a real sacrifice. Shortly before His departure from this world, Christ in His prayer as high priest, called His death a sanctification, that is, a dedication and offering of Himself for His disciples, to merit for them true sanctity, interior purification from sin, and justification: “For them do I sanctify Myself: that they also may be sanctified in truth” (John

¹⁵ *Serm.*, LIX (LVII), *de Passione Dom.* VIII.

¹⁶ Dare animam suam (His soul = His life, His blood, Himself) redemptionem (= money or price of ransom) pro multis (for many who actually obtain the full result or fruit of the redemption in heaven).

17:19). St. John writes: "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." St. Paul says that we become justified "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation through faith in His blood" (Rom. 3:25).¹⁷ To restrain the faithful from sin and to animate them to the practice of virtue, the Apostle represents to them the intimate and courageous, tender and generous, love of Christ, by which He offered Himself for us: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children. And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us and hath given Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness" (Eph. 5:2).¹⁸ In the Epistle to the Hebrews the doctrine of the vicarious and atoning death of Christ is repeatedly expressed in the clearest and most emphatic manner. There we read passages proving the dignity and efficacy of the bloody sacrifice of Christ on the cross in contrast with the inefficacious offerings of the Old Testament. These figures were abolished by Christ, who sacrificed His own body, the sweet odor of which ascended to heaven, drawing down God's favor and grace, procuring for us all salvation and sanctification. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered Himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works [that is, from sin], to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:14). Christ "needeth not daily (as the other priests) to offer sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the people's; for this He did once, in offering Himself" (7:27). "But now once at the end of ages, He hath appeared for the destruction of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. . . . So also Christ was offered once to exhaust the sins of many" (9:26, 28).

3. How is Christ's death on the cross to be understood as a true sacrifice? Does it contain all the constituents of a sacrifice taken in its strict sense? Upon the altar of the cross, Jesus Christ, the great high priest, as the representative of the human race, dedicated His precious life to the most painful of deaths, thus worthily to glorify and perfectly propitiate the divine Majesty, as well as to regain for man the favor and grace of God.

a) He who was sacrificed on the cross was Jesus Christ, the God-

¹⁷ God gave up His Son and revealed Him on the cross (*proposuit*) as a propitiatory sacrifice, which he offered "in His blood," i.e., by shedding His blood, and in which we share "by faith."

¹⁸ *Christus obtulit sacrificium suavitatis summae pro perfecta Dei placatione* (S. Bonav., *Breviloq.*, IV, chap. 9).

man and our high priest. Hence it was a divine person, it was the Son of God Himself who was offered on Mount Calvary; but He could offer the sacrifice only through His human nature, that is, by acts of love and obedience, of humility and submission, with which His holy soul was filled and inflamed. This sacrifice was of an infinite value and merit because it proceeded from and was offered by an infinite person.

b) That which was offered on the cross, the victim, was also the Son of God. His human nature was united to the eternal Word and through this union possessed of infinite dignity. Thus Jesus Christ was not only the priest of His sacrifice, but also the sacrifice of His priesthood, when He offered Himself, His life, His body and His blood on the tree of the holy cross. For according to St. Peter, "it is the Author of life you killed" (Acts 3:15); according to St. John, "He hath laid down His life for us" (I John 3:16); according to St. Paul, the Jews "crucified the Lord of Glory" and God purchased the Church with His own blood (I Cor. 2:8; Acts 20:28).¹⁹

In the sacrifice of the cross, therefore, the God-man²⁰ is the priest offering and, at the same time, the lamb offered: He offers and He is offered according to His human nature. He is priest and offers, inasmuch as He acts without restraint and freely gives His life; He is the victim and He is offered, inasmuch as He suffers pain and undergoes death in order to be slain for the honor of God and the salvation of man.²¹

c) Since the offering of sacrifice pertains to the priest, it must

¹⁹ Absque dubio concedendum est, Filium Dei pro nobis fuisse mortuum, et hoc quidem sibi vere attribuitur non secundum naturam divinam, sed secundum humanam. . . . Et hoc in nullo derogat divinae dignitati et multum consonat pietati. Nullum enim verbum majoris dignationis resonare potest in auribus cordis nostri, quam quod unigenitus Dei Filius mortuus fuerit pro nobis debitoribus mortis. Et ideo non tantum est hoc credendum et asserendum tamquam verum, sed etiam frequentissime recolendum (S. Bonav., III, dist. 21, a. 2, q. 3).

²⁰ The Son of God alone—not the Father and not the Holy Ghost—is both priest and victim, inasmuch as He alone assumed human nature, which placed Him in a condition to sacrifice and to be sacrificed; but according to His divine nature, by which He is one with the Father and the Holy Ghost, He receives and accepts the sacrifice which is perpetually offered to the triune God.

²¹ Nihil mundum [Christus] invenit in hominibus, quod offerret pro hominibus: seipsum obtulit mundam victimam. Felix victima, vera victima, hostia immaculata! Non ergo hoc obtulit, quod nos illi dedimus; immo hoc obtulit, quod a nobis accepit et mundum obtulit. Carnem enim a nobis accepit, hanc

have been accomplished by our Saviour Himself on Golgotha. Evidently it did not consist in the physical execution effected by the enemies and tormentors of Jesus, but in the voluntary acceptance and endurance of the bloody death on the part of the God-man as high priest. The executioners and soldiers who lacerated our Lord, wished to kill Him, and in reality they did so with violence and cruelty, but in nowise did they sacrifice Him; they did not perform a work pleasing to God, but rather committed the greatest of outrages.²² "The Lord took upon Himself what, according to the decree of His will, He hath chosen. He permitted to rage against Him the hands of the godless, which became of service to Him while engaged in their own wicked deed."²³ Jesus Christ acting as priest on the cross performed the sacrificial act without compulsion, but of His most free choice He shed His blood amid unspeakable pains, and in prompt obedience gave His infinitely precious life, in order to glorify and to propitiate the majesty of the Most High dishonored by sin. To be a real sacrifice, Christ's passion and death had to be entirely voluntary, that is, to depend upon His human will, to be accepted by it and directed to the divine glory. That this was really the case is frequently and strongly stated in Holy Writ: "He was offered because it was His own will" (Isa. 53:7).

In the first place, the willingness of Christ to undergo His passion and death is evidenced by His allowing sinners to afflict and torment His body, although by His human will He could easily have prevented it; for without or against His will all the powers of this world and all the rage of hell could not have done Him the slightest harm. When His hour had come, the Saviour voluntarily surrendered Himself into the hands of His enemies and ascended the altar of the cross; for by His mere words, "I am He" (John 18:6), He prostrated the soldiers to the ground, rendered His adversaries powerless, and at His petition the Father would have sent to His aid

obtulit. Sed unde illam accepit? De utero Virginis Mariae, ut mundam offerret pro immundis. Ipse rex, ipse sacerdos: in eo laetemur (S. August., *Enarrat. in Ps.*, 149:6). Formam servi obtulit [Christus], in hac oblati est: quia secundum hanc mediator est, in hac sacerdos, in hac sacrificium est (*Idem., De civit. Dei*, X, chap. 6).

²² Passio Christi ex parte occidentium ipsum fuit maleficium, sed ex parte ipsius ex caritate patientis fuit sacrificium. Unde hoc sacrificium ipse Christus obtulisse dicitur, non autem illi qui eum occidentur (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 48, a. 3 ad 3).

²³ S. Leo, *Serm.*, LXII (LX), *de Passione Dom.* XI, chap. 3.

“more than twelve legions of angels,” that is, an innumerable host of heavenly warriors (Matt. 26:53). But “the Son of the living God” would not ward off the violence committed against Himself: of His own choice and love He entered upon the painful way of the cross. Hence sufferings and death were the natural outcome of those cruel torments. These natural consequences He could have prevented by His own free will and power. This He refused to do; rather would He drink the chalice of sufferings to the dregs and taste the bitterness of death in all its severity.

With strong voice and loud cry He commended His spirit into the hands of His heavenly Father (Luke 23:46), bowed His head and expired, “because He willed it, when He willed it, and as He willed it.”²⁴ Why this loud cry? To show His power over death and life; to prove to the world that He possessed the might and strength to ward off death and to preserve His life; that “He died, not out of weakness, but by His own might,”²⁵ that is, by His free will and free choice. The effect upon the beholders was, in fact, so great that later on the pagan centurion exclaimed: “Indeed, this man was the Son of God” (Mark 15:39). Thus was accomplished on Golgotha what the Saviour had beforehand distinctly foretold: “I lay down My life for My sheep. . . . No man taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself . . . and I have power to take it up again” (John 10:15, 18).²⁶

The priestly activity and self-sacrifice of our Saviour were first of all accomplished in spirit and in heart, but did not remain interior and invisible, for Christ’s intention and will to offer Himself in sacrifice appeared outwardly and revealed itself by the shedding of His blood and the loss of His life, which He could have prevented, but would not prevent.

d) The object and fruit of this bloody sacrifice of Christ was the redemption of the world, the restoration and completion of the supernatural order in the human race, in fact, in the whole creation. For “what else has the cross of Christ effected, what else does it still effect, than that enmity is destroyed and the world reconciled to God, so that by the sacrifice of the Lamb slain all be led back

²⁴ S. August., *De Trinit.*, IV, n. 16.

²⁵ *Idem.*, *De nat. et grat.*, n. 26.

²⁶ Quia anima Christi non repulit a proprio corpore nocumentum illatum, sed voluit, quod natura corporalis illi nocumento succumberet, dicitur suam animam posuisse vel voluntarie mortuus esse (S. Thom., IIIa, q.47, a. 1).

to true peace?"²⁷ To accomplish the redemption, the Lord did not offer a gift of little value, but His own humanity, which in itself is incomparably more valuable than all creation, and which, in union with the divine nature, possesses infinite dignity and majesty. It was this august, adorable humanity of Christ that was sacrificed on the cross, that was bruised in its infirmity (Isa. 53:10), actually to acknowledge and honor the inviolable majesty of the Most High, as well as to appease the anger of God and propitiate His justice.²⁸ The fruit of this homage and atonement which Christ offered for us and in our stead is profitable to us men; by means of it He merited for us the remission of all sin and punishment, as well as the bestowal of every grace and blessing. The majesty and justice of God could not have been glorified in a more brilliant and stirring manner than was done by the unfathomable and incomprehensible self-abasement of the divinely human high priest on the cross. Infinitely worthy was the adoration offered to the divine Majesty by the sacrifice of the cross; infinitely perfect the satisfaction rendered to the divine justice by the passion and death of Christ; infinitely abundant also the merit which our Saviour, by giving His life, acquired for man. "What sacrifice was ever holier than that which the true high priest offered on the altar of the cross by the sacrifice of His body?"²⁹ Here the high priest is infinitely worthy, the gift offered infinitely precious, and the act of offering infinitely valuable; consequently it is the absolutely perfect sacrifice to which all other sacrifices are referred and from which all other sacrifices draw their significance, power, and efficacy.³⁰

4. At the touching ceremony of the unveiling of the cross on

²⁷ S. Leo, *Serm.*, LXVI (LXII), *de Passione Dom.* XV.

²⁸ *Sacrificium proprie dicitur aliquid factum in honorem proprie Deo debitum ad eum placandum. Christus autem "seipsum obtulit in passione pro nobis" (S. August.) et hoc ipsum quod voluntarie passionem sustinuit, Deo maxime acceptum fuit, utpote ex caritate maxima proveniens. Unde manifestum est quod passio Christi fuerit verum sacrificium (S. Thom., IIIa, q.48, a. 3).*

²⁹ S. Leo, *Serm.*, LXIV (LXI), *de Passione Dom.* XIII.

³⁰ Consideremus hujus sacrificii *latitudinem*, qua *universum* in suis complectitur primitiis, et *universo* profuit mundo; ejus *longitudinem*, quum jam adumbratum fuerit in Abelis oblatione, qua de causa Christus "agnus occisus ab origine mundi" dicitur (Apoc. 13:8), et idem commemorandum sit usque ad saeculi consummationem; ejus *altitudinem*, sua enim virtute penetravit coelos eosque nobis iterum aperuit; *profunditatem* effectuum, nam animae maculas radicitus delet et vel ex infernis animas justorum ibi degentium eri-

Good Friday, the Church three times sings these words to the faithful: *Ecce lignum crucis, in quo salus mundi pependit. Venite, adoremus.* ("Behold the wood of the cross, on which was suspended the Salvation of the world. Come, let us adore.") We will accept this invitation; therefore let us with reverence and adoration linger a while at the foot of the cross erected upon Golgotha, the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense (Cant. 4:6). On the hill of Golgotha the passion of the high priest was consummated amid incessant sacrificial prayer; hence the place of Christ's crucifixion is a mountain of myrrh, that is, a mountain which became for our Saviour the myrrh of most bitter torments, and a hill of frankincense, that is, a hill whence the odor of fragrant devotion and the sacrificial flame of acts of loving atonement ascended without intermission to heaven from the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Place yourself in spirit on Golgotha, behold the bleeding sacrificial Lamb and consider whether there was ever sorrow like unto His. For eighteen hours, from the night before to the hour of His death, the God-man was immersed in a fathomless ocean of the bitterest sorrow. How excruciating were all His pains for His delicately and nobly constituted body and His most pure and sensitive soul! The incomprehensible prerogatives of the holy humanity of Jesus served but to sharpen His sense of pain and His confusion; for, as it were, it was framed to taste fully the bitterness of suffering.⁸¹ Along the bloodstained stations of the cross, the divine sacrificial Lamb was dragged to the shambles without mercy. His soul was overwhelmed with anguish and sorrow, with shame and contumely. His body was

puit; aut etiam ratione ss. Cordis Jesu, in quo radicatur. Huic enim Cordi adscribi debet a) tantum pietatis consilium, quo nos dilexit usque in finem non solum suae vitae, sed etiam usque ad supremam caritatis mensuram: nam "majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis" (John 15:13). Ex illo Corde b) tamquam e fonte manavit sanguis ille pretiosus pro mundi vita; c) ex amore illius Cordis speciale derivatur pretium hujus sacrificii, quia cum tanto oblatum est amore, ut plus contulerit ad mortem, quam carnifices: nisi enim ille permisisset, nihil hi potuissent. Quare Christus (John 14:31) ait: "Sed ut cognoscat mundus, qui diligo Patrem. . . . Surgite, eamus hinc." Quocirca sacrificium crucis verum est *holocaustum*, cujus ignis erat intensissimus ss. Cordis amor (Hurter, *Theol. dogm. comp.*, II [2nd ed.], 419).

⁸¹ Poenam amarissimam pro nostris peccatis in cruce sustinuit, in proprio corpore immaculatissimo, tenerrime ac nobilissime complexionato ideoque maxime perceptivo doloris et summe passivo (Dion. Carthus., *Enarrat. in 1 Petr.*, 2:24).

struck and beaten, bruised and tortured, shamelessly stripped and scornfully clothed; His face was spat upon and defiled; His head was pierced with thorns; His hands and feet were transfixed with cruel nails. "From the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no soundness therein: wounds and bruises and swelling sores. They are not bound up, nor dressed, nor fomented with oil" (Isa. 1:6). He had been comely in countenance beyond all the children of men; from His lips sweetness and benignity flowed; Him God had filled with blessings and anointed with the oil of gladness. But upon Golgotha He became a man of sorrows, a twig in an arid soil, one without form or beauty, a worm and no man, the reproach of men, the outcast of the people, unworthy of esteem, unrecognizable, and, as it were, struck and crushed by God (cf. Ps. 21 and 44; Isa. 53). In suffering and pain, in untold misery, amid the intense pangs of wounds, amid a parching thirst, the innocent sacrificial Lamb hangs suspended, for three long hours, on the hard wood of the cross.

The sacrificial ardor with which the divine victim is consumed is that fire which the Lord Himself brought from heaven upon the earth and enkindled, the fire of the love of God and of neighbor; that fire of love environs His thorn-crowned head, encircling in vivid flames His wounded body, radiating in streams from His pierced members and from His open heart. At the sight of such inexhaustible sufferings, the Church sings to the tree of the cross:

O lovely tree, whose branches wore
The royal purple of His gore;
How glorious does thy body shine,
Supporting members so divine!

St. Ignatius bids us pray "for sorrow with Christ filled with sorrow, to be bruised with Christ bruised; to beg for tears, for interior grief at the remembrance of the excessive torments that Christ endured for us." Where may our stony hearts be more readily softened and transported with love and gratitude, with grief and compunction, with sorrow for sin, than on Calvary at the sight of the cross on which our Saviour shows to us poor creatures a love that shrinks from no sacrifice, that knows no measure and no bounds?

Is the cross with our dying Lord upon it anything else than the open book of our sins? Is not Christ He that knew no sin, but was made by

God sin for us, as says the Apostle (II Cor. 5:21)? Alas, if I open this book of the cross, I read therein all my transgressions. On beholding the pierced hands, I recognize all my perverse actions; if I look upon the transfixed feet, I think on the evil ways in which I have strayed; if I glance upon this body become one wound, I have before me all my effeminacy, all my sensuality; if I consider the thorn-crowned, bleeding brow, it is a fearful mirror of my vanity, of my sinful ambition; and this heart transpierced by the lance denotes my want of love and my unfaithfulness toward God, my hardheartedness and impatience, my implacability toward my neighbor.³²

“Our Lord bore our sorrows and endured our pains” on the cross. Yet His boundless love is returned with coldness and indifference, with ingratitude and outrages of all kinds: this caused pain to His heart a thousand times more bitter than all the sufferings of His passion. This should, moreover, impel us to compensate and atone for the despised love of our Redeemer, by gratefully considering and honoring the immensity of His sufferings, by which we bring sweetest consolation to His heart.

But why this excess of suffering and misery, of humiliation and abandonment, of blood and wounds? ³³ All this was by no means

³² Molitor, *Das Gleichniss von den klugen und thörichten Jungfrauen*, p. 97.

³³ Dolor passionis Christi inter ceteros dolores et passiones fuit acerbissimus et acutissimus. Et hoc patet, si illa considerentur, quae doloris passionem acerbiorum reddunt. Haec autem sunt tria, videlicet causa passionis et modus patiendi et conditio patientis. Si consideretur causa, ob quam Christus passus est, fuit in eo doloris afflictio magna. Non enim patiebatur pro culpa propria, imo pro aliena; non pro amicis tantum, sed etiam pro inimicis, et etiam pro his, quos videbat ingratos. Si autem consideretur modus patiendi, fuit in eo passio doloris acerbior, tum propter generalitatem, quia in omnibus membris affligebatur, tum etiam propter continuitatem, quia suspendium ejus continuabatur, et clavi adeo affligebant pendentem, sicut afflixerunt, quando manus ejus et pedes confodiebantur, in quibus maxima erat afflictio propter nervos et musculos ibidem concurrentes, in quibus praecipue viget sensus. Si autem consideretur qualitas sive conditio patientis, maxima erat afflictio propter maximam complexionis aequalitatem et propter sensus vivacitatem. Unde quia nullus potuit ei aequari nec in aequalitate complexionis, nec in vivacitate sensus, dolor illius omnium dolorum fuit acutissimus. Et ideo rationes, quae hoc ostendunt, concedamus, et ei gratias, quantas possumus et supra quam possumus, referamus si quo modo donetur nobis, ut tam graviter patienti compatiamur (S. Bonav., III, dist. 16, a. 1, q. 2). In Christo patiente fuit verus dolor et sensibilis, qui causatur ex corporali nocivo, et dolor interior, qui causatur ex apprehensione alicujus nocimenti, qui tristitia dicitur. Uterque autem dolor in Christo fuit maximus inter dolores praesentis vitae (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 46, a. 6).

necessary to pay the full price of redemption; the slightest suffering, each single tear, each single step and grief and sigh of our Saviour sufficed, since all His acts and sufferings were of infinite value on account of the infinite dignity of His person, and consequently they were infinitely meritorious and propitiatory before God. Yet our Lord poured out His precious blood in streams and, so to speak, lavishly in the seven adorable mysteries, namely, of the Circumcision, the Agony, the Scourging, the Crowning with Thorns, the Way of the Cross, the Crucifixion, the Piercing of His Sacred Heart.³⁴ This He did through love of God and man; for in what is the divine Majesty more greatly and splendidly glorified, the salvation of mankind more powerfully and efficaciously accomplished, than by a sacrifice so sorrowful, so bitter and painful as the one the Son of God consummated on the cross?

The greatest mystery of God and Christ (I Cor. 2:7; Eph. 3:4), that is, the work of redemption, was in every detail to be perfect as a miracle of divine power, wisdom, and love; and it is so profound, so glorious, and so bountiful, that even the angels desire to contemplate it (I Pet. 1:12). During the long ages of eternity it will be for angels and for man a subject of unending contemplation and never-ending adoration, a subject in the meditation of which all the blessed spirits, with ecstatic jubilation and reverential awe, with ever-fresh admiration, will be forever immersed and lost. Hence the Church, on the holy night of Easter, sings in transport of joy: "O wonderful condescension of Thy goodness to us, O God! O inestimable favor of love! To redeem the slave, Thou didst give Thy Son." Blessed Henry Suso exclaims:

³⁴ Christus pro nobis sanguinem suum fudit piissime, plenissime et acerbissime. *Piissime* fudit, si consideretur *causa*: nam causa effusionis sui pretiosi sanguinis fuit piissima, quia ipsum fudit ex charitate ferventissima, ex qua voluntarie pro nobis pati voluit. . . . *Plenissime* fudit, si consideretur *mensura*: quia totum sanguinem effudit, ita ut unica gutta in eo non remaneret. . . . *Acerbissime* fudit, si consideretur *natura*: nam quanto natura et complexio est nobilior et delicatior, tanto est suae laesionis perceptibilior, et per consequens poena inflictata et ejus sensibilitas est acerbior; sed constat, quod complexio corporis Christi fuit delicatissima, quia Spiritus Sancti artificio de Virginis sanguine formata, et ergo sui sanguinis effuso et poenarum illatio fuit acerbissima, et ideo dicit: "Attendite [sc. mentaliter] et videte [sensibilitate], si est dolor similis, sicut dolor meus"; quasi diceret: Non (Ludolph. de Saxon., *Vita Jesu Christi*, II, lxiv, 16).

O Eternal Wisdom! I realize perfectly that whoever desires a great reward and eternal salvation, exalted science and profound wisdom, whoever would be equal in love and sorrow, have perfect security from all evil and desire to taste Thy bitter passion and receive supernatural sweetness, must keep and bear Thee, O crucified Jesus, at all times before the eyes of his soul, beholding himself therein as in a mirror, so as to regulate his life according to Thine. Ah! loving Lord, draw me, by means of love and suffering, from all the world to Thee and to Thy cross; penetrate me most intimately with Thy cross, so that my soul may enjoy Thee in all Thy glory!

CHAPTER IV

THE EFFECTS OF THE SACRIFICE OF THE CROSS

THE FRUITS OF THE SACRIFICE OF THE CROSS

As the Church sings in her Passion chant, the cross is “a tree beautifully adorned, environed with light, a noble tree, selected from all trees; no forest produces its equal in foliage, blossom, and fruit.” The noble tree of the cross was besprinkled with the blood that gushed forth from the body of the Lamb. Hence its branches are full of blossoms of grace and fruits of life; and its foliage, which neither withers nor falls, avails for the salvation of nations (Apoc. 22:2). The manifold, blessed fruits of the noble tree of the cross, “to which was granted the privilege of touching members so holy, of bearing the ransom of the world,” should now be considered in detail.

1. The glory of redemption by the Cross is to the angels a mystery as attractive as it is impenetrable. Hence we may conclude that the fruits of redemption must be immeasurably rich and precious. *Ecce lignum crucis!* Behold the cross. What a sacrifice is there presented! Whose body is thereon immolated? Whose blood is there poured out? Whose life is thereon offered up? It is the body, the blood, the life of the God-man, therefore the most magnificent sacrificial offering that can be conceived. This infinitely precious sacrifice is presented, after the most perfect manner, in the most perfect sentiments, by the infinitely exalted sacrificing priest, Jesus Christ, upon the altar of the cross, to the Most High for the salvation of the whole world. Therefore inestimable, infinitely rich must be the treasure of grace and salvation purchased at so great a price, at the price of such a sacrifice. In fact, through Christ’s blood we have not merely redemption from all sin and punishment, but also the fullness and superabundance of all the gifts of grace (Eph.

1:8-10); by Christ's death God has not only rescued us from the power of darkness, but yet more, translated us to the kingdom of His beloved Son and made us worthy to participate in the heritage of the saints in light (Col. 1:12 f.). Through Christ we have fullness of grace and gifts (Rom. 5:15); for "where sin abounded, grace did more abound" (Rom. 5:20). "Through Christ's unspeakable clemency we have received more and greater gifts than we had lost by the envy of the devil. For those whom the wicked foe had driven from the happiness of their original abode, with them the Son of God has incorporated Himself and placed them at the right hand of the Father." ¹

From the dust, from the depth of misery God has raised us and placed us by the side of the angels; He has elevated us to a height, dignity, and glory which the heart of man could neither have conceived nor desired. Thus has God, "who is rich in mercy, for His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ (by whose grace you are saved), and hath raised us up together and hath made us sit together in the heavenly places through Christ Jesus, that He might show in the ages to come the abundant riches of His grace, in His bounty toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:4-7). What is the frightful abyss of misery and wretchedness from which we have been delivered by the sacrifice of the cross? And what are the heavenly gifts with which God, in Christ, has blessed us, according to the riches of His grace which has been imparted to us in superabundance? (Eph. 1:3-8.)

2. By the fall of our first parents, the entire human race was plunged into the deepest and most deplorable misery; sin with its bitter consequences, like a crushing weight, lay heavy upon the children of Eve, banished from Paradise. They were spiritually dead, that is, they were deprived of the supernatural life of grace and had forfeited eternal happiness; hence, of themselves they were absolutely incapable of rendering satisfaction for sin and its punishment and of propitiating the divine justice; they were also just as little capable of regaining and meriting the lost grace of being children of God and heirs to heaven. Without the mercies of the Lord, nothing would have remained for man to do but to pass from the distressing sufferings and trials of time into the hopeless pains and

¹ S. Leo, *Serm.*, LXXIII (LXXI), *de Ascens. Dom. I.*

torments of eternity. This lamentable state in which man, full of concupiscence, infected with sin, was subject to temporal and eternal punishment, is justly considered and represented in Scripture as a hard slavery under the tyrannical dominion of Satan.

From all these evils, Christ redeemed poor, unfortunate humanity by the sacrifice of His life; He rendered on the cross not only ample satisfaction for all the sins of the world, but also regained and merited for us all the gifts of grace. His passion and death possessed atoning and, at the same time, meritorious power and efficacy. By the treasure of satisfaction and merit comprised in the sacrifice of the cross, Christ paid for us to the divine justice so glorious a ransom that God delivered us from the slavery of Satan and reinstated us as His children.

3. Jesus Christ suffered and died in order to render satisfaction for the sins of the world. How is this to be more clearly understood? Whoever is in the state of sin not only has incurred a debt, but is also liable to punishment; for in sin guilt and punishment are distinct. Both are evils that press upon sinful man and separate him from God; man laden with guilt and deserving of punishment is a stranger to God and remains at a distance from Him, since God's anger and displeasure are resting upon him. If these evils (guilt and punishment) are to be removed from man, if sin is to be utterly effaced, a commensurate satisfaction must be presented to the divine justice. But in what does satisfaction for sin and punishment consist, and in what degree has Christ rendered it by the sacrifice of His passion and death?

a) When man sins he offends God: he violates the rights of God, he does God an injustice by refusing to Him due honor and submission, he dishonors the supreme majesty of God, despises His infinite goodness. This places him in a state of guilt: he thereby becomes an object of the divine displeasure and anger, an enemy of God (Rom. 5:10). How can this guilt be atoned for? How can God's displeasure be overcome? To effect this, there is required such a voluntary act or suffering as honors the offended majesty of God as much as, or even more than, sin has displeased Him.² Satisfaction, therefore, reconciles man with an offended God, it causes God to lay aside His anger and to be ready to forgive the guilt. Hence satis-

² Ille proprie satisfacit pro offensa, qui exhibet offenso id, quod aequè vel magis diligit, quam oderit offensam (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 48, a. 2).

faction for the guilt is a mark of honor, or rather it is a restitution of honor; accordingly a good work will answer the object of satisfaction so much the better the more it is calculated to honor and glorify God. This is the case most especially in sacrifice, since sacrifice is the principal act of religion. From what has been said, it is evident how far and how exceedingly proper the sacrifice of the cross of Christ was to effect the atonement demanded by the debt of sin.³

Since Christ, through love and obedience to His Father, drained the bitter chalice of His passion and underwent the agony of death for us, He offered to God something far greater and more precious than was required to counterpoise all the offenses that the sinful human race had committed and is still committing against Him; hence God received far more pleasure in the infinitely precious propitiatory sacrifice of the cross than the pain and displeasure He experienced from all the sins of mankind. Jesus was obedient to His Father unto death, even unto the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8), and this His perfect obedience amply compensated for the disobedience of sinful man. How could the honor of which God was deprived by our sins be more worthily restored than was done on the cross? Infinitely great are the honor and adoration offered to the triune God by the self-immolation of the Saviour. God's inviolable majesty and holiness are there displayed in the clearest light inasmuch as, to acknowledge and propitiate them, the perfect humanity of Christ was offered and sacrificed. By the voluntary surrender of His precious life to the death of the cross, the God-man offered infinite honor and glory to the Most High, in order to efface the insults and ignominies with which men had offended and continue to offend the divine Majesty.

b) With the guilt of sin punishment is inseparably connected: as long as the guilt exists it deserves punishment. Man laden with sin is a child of wrath (Eph. 2:3), subject to divine justice; consequently condemned to be punished for the sin committed in proportion to the guilt incurred, that is, to be humbled and afflicted. This punishment is either to be undergone or the remission of it

³ Morte sua quippe uno verissimo sacrificio pro nobis oblato, quidquid culpae erat, unde nos principatus et potestates (*the powers of hell*) ad luenda supplicia jure detinebant, purgavit, abolevit, exstinxit (S. August., *De Trinit.*, IV, xiii, 17).

may be obtained by satisfaction. Satisfaction takes the place of the punishment to be undergone and remits it; the punishment must be compensated for by an equivalent voluntary service. Good works, so far as they are painful and laborious, are most suitable to this end; for the voluntary performance of something hard and difficult is especially well adapted to supply the pain and humiliation connected with every punishment. Inasmuch as in sacrifice the offering is destroyed, sacrifice is most evidently endowed with the power of satisfying for punishment and is therefore most peculiarly fitted to supply for the punishment and to merit its remission.

If we keep this in view, we will perceive why the punishment of sin cannot be more perfectly compensated for and removed than by the propitiatory sacrifice of the cross. What can be more painful and humiliating than to die on a cross between two thieves? There our Saviour, who is innocence and holiness itself, was immersed in a flood of pain and humiliation: a most bitter ocean of suffering raged around Him. From the soles of His feet to the crown of His head, His most pure body was but one wound; covered with blood, cruelly scourged and bruised, He hangs as a victim on the stake of the cross. In this manner has He borne "our sorrows"; thus has He suffered and expiated what we had deserved and what we should have undergone.⁴

By His sacrifice on the cross Christ has thus rendered satisfaction for us: this satisfaction has removed God's displeasure, effacing all the debt of sin. It has satisfied all the requirements of divine justice and has delivered us from all the punishment of sin. The sacrificial death of Christ has once more reconciled us with God offended by sin, it has effected this boon so that we are no longer objects of the divine displeasure and wrath. God, on His part, is prepared to remit our debt and punishment. Thus, through the blood of the Saviour, we have redemption and remission of sins (Eph. 1:7). "Jesus Christ hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood"

⁴ It would be incorrect to say that Christ, the innocent one, has been literally punished or chastised for us guilty men; for His sufferings and death were no *satispassio*, that is, an involuntary undergoing of the punishment inflicted, as, for example, we say of the souls in purgatory, that they have sufficiently satisfied (*satispatiuntur*); but Christ's death was a real *satisfactio pro poena*, that is, a voluntary penance, undertaken and suffered out of pure love, which outweighed our punishment and consequently obtained for us its full remission. In this sense have the words of the Prophet to be understood: "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him" (Isa. 53:5).

(Apoc. 1:5). This was accomplished when Christ concluded peace and reconciled us to God by the Cross, killing the enmities in Himself (Eph. 2:15 f.), by the sacrifice of His life. For "when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. 5:10). And thus the blood of the Cross brought about that all are united in peace in heaven and upon earth (Col. 1:20).

4. In addition to our reconciliation, the other chief fruit of the tree of the cross is our restoration to grace. The sacrificial death of Christ had not merely the character of atonement, it was at the same time meritorious in the highest degree.⁵ Christ by His death on the cross obtained for us not only forgiveness of sins, but also superabundance of life (John 10:10) and entrance into the sanctuary of heaven (Heb. 10:19). He restored the kingdom of God, the supernatural order of grace. It is to the redeeming death of Christ that we owe all and every grace we receive from God: the grace of prayer, the vocation to the true faith, victory over temptations, conversion of the heart, the observance of the commandments, and final perseverance. To each of these graces there is attached, so to speak, a drop of the precious blood of Christ; for at the price of His blood has He purchased all graces for us, from the first enlightening of the understanding and the least moving of the will to the consummation of the glory of heaven. Christ has merited for us not only the plenitude of actual graces, but also sanctifying grace, the infused virtues, the gifts and fruits of the Holy Ghost, the heavenly transfiguration of soul and body, in short, the whole glory of grace of the children of God, which here below is concealed, but which hereafter will shine with unending brightness. The inexhaustible treasure of grace, the riches of heavenly blessings, the establishment of the Church and its endowment with all the gifts and means of salvation, are fruits that proceed from the tree of the cross. Thus has God, through the merits of Christ, presented us with the greatest and most precious promises (II Pet. 1:4). Filled with holy joy and gratitude, the Prince of the Apostles thus exultingly exclaims: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy hath regenerated us unto a lively hope,

⁵ To merit is to acquire by some act a right or claim to recompense, that is, to a good which must in strict justice be given as a reward; whereas satisfaction blots out and removes guilt, that is, acquires a claim to pardon and imparts to merit a right to reward. One and the same good work has, under different aspects indeed, both a satisfactory and a meritorious power.

by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead: unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that cannot fade, reserved in heaven for you" (I Pet. 1:3 f.).

5. By His atoning and meritorious sacrificial death, Christ rendered for us all that God, according to the rigor of His justice, required in order to bestow upon us remission of all the guilt of sin and its punishment, and favor us anew with His special benevolence and good pleasure, in consequence of which we are His children and heirs of heaven. This salvation through Christ is frequently called redemption in Scripture.⁶ There we read that we were purchased, or ransomed, by the blood of Christ. Regarded in this light, the merit and satisfaction of the sacrifice of the cross constitute the ransom required by God and paid by Christ that we might be freed from the bondage of Satan. God accepted the ransom that Christ, from the superabundance of His love, offered for us, as a full payment for our enormous debt, and thus broke the chains of slavery in which we were groaning, and restored us again to the freedom of the children of God.⁷ "That great dragon was cast out, that old serpent . . . who seduceth the whole world" (Apoc. 12:9); he had arrogated to himself dominion over fallen man, God permitting it as a just punishment for sin. The devil exercised his tyranny over men, inasmuch as he tormented and oppressed them by a thousand snares and temptations, by the fear of death and of the torments of hell. Then Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, that is, sin and death (I John 3:8), and to cast out the prince of this world

⁶ *Redemptio*, λύτρωσις, ἀπολύτρωσις, means loosening, freedom from sin and its consequences or from the slavery of the devil. Cf. S. Thom., IIIa, q.48, a.4; q.49, a.2.

⁷ Per peccatum dupliciter homo obligatus erat: *Primo* quidem servitute peccati (John 8:34; II Pet. 2:19). Quia igitur diabolus hominem superaverat, inducendo eum ad peccatum, homo servituti diaboli addictus erat. *Secundo* quantum ad reatum poenae, quo homo erat obligatus secundum Γεῖ justitiam, et hoc est etiam servitus quaedam; ad servitutem enim pertinet, quod aliquis patiatur quod non vult, cum liberi hominis sit uti se ipso ut vult. Quia igitur passio Christi fuit sufficiens et superabundans satisfactio pro peccato et reatu poenae generis humani, ejus passio fuit quasi quoddam pretium, per quod liberati sumus ab utraque obligatione. Nam ipsa satisfactio, qua quis satisfacit sive pro se sive pro alio, pretium quoddam dicitur, quo se ipsum vel alium redimit a peccato et a poena (Dan. 4:24). Christus autem satisfecit non quidem pecuniam dando aut aliquid hujus modi, sed dando id quod fuit maximum, se ipsum sc. pro nobis. Et ideo passio Christi dicitur esse nostra redemptio (S. Thom., IIa, q.48, a.4).

(John 14:30). By the sacrifice of the cross He vanquished and subjugated the prince of darkness; hence the Apostle says: "That through death He might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil," and by His death "might deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to servitude" (Heb. 2:14 f.).

If, when the Israelites went out of Egypt, the blood of the lamb became the restoration of freedom, and the day upon which the immolation of the victim disarmed the anger of the avenging angel, became a great and holy feast, how much more should Christian nations rejoice, for whom the almighty Father hath "spared not even His own son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32), that in the death of Christ we might have the true pasch and the sole and peculiar sacrifice by which not one nation alone was delivered from the bondage of Pharaoh, but the entire world was snatched from the captivity of Satan.⁸

Christ's dominion over Satan is beautifully expressed by the Church at the solemn blessing of the palms, when she prays as follows:

The palms represent the coming triumph of the Lord over the prince of death; and the olive branches proclaim the advent of a spiritual unction. For that pious multitude of men [which went forth to meet the Redeemer] knew even then that these things signified that the Saviour, compassionating the miseries of all mankind, was to combat with the prince of death and to triumph over him by His own death. Hence it was that they offered Him such gifts [palm and olive branches] as would declare both the triumph of His victory and the riches of His mercy. . . . Therefore the multitude goeth out to meet the Redeemer with flowers and palms, and payeth worthy homage to the triumphant conqueror; the nations proclaim the Son of God with their tongues; and their voices rend the skies in praise of Christ: Hosanna in the highest!

As Jesus Christ, "the Lion of the tribe of Juda" (Apoc. 5:5), has conquered the powers of death and hell, He has also obtained for us the grace to be strong and to overcome the wicked one (I John 2:14), "and to be victorious over the dominion of death, so as to participate in the glorious resurrection with the Lord of life."⁹ Hence we praise the Lord who has visited His people and wrought

⁸ S. Leo, *Serm.*, LX (LVIII), *de Passione Dom.* IX.

⁹ *Orat. in bened. Palm.*

their redemption, that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, may serve Him without fear, in holiness and justice all the days of our life (Luke 1:68-75).

6. The whole work of redemption is an incomprehensible achievement of divine love and mercy. Do not the goodness and humanity of God shine most brightly therein? The eternal Son of God descended from the kingdom of imperishable glory to our earth, in order here amid brambles and stones to seek the lost, weary, wounded sheep and lead them back to eternal bliss. With a heavenly self-sacrificing love He gave His life to refresh all that are weary and burdened, to soothe every sorrow, to pour oil and wine into every wound, to remove the sting of death and the terror of the grave; in a word, to free us from all evil and to bestow upon us every good. This freedom from all suffering and this enjoyment of every happiness will not, of course, be granted to us here below, but in eternity, in the land where God will wipe away all tears from our eyes, and "where death shall be no more, nor mourning nor crying nor sorrow" (Apoc. 21:3 f.); we shall fully partake of the blessing of redemption only beyond the grave. By the Cross the Saviour redeemed us from sin and eternal misery, and with many hardships acquired for us all spiritual and heavenly blessings; hence, according to the wise dispensation of God, the earthly way of the Cross alone will lead us to the eternal full possession of all the gifts of redemption. Since it pleased God to perfect the Author of our salvation by His passion (Heb. 2:10), and as Christ had to suffer "and so to enter into His glory" (Luke 24:26), it is most proper and beneficial that we too, His ransomed ones, should enter into the kingdom of heaven through many tribulations. Remove sin, and the bitter waters of earthly sufferings are changed into sweet fountains of grace. To them who love God, all earthly woes serve as means of salvation and sanctification.

Let us the Cross embrace with love and joy,
 Of fear the curse shall mingle no alloy;
 A blooming Eden from it sprung
 Of precious blood from Christ's heart wrung;
 The thorn-crowned sorrows of this earth
 Give place to rose-crowned joys of heavenly birth.

—Brunner

Christ's passion and death have transformed sufferings and have cast a mellow light over the darkness of death and the grave; therefore, the Cross is the joy and sweetness of holy souls. In overflowing love they pray: "To suffer or to die!" "Not to die, but to suffer!" "To suffer and to be despised for Thee, O Lord!" Of those who willingly and cheerfully suffer, Blessed Henry Suso says: "I shall be silent on the consolations and heavenly inundations wherewith God often, unknown to men, supports His suffering friends. These persons are, I know not in what manner, as it were already in heaven; what happens or does not happen, what God does in all His creatures or does not do, is altogether to their advantage. Thus the man who knows well how to suffer is partly recompensed even in time for his sufferings; for in all things he experiences peace and joy, and after death is rewarded with life eternal."¹⁰

Behold the treasures, the riches, and the glory of the fruits of grace, which have ripened on the tree of the cross, that you may embrace and honor it with devotion and love as did the Blessed Henry Suso.

During the night of the eve of May, he usually began by planting a spiritual May pole, daily paying it honor for a considerable time. Among all the beautiful branches that ever grew, he could find none more like the lovely May pole than the bough of the holy cross, which is more blooming with graces and virtues and more finely adorned than all other May poles. Beneath this May pole he made six prostrations; each prostration, with its accompanying meditation, formed a desire to deck the spiritual May pole with the most beautiful productions of summer. He recited and sang from his inmost heart, before the May pole, the hymn, *Salve, sancta crux*, in this manner: Hail, heavenly May pole of eternal Wisdom, upon which grew the fruit of eternal salvation! At the first prostration, for Thy adornment I offer red roses with my heart's love this day; at the second, with tiny violets I offer a humble bow; at the third, with delicate lilies I offer a pure embrace; at the fourth, with all kinds of beautifully colored and bright flowers that ever the meadows or the woods or the trees or the lowlands or the fertile plains produced during this beautiful month of May or that ever were or shall be in time to come, my heart presents to Thee a spiritual kiss; at the fifth, with all the gay, merry singing ever executed by the birds during a May tour, my soul offers Thee unbounded praise; at the sixth, for all the grandeur wherewith a May pole was ever adorned I this day raise my heart to

¹⁰ Denifle, *Die Schriften des sel. H. Seuse*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 138.

Thee in spiritual song, and I pray Thee, blessed May pole, that Thou wouldst assist me so that during this short time I may praise Thee, that I may enjoy Thee, the fruit of life, for evermore.

APPLICATION OF THE REDEMPTION ACCOMPLISHED ON THE CROSS

1. That with the sacrificial death of the divine Redeemer on the cross the work of our redemption was effectually accomplished, is a fundamental truth of faith.¹¹ Our Saviour, indeed, during His earthly pilgrimage, from the first moment of His existence until His last breath on the cross, offered satisfaction and accumulated merits for us, that is, for our redemption. But why does Holy Scripture ascribe the redemption of the world to the death, the blood, the cross of Christ? Because, in accordance with the good pleasure of God and the will of Christ, it was precisely the shedding of His blood and the offering of His life in the sacrifice of the cross that were to serve as the appropriate ransom and full price of redemption. The preceding labors, sufferings, and prayers, that is, the satisfactions and merits of the whole earthly career of Jesus, belong indeed to the treasure of redemption. But independently of His death they were not offered by Christ and accepted by the Father for the actual redemption, but only so far as they were to find therein their completion and consummation.¹² "Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground, die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). These words of

¹¹ In His ignominious death the satisfactory and meritorious efficacy of Christ reached its full measure and also accomplished its object, although the Resurrection and Ascension belong to the objective completion (integrity) of the redeeming act of salvation, in so far as these two glorious mysteries set the seal upon the redemption accomplished in a state of humiliation, and both guarantee and prefigure its eternal valid efficacy.

¹² For an actual ransom it is not sufficient that there should be only an equivalent price paid, but it must also be destined for the object in question, that is, it must be offered by him who would redeem and be accepted by him who is to grant the release. Si loquamur de redemptione humani generis quantum ad quantitatem pretii, sic quaelibet passio Christi etiam sine morte suffecisset ad redemptionem humani generis propter infinitam dignitatem personae. Si autem loquamur quantum ad deputationem pretii, sic dicendum est, quod non sunt deputatae ad redemptionem humani generis a Deo Patre et Christo aliae passionem Christi absque morte. . . . Ideo humanum genus non est redemptum per aliam passionem absque morte (S. Thom., *Quodlib.*, II, a. 2).

our Saviour were marvelously accomplished in His own person: by dying He produced fruits of life and grace in superabundance. His life of redemption reaches its zenith in His sacrificial death; therein the work of redemption was consummated. This the Lord Himself announced, in the presence of heaven and earth, when on the cross He cried out in a loud voice: "It is consummated" (John 19:30).

All the riches that our Lord has lavished upon us by His holy Incarnation are beyond the understanding of angels and of men. Hence no one can sufficiently praise and thank Him for them. But, my God, how can we thank Thee as we should for the priceless good which, by Thy wounds and sufferings, Thou hast bestowed upon us in restoring and healing the breach, which all creatures together could never have remedied? Even the slightest insult offered Thee would have been powerful enough fully to atone for all our indebtedness, for innumerable worlds. For the service rendered is measured by the dignity of the person. What shall we give Thee in return, sweet Jesus, for the great goodness Thou hast shown us, that out of Thy boundless love and for our sake, Thou, during thirty-three years, didst not pass a single day without suffering, and, finally, Thou didst die a shameful death on the cross? (Suso.)

It was by the death of Christ that the redemption of the human race and the restoration of the supernatural kingdom of God upon earth were accomplished. On the cross "the handwriting of the decree that was against us" (Col. 2:14) was blotted out. Then God was appeased and the rigor of His justice satisfied, so that the stream of His mercies could again flow without hindrance; then were sin and the curse of sin taken away, and grace and glory once more restored; then was death swallowed up in victory, and life was resuscitated; then was the power of darkness broken, and mankind delivered from ignominious captivity; then was the abyss of hell closed, and the gates of paradise reopened; then heaven and earth were again united in peace.¹³

With death came for our Saviour the night when He could no more work (John 9:4) in a meritorious manner. At the moment

¹³ Per passionem Christi liberati sumus non solum a peccato totius naturae humanae (*from original sin*), et quantum ad culpam et quantum ad reatum poenae, ipso solvente pretium pro nobis, sed etiam a peccatis propriis singulorum, qui communicant ejus passioni per fidem et caritatem et fidei sacramenta. Et ideo per passionem Christi aperta est nobis janua regni coelestis (Heb. 9:11). S. Thom., IIIa, q. 49, a. 5.

when His divine heart ceased to beat on the cross, the acquisition of new merits and new atonements for our redemption also ceased: the ransom is neither susceptible of augmentation nor in need of it. For our immense debt our divine and bountiful Redeemer has atoned not only sufficiently but in superabundant measure; out of His overflowing love He paid infinitely more than was required. The treasure of our redemption is infinitely great and consequently inexhaustible; it can be neither increased nor diminished. Superabundant, infinitely rich, is the atonement and merit of the death of the cross. This is so not merely on account of the infinite dignity of the suffering and expiring Redeemer, but also because of the immensity of the love wherewith He suffered and died. To all this we may add the value of the divinely human life which He sacrificed; and lastly the extent, the number, and the bitterness of the torments and ignominies which He endured contributed thereto.

Therefore the satisfaction offered for us by Christ is infinite, far surpassing all sins conceivable: it is a satisfaction beyond which none more bountiful and complete can be thought of. "Far more than we owed has Christ paid for us; as far as the ocean exceeds a drop of water, does Christ's satisfaction outweigh our indebtedness."¹⁴ The number and greatness of our sins should not, therefore, deprive us of confidence, they should not tempt us to despair, be they ever so great and numerous. Relying on the blood of Christ, we must always hope for mercy and pardon, because Jesus Christ "is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (I John 2:1). All the sins and all the punishment of sin which God has remitted since the beginning of time or which He will continue to remit until the end of time, He has pardoned and will pardon only because the blood of the divine Lamb flowed in sacrifice on the cross for their atonement.

The merit acquired for us by Christ is likewise infinite; it is a merit beyond which none greater and more precious can be conceived. Therefore, in consideration of the infinite merits of Christ, we may and we should confidently expect and implore all that is conducive to our salvation; for no other gifts and goods are equal to His merits. All the graces imparted to mortals from the beginning of the world (that is, since the fall of man) and that may still be imparted to them until the end of the world were and will be imparted

¹⁴ S. Chrysost., *Homil. X in cap. 5 ad Rom.*, n. 2.

only because Christ purchased them at the price of His precious blood.¹⁵

The host of the blessed in heaven, whom no one can count, are glorious fruits of the sacrifice of Christ; because the Lamb was slain and in His blood has redeemed them to God out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Apoc. 5:9), and in the blood of the Lamb they have washed their robes so that they are whiter than the newly fallen snow (Apoc. 7:14). Therefore they fall down before the Lamb and amid the harmony of celestial harps sing for all eternity the enchanting canticle of praise and thanksgiving: "The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and benediction" (Apoc. 5:12).

Incomprehensible and unfathomable are the riches of Christ: from His bleeding wounds and from His transpierced heart all blessings and salvation have come to us. His blood, poured out in sacrifice upon Golgotha, is a fountain of grace, flowing and atoning for the whole world, healing and sanctifying it. It does not diminish, it does not cease to flow, though millions upon millions draw from it grace upon grace, health and strength, light and life and the plenitude of life.

2. Thus the work of redemption is objectively fulfilled; but it must also be subjectively accomplished and completed in the individual man. On the cross Christ merited for us all forgiveness of sin, the grace of sanctification and eternal beatitude; this merit is to be applied to individuals, that by it they may be freed from sin, receive grace and sanctification. But what is required that the salvation founded upon the cross and placed in the Church and offered to all may be realized in the individual man? The Apostle, speaking of Christ, says: "Being consummated, He became to all that obey Him the cause of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:9). Indeed "with the Lord there is mercy: and with Him plentiful redemption" (Ps.

¹⁵ Those theologians who are of opinion that the Son of God would have assumed human nature even if Adam had not sinned, refer, as a general rule, all graces, those of our first parents in Paradise (*in statu justitiae originalis*) and those of the angels, to Christ as their meritorious cause; consequently they reject the known distinction of *gratia Dei* (grace imparted to our first parents before their fall and to the angels without regard to the merits of Christ) and *gratia Christi* (grace bestowed upon men since the fall in virtue of the merits of Christ). Cf. Mazzella, S.J., *De gratia Christi*, disp. I, a. 1, 2, n. 12.

129:7). But to partake of it and to attain to the imperishable heirship of heaven, obedience to the Lord is demanded, that is, it is required to do all and to comply with all that He has ordained and prescribed. The obedience required for obtaining salvation extends to two things: we must first diligently employ the means of grace instituted and ordained by Christ; and then faithfully cooperate unto the end with the graces received.

From the precious blood of Jesus Christ comes the heavenly medicine prepared for all: it depends upon us to receive it for the cure of our sickness and infirmities, and thus to enjoy eternal health of soul and body. The fountain of grace that sprang forth upon Golgotha is open and available to all; but we must approach it and drink therefrom "that living water" that it may become in us "a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting" (John 4:14), and that we famish not "in a desert land, where there is no way and no water" (Ps. 62:3). In the sight of all is the wonderful tree of the cross planted; but we must pluck and eat of its fruits in order to live eternally and be able to walk in the strength of this food, to the holy mountain of God (III Kings 19:8).

Christ has given to men the power to be made the sons of God (John 1:12) and thus to remain; but so long as we are in this land of probation, there is no infallible security and certainty of salvation. That we may not lose the grace of divine adoption and be excluded from the eternal inheritance of heaven, we should "receive not the grace of God in vain," but we must diligently employ "the acceptable time . . . the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:1 f.), and by good works make sure our predestination. We must use violence in order to secure the kingdom of heaven, and strive earnestly to enter by the narrow gate; during the heat and burden of the day, we must cultivate the vineyard of our soul; we must fight the good fight, keep the faith, and win the race so as to gain the crown of justice; we must suffer with Christ in order to be glorified with Him, and die with Christ in order to live with Him; we must walk in a manner worthy of God, pleasing Him in all things, fruitful in good works, increasing in the knowledge of God. By a holy and devout life we should be ready and hasten to the coming of the day of the Lord, so as to be found by Him spotless and without blame; we should renounce all in order to purchase the hidden treasure, the precious pearl of the kingdom of heaven. With burning lamps, filled

with the oil of charity and good works, we should go forth to meet the Bridegroom, in order to be admitted into the heavenly nuptial chamber.¹⁶

Therefore we must watch, pray, labor, suffer, and combat to become holy and to secure our salvation. Eternal life is not merely an inheritance, not merely a pure gift of divine mercy, but a reward also that we must deserve, and a crown of justice that we must win in lawful combat. The superabundant satisfactions and merits of Christ do not exempt us from the obligation we are under of satisfying God for our sins by performing works of satisfaction and accumulating merits for heaven. But all our satisfactions have their root and source in Christ, from whom they draw their efficacy and value, by whom they are presented to the Father, and through whose mediation they are accepted by the Father.¹⁷ It is precisely in this that the glory and superabundance of the redemption are shown, that Christ our chief has not only satisfied and merited for us, but has, moreover, acquired for us grace and efficacy, presenting them to us that we ourselves may also in Him, through Him, and with Him be enabled to render satisfaction and to merit heaven.¹⁸

How in the course of time are the plentiful fruits of the redemption, the gifts and graces purchased on the cross, to be applied to and appropriated by individual man? This is effected in various ways. Some graces God imparts to us without our cooperation; others we obtain only by our cooperation, by disposing ourselves for their reception and employing well the means of grace. Such means of grace are manifold and by God's disposition are found in the Church: on the one hand, the principal ones are prayer and good works; on the other, the sacraments and the Sacrifice of the Mass.¹⁹ All these means of grace are channels through which the

¹⁶ Cf. Matt. 2:12; Luke 13:24; Matt. 28:8; II Tim. 4:8; 2:11 f.; Col. 1:10; II Pet. 3:12 f.; Matt. 13:44-46; 25:1.

¹⁷ Trid., Sess. XIV, cap. 8.

¹⁸ Meritum Christi sufficienter operatur ut quaedam causa universalis salutis humanae; sed oportet hanc causam applicari singulis per sacramenta et per fidem formatam, quae per dilectionem operatur. Et ideo requiritur aliquid aliud ad salutem nostram praeter meritum Christi, cujus tamen meritum Christi est causa (S. Thom., *De verit.*, q. 29, a. 7 ad 8).

¹⁹ The holy apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, does not exclude such a sacrifice as is repeatedly offered to impart to men the fruits of redemption acquired on the Cross. He there insists on and proves the uniqueness and the complete adequateness of the bloody sacrifice of Christ only in the sense that along with it and after it there is and can be no other sacrifice

graces merited by Christ flow to us in abundance and in a mysterious manner. Thus has Christ by the sacrifice of the cross won for us an eternal redemption, and once for all accomplished the regeneration of the world, that is, atoned for all the sins of all men and merited for us every grace.

Consequently by the sacrifice of the cross we expect and obtain full reconciliation and favor in time, as well as happiness and glory in eternity. Whoever separates himself from this sacrifice; whoever, through disobedience and unbelief, despises and rejects it, for him "there is now left no [other] sacrifice for sins, but a certain dreadful expectation of judgment, and the rage of a fire" (Heb. 10:26 f.). Therefore with the Church we joyfully unite in the hymn:

The Cross we hail, our only stay!
In holy hearts fresh grace implant,
And pardon to the sinner grant!

JESUS CHRIST, "A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDECH"

In a short but magnificent and mystical psalm David prophetically announced that the Messiah would unite in His person the regal and the priestly dignity. His priesthood is more distinctly characterized as eternal, according to the order of Melchisedech: "The Lord hath sworn, and He will not repent: Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech" (Ps. 109:4). St. Paul also ascribes to the Lord "an everlasting priesthood" (Heb. 7:24). Now, if it be asked in what manner we are to understand the perpetual duration of the priesthood of Christ, we must then consider the priestly dignity and the exercise of the priestly office.

1. On the cross Christ exercised His office of high priest, to which at the moment of Incarnation He had been destined and for which He had been sanctified. After having by the bloody sacrifice of His life taken away the sins of the world, He sits eternally at the right hand of the Father and dies no more: thus He retains His priestly dignity which can never be lost. Of every sainted bishop the Church sings: God "made him to be a prince in order that the dignity of the

whose object would be to express the acknowledgment of unatoned guilt, as was the case with the sacrifices of the Old Testament, or to increase or supply the price of redemption, as though this had been insufficiently paid for by the sacrifice of the cross.

priesthood might belong to him forever";²⁰ for the priestly character is forever indelibly impressed upon the soul of him who has received ordination. It must be added that the power and fruit of the sacrifice of Christ remains and endures forever. As the high priest of the good things to come (Heb. 9:11), He has acquired and purchased for us by His bloody sacrifice, not earthly and perishable treasures, but the new, imperishable life of grace and glory. The priestly dignity as well as the precious effects of His priestly office never cease, but continue unchanged for all eternity. These two characteristics are manifest in the eternal priesthood of Christ, but they do not exhaust it; for it has a broader and richer capacity, as it includes a certain continuance and permanence of the priestly activity of Christ.

2. Our glorified Saviour continues His priestly functions, His redeeming office as mediator for the salvation of mankind, chiefly in a twofold manner; in heaven by mediatory intercession, and upon earth by the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice. Both will endure until the end of the world, that is, until the last elect soul enters into the joys of paradise.

That Christ in heaven is our mediator, intercessor, and advocate with the Father, is frequently and clearly expressed in Holy Scripture. Previous to His passion and death, He consoled and encouraged His sorrowful disciples by promising that when in heaven He would intercede for them with the Father (John 14:16). The Apostle St. Paul says that Christ, after dying and rising again, sitteth at the right hand of God, making intercession for us (Rom. 8:34). And elsewhere he says that Christ "hath an everlasting priesthood, whereby He is able also to save forever them that come to God by Him; always living to make intercession for us" (Heb. 7:24 f.). The same truth is expressed in the following words: Jesus "entered into heaven itself, that He may appear now in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24).

That we may the better appreciate the presence of Christ before the face of God for us and His everlasting mediatorial intercession in our behalf, we will cast a rapid glance upon the prayer which our Saviour made during His mortal life on earth.²¹

²⁰ Introit of the Mass.

²¹ Absque dubio decens fuit, Christum orare, maxime in diebus carnis suae (Heb. 5:7). Ratio autem hujus condecencie potest quadruplex assignari,

Prayer occupied the entire life of Jesus: for what else was His sojourn on earth than an unspeakably holy and mysterious life of prayer, intercession, meditation, and contemplation? He prayed in the crib, in the Temple at Jerusalem, during the flight into Egypt, in the house of Nazareth, in the desert. During His public life He frequently retired to secluded places, chiefly to mountains, there to pray and to watch throughout the night in prayer; praying He raised His eyes to heaven before working miracles or imparting blessings; during His prayer He was gloriously transfigured on the holy mount; the whole time of His passion, from the beginning to the end, He continued to offer most humble, fervent sacrificial prayer: He prayed at the Last Supper, on the Mount of Olives, and upon the cross.²² Thus Jesus entered into the world praying, He prayed while He lived, prayed while He suffered, and it was while praying that He expired. What significance, what power and efficacy, His most holy prayer and intercession had for us in the work of redemption! He wished to procure our eternal salvation, not only by satisfaction and merit, but also by prayer;²³ for all the gifts of grace that He merited in His life, in His passion, and in His death, He at the same time implored and obtained for us by supplication, laboring thus in every possible way for His vineyard (Isa. 5:4).²⁴ It was this spirit of prayer animating His Sacred Heart at all times,

videlicet propter meritum, propter virtutis exemplum, propter veritatis argumentum et propter officium explendum. Propter *meritum*: quia sua petitione et postulatione merebatur nobis, qui minus idonei eramus ad susceptionem beneficiorum Dei. Propter *exemplum*: ut sc. discipulos suos et per consequens alios invitaret ad orationis studium, in cuius exercitio maxime superatur adversarius (Matt. 26:41). Propter *veritatis argumentum*: ut ostenderet, se esse verum hominem et vere a Deo missum (John 11:41). Propter *officium*, quia Christus habebat dignitatem sacerdotis et pontificis; unde sicut ad ipsius officium pertinebat sacrificium offerre pro peccatis, ita et pro peccatoribus exorare (Heb. 5:1; 7:26). S. Bonav., III, dist. 17, a. 2, q. 1.

²² Cf. Luke 6:12; 22:39; 23:34; Matt. 19:13; 26:36; John 11:41; 17:1 f.

²³ Magna Domini propter salutem nostram benignitas pariter et pietas, ut non contentus quod nos sanguine suo redimeret, adhuc pro nobis amplius et rogaret (S. Cyprian., *De orat. domin.*, chap. 30).

²⁴ Omnia quae pro genere humano impetravit satisfaciendo merendoque, etiam orando impetravit, quia his omnibus justitiae titulis remedium hominum operari voluit, quo copiosior esset redemptio ipseque suum erga illos amorem immensum amplius declararet (Arias, *Thesaur. inexhaust.*, I, Tr. III, chap. 14). Christus exercuit officium sacerdotis merendo nobis, satisfaciendo pro nobis et interpellando pro nobis: hac enim via Deum nobis reconciliavit et nos adduxit ad Deum, quod est munus sacerdotis propriissimum (Salmant., *De Incarn.*, disp. XXXI, dub. I, n. 11).

which in reality made His passion and death, the offering of His body and the shedding of His blood, an atoning and meritorious sacrifice. Prayer is, therefore, the soul of sacrifice. Thus our Saviour through prayer fulfilled the will of God and accomplished His work; through prayer He redeemed the world and saved mankind.

3. But not only during His earthly life our Lord "with a strong cry and tears, offering up prayers and supplications to Him that was able to save Him from death, was heard for His reverence" (Heb. 5:7), but glorified in heaven He is also an advocate and intercessor for men, to bring them to the full possession of salvation merited by Him. His heavenly intercession has for its object to procure for individual man the treasures of grace acquired and gathered on the cross.

On the best grounds we should believe that Christ in heaven really and expressly intercedes for us with the Father. Why should not the divine heart of Jesus, which on earth so often, so earnestly, so constantly prayed and supplicated in our behalf, why should not this heart also in the glory of heaven present to the Father His wish, His fervent desires for our salvation? This intercession of the glorified Saviour, to whom all dominion and power has been given in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18), is incomparably more perfect, more potent, and more efficacious than all the united petitions of all the angels and saints. For it is not merely the divinely human prayer which Christ offered when upon earth and which was always answered (John 11:42), but it is the prayer of the eternal high priest, who with the price of His blood purchased all those gifts and graces which He desires to obtain for us, and who consequently has a just claim to that which He wishes to procure for us and to impart to us. What our Lord thus asks in virtue of His infinite merits, He will infallibly obtain. "Ask of Me and I will give Thee the Gentiles for Thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession" (Ps. 2:8), says the Father to the Son, who sits at His right hand, waiting until His enemies be placed under His feet.

4. To this especial intercession, by which Christ as mediator becomes our advocate with the Father, is added the representation and the offering of the sacrifice of the life of the Lord on the cross, and of the merits He thereby acquired. Christ appears for us before the face of God, that is, He presents to the Father the wounds He

received, the blood He shed, and the death He underwent on the cross, in order to move Him to impart to us His favor, His mercy, and His grace. In this is found one of the reasons why the Saviour desires to retain for all eternity in His risen body the glorious marks of His wounds. These emblems of His bloody passion and combat represent to the Father what price was given for "the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free" (Gal. 4:31).²⁵ These open death-wounds now shine as stars with marvelous beauty and brilliance; but they continually proclaim to the eternal Father that the heart, the hands, and the feet of His beloved Son were once cruelly transpierced; they repeat loudly and solemnly that the Saviour in lavish profusion shed all His blood in order to ransom us. The sufferings and the wounds of the glorified Saviour appear, as St. Hildegard declares,²⁶ before the face of the Father like unto the aurora, which ceases not to increase in splendor until the perfection of day. Or, as Father Faber puts it, God beholds all things in that never-setting red sunset of the precious blood, which by His command is forever to be seen hovering on the horizon in all its splendor.

How dear and how precious, therefore, to our soul should be the sight of those glorified wounds of the Lord! They testify that He has written us in His hands and engraved us in His heart in indelible characters. With gratitude should we gaze upon these sweet tokens of His martyrdom. For us they are fountains of eternal atonement and mercy, pledges of heavenly goodness and longanimity. In every tribulation and necessity, animated with a confidence full of joy, we should look up to our merciful and faithful high priest in heaven; for His heart is the dwelling place of eternal gentleness, an abyss of love and clemency. When we sin, we should never despair, for "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just, and He is the propitiation for our sins" (I John 2:1 f.).

5. The exercise of the office of mediator and intercessor, ex-

²⁵ In quo non solum fidem firmat, sed etiam devotionem acuit, quod vulnera suscepta pro nobis coelo inferre maluit, abolere noluit, ut Deo Patri nostrae pretia libertatis ostenderet (S. Ambros., *In Luc.*, X, n. 170).

²⁶ Ante oculos meos apparet, quid Filius meus propter amorem hominis in mundo passus sit; quoniam nativitas, passio et sepultura, resurrectio et ascensio Unigeniti mei mortem humani generis occiderunt. Unde et ea in coelestibus coram me fulgent, quia eorum non sum oblitus, sed usque ad consummationem saeculi quasi *aurora* ante me in multa claritate apparebunt. (S. Hildegardis, *Scivias*, II, vis. 6).

plained above, which the God-man discharges in heaven before the throne of His Father, is a priestly function; there He propitiates Him in our behalf by virtue of the sacrifice He once offered for us on the cross. His heavenly intercession is based upon and supported by the sacrificial merits acquired at the price of His blood, and is, therefore, a priestly function, a priestly intercession.²⁷ After our Lord had, by the bloody sacrifice of Himself, atoned for the sins of the people and "obtained eternal redemption," He entered into the sanctuary of heaven (Heb. 9: 11 f.). There He continually exercises His office of high priest by intercessory supplication, the object of which is to apply and to procure for man, throughout all ages, the fruits of the redeeming sacrifice accomplished on the cross, that man may obtain salvation and eternal beatitude. This application of the fruits of the sacrifice of the cross, by the priestly intercession and oblation of Christ in heaven, may in a certain sense be called the continuation or, according to St. Thomas, the consummation of the sacrifice of the cross; but we do not intend by this to assert that the sacrifice of the cross was not essentially consummated upon earth. This would be altogether erroneous. For the exercise of the priestly function of mediator in heaven is not in an exact and strict sense a sacrifice.²⁸ Having ascended into heaven, our Saviour

²⁷ *Christus in coelo interpellat et orat pro nobis idque proprium est Christo, ut tamquam pontifex oret pro nobis; alii enim Sancti, etiam ii, qui in hac vita sacerdotes fuerunt, orant pro nobis in coelo, non tamquam sacerdotes, sed tamquam privati Sancti et amici Dei; non enim amplius funguntur sacerdotio in coelis* (Corn. a Lap., *In Rom.*, 7:25).

²⁸ With regard to the so-called heavenly sacrifice of Christ, there prevails at present a theological controversy, which, however, in our opinion, refers more to the manner of expression than to the thing itself. As in the Mass the liturgical oblation is annexed to the transient sacrificial act (*in actu consecrationis*), thus Christ with unchangeable sentiments of sacrifice continues in heaven the priestly representation and offering (*oblatio*) of the sacrifice once accomplished on the cross, so as to apply, until the end of time, to all men God's favor and grace. But this heavenly oblation of Christ is no *sacrificatio vel immolatio corporis et sanguinis Christi*; consequently it is no sacrifice in the real and strict sense, as are the sacrifice of the cross and that of the Mass. Therefore, the celebration of the Eucharist is a *verum sacrificium* and not a mere *oblatio*, since therein, as the Council of Trent says, Christ according to His humanity is offered in an unbloody, yet true and real manner—(*sacrificatur, in statu victimae ponitur hic et nunc*). But this last quality (*actualis positio in statu victimae*) is not to be found in the humanity of Christ as it is glorified in heaven, and therefore—because this requisite which is essential for the complete idea of sacrifice is wanting—there can be no question of a heavenly sacrifice in the strict sense of the word. The heavenly *interpellatio* of Christ

does not there sacrifice Himself, since He is in the glory of the Father, but He does so here on our earthly altars under the sacramental species. In heaven He is not in the state of sacrificial lamb, but He reigns there in the splendor of the saints and is there enthroned as King of kings in the radiant glory of victory.

6. Upon earth also our glorified Saviour continually exercises His office of high priest, and that by the accomplishment of a true and real sacrifice. For He is the chief sacrificial priest who upon the altar, by the hands of His duly authorized ministers, ever performs the Eucharistic action of sacrifice. For this reason the Prophet glorifies Him as a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech. In what, then, is Melchisedech "likened unto the Son of God" (Heb. 7:3), that is, a figure of the eternal high priest Jesus Christ? Melchisedech was priest and king: according to his name, Melchisedech, "King of Justice," and according to his kingdom of Salem, "King of Peace." Christ also in His divine-human dignity is priest and king at one and the same time, and as such the author and source of all supernatural justice, as well as the founder and prince of all true peace in time and eternity. Already David had announced that "in His days shall justice spring up and abundance of peace, till the moon be taken away" (Ps. 71:7). Holy Scripture makes mention

is indeed an *oblatio sacerdotalis*, but no *actio sacrificia*. *Officii ratione* [Christus vocatur sacerdos in aeternum], quia semper apud Patrem in coelis interpellat pro nobis. Est enim sacerdotis officium interpellare Deum pro salute eorum, quibus datus est sacerdos. Fungitur autem hoc officio Christus in aeternum, i.e. usque in finem saeculi, donec omnes electos suos adduxerit ad salutem. Nec vero haec interpellatio est sine oblatione, quae et ipsa ad sacerdotis officium pertinet; nam continuo seipsum hominem et vulnere signa, quae passus est, exhibet atque offert Patri pro salute electorum. . . . His addi poterat ratio sumpta ab officio sacrificandi, quia nimirum Christus Dominus non solum interpellando causam electorum suorum etiamnum promovet apud Deum, verum etiam jugiter pro iis sacrificando. Sed illud agit continuo per se ipsum; hoc per ministros ac vicarios suos sacerdotes, quibus commisit offerendum in Ecclesia, usque ad saeculi consummationem, visibile sacrificium corporis et sanguinis sui sub speciebus panis et vini, quod tamen et ipse primus in ultima coena obtulit (Estius, *In Epist. ad Hebr.*, 7:17; cf. *ibid.*, 7:25; 8:2 f.; 9:25). Est Christus in coelo sacerdos in aeternum non solum dignitate permanente et effectu sacrificii perpetuo, sed etiam continuata quadam functione, non quod sacrificium in coelo offerat, sed quod statim victimae in cruce et totum meritum illius sacrificii Patri pro nobis repraesentat, et ita interpellat pro nobis interpellatione sacerdotali. Unde etiam in coelo victima est, non quae ibi nunc actu sacrificetur, sed quae semel est sacrificata et nunc cum omnibus meritis illa oblatione consummatis perseverat et vivit in aeternum (Cardin. Franzelin, *De Verbo incarnato*, thes. 51, n. 2).

neither of the father nor of the mother of Melchisedech, and portrays him as though he had neither beginning of days nor end of life. Christ was upon earth, according to His humanity, without a father; and He is in heaven, according to His divinity, without a mother; and His priesthood is eternal and imperishable: He is the only priest in His order, having neither predecessor nor successor. But this figure of Melchisedech would be defective if he did not prefigure Christ, at the same time, in the essential and truly priestly function, that, is, in the offering of sacrifice. But this characteristic also is not wanting. Melchisedech was a priest of the Most High, and as such he presented to Him earthly offerings of bread and wine; thereby prefiguring the new and eternal sacrifice of the Eucharist, which the eternal and real Melchisedech, Jesus Christ, instituted in the new and eternal covenant under the sacramental species of bread and wine, and which He will offer until the end of the world. This is the principal reason why it is said of Jesus Christ that He is a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech.

This twofold priestly function, namely, of intercession in heaven and of offering sacrifice on earth through the application of the healing and sanctifying power of His sacrificial blood and merits, Christ will continue so long as there are men who require help, deliverance from sin, and justification: therefore until Judgment Day, when the number of the saints will be filled and completed, the heavenly Jerusalem constructed of the living and chosen stones of the elect. Then, too, when the work of redemption shall have been victoriously and universally accomplished, when the enemies of Christ shall have been placed at His feet and dashed to pieces like the potter's ware, even then will the Lord, as the glorious head of the Church triumphant, present to the majesty of the triune God a sacrifice of praise, of adoration, and of thanksgiving throughout all eternity.

SECTION III

The Sacrifice of the Altar

CHAPTER V

THE TRUTH AND REALITY OF THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE

THE NECESSITY OF A PERPETUAL SACRIFICE

1. The offering of the bloody sacrifice of the cross constitutes the conclusion and crowning of the earthly, as well as the foundation of the heavenly, activity and efficacy of Christ for the salvation of mankind. In the sacrifice of the cross all sacrifices prior to the coming of Christ have their fulfillment and by means of it have attained their end.

There was but one sacrifice offered to God for the redemption of the world; the death of Christ, the true sacrificial Lamb, announced so many centuries in advance, placed the children of promise in the liberty of faith. Then also was the New Covenant sealed, and the heirs of the eternal kingdom were inscribed with the blood of Christ. . . . Then was evidently effected the transition from the Law to the Gospel, from the Synagogue to the Church, from the many legal sacrifices to the one sacrifice, in such a manner that, when the Lord gave up His spirit, the mystical veil which concealed the innermost part of the Temple and its holy mystery from view, was suddenly and violently rent in twain from top to bottom. Then truth abolished the figures, and the prophecies became superfluous after their fulfillment.¹

The tearing asunder of the veil before the entrance to the holy of holies of the Old Dispensation was a sign that the Old Covenant

¹ S. Leo, *Serm.*, LXVIII (LXVI), *de Passione Dom.* XVII, chap. 3.

ceased when the new and eternal covenant of grace had been instituted in the blood of Christ. With the ending of the Old Covenant, the ancient sacrifices also ceased because they had become useless.² For when the reality appears, the shadow vanishes; at the rising of the sun, night disappears. The sacrifice of the cross was a transient act, and as such it was accomplished but once, in one place, upon Golgotha; at a stated time, on that memorable and first Good Friday. Only a few persons stood at the foot of the cross and assisted at this most affecting sacrificial drama; for all others the sacrifice of the cross is an historical fact: a thing of long ago and of the past. Now was there to be no further sacrifice after the death of Christ? Was Christendom to be without a perpetual sacrifice? Was Christ, the author and finisher of faith (Heb. 12:2), not to bequeath to His beloved Church a permanent sacrifice as a heritage? To say that Christ left the religion He founded without a perpetual sacrifice is an assertion which of itself appears improbable and will later on be proved utterly false. But before we give proofs from the written and traditional word of God, from which it is as clear as the noon-day sun that the Catholic Church possesses in the celebration of the Eucharist a permanent sacrifice, we will prove how exceedingly proper, even necessary, in a certain sense, for the Christian religion and the Church, is a perpetual sacrifice, and that precisely the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ.

a) The offering of sacrifices for the purpose of divine worship, if not of absolute necessity, is in the highest degree in accordance with human nature and the natural law. Man, being composed of body and soul, cannot express his interior religious life by anything better, cannot give it more powerful and emphatic proof, than by sacrifice. Grace does not destroy nature, but improves and sanctifies, ennobles and transforms it. Hence man requires, even in his condition as a child of God and in the kingdom of grace, that is, in Christianity, a visible sacrifice in order to comply with his religious obligations in a manner most consonant with his nature. Since human nature requires a visible sacrifice, God, whose providence arranges all things with so much power and gentleness, would assuredly not

² Quoniam veritate superveniente cessat umbra, et figura praeunians sortitur finem intentum, quo habito, cessare debet ejus usus et actus: hinc est, quod gratia superveniente, vetera sacramenta et signa impleta sunt pariter et sublata (S. Bonav., *Brevil.*, VI, chap. 2).

leave Christians without a permanent sacrifice which so greatly accords with the inmost wants of a religious heart.

b) Since sacrifice is so well suited to human nature, it is always and everywhere found recorded in history. In the Old Dispensation sacrifices constituted the essence and center of the entire service. Hence the New Covenant cannot be without sacrifice since it is the fulfillment and completion of the Old. Now, if the Old Law, which was transient, was invested with so much glory, how much more must the New Law, which is to remain forever, be glorious, that is, endowed and distinguished among other things by a corresponding sacrificial worship! (II Cor. 3:11.) In the Old Law there were daily not only bloody, but unbloody sacrifices also. Both kinds were figures of the New Law. Now, as the bloody sacrifices found their fulfillment in the death of Christ on the cross, in like manner can the figures of the unbloody sacrifices, daily offered, find their realization alone in the fact that in the New Law there exists a perpetual unbloody sacrifice.³ In the Old Testament there were sacrifices which prefigured to the Israelites the future sacrifice of redemption, placing it before their eyes, thus becoming to them a means of gathering in advance the fruits of the tree of the cross. Hence it is highly proper that the New Law also should have a sacrifice, whose object it is to represent to all generations the sacrifice of the cross, accomplished once for all, and evermore to apply to them its graces. Consequently, we may draw the conclusion that by the New Law Christ did not simply abolish the imperfect sacrificial worship of the Old Law, but changed it into one that was more perfect.

c) The religion instituted by Christ is most perfect and most complete, for it possesses the plenitude of divine truth and grace. In Christianity supernatural revelation has found its consummation, so that a richer and more copious outpouring of the Holy Spirit is not to be expected here below. The Church of Christ is placed in the middle, between the figurative shadow of the Old Law and the final completion of the heavenly Jerusalem. The Old Dispensation was the preparation and the breaking of the ground for Christianity; and Christianity forms the direct entrance and vestibule

³ In promptu est, sacrificia incruenta non minus ac sacrificia cruenta imaginem gerere novi Testamenti; sacrificia nempe cruenta praesignabant cruentam Christi oblationem in cruce, incruenta vero sacrificium incruentum celebrationis eucharisticae, et ideo sane sacrificia tum cruenta tum incruenta in lege dicta sunt sancta sanctorum (Lambrecht, *De ss. Miss. sacrif.*, I, iv, 5).

leading to the revealed and beatific vision of the eternal truth and beauty to come. But the perfection of religion requires a perfect divine worship, that is, the offering of sacrifice; for sacrifice is the chief and the most excellent act of religion. If the Christian religion had not a perpetual sacrifice, it would not have a perfect divine worship and it would not be complete in every respect, but would in an essential point be incomplete and insufficient. Since the Christian religion is the most perfect, it must possess the most excellent and the most sublime and worthy form of worship, the worship of sacrifice. Where there is no sacrifice, there is no priesthood and no altar: what would Christianity be without sacrifice, priest, and altar? ⁴

d) Christianity is founded on the sacrifice of the cross and takes its root in that sacrifice. The holy sacrifice is the source from which the New Law has emanated with its blessings and graces. As the New Law was instituted and confirmed by sacrifice, it must be sustained and maintained by a perpetual sacrifice; since the preservation of an object is equivalent to a continued creation, it is dependent upon the same cause as that of its creation. Hence it is not sufficient that the Christian religion and the Church should have as its foundation a sacrifice which was offered once; it must possess a sacrifice which is perpetually repeated as the fundamental support of its permanent existence.

2. The sacrifice of the New Testament cannot be independent of the sacrifice of the cross. From this sacrifice salvation flowed forth to mankind before and after Christ; therefore it constitutes the central point to which all other sacrifices are referred. The object of the perpetual sacrifice of the New Covenant cannot be a means of acquiring for us additional merit or of rendering fresh satisfaction for the sins of men, but its sole purpose can be no other than to apply individually to men in need of help and salvation the satisfaction and merits of the sacrifice of the cross.

Sacrifice forms the center of exterior divine worship and with regard to its perfection stands on a par with it. Since the New Law so immeasurably excels the Old Law, the former must possess a

⁴ Cum tres intentiones et praecipui actus sint cultus divini ac verae religionis, videlicet honorificentia Dei, impetratio veniarum et adeptio gratiarum, multum deesset cultui Dei, si durante tanta transgressione ac culpa, desit advocatus et sacerdos, ad impetrandum cunctis veniam ac gratiam efficax, utpote Christus (Dion. Carthus., *De sacr. altar.*, a. 10).

sacrifice incomparably nobler and more efficacious than did the latter.⁵ The difference between the two Testaments must be impressed principally on their respective sacrifices. In the Old Law the exterior and the carnal, the spirit of fear and of bondage prevailed. Therefore the bloody sacrifices offered up by unregenerate man with the consciousness and acknowledgment of unatoned guilt were altogether appropriate; they appealed to an irritated and avenging God, who punishes sin with death. But for the New Testament is suited not a bloody sacrifice, but an unbloody one. In the New Law the interior and spiritual prevails; we have there the grace and joy of redemption, the spirit of love and of divine adoption.⁶ This unbloody sacrifice must correspond to the perfection of the New Law, which possesses the unfathomable riches and treasures of the grace of Christ. The unbloody sacrifice must not only represent figuratively the sacrifice of the cross, as did the sacrifices of the Old Testament, but it must really show forth and render present the sacrifice once accomplished upon Calvary. But such a presenting anew of the sacrifice of the cross becomes possible only when the offering upon our altars is in no way inferior to the sacrificial victim immolated on the cross, that is, only when in the sanctuary of the Church the body and blood of Christ are continually and mystically offered.⁷

3. But how can Christ, who has risen from the dead, who dies now no more, and over whom death shall have no more dominion (Rom. 6:9), be the gift offered and sacrificed? To all appearances the

⁵ *Sacrificium est primarium religionis munus vel potius complementum. Itaque decebat, ut excellentissima religio, qua nulla alia perfectior aut sublimior esse potest (quae quidem naturae humanae sit accommodata) nobilissimum haberet sacrificium, quale est sacrificium Eucharistiae, a quo ipsa religio praecipuam suam excellentiam habet (Lessius, De perfect. divin., XII, xiv, 99).*

⁶ *Dicitur lex mosaica differre ab evangelica, quia illa figurae, haec veritatis (Heb. 10:1); illa lex poenae, haec gratiae (Rom. 5:20 f.); illa litteralis, ista spiritualis (II Cor. 3:6); illa occidens, ista vivificans; illa timoris, ista amoris; illa servitutis, ista libertatis (Gal. 4:31); illa oneris et ista facilitatis (S. Bonav., Brevil., V, chap. 9).*

⁷ *Congruebat, ut (homines quotidianis peccatis implicati) haberent oblationem exteriorem; sed Dominus unica oblatione offerendo se omnes alias oblationes evacuaverat: ergo si non debuit reficere (to restore again), quod destruxerat, debuit dare nobis illam eandem, quam obtulit, et non aliam. Ergo sicut corpus Christi verum fuit oblatum in cruce, ita sacrificatur in altari (Idem., IV, dist. 10, p. 1, art. 1, q. 1). Quoniam tempus gratiae revelatae requirit, quod jam non offeratur oblatio qualiscumque, sed pura, placida et*

immortality and glory of our Saviour, who has ascended into heaven, seem insuperable obstacles to a sacrifice; still, what is impossible to man is possible with God. His infinite wisdom discovered never-suspected means and the way to accomplish what to men was apparently impossible. By virtue of manifold and dazzling miracles our Lord conceals under the appearance of bread and wine upon the altar the grandeur of His glorified humanity, uniting in His adorable person life and death, uniting the condition of a victim in sacrifice with the possession of heavenly glory.⁸

Since "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" and since the Lord "was seen upon earth and conversed with men" (John 1: 14; Bar. 3:38), His dwelling among us and His association with us have never ceased. When He ascended into heaven, He would not leave us orphans, He would not deprive us of the joy and consolation of His bodily presence (which is, of course, perceptible only by the light of faith, because His bodily presence with us is sacramental). He made good His parting words in a marvelous manner: "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. 28:20). Jesus wishes to remain in our midst as a perpetual sacrifice. He is the head of the triumphant Church above, as well as of the Church militant here below: as He is in heaven, so likewise does He desire to be and abide here upon earth, even in His sacred humanity. His presence accords perfectly with the state of the heavenly Church, as well as with that of the earthly Church here below. Therefore He is bodily present in a different way after the condition of each: in heaven He sits at the right hand of God, full of majesty and glory; upon earth He abides under the appearances of bread and wine, as a sacrificial victim, in lowliness and obscurity.

plenaria; et nulla alia oblatio est talis, nisi illa, quae in cruce fuit oblata, scilicet Christi corpus et sanguis; hinc est, quod necessario oportet in hoc sacramento (Eucharistiae) non tantum figurative, verum etiam veraciter corpus Christi tamquam oblationem huic tempori debitam contineri (*Idem., Brevil., VI, chap. 9*).

⁸ Sacrificium Missae quotidie pro vestra reconciliatione, purificatione et salute in ecclesia Deo Patri offertur: nempe tam ardentissime vos dilexi, tam liberalissimum ad vos animum habui, quod non suffecit mihi semel vobis conferri et semel pro vobis offerri, sed in fonte et abyso infinitae sapientiae meae hunc mysterialissimum modum inveni ac statui, quo vobis indesinenter adsim et conferar, pro vobisque offerar et ita a vobis manducer, modo vobis tolerabili ac proportionato sub tegumentis panis et vini, non in specie carnis et sanguinis, nec in quantitate propria, ut in ea subsisto, quamvis simul cum ea accipiar (*Dion. Carthus., De sacr. alt., a. 7*).

As long as the Church continues here below combating and suffering, in labor and tribulation, Christ will abide as a perpetual sacrifice with her; for He Himself will ever be the bright model and inexhaustible source of that life of sacrifice which the Church militant, as a true and worthy spouse of the Crucified, leads upon earth and will lead until the heavenly nuptial day, whose happy dawn will usher in endless joy, crown us with victory, and end all suffering. Amid the combat of mortal life, we will, full of consolation and confidence, have recourse to the holy altar, to implore there strength, courage, and victory from the divine victim.⁹

THE REALITY OF THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE PROVED FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

Already in the Old Law, God announced and predicted by the mouth of His prophets the unbloody sacrifice of the New Law.

1. In the first place, we have the figurative priesthood and sacrifice of Melchisedech. The kingly priest, Melchisedech, appears suddenly in the pages of Holy Writ as a mysterious personage and as suddenly disappears. God conferred on him the honor of prefiguring the priesthood and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, inasmuch as both are perpetuated in the New Covenant. Christ is called "a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech" (Ps. 109:4). These words signify that Melchisedech, by the order of his priesthood, that is, by the nature of his sacrifice and by the manner of his offering sacrifice, prefigured the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ. The eternal priesthood of Christ must, therefore, correspond to the figurative priesthood of Melchisedech and be similar to it in the nature and manner of its sacrifice. Christ must at all times offer His sacrifice in the same manner as Melchisedech offered his. The peculiar characteristic of the sacrifice, and consequently of the priesthood, of

⁹ Magna fiducia ad eundem est magnus Pontifex noster, Jesus Filius Dei, qui in aris nostris tamquam in throno gratiae sedet (Heb. 4:14-16). Regnat quidem apud coelitos, ex quo devicta morte coelos penetravit, Rex regum et Dominus dominantium; quotidie tamen velut hostia pacifica, quae imis summa reconciliet, ad instaurandum perficiendumque nostrae redemptionis opus offertur. Quae quidem oblatio inexhaustos in nostrum usum et commodum divinae misericordiae thesauros in se continet neque praesentis tantum vitae limitibus circumscribitur ejus fructus et utilitas, sed futuram etiam, alterumque, qui humanis oculis cerni non potest, mundum complectitur (*Collectio Lacensis*, III, 493).

Melchisedech consisted merely in this, that he offered bread and wine to the Most High (Gen. 14:18). Accordingly Christ, as the true and eternal Melchisedech, must also offer a similar sacrifice, and that not merely once, but continually throughout all ages until the end of time. But this can be the case only if the daily celebration of the Eucharist under the species of bread and wine is a true and real sacrifice. Christ is "eternal priest according to the order of Melchisedech" only so far as, by changing the elements of bread and wine into His body and blood, He offers perpetually to the Most High an unbloody sacrifice.

Thus the human figure, Melchisedech, harmonizes most beautifully with the divine original, Jesus Christ, except that the sacrifice of Christ must be infinitely more perfect than was that of Melchisedech. In fact, Christ offers upon the altar not ordinary bread or earthly wine, but "the holy bread of eternal life and the chalice of everlasting salvation." "Who," as St. Cyprian says, "is more a priest of God, the Most High, than our Lord Jesus Christ, who offered to God the Father a sacrifice, and offered the same as Melchisedech, that is bread and wine: His body and his blood?"¹⁰

2. On the eternal priesthood and sacrifice of Christ, according to the order of Melchisedech, a marvelously clear light is cast by the prophecy of Malachias, the last of the prophets: "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts; and I will not receive a gift of your hand. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice and there is offered to My name a clean oblation" (Mal. 1:10 f.).¹¹

The Fathers unanimously taught and the Church herself has

¹⁰ *Ep. ad Caecilium*, chap. 3. Sacerdos in aeternum Christus Dominus secundum ordinem Melchisedech, panem et vinum obtulit (*Antiph. in festo Corpor. Christi*).

¹¹ *Ab ortu solis usque ad occasum magnum est nomen meum in gentibus, et in omni loco sacrificatur et offertur nomini meo oblatio munda.* The words *magnum est, sacrificatur et offertur* do not relate to the present, but to the future, and to the Christian future, as is evidenced by the context; the prophets frequently use in their prophecies the present tense instead of the future, because they were accustomed to behold as present the event which, according to time and distance, was to happen in the future. The expressions *ab ortu solis usque ad occasum, in omni loco, in gentibus* (Hebrew, *gojim*: not Israelites, but pagan nations), designate the universality or catholicity of the promised worship and sacrifice, such a universality as is found only in the Christian Church.

formally declared that the Mass is that "clean oblation," which cannot be sullied by any unworthiness or depravity in him who offers it, and of which the Lord predicted by Malachias, that it would be offered in all places to His name, which would be great among the nations.¹² In this prophecy (verse 10) the annulment and the rejection of the sacrificial worship of the Old Law are emphatically expressed. Then, in verse 11, a new worship is foretold, and therewith an oblation that is new, unbloody, ineffably pure, is promised to be offered in all places. By this nothing else can be meant than the celebration of the Holy Eucharist in the Catholic Church.

a) The severe complaint of the Lord: "I have no pleasure in you," refers to the priests of Levi, who after their return from exile, as despisers of the divine name, were very careless and irreverent in offering sacrifices; for God complains by the Prophet that, contrary to the law, they offered to Him what was lame and blind and sick (Mal. 7 f.). The Lord, therefore, expresses His displeasure at the defective and unclean sacrifices of the priests of Levi, taking an opportunity, at the same time, to announce the total cessation of the sacrificial worship of the Old Testament in these words: "From your hands [that is, from the hands of the priests of Levi] I shall accept no more sacrifices." The true reason why the Lord rejects the Mosaic sacrifices is not because they were carelessly offered, but because an entirely different and new sacrifice was to be offered to Him from the rising to the setting of the sun. "He taketh away the first [the sacrifice of the Old Covenant], that He may establish that which followeth [the sacrifice of the New Covenant]" (Heb. 10:9).

b) The ancient sacrificial worship is to be annulled and replaced by a new and better worship. By the worship promised, the name of God will be made great (worshiped and glorified), and this not only in Jerusalem, but "from the rising of the sun even to the going down," namely, throughout the entire world; not merely among the Jews, but "among the Gentiles" of the whole earth: in short, "in every place." In contrast to the Mosaic worship, which was confined to one nation and to one place, the new worship is represented as being spread among all nations and throughout the whole world, a truly catholic worship, which is found nowhere but in the Church of Jesus Christ. Hence only Christian worship could have been

¹² Trid., Sess. XXII, cap. 1.

meant; for the prophecy refers to that time when Christ, as the Prince of Peace, would "rule from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth," and when "all kings of the earth shall adore Him, all nations shall serve Him" (Ps. 71:8, 11).

c) This new, this Christian worship is more exactly characterized as being a true and peculiarly divine worship. A true and real sacrifice is promised for the New Dispensation, to replace those offerings which the Lord will no longer accept from the hands of the priests of Aaron and which, nevertheless, were also real sacrifices. "Not that sacrifice in itself was rejected; for sacrifices were to be found among the Jewish nation and in the Church, but only the manner of offering sacrifice has been changed."¹³ The words promising the new sacrifice are as follows: "In every place . . . there is offered to My name a clean oblation (*mincha purum*)" (Mal. 1:11).¹⁴ These words can by no means be figuratively understood of an oblation not essentially and really a sacrifice, as that of prayer or any other good work; for the words clearly express a real sacrifice, whether we consider the context or the words in themselves. And here the clean oblation of the New Dispensation is placed in contrast to the unclean sacrifices of the Old Dispensation; but the contrast is complete only when in both cases there is ques-

¹³ S. Iren., *Adv. haeres.*, IV, xviii, 2.

¹⁴ Et in omni loco sacrificatur et offertur nomini meo oblatio munda. The original text is emphatic; translated literally it reads thus: Et in omni loco suffimentum oblatum nomini meo, et (incruentum) sacrificium mundum. The words of the Vulgate *sacrificatur et offertur* are in the Hebrew *muctar muggasch* (= *sacrificium [incruentum] oblatum*). *Muctar* is the participle of *hofal*, and the meaning of it is rendered in the sense of *sacrificium in genere*, or rather, *sacrificium incruentum*; for according to its etymology it signifies the *sacrificium incensi thuris vel thymiana* (incense-offering). The other participle, *muggasch* (= *oblatum*), expresses the presentation. An explanatory addition to the preceding forms are the two concluding words, *oblatio munda*, which in the original text are *mincha tehora* (= [*incruentum*] *sacrificium mundum*). The word *mincha* in the Old Testament has one hundred and fifty-four times the specific signification of unbloody sacrifice. All three words, *muctar*, *muggasch*, *mincha*, occurring in the original text are often found employed in the liturgical language of the Old Testament, but always only to signify real sacrifice, never to signify interior acts of worship, or such exterior oblations as are not real sacrifices. The sense of the entire text is therefore: Et in omni loco offertur nomini meo sacrificium, mincha (= incruentum sacrificium) mundum. Cf. Franzelin, *De sacrif.*, thes. 10; Lambrecht, *De ss. Miss. sacrif.*, II, iii, 2; Corluy, S.J., *Spicilegium dogmatico-biblicum*, II, 398-408; Knabenbauer, S.J., *Commentar. in prophet. minor.*, II, 430-45.

tion of sacrifice in its strict sense. Each word is so chosen as to designate, not only a real sacrifice in general, but more particularly and strictly an unbloody sacrifice. This is especially the case with the word *mincha*, which in the liturgical mode of speech is invariably employed to indicate the unbloody sacrifices of eatables.

With the prophecy of this sacrifice is connected the announcement of a new and special priesthood, destined to offer the new sacrifice; and with regard to their priestly office the new ministers of the altar are designated as *Levites* by the same prophet Malachias (3:3). Since the new sacrifice is to be celebrated everywhere, its priests, unlike the Jewish priesthood, do not belong to one tribe or people, but are chosen by the Lord from all nations, and by supernatural consecration are fitted and sanctified for their office. After the prophet Isaias (66:18-21) had described the conversion of the pagan nations and their entrance into the Christian Church, he continues: "And I will take of them to be priests and Levites, saith the Lord."

d) From the prophecy just quoted and explained it is now no longer difficult to prove the truth of the Eucharistic sacrifice. The Prophet announces that there shall be offered in the Christian era throughout the whole earth an unbloody but real sacrifice. This can mean nothing else than the celebration of the Eucharist: were it not a real sacrifice, then we should be forced to admit that the divine prediction has not been accomplished, a conclusion that is inadmissible. The words of the Prophet cannot be applied to the sacrifice of the cross; for it was offered only in one place and then in a bloody manner, while the sacrifice foretold is an unbloody one and offered everywhere. On the other hand, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and in it alone, are found united all those marks by which the Prophet characterizes the promised sacrifice of the New Law. The new sacrifice is an unbloody oblation of food; is not the Eucharist such, in a marvelous sense? The sacrifice announced is universal, offered in all places and among all nations; the Sacrifice of the Mass is celebrated wherever the sun shines and the Catholic Church exists: in the Old and in the New World, in the South and in the North, on the hills and in the plains, in the sumptuous cathedral and in the poor village church. The new sacrifice magnifies the name of the Lord, containing in itself the most worthy adoration and glorification of the divine Majesty: it is indeed upon the altar that "all honor and glory" is rendered to the Holy Trinity. Finally,

the sacrifice in prospective vision is praised, with particular emphasis, as perpetual and perfectly clean: where is this prerogative found in a higher degree than in the Eucharistic sacrifice? This sacrifice appears not only as exceedingly clean in its exterior celebration and offering, but it is in its very nature and essence so absolutely spotless as to be untarnishable even by the unworthy dispositions of those who offer it; for Christ, the holy of holies, is not only the sacrificial victim, but also pre-eminently the sacrificer at the altar.¹⁵

3. Already the figurative sacrifice of bread and wine of Melchisedech, as well as the prophecy of Malachias, intimated that the perpetual sacrifice of the New Dispensation would be a food oblation, and consequently that a sacrificial banquet would be connected therewith. This Eucharistic sacrificial repast is beautifully described and clearly announced in an exceedingly mysterious, venerable, and affecting psalm. We allude to psalm 21. According to the testimony of Holy Scripture, of the Church, and of the Fathers, this psalm is Messianic. Furthermore, that it is directly and exclusively Messianic is taught and satisfactorily proved by almost all Catholic commentators. The psalm contains a prophetic Gospel relative to the passion of the Lord, and admits of two divisions: the first part, verses 1-22, expresses sorrow, suffering, and lament, and unfolds a painful picture of the crucified Saviour; the second part, verses 23-32, presents in consoling and bright imagery the abundant fruits of sacrifice and benediction that flow from the passion of the Lord upon Christ Himself and upon those whom He has redeemed. So far as the latter part of the psalm refers to our subject, it reads thus:

<p>23. Narrabo nomen tuum fratribus meis: in medio ecclesiae laudabo te.</p> <p>26. Apud te laus mea in ec- clesia magna: vota mea reddam</p>	<p>23. I will declare Thy name to my brethren: in the midst of the Church will I praise Thee.</p> <p>26. With Thee is my praise in a great church: I will pay my</p>
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¹⁵ Sacrificium consistit partim in actione offerendi, partim in re oblata. Ergo ut sit omnino purum et mundum, non satis est, quod res oblata sit pura, sed praeterea requiritur, ut persona offerens sit pura: quia alioquin actio offerendi non esset omnino pura. Huc refertur illud Mal. 1:11: "In omni loco sacrificatur et offertur nomini meo oblatio munda" non solum ex parte rei oblatae, sed etiam ex parte principalis offerentis, non tamen ex parte aliorum hominum offerentium (Becanus, *Summa theolog. de Sacrif. Miss.*, I, q. 9).

in conspectu timentium eum.

27. Edent pauperes et saturabuntur, et laudabunt Dominum, qui requirunt eum: vivent corda eorum in saeculum saeculi.

28. Remiscentur et convertentur ad Dominum universi fines terrae: et adorabunt in conspectu ejus universae familiae gentium.

29. Quoniam Domini est regnum, et ipse dominabitur gentium.

30. Manducaverunt et adoraverunt omnes pingues terrae: in conspectu ejus cadent omnes, qui descendunt in terram.

vows in the sight of them that fear Him.

27. The poor shall eat and shall be filled, and they shall praise the Lord that seek Him: their hearts shall live forever and ever.

28. All the ends of the earth shall remember, and shall be converted to the Lord: and all the kindreds of the Gentiles shall adore in His sight.

29. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He shall have dominion over the nations.

30. All the fat ones of the earth have eaten and have adored: all they that go down to the earth shall fall before Him.

These words find their full and true meaning only when applied to the Eucharistic sacrifice and banquet. While the Lord on the cross is immersed in the lowest depths of torment, there gushes forth from His heart that suffering and agonizing prayer of our psalm. Then the dark clouds lift at once and disappear; the morn of the Resurrection dawns clear and brilliant upon His gaze; all the blessings and glorious results of His passion and death reveal themselves, the future bright and consoling, full of salvation and glory, stretches out before Him. With this blessed perspective presenting itself to His view, the Lord utters the verses quoted above, wherein He predicts a sacrifice and a sacrificial banquet to which all the inhabitants of the earth are invited.

Verse 23. All who have been redeemed by the sacrifice of the cross are "brethren" of Christ and children of God; as such they constitute the great family of God, the Church, which has been gathered from all nations. "In the midst of the Church" Christ, the risen Saviour, abides mystically, perpetually, as the author and source of the joyful tidings that herald to the regenerated "brethren" of Christ the "name" of the triune God. In the sanctuary of this Church the glorified Redeemer dwells and lives forevermore, His

Eucharistic presence being there as an unfailing source of endless praise to the Almighty.

Verse 26. After this manner does the Lord promise to glorify His Father with praises in the great assembly of the Catholic Church. The crown of this praise is to consist in this, that He would discharge in full His vows (*vota mea*),¹⁶ that is, that He would uninterruptedly offer a public vow, or thank offering. By this offering is understood and meant the Eucharistic peace offering offered "in sight of them that fear" the Lord, who worship His divine Majesty by faith, love, and devotion. Our Lord here announces that, in grateful acknowledgment of His deliverance from suffering and death, He would continually offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which is not only the eternal and unbloody continuation, but also the sweet fruit of the bitter sacrifice of the cross.¹⁷

Verse 27. In connection with this sacrifice there is spread a banquet, the Communion of the admirable body and blood of Christ. To partake of this food of God, to sit at this banquet of love, all indeed are invited; but among the attending guests, the honored and preferred are the poor in spirit, the humble and the lowly; in short, all who have emptied their hearts and divested them of the love of the goods of this earth, and who, therefore, hunger and thirst after the imperishable food of heaven. These poor in spirit will eat at the table of the Lord and be filled, that is, they will be strengthened and consoled, be replenished with joy and be loaded with graces; refreshed and regaled with heavenly nourishment, they will sing

¹⁶ Offering of vows, that is, peace offerings made in thanksgiving in fulfillment of a promise made, in case the petition were granted, when the favor was implored of God. Along with the peace offerings were joined banquet offerings, to which widows and orphans, the poor and needy were invited. *Vota mea*, i.e. sacrificium N.L., videlicet sacrificium corporis et sanguinis mei, *reddam*, i.e. per sacerdotes meos offerri faciam Domino *in conspectu timentium eum*, i.e. praesentibus atque cernentibus populis Christianis (Dion. Carthus., *In Ps.*, 21:26).

¹⁷ *Vota mea reddam in conspectu timentium eum*: per vota intelligenda videntur hoc loco vota sacrificiorum et oblationum juxta illud Isa. 19:21: "Colent eum in hostiis et muneribus; vota vovebunt Domino et reddent." Christus enim cum videret holocaustum mortis suae gratissimum Deo fuisse, videtur quodammodo promississe, se holocaustum illud per ministros suos frequentissime oblaturum eo quo deceret modo, atque hoc est, quod nunc dicit: "Vota mea reddam in conspectu timentium eum," i.e. per ministros meos, sacerdotes novi Testamenti, assidue immolabo sacrificium Deo gratissimum, idque "in conspectu timentium," i.e. colentium eum ac per hoc verorum fidelium (Bellarm., *In Ps.* 21).

praise to the Lord whom they sought and of whose unspeakable sweetness they have tasted. Therefore their hearts will live eternally; for whoever eats of the living and life-giving bread of the Eucharist "shall live forever" (John 6:52).¹⁸

Verse 28. To this sacrifice and banquet of grace not only is Israel summoned, but from "the ends of the earth" all peoples are invited to it. Aroused by the sound of apostolic preaching, heathen nations, hitherto forgetful of God and estranged from Him, wandering about in error, like lost sheep, shall be reminded, shall be renewed in the faith of God, and by penance shall be converted to God. The heathens, at one time without grace, but now partakers of it (I Pet. 2:10) and belonging to the kingdom of God, will adore the Lord in spirit and in truth.

Verse 29. The Church of God, the kingdom of grace which the Lord conquered by His blood, comprises all nations and embraces the ends of the earth; for Christ hath conquered, Christ reigns, Christ governs by reason of the sacrifice of His life.

Verse 30. Still, not only the poor, but also the rich, the great and the powerful of the earth, are called to partake of this sacrificial banquet and to adore. Every mortal, whose lot it is to return into the dust of the earth, will fall down in profound reverence before the altar, upon which the majesty of the Eucharistic Redeemer is offered and hidden.

4. During the period of the Old Dispensation a mysterious obscurity hung over all such prophecies; but in the light of Christianity they are made plain. Who does not recognize their glorious fulfillment in the Eucharistic sacrifice and Communion, which the Catholic Church celebrates in all places and at all times? These prophecies are full of consolation, for they guarantee the truth and divinity of our daily sacrifice. Not to themselves, but to us the prophets have ministered (I Pet. 1:12), inasmuch as, urged on and enlightened by the Spirit of God, they foretold the salutary sacrifice and the

¹⁸ *Edent pauperes*, i.e. humiles manducabunt sacramentum altaris, non solum sacramentaliter, sed etiam spiritualiter, et ideo *saturabuntur*, i.e. mentaliter impinguabuntur caritate, gratia, consolatione ac donis Spiritus Sancti, et *laudabunt Dominum* Jesum Christum, qui est in hoc sacramento dator ac donum, *qui requirunt eum* affectu, fide et opere sequendo vestigia ejus; *vivent corda eorum* spirituali vita *in saeculum saeculi*, i.e. sine fine. Nunc enim vivunt per fidem et caritatem, consummatoque cursu praesentis exilii vivent per contemplationem et gloriam. Vivent enim quoniam fontem vitae, sc. Christum, digne recipiunt (John 6:51 f.). Dion. Carthus., *In Ps.*, 21:27.

heavenly banquet of the Eucharist. How great our happiness and how great a grace for us to be able to behold and to enjoy in the bosom of the Church all these promised goods of the Lord! Those enlightened men of ancient times “not having received the promises,” beheld and saluted them afar off (Heb 11:13): we are in the possession and the enjoyment of all the treasures of redemption. Hence these words addressed by the Lord to His apostles are also applicable to us: “Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them” (Luke 10:23 f.).

THE REALITY OF THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE PROVED FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

What was prophetically promised in the Old Dispensation by word and figure, has found its wonderful fulfillment and completion in the New Law of grace, through Jesus Christ, who, after suffering death and when leaving the world, bequeathed to His holy Church as a precious inheritance a clean food offering and a heavenly sacrificial food. Our Lord “terminated the period of His earthly pilgrimage by a wonderful order.”¹⁹ Before offering Himself on the cross in bloody sacrifice to redeem us from all iniquity and to present to Himself a people acceptable and zealous in the performance of good works (Titus 2:14), He already offered Himself to His heavenly Father as an unbloody sacrifice under the appearances of bread and wine; as Father of the world to come (Isa. 9:6), He instituted at the same time the celebration of this unbloody sacrifice for all future ages. The Church says on this subject:

Our God and Lord, though He was by His death about to offer Himself once upon the altar of the cross to God the Father that He might there accomplish an eternal redemption, nevertheless, that His priesthood might not come to an end with His death, at the Last Supper, on the night He was betrayed, that He might leave to His beloved spouse the Church a visible sacrifice, such as the nature of man requires, whereby that bloody sacrifice once to be accomplished on the cross might be represented, the memory thereof remain even to the end of the world, and its salutary effects applied to the remission of those sins which we

¹⁹ *Pange lingua.*

daily commit, declaring Himself constituted a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech, offered up to God the Father His own body and blood under the form of bread and wine, and under the forms of those same things gave to the apostles, whom He then made priests of the New Testament, that they might partake, commanding them and their successors in the priesthood by these words to do likewise: Do this in commemoration of Me, as the Catholic Church has always understood and taught.²⁰

It is manifestly evident from the words which Christ our Lord employed in celebrating and instituting the Eucharist, that on the night of the Last Supper He did by the consecration of bread and wine perform a true and real sacrificial act, and ordained that it be repeated until the consummation of time.

1. The Last Supper was not merely a Communion celebration, but also a sacrificial celebration; for "after partaking of the figurative lamb," our Lord, by His creative omnipotent word, changed the earthly elements of bread and wine into His sacred body and blood; He placed His body and His blood in the sacramental state of sacrifice, offered Himself thus to His Father, and then gave His body and His blood offered in sacrifice to His disciples as food and drink.

a) St. Luke gives the words of consecration thus: "This is the chalice, the New Testament in My blood, which [chalice] shall be shed for you"; St. Matthew: "For this is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many, unto remission of sins."²¹ Vicariously to shed blood for the atonement of the sins of others is an expression frequently employed in Holy Writ to designate sacrifice. Hence the words of the institution convey this idea: This is the chalice which is offered for you; this is My blood which is offered for many, in order to blot out sins. Our Lord, therefore,

²⁰ Trid., Sess. XXII, cap. 1.

²¹ Hic est calix novum testamentum in sanguine meo, qui pro vobis fundetur (τὸ ποτήριον . . . τὸ ὑπερ ὑμῶν ἐκχυνόμενον). (Luke 22:20.) Hic est enim sanguis meus novi testamenti, qui pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum (τὸ αἷμα . . . τὸ ἐκχυνόμενον). (Matt. 26:28.) The original Greek text here designates that also at the consecration of the bread the Eucharistic sacrifice is directly offered and the sacrifice of the cross only indirectly, while reversely the Vulgate has the sacrifice of the cross directly expressed and the Eucharistic sacrifice only indirectly expressed. The original text and the Vulgate both express the same thing, but in a different manner. On this subject see Franzelin, *De ss. Eucharist. sacrif.*, thes. 11.

declares that He presents His sacrificial blood to His disciples as drink, and that His blood is offered in sacrifice. The words of our Lord are (according to the original Greek text) so constituted that they directly and expressly designate the offering of His blood by a mystical or mysterious shedding in the chalice, and not that of a true and real shedding of His blood on the cross. So, to show that here the sacramental offering of the blood of Christ is meant, reference is made, and very justly, to the use of the verb in the present tense by the Evangelists: "which is shed" (*ἐκχυνόμενον* = *qui effunditur*); and there is no reason for departing here from the meaning of the present tense. Now, that we must adhere to this meaning is clearly and incontestably proved by the expression employed by St. Luke. According to it, it is not said that the blood is shed, but that the chalice is poured out (*τὸ ποτήριον. . . τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυνόμενον* = *calix, qui pro vobis effunditur*). This figurative mode of speech does not state merely that the contents of the chalice, that is, that the blood of Christ contained in the chalice, will be somehow or somewhere shed, for example, on the cross, but, on the contrary, that Christ's blood will be shed precisely in the chalice inasmuch as it is therein present and contained; in other words, that it is shed in the sacramental state under the appearance of wine.²² Our Lord Himself declares unequivocally that He had shed and poured out His Eucharistic blood mystically in the chalice, that is, that He had truly offered it to God the Father; consequently the fact of consecration at the Last Supper was a truly sacrificial act.

But the blood only cannot be shed, that is, sacrificed, without the body being, at the same time, also sacrificed; body and blood constitute together but one sacrificial gift. This proof, that Christ at the first celebration of the Eucharist sacrificed His blood, likewise goes to establish the conclusion and the supposition that at the same time and in the same manner He also offered His body, a fact which can be especially proved from the formula of the consecration of the bread.

According to St. Luke our Lord consecrated the bread with the words: "This is My body which is given for you" (Luke 22:19);

²² Verum quidem est quod continens ponitur pro contento; quia tamen effusio hic tribuitur *calici* et non sanguini, nisi quatenus calice continetur, necesse est intellegere effusionem, quae tunc fiebat, quando sanguis calice contentus effundebatur, quod erat in coena (Sylvius, III, q. 83, a. 1).

St. Paul in the Greek text has the formula: "This is My body which shall be delivered for you" (I Cor. 11:24). Hence Christ does not say that His body shall be given, or broken, to the disciples, but He declares that His body shall be delivered for (ὑπέρ, *pro*) His disciples and "for many unto remission of sins," as is to be supplied in this place from the formula of the consecration of the wine. Now, the vicarious immolation of the body of Christ for the atonement of sin is indisputably a true sacrifice. The words of our Lord: "This is My body which is given and delivered, or broken, for you," have, therefore, this meaning: This is My body which is sacrificed for you.

The giving or the breaking of the body of Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist is characterized and designated in the present time, not merely as about to take place in the future on the cross; consequently there can here be literally meant and understood only the unbloody sacrifice of the body of Christ in the Eucharist, and not the bloody sacrifice of the cross. This is proved, in the first place, by the use of the present tense: the body which is given and broken for you (*διδόμενον* = *quod datur*; *κλάμενον* = *quod frangitur*); for so long as there is no reason to compel us, we dare not depart from the meaning of the present tense in the text. In this instance nothing either requires or justifies us in applying or transferring the present form of the verb to the future sacrifice of the cross. On the contrary, there are reasons which preclude such an application. For, from the circumstance that the shedding of the blood is to be understood in the present time, it necessarily follows that the sacrifice of the body must be considered also as taking place in the present time. And the expression of St. Paul, "the body broken for you" (*corpus pro vobis fractum*), is of such a nature that it unequivocally designates the sacrifice of the Eucharist.²³ The word "broken" can in this place be applied only to the Eucharistic body of Christ, which, under the appearance of bread, is presented and eaten as food; for only the Eucharistic body is broken or distributed. The literal meaning of the Apostle is, therefore: This is My body which as food under the appearance of bread is broken for you. Now, these words necessarily have the same meaning as those of St. Luke: "This is My body which is given for you," that is, sacrificed; hence they

²³ Cf. Maldonat., *Comment. in Matt.*, 26:26; Estius, *Comment. in I Corinth.*, 11:24; Cornely, S.J., *loc. cit.*

must in like manner express the sacrifice of the body of Christ. The full meaning of St. Paul's words is accordingly: This is My body which is sacrificed for you in the sacramental state, in which it is given as food.²⁴ Thus Christ gave His body, primarily, to His heavenly Father as a sacrifice for His disciples, and He then distributed to them His body sacrificed for them to be eaten as food. By this He accomplished a former prediction: "The bread [of heaven] that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world" (John 6:52).

Hence it is clearly expressed in Holy Scripture that the first celebration of the Eucharist, which our Lord arranged for the eve of His passion, in the presence of His apostles, was a true sacrifice and a sacrificial repast. The sacrifice was accomplished in the words: "This is My body; this is My blood"; for by these words, Christ's body and blood under the appearances of bread and wine were placed in the sacramental state of sacrifice, that is, they were sacrificed to adore and appease the divine Majesty. The declaration that this action and change was a true sacrifice, a real sacrificial act, is contained in the additional words: "which shall be given or broken for you; which shall be shed for you and for many." They designate and testify to this, the sacrifice of the Eucharistic body taking place at that moment, and likewise the shedding of the Eucharistic blood then taking place in the chalice. Hence they designate the body and blood of Christ under the sacramental appearances as a truly and really sacrificed body and as a truly and really sacrificed blood.

b) Christ not only before His death offered Himself in an unbloody manner, but He instituted a perpetual unbloody sacrifice. This is easily proved. In the words, "Do this for a commemoration of Me" (Luke 22:19), the Lord commanded His apostles and their successors in the priestly dignity (I Cor. 11:24-27) to do the same as He had done, until His return at the end of time, that is, continually to offer the Eucharistic sacrifice, which He had just offered in their presence.²⁵ By this command, as a natural consequence, He also imparted to them the power of consecration, or of offering sacrifice; that is, He made them priests of the New Law. "Thus our

²⁴ Oportet intelligere verba illa de vero corpore, sed sub specie panis, ut sensus sit: Hoc est corpus meum, quod nunc pro vobis in specie panis frangitur, i.e. datur et immolatur Deo (Bellarm., *De Missa*, I, chap. 12).

²⁵ Qui [Jesus Christus] formam sacrificii perennis instituens, hostiam se tibi [Deus] primum obtulit, et primus docuit offerri (*Liturg. Gallic.*).

Lord instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice and willed to transmit the power to offer it to priests only, to whom it appertains to partake of it and to distribute it to the rest.”

2. Certain circumstances under which the Eucharist was celebrated and instituted by the Lord serve to develop still further its sacrificial character and to confirm the proofs already drawn from the words of the institution.

a) Our Saviour named His blood, contained and shed in the chalice, *My blood of the New Testament* (Matt. 26:28). The word “testament” has here a twofold meaning: covenant and legacy. Christ is the mediator of a better covenant, which is established on better promises (Heb. 8:6), and that covenant is the New Covenant of grace.

This covenant was formed mainly at the Last Supper and at the same time was sealed with Christ’s Eucharistic blood in the chalice; it then obtained by the shedding of the blood of Christ its valid and complete confirmation.²⁶ Thus Christ’s blood, in the chalice as well as on the cross, was the blood of the Covenant, that is, the blood in which the New Covenant of grace was established. Therefore the blood of Christ not only must not have first been sacrificed on the cross, but must previously have been offered in the chalice as sacrificial blood. This is required by the contrast here evidently made between the establishment of the Old and the New Covenant; for the words of our Saviour: “This is My blood, the blood of the New Covenant,” contain a distinct allusion to the words: “This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you” (Exod. 24:8), the words spoken by Moses after the establishment of the covenant of the Old Law, when he sprinkled the people with blood. At the foot of Mount Sinai, God formed a solemn covenant with the chosen people Israel. The Lord gave His laws and promises; the people promised obedience to the instructions and regulations contained in the book of the covenant, and then they were sprinkled with “the blood of the covenant.” This blood of the Old Law was sacrificial blood; for it was consecrated by the offering of holocausts. The covenant into which God, through Moses, entered

²⁶ Sine dubio in ultima coena praecipue condidit (Christus) testamentum quod suo etiam sanguine tunc incruente immolato sancivit; postea vero in sacrificio cruento omnino stabilivit ac confirmavit (Suarez, *In III S. Thom.*, disp. XXXVII, sect. 4, n. 15).

with the Israelites, was only a figure of the new and better covenant which God, through Jesus Christ, formed with mankind. But in order to be the counterpart and completion of the Old Covenant, the New Covenant had likewise to be established by a sacrifice and to be sealed with sacrificial blood. Hence it follows that the Eucharistic blood, which flowed in the chalice for the sealing of the New Covenant, was the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ shed for the glory of God. This celebration of the Eucharist established by our Lord became, consequently, a true and real sacrifice. The better covenant, whose author and surety (Heb. 7:22) Jesus Christ became, is not merely an alliance between God and the regenerated, but also a legacy.²⁷ That which Christ bequeathed to us at the Last Supper is nothing else than His sacrificial body and sacrificial blood, the Eucharistic sacrifice together with all the goods and graces of redemption included therein.

(b) The paschal lamb of the Old Dispensation was the most expressive and universal figure of the Eucharist.²⁸ Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is the true paschal Lamb, He is our paschal Lamb, having taken the place of the ancient. Therefore the priest during Mass, immediately before his Communion, says the *Agnus Dei* and, before he administers the heavenly Eucharistic food to the faithful, he says to them in a loud voice: "Behold the Lamb of God!" The ancient paschal lamb unquestionably had the character of sacrifice; the celebration of the Pasch was a sacrificial celebration. Accordingly the Eucharist must also be a true sacrifice; otherwise it would not perfectly correspond to the figurative paschal lamb nor would it fulfill in every respect this excellent type. But the Eucharist is in the most perfect respect the new paschal Lamb and Easter banquet of the New Dispensation. Therefore it is also the true paschal Lamb that is immolated upon the altar in an unbloody manner, and partaken of as an eternal remembrance of our deliverance from the

²⁷ Cf. Heb. 9:16 f. *Testamentum* is the translation of the Greek *διαθήκη* (= arrangement, disposal, disposition), which may be the unilateral disposal of inheritance, or may be effected by mutual agreement (covenant). Therefore in Heb. 9:16 *δαθέμενος* = *testator*, a testator. St. Gaudentius (*Sermon II*) calls the Eucharistic sacrifice "the hereditary gift of the New Testament, which Christ on the night that He was given over to be crucified, left as a pledge of His presence."

²⁸ *Quamquam multis figuris fuisset Eucharistia sacramentum praefiguratum, praecipua tamen ejus figura fuit agnus paschalis, cum secundum omnia ipsum repraesentaverit* (S. Thom., III, q. 73, a. 6).

bondage of sin and as a perpetual thanksgiving for the wonderful work of redemption. The shadow of the Jewish Pasch disappeared before the brightness of the Eucharistic celebration.

*In hac mensa novi Regis,
Novum Pascha novae legis,
Phase vetus terminat.*

“In this banquet of the new King, the new paschal Lamb of the New Law puts an end to the ancient Pasch.” To signify this, our Lord joined directly with the typical paschal celebration of the Old Dispensation the institution of the Eucharist as the paschal sacrifice and banquet of the New Law. First He gave to His disciples the lamb and unleavened bread, according to the ordinance of the Law, which had been given to the forefathers. Then He offered Himself as the spotless and blameless sacrificial Lamb in sacrifice to God; and lastly He fed His apostles with His sacrificial flesh, and gave them to drink of His sacrificial blood. The sacrificial banquet was necessarily preceded by a sacrificial action; for the lamb must be slain before it can be eaten.

3. The doctrine and practice of the apostles prove that they henceforth celebrated the Eucharist as the sacrifice of the Christian religion.

a) It is of the Christian altar, upon which the sacrifice of the Eucharist is offered to God and from which this heavenly sacrificial food is given to the faithful for actual participation, that the following words, which St. Paul addressed to the Hebrews, are often understood: “We have an altar whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle” (Heb. 13:10), that is, the Jews; for in order to have the right and privilege to participate by means of Holy Communion in the Eucharistic sacrifice, they had to cease “to serve the tabernacle,” that is, they had to renounce the Mosaic religion and enter into the Church of the Crucified.

b) This is the Eucharistic banquet “which the Apostle Paul has clearly indicated when he says that they who are defiled by partaking of the table of devils cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord, understanding by table in each case the altar.”²⁹ In the afore-said passage (I Cor. 10:20 f.) the heathen sacrificial table and banquet are contrasted with the Eucharistic table and banquet, to show

²⁹ Trid., Sess. XXII, cap. 1.

the Christians that it is by no means allowed them to "be partakers of the table of the Lord and of the table of devils," to "drink the chalice of the Lord and the chalice of devils." The contrast between the Eucharistic table and the sacrificial banquets of the heathens is completely established only when the Eucharist is considered as a sacrifice of food and as a sacrificial banquet.

c) Finally, when it is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles that the clergy (prophets and doctors) of the Church of Antioch "were ministering to the Lord,"³⁰ the celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass is thereby unmistakably meant; sacrifice being the most worthy service that may and must be rendered to God alone. Therefore it is evident that the Eucharistic celebration, which is frequently called in Holy Scripture the breaking of bread,³¹ was in the apostolic times and Church always regarded and performed as a sacrificial celebration.

4. What a marvelous love the Sacred Heart of Jesus has manifested in the institution of the unbloody sacrifice of the Eucharist!³² How could this divinely human, inconceivable, indescribable love have more touchingly manifested itself? Before the Sacred Heart was immersed in the bloody ocean of the pangs of death and broken asunder in death, it burst forth once more in divine radiating flames

³⁰ Ministrantibus (λειτουργούντων) illis Domino (Acts 13:2). The word λειτουργεῖν in the Old and New Testaments is frequently used for the celebration of public worship, principally to mean that of holy sacrifice; hence the Greeks usually call the Eucharistic sacrifice and its celebration λειτουργία.

³¹ Acts 2:42; 20:7, 11; I Cor. 10:16.

³² Omnis sacerdos causas institutionis sacramenti altaris, videlicet cur Christus in coena novissima hoc supervenerandissimum instituerit sacramentum, sapienter atque multoties contempletur. Cujus utique institutionis prima causa est recordatio totius ardentissimae ac plenissimae dilectionis Christi ad nos. De qua dilectione ipsemet dixit: Majorem hac caritatem nemo habet, quam ut animam suam ponat pro amicis suis. Haec quippe est summa dilectio, dum quis non sua dona dumtaxat, sed seipsum quoque donat dilecto. Rursus, cum amoris proprietas sit, amantem unire amato, per hoc quod Christus in sacramento se ipsum nobis substantialiter unit, patet ipsius ad nos mutua dilectio ac summa. Toties ergo flammescit spiritus noster ad Deum, totiesque inflammatur ac penetratur, quoties celebramus, quoties sacramentum hoc consecramus ac sumimus, quoties caritatem Christi ad nos recordamur, quoties tantae dilectionis pignus prae oculis habemus, manibus contrectamus, ore suscipimus. Ideo namque Salvator, instituto hoc sacramento, dixit ac jussit sanctis apostolis et in eorum persona sacerdotibus universis: Hoc quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis. Quae utique verba sunt mirabiliter affectuosa ac dulcia piaeque mentis inflammativa (Dion. Carthus., *De vita Curatorum*, a. 15).

of love at the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice and sacrament, like the gorgeous glow of the setting sun in the horizon. A short time before His painful and ignominious death, "on the night," says St. Paul, "in which Jesus was betrayed," He bequeathed to us all that is most precious and most adorable in the mystery of the altar.³³ The hour had arrived for Him to depart out of this world, that His holy humanity might also take possession of that glory and splendor which He had shared with the Father before the creation of the world. Since He, the Good Shepherd, loved His own who were in the world, He loved them with an eternal love unto the end. He loved His own to the end, that is, not merely to the end of His life, but to the end of time; for He will remain upon the altar for the sake of His own as long as they are pilgrims in this world, wayfarers in this land, far from their heavenly country, whither He has preceded them to prepare mansions for them in His Father's house. He desires to remain with the children of salvation in the mystery of the Eucharist, abiding there for their sakes as a perpetual victim and as the daily bread of the soul, until the sacramental banquet on earth finds its fulfillment in the kingdom of God (Luke 22:15 f.), that is, until the time shall come when they will eat and drink at the banquet of heavenly joy and felicity at that table where the Lord will gird Himself and going about will minister unto them (Luke 22:29; 12:37).

He loved His own to the end, that is, to the uttermost bounds, so that He could not love them with greater or more intimate love.³⁴ He had nothing more precious at His command than this best of gifts, the mystery of His body and blood, nothing better than His own self with His divinity and humanity, with all the riches and

³³ Sunt et aliae causae (institutionis Eucharistiae), ut scilicet Christus homo indesinenter et maxime Deum Patrem, imo totam superbeatissimam Trinitatem veneretur tanti sacrificii jugi oblatione, in qua bonitas, caritas, misericordia Dei ad homines, beneficia et promissa ipsius commemorantur, laus, gratiarum actio et reverentia omnium fonti bonorum devotissime exhibentur, humanoque generi multipliciter, imo ineffabiliter subvenitur et ipsa Ecclesia mirabilissime ditatur, ornatur, munitur (Dion. Carthus., IV, dist. 8, q. 3).

³⁴ Cum dilexisset suos (τοὺς ἰδίους), qui erant in mundo, in finem (εἰς τέλος) dilexit eos (John 13:1). Jesus had constantly shown His love to His disciples, whom He left behind in this world, but at His departure out of this world He loved them *εἰς τέλος*, until the end and the consummation, as much as a God-man could love, giving them the last and greatest proof of His love (S. Cyr., *In Joann.*, 12:1).

treasures of the redemption. Mount Calvary did not suffice for the ardor of His love, it did not come soon enough for Him. Before His blood flowed forth in clear streams from a thousand wounds, He would shed it and have it flow mystically in the chalice; before His body would be consumed as a fragrant victim on the cross in the fire of torments, He wished to give and break it for us already at the Last Supper under the appearance of bread. This unbloody sacrifice of His body and blood, according to the directions of His last will, according to the testament of His heart inflamed with love, is to be perpetuated to the consummation of the world.

So great the love for us He bore,
 To torments and death He adds yet more;
 In the Supper Hall, Himself He gives,
 His token of love—with us forever to live.

Under the appearance of bread and wine,
 He is our food, our nourishment divine;
 On the cross His life He joyfully gave,
 On the altar, His same sacrifice will save.

Like to the eternal glory of His name,
 His priesthood continues ever the same,—
 In sacrifice to the Father, daily His Sacred Heart
 Prompts Him, Himself to offer on our part!

THE REALITY OF THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE PROVED FROM TRADITION

To render our demonstration complete, we will now prove the existence of the Eucharistic sacrifice from the other source of faith, divine tradition. As “the pillar and ground of the truth” (I Tim. 3: 15), the Catholic Church has always and everywhere believed and taught that the Mass is a true sacrifice, the sole and perpetual sacrifice of the New Law. As the faithful guardian and dispenser of all the means and treasures of the grace of Jesus Christ, she has also at all times preserved and administered the Eucharistic sacrifice as her greatest treasure. In the very earliest ages of the Church there are to be found many clear and irrefragable testimonies in favor of the universal and constant belief of all Christendom in the sacrificial

character of the Eucharist, as well as of its uninterrupted celebration as a sacrifice in the bosom of the Catholic Church. As the most sublime and wonderful mystery of faith, the daily Sacrifice of the Mass was concealed with the most anxious care from the eyes and ears of unbelievers and of the uninitiated, so that the Fathers frequently speak of it in an obscure and merely suggestive manner; but notwithstanding this ancient prevalent discipline, there are to be found in their writings and in the various liturgies so many beautiful expressions relative to the Eucharist, that we may without difficulty gather therefrom all the principal teachings of the Church with reference to the Sacrifice of the Mass.

When the Fathers speak of the celebration of the Eucharist, they often use the expressions sacrifice (*sacrificium, oblatio, hostia, victima*) and to offer (*sacrificare, immolare, offerre*), priest (*sacerdos*) and altar (*altare, ara*). Thus they acknowledge in the Eucharistic celebration a sacrificing priest, a sacrificial gift, a sacrificial action, and a place of sacrifice. But it unquestionably follows from these words that they are not to be taken in a wide sense, but in their strict and literal meaning.

a) They designate the celebration of the Eucharist often as a sacrifice of atonement (*sacrificium propitiationis*), as a complete and true sacrifice (*sacrificium plenum et verum*), as the most sublime and the most true sacrifice (*summum et verissimum sacrificium*), and as a tremendous sacrifice (*sacrificium horrendum, tremendum, terribile*).

b) The Eucharistic sacrifice, which can be celebrated only by a duly ordained priest, they expressly distinguish from the sacrifice improperly so called, that is, from the interior and spiritual sacrifice, which each of the faithful should offer.

c) They distinguish the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, which is accomplished by the spiritual sword of the words of consecration, from participation by Holy Communion in the completed sacrifice, as well as from the prayers and ceremonies with which the sacrificial action is accompanied and celebrated.

d) Very often they teach that the perpetual sacrifice of the New Covenant has replaced the figurative sacrifices of the Old Law. They discover in the sacrifice of the altar the fulfillment of the figurative sacrifice of Melchisedech; they behold in the Eucharist the clean oblation predicted by Malachias.

e) When they consider more closely the relation of the sacrifice of the altar to that of the cross, they say that upon the altar, as upon the cross, there is one and the same sacrificing priest, one and the same sacrificial victim, but a different mode of action of offering; for in the unbloody sacrifice of the altar the Lamb of God is mystically and sacramentally immolated, in order always to keep alive the remembrance of the bloody sacrifice of the cross.

f) They teach that the Eucharistic sacrifice is offered, not only for the living, but also for the dead, and that it procures for all atonement and forgiveness of sins.

g) From those who assist at this sacrifice, they require the utmost devotion and the most profound reverence; from the celebrating priest, virginity and angelic purity of heart.

For these and similar proofs, we have "a cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 12:1); but we shall here confine ourselves to a few passages from the Fathers.

A. THE FATHERS OF THE EAST

Among these proofs we may reckon the beautiful words said to have been addressed by the Apostle St. Andrew to the proconsul who ordered him to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. The Acts of the martyrdom of this apostle give them as follows: "Every day I present to God Almighty a living sacrifice. . . . Daily I offer to God the immaculate Lamb upon the altar of the cross (that is, upon what takes the place of the cross). After the faithful have eaten the flesh of this immaculate Lamb and drunk of His blood, He remains whole and living. . . . Although He has been sacrificed and eaten, this Lamb remains uninjured and lives immaculate in His kingdom." ⁸⁵

St. Irenaeus (d. 202) distinctly calls the Eucharist the clean oblation predicted by the Prophet Malachias. "Christ," he writes, "acknowledged [at the Last Supper] the chalice as His blood and taught the new sacrifice of the New Covenant, which the Church has received from the apostles and offers to God throughout the entire world." "The Jews have not received the Word, which is sacrificed." This sacrifice, which our Lord commanded to be offered, is

⁸⁵ *Acta S. Andr. Apost. in epist. Presbyt. Achaiae*, chap. 6. The authenticity of these Acts is indeed disputed; they are, however, an undeniably ancient and venerable written memorial that reaches back to the third century.

accepted by God as a "clean oblation and well pleasing to Him." ³⁶

St. Ephrem (d. 379), the greatest and most learned Father of the Syrian Church, filled with enthusiasm, extols the inconceivable dignity of the priesthood of the New Law.

O astounding miracle, O unspeakable power, O dread mystery of the priesthood! Spiritual and holy, sublime and immeasurable office, which Christ, after His coming into this world, gave to us without our meriting it! On bended knees, with tears and sighs, I beg to consider this treasure of the priesthood; I repeat, a treasure for those who preserve it worthily and holily. Yet, shall I attempt to extol the dignity of the priesthood? It exceeds all comprehension and all conception. It was, I believe, in consideration of the priesthood that St. Paul exclaimed: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!" (Rom. 11:33.)

With respect to the Eucharist, we find in St. Ephrem's writings the following passage: "Fire once fell upon the sacrifices of Elias and consumed them. For us the fire ³⁷ of mercy became the sacrifice of life. Fire at one time consumed the sacrifice; but Thy fire, O Lord, we eat at Thy sacrifice." ³⁸

Cyrillonas, ³⁹ after Ephrem the most famous of the Syrian poets, repeatedly evidences in a powerful and original manner the Eucharist as a sacrifice and sacrament. In his first homily on the Pasch of Christ, he writes:

The Lord prepared a new banquet, inviting to it those of His household. A feast He prepared for His spouse to satisfy her hunger. He Himself first offered His own body, and afterward He was slain by man. He pressed it out in the chalice of redemption, and later on the people also pressed it out on the cross. Upon His head He placed the crown of glorious prophecy. He sharpened the sacrificial knife of the Law, therewith to immolate His own body as the paschal Lamb. He brought the nations to His banquet and called the tribes to His feast. He clothed Himself with the true priesthood and with the perfect celebration of sacrifice. He stood there and supported Himself through love and held His own body high up in His hands. His right hand was a holy altar, His uplifted hand a table of mercy. His omnipotence exercised the true

³⁶ *Adv. haeres.*, IV, chaps. 17 f.

³⁷ The Syrians love to designate the Divinity and especially the Eucharistic presence of the God-man by the word "Fire."

³⁸ St. Ephrem, *The Incomprehensibility of the Son*, chap. 4.

³⁹ Concerning Cyrillonas and the following Fathers, cf. Bickell in the *Bibliothek der Kirchenväter*, Kempten, 1872.

priesthood. He consecrated and blessed Himself, He prayed and gave thanks over His own body. He sacrificed and slew His own self, He bestowed and pressed out His life-giving blood. Come, My disciples, thus cries out the Lord, receive Me, I will place Myself in your hands. Behold, here truly do I stand, but at the same time you really and indeed consume Me. Come, My beloved ones, drink also of My blood, which is the blood of the New Testament. Drink of the cup of fire, the blood which inflames all that partake of it. But, that you may not forget this evening, more precious to you than the day, that you may not forget this hour, in which you have tasted the Divinity, I command you also, My beloved ones, confidants of My mysteries, to do this: the remembrance of this is not to cease among you until the end of the world. Thus, My brethren, shall you do at all times and be mindful of Me. In My Church let this be My sublime memorial, and upon the face of the earth this shall be My Pasch.

In a Syrian poem, "On Wheat," which in all probability emanated from the same Cyrillonas, we read the words: "Without wheat [which forms the element of the Eucharistic sacrifice] the altar would be empty, without it the Holy Ghost could not descend [to the consecration of the Eucharist], without it the priest could not offer the sacrifice of propitiation, without it, indeed, no man would be able to appease the Deity."

In a poem on the dedication of a new church, composed by the Syrian Bishop (chorepiscopus) Balaeus (prior to 431), we read:

Enthroned in His house is the Lord, awaiting us that we may enter and implore His mercy. It is not an ordinary dwelling, but a heaven upon earth, because the Lord of heaven resides therein. Instead of angels, holy priests who therein serve the Deity are seen there. The altar is prepared, enveloped in truth; before it stands the priest, who enkindles the fire. Bread he takes, but the body He gives; wine he receives, but blood he distributes. The altar of stone supports our hope, the pure priest invokes the Holy Ghost, the assembled faithful unite in the Sanctus, the King hears it and allows His mercy to pour down. Upon the earth stands the altar which bears His body, and in His heavenly kingdom He imparts eternal life and glory.

Isaac of Antioch (d. between 459 and 461) sings in a poem "On Faith": "I saw the mixed vessel of faith, which was filled with blood instead of wine; and instead of bread the slain body was placed upon the table. I saw the blood and shuddered; the sacrificed body, and terror seized me."

According to Didymus the Blind of Alexandria (d. about 395), the Eucharist is that unbloody sacrifice daily celebrated throughout the world. "Of that which the Lord Himself has given and daily gives to each [bread and wine], each one receives the unbloody sacrifice offered devoutly and holily." "Why do we with faith and reverence celebrate the so much longed-for and carefully prepared Pasch each year, yea, every day, or rather at every hour, in which we partake of His body and blood? They who have been favored with this sublime and eternal mystery know what I say."⁴⁰

Many beautiful and explicit passages relative to the Eucharist are found in the writings of St. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem (d. 386). In the Fifth Mystagogical Lecture he treats of the Sacrifice of the Mass. In it he instructs the newly baptized and explains to them its principal points according to the rite of the Mass of the Church of Jerusalem, that is, the liturgy of the Apostle St. James. He calls the time of sacrifice "a sublimely dread hour," in which, above all, our hearts should be elevated to God. The Mass is "a holy and tremendous sacrifice," "a holy mystery," "a sacrifice of reconciliation," a sacrifice offered for our sins and for all our wants, for the living and for the dead.

After this spiritual [= mystical, sacramental] sacrifice, this unbloody worship of God, is accomplished [that is, after the real sacrificial action, the Consecration], over this sacrifice of reconciliation we implore God to grant universal peace to the churches, . . . and in unison we pray and offer this sacrifice for all who are in need. . . . For all among us [that is, all in communion with the Church] who have already departed this life, we pray, believing that these petitions will be of the greatest benefit to those souls for whom they are offered; while this holy and most sublime sacrifice is presented on the altar. . . . For the departed, we offer Christ slain for our sins, propitiating our merciful God for them as well as for ourselves.⁴¹

Gregory of Nazianzus (d. about 390) carefully draws a distinction between sacrifice in a strict sense, which the priest alone can offer, and sacrifice in a wider sense, which all the faithful can and should present. The interior sacrifice, self-denial, the spirit of self-immolation, is a necessary requisite for the priest, that he may worthily offer the sacrifice of the altar.

⁴⁰ *De Trinit.*, II, chap. 7; III, chap. 21.

⁴¹ *Catech. mystag.*, V, chaps. 8-10.

As I am aware that no one is worthy of the great God, of sacrifice, and of the priesthood, if he has not beforehand presented himself a living and holy sacrifice to the Lord and rendered to Him a reasonable, acceptable service, if he has not previously offered to God a sacrifice of praise and a contrite heart, which are the only gifts required of us by the Giver of all good gifts; how could I have dared to offer to Him the external sacrifice,⁴² the figure of great mysteries? How could I have ventured to bear the name and dignity of a priest, before sanctifying my hands with good works, before accustoming my eyes to regard created things in the proper manner, in admiration of the Creator and not to the ruin of the creature?⁴³

In the writings of St. Chrysostom (d. 407) we find many important explanations pertaining to the sacrifice of the Eucharist. With astonishment he praises the dignity of the Christian priesthood, which "not a man, not an angel, nor an archangel, nor any other created power than the Holy Ghost Himself instituted." He shows what purity and fear of God are required in order that the priest may worthily celebrate the holy and tremendous sacrifice. "When you behold how the Lord is sacrificed and laid there, and how the priest stands and prays during the sacrifice: do you still imagine yourself to be among men and on this earth?"⁴⁴ Those who do not remain for the conclusion of this holy action, but who irreverently and with distraction to others leave the church at the time of Communion, are severely censured by the saint. He admonishes them in this wise: "What art thou doing, O man? When the priest stands before the altar, his hands raised to heaven, invoking the Holy Ghost, that He come and touch [i.e., change] the gifts lying there, then there reigns perfect stillness, deep silence; but when the Spirit has granted the grace, when He has come, when He has touched the gifts on the altar, when thou perceivest the Lamb immolated and prepared, then thou makest a noise and disturbance, then thou contendest and quarrelest."⁴⁵ He teaches that on the cross and on every altar the sacrificial offering is one and the same, the divine Lamb, Jesus Christ.

⁴² The external, visible sacrifice, that is, the real sacrifice of the Eucharist, which St. Gregory in this place more minutely characterizes as the unbloody representation of the great sacrifice of the cross.

⁴³ *Orationes*, II, chap. 95.

⁴⁴ *De sacerdot.*, VI, chap. 4.

⁴⁵ *De coemeter. et cruce*, n. 3.

We always offer the same victim, and not one lamb today and another tomorrow, but always the same one, so that the sacrifice is but one. Now, since the sacrifice is offered everywhere, are there not also many Christs? By no means, for Christ is only one and the same in all places, perfect here and perfect everywhere, one body. Now, as everywhere He that is sacrificed is one body and not many bodies, so also there is but one sacrifice. Our high priest is He who offered the sacrifice that cleanses us. That which was then offered, is now still offered; for it is inexhaustible.⁴⁶

St. Chrysostom dates the custom of offering the Sacrifice of the Mass for the dead back to the apostles. "It was not in vain," he says, "that the apostles ordained that at the tremendous mysteries the departed should be remembered. They knew that therefrom these would derive great profit and advantage. For if all the congregation and the assembly of priests unite, while the dread sacrifice is going on at the altar, why should we not propitiate God by praying in their behalf? This is to be understood only of those who have died in the faith."⁴⁷

Do you desire blood? says Christ. Then offer not the blood of animals, but redden My altar with My blood. What is more awe-inspiring, but at the same time more loving? Thus do lovers act. . . . But lovers manifest their liberality by bestowing money and gifts and articles of clothing; never yet has any one given his blood: but Christ in this manner proved to us His care and intense love for us. In the Old Law, while men were yet imperfect, He did indeed accept even the blood that men used to offer to idols, in order to detach them from the idols; and this was indeed a proof of His unutterable love. But in the New Law He would have this holy action performed in a more tremendous and magnificent manner, inasmuch as He changed the sacrifice itself, commanding that He Himself should be sacrificed in place of irrational animals.⁴⁸

B. THE FATHERS OF THE WEST

St. Cyprian (d. 258) in various places develops glorious sentiments about the Sacrifice of the Mass. He requires the priests to be blameless, devoting themselves by day and night to things heavenly and spiritual. According to his teaching, the right to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice constitutes the most beautiful adornment

⁴⁶ *In Hebr. hom.*, XVII, 3.

⁴⁷ *In Philipp. hom.*, III, 4.

⁴⁸ *In I Corinth. hom.*, XXIV, 10, 17.

and garland of honor of the Catholic priesthood, and for this reason the deprivation of this privilege was regarded as the most severe and most painful of punishments.⁴⁹ The altar is the place in which those members of the Church who are temporarily separated by distance, the living and the dead, remain in constant and most intimate communication with one another. When the martyr had consummated his testimony for Christ and gained the heavenly crown of victory, the assembly of the faithful had no better offering to make in gratitude to the triune God than that whereby the bloody victory had been obtained, namely, the Eucharistic sacrifice. On the anniversary of the martyrdom, the Holy Sacrifice was always repeated. For the other departed the Holy Sacrifice was offered for another intention, to obtain repose for their souls.⁵⁰ The most copious testimonies for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass are contained in the letter of St. Cyprian to Caecilius. This letter, called by St. Augustine *Liber de sacramento calicis*, is a classic work in proof of the doctrine of sacrifice. In it the saint combats the abuse and disorder that had obtained in various parts of Africa of using only water in the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice instead of wine mixed with water. At the very beginning of the letter, Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, is called "the Author and Teacher of the Eucharistic sacrifice." The principal passage (no. 14) is as follows: "If Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, is Himself the high priest of God the Father, and if He first offered Himself to the Father as a sacrifice, commanding the same to be done in commemoration of Him, then, in fact, that priest really takes the place of Christ who imitates what Christ has done, and then offers to God the Father a true and perfect sacrifice only when he offers the sacrifice in such a manner as he sees that Christ Himself offered it."

St. Ambrose (d. 397), that strenuous promoter of the dignity and beauty of divine service, expressed himself in a concise and forcible manner with regard to the sacrifice of the altar. "If only an angel would stand at our side and render himself visible, when we are burning incense at the altar, when we are celebrating the sacrifice! For you may not doubt that angels are present, when Christ is there, when Christ is being sacrificed."⁵¹

⁴⁹ Cf. *Epist.*, 16, 64, 65, 67.

⁵⁰ Cf. *Epist.*, 12, 39, 66.

⁵¹ *In Luc.*, I, 28.

We saw the Prince of priests (Christ) coming to us; we saw and heard in what manner He offered His blood for us. We priests imitate Him, as is our right, by offering the sacrifice for the faithful. Although we are poor in merits, we become worthy of veneration by the sacrifice. Although at present we do not behold (with our bodily eyes) Christ celebrating, it is still He Himself who is being sacrificed upon earth, when Christ's body is offered up. Yes, He offers Himself visibly by us, His servants, since His word sanctifies the sacrifice that is being offered.⁵²

Here it is plainly stated that upon the altar Christ is not only the sacrificial gift, but, moreover, the chief sacrificer, who through the ministrations of the visible priest performs the Eucharistic sacrificial action.

Rich in profound instruction on the sacrifice of the Eucharist are the writings of St. Augustine (d. 430).

[Abraham] was then, in truth, blessed by Melchisedech, who was a priest of the most high God. Of the latter many remarkable things are written in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Then for the first time appeared [figuratively] the sacrifice which is at present offered by Christians throughout the whole world and by which is accomplished that which long after this event was said by the Prophet to Christ, who had not yet appeared in the flesh: "Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech." . . . Can anyone still doubt of whom this was said, now when there is nowhere a priesthood and sacrifice according to the order of Aaron, and when everywhere sacrifice is offered through the high priest, Christ, prefigured by Melchisedech?⁵³

To what else do these words refer, "There was no good for a man but to eat and drink" (Eccles. 8:15), than to the participation at that table which the priest and mediator of the New Law, according to the order of Melchisedech, prepares Himself with His own body and blood? For this sacrifice took the place of all the sacrifices of the Old Law, which were offered as shadows of the future sacrifice. Hence we recognize in the words of psalm 39 the voice of the Mediator speaking prophetically: "Burnt offering and sin offering Thou didst not require; but a body Thou hast fitted to Me." For instead of all those sacrifices and oblations, His body is sacrificed and administered to the participants.⁵⁴

St. Gaudentius, bishop of Brescia (d. about 410), has left us several clear testimonies concerning the sacrificial character of the Mass.

⁵² *In Ps.* 38, n. 25.

⁵³ *De civit. Dei*, XVI, chap. 22; XVII, chap. 17.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, XVII, chap. 20.

In the Old Law many lambs were immolated as figures; but in the New Law "one died for all, and the same one in every house of God imparts renewed vigor, inasmuch as He is offered under the appearances of bread and wine, He imparts life to them that believe, sanctifies them that consecrate, inasmuch as He is consecrated." God purifies and enlightens our hearts for the knowledge of divine mysteries, so that "we comprehend the cause and reason of the heavenly sacrifice instituted by Christ, in order to return thanks to Him for His ineffable gift." ⁵⁵

Pope St. Leo the Great (d. 461) draws an accurate distinction between the general (not the real) and the special (real) priesthood.

The sign of the cross makes kings of all those who are born again to Christ, but the unction of the Holy Ghost dedicates them as priests, so that all who in spirit and in truth are Christians, independently of the special service of our priestly office, participate in a royal race and in a priestly dignity. For what is so regal as the spirit which has subjected the body to the dominion of God? And what so priestly as to dedicate to the Lord a clean conscience, and present to Him upon the altar of the heart pure sacrifices of devotion? ⁵⁶

St. Leo says that Christ at the Last Supper instituted the sacrifice of the New Testament: "Jesus, firmly persevering in His decree and undaunted in the execution of the will of His Father, brought to an end the Old Testament and founded the new Easter. For as the disciples sat with Him at table, to partake of the mystical supper, while the Jews were deliberating in the court of Caiphas in what manner to kill Him, Christ instituted the sacrament of His body and blood, and instructed them as to what kind of victim should be offered to God." ⁵⁷ He also proves that in Christ's sacrifice the figures of the Old Law found their fulfillment and consummation:

Thou hast drawn all to Thyself, O Lord, for, by the rending of the veil of the temple, the holy of holies was taken away from the unworthy high priests, the figure passed over into the reality, the prophecy into its fulfillment, and the law into the Gospel. All hast Thou drawn to Thyself, O Lord, so that at present, when the mystery is accomplished and disclosed, the piety of all nations celebrates what formerly in the

⁵⁵ *Serm.*, II.

⁵⁶ *Serm.*, IV (III), *de Natali* IV, chap. 1.

⁵⁷ *Serm.*, LVIII (LVI), *de Passione Dom.* VII, chap. 3.

one temple of Judea was solemnized in figurative symbols. For now the estate of deacons is more splendid, the dignity of priests is greater, and the anointing of bishops is holier, because Thy cross is the source of all blessings, the cause of all graces; by it the faithful receive strength instead of weakness, honor instead of ignominy, and life instead of death. Now when the manifold animal sacrifices have ceased, the one sacrifice of Thy body and blood supplies the place of all other sacrifices; for Thou art the true Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, Thou hast accomplished in Thyself all mysteries, so that in place of all sacrifices there is one sacrifice. Thus all nations form but one kingdom [the Church].⁵⁸

C. THE ANCIENT LITURGICAL RITES

The foregoing passages from the Fathers are a sufficiently valid proof of the sacrificial character of the Eucharist. Annexed to these is another proof, which, if possible, is still more clear and more convincing. We allude to the proofs from the venerable ancient documents and monuments of ecclesiastical liturgy. They contain a rich treasure of the truths of salvation; they are mines of gold with respect to Catholic dogma. Doctrine constitutes the root and the soul of both ecclesiastical life and its worship. There is no point of external life in which the truths of faith are more directly and more distinctly revealed than in the liturgy of the Church. Hence these truths can often with certainty be known and recognized therefrom according to the maxim of Pope Celestine I: *Legem credendi lex statuit supplicandi*⁵⁹ ("The liturgical form of prayer becomes the standard of faith"). With special reference to our subject, there are a vast number of both Eastern and Western liturgies and directions for the Mass. By these are meant collections of formulas of the prayers and rites,⁶⁰ according to which the Eucharistic sacrifice has always been celebrated. These liturgies are in their essence and substance decidedly of apostolic origin. They are composed in different languages, and they were for centuries in daily and public use in

⁵⁸ *Serm.*, LIX (LVII), *de Passione Dom.* VIII, chap. 8. Cf. the *Secreta* of the Seventh Sunday after Pentecost: *Deus, qui legalium differentiam hostiarum unius sacrificii perfectione sanxisti, accipe sacrificium a devotis tibi famulis. . . .*

⁵⁹ *Epist. ad Gall. Episc.*, n. 11.

⁶⁰ *Liturgiarum nomine intellegi debent Officia seu Rituales libri auctoritate publica Ecclesiarum scripti, earumque usu comprobati, quibus preces et ritus ad consecrandam et administrandam Eucharistiam continentur* (Renaudot., *Liturg. orient. collect.*, I, 152).

various places and among diverse nations, and consequently they denote the universal and constant belief of Christendom. Now, however variously they may otherwise be framed, all these liturgical formulas agree perfectly in essentials, so that they represent in their whole contents the Eucharistic celebration as the true sacrifice of the immaculate Lamb, Jesus Christ.

In these liturgical formulas of prayer the Eucharist is designated a sacrifice, a perpetual sacrifice, a holy sacrifice, a heavenly sacrifice, a divine sacrifice, a tremendous sacrifice, a sacrifice deserving of honor, a reasonable and unbloody sacrifice, a sacrifice for the living and the dead, a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; and especially a sacrifice of propitiation and petition. In the Eucharist are offered gifts that are holy, precious, unspeakable, glorious, and without blemish; and mysteries are celebrated that are divine, profoundly hidden, and full of awful majesty. Christ is styled the Lamb living and as yet slain upon the altar. He is glorified as the sacrificing priest and sacrificial gift, as well as the founder of this sacrifice. They mention a holy altar, which the priest approaches only with a pure conscience, in fear and trembling.

In the liturgy of St. James, for instance, it is said: "Let all mortal flesh be silent, standing there in fear and trembling, let all things of earth vanish from our thoughts; for the King of kings, the Lord of lords, Christ our God, is about to be sacrificed and to be given as food to the faithful. Before Him choirs of angels go, clothed with power and dominion, with faces veiled, chanting the hymn, Alleluia." The Coptic liturgy of St. Cyril directs the priest to say: "Make us worthy, O Lord, to present to Thee this holy, reasonable, spiritual, and unbloody sacrifice for the remission of our sins and for the pardon of the faults of Thy people." To this may be added a passage for the consecration of bishops, found in the Apostolic Constitutions (Bk. VIII, chap. 5), which runs thus: "Grant to him, almighty God, through Jesus Christ, participation in the Holy Ghost, that he may have the power to appoint clerics and to loosen all bonds, and that he may please Thee by a heart meek and pure, steadfast, guileless, and blameless, offering to Thee the immaculate and unbloody sacrifice which Thou, through Christ, hast instituted as the mystery of the New Law as an agreeable odor to Thee." In a letter to the clergy of Neocaesarea, St. Basil assures them that the following prayer was used in all the Churches of the East:

“Strengthen me, almighty God, with the power of Thy holy Spirit, and grant that I, invested with the grace of the priesthood, may present myself at Thy holy table to offer to Thee Thy holy and immaculate body and Thy precious blood. I humbly beseech Thee not to turn Thy face from me, but graciously permit these gifts to be offered to Thee by Thy unworthy servant and sinner, as I am. For it is Thou who offerest and who art offered; it is Thou who acceptest this sacrifice and who art distributed.”

Thus in the first ages of faith the sacrificial character of the Eucharist was expressed in the most striking and unequivocal manner by the doctrine and practice of the entire Church. But such universal and unchangeable belief of Christianity can rest only on divine revelation, that is, it must proceed from Christ and the apostles. Our faith, therefore, is that of the first Christians, the faith of Christian antiquity. This fact invariably imparts to the Catholic heart untold satisfaction, in finding the most sacred truths and the treasures of religion sustained by so great an array of witnesses from ecclesiastical antiquity.

D. THE CATACOMBS

In conclusion, we will cast a rapid glance upon the Roman Catacombs, in which the doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice, proved from the Fathers and liturgies, rises up to view in picturesque representations and symbolic illustrations.⁶¹ The catacombs, according to their original plan and destination, were burial places in which the remains of Christians were deposited. In times of persecution they served also as places of refuge, especially for the clergy, and at the same time they were used for divine worship. On the walls and ceilings of these subterranean mortuary chapels, the persecuted Christians inscribed in symbolic pictures, as simple as they were touching, their superhuman faith, hope, and charity. In the mysterious language of the catacombs we may, therefore, read many of the doctrines of faith, emblematically represented as in a pictorial catechism. This is the case also with the Sacrifice of the Mass.

The most ancient and most prominent representation of the Eucharistic service dates from the beginning of the second century

⁶¹ Cf. Kraus, *Roma Sotterranea*; P. Wolter, *Die Römischen Katakomben*; De Richemont, *Die neuesten Studien über die Katakomben*; Ott, *Die ersten Christen über und unter der Erde*.

and is found in the so-called Greek Chapel in the Catacomb of St. Priscilla. It consists of a continuous fresco cycle, the center of which exhibits the breaking of the bread. As the artist placed this portion of the picture directly over the altar, it must be considered an altarpiece. It represents the liturgical breaking of the consecrated bread, which precedes Holy Communion, by the hands of the bishop. On a semicircular couch are six persons in a reclining position, five men and one woman. At the right of the couch, that is, in the place of honor, on a low stool is seated a man, who must be the principal personage, for he alone wears a beard. He is certainly the one who presides, the "chief among the brethren," the one who offers the sacrifice, for he holds the bread in his hands, and by his whole demeanor shows that he is about to break it for his companions. Near by at his feet stands a chalice, having the form of a large two-handled goblet; a little further off are two dishes containing two fishes and five loaves, and at both extremities of the scene are baskets filled to the brim with bread. These five loaves, two fishes, and seven filled baskets are doubtless an allusion to the wonderful multiplication of the loaves and the feeding of the multitude by our divine Saviour, for in this miracle all Christian antiquity recognized a figure of the Eucharistic banquet. Near the altarpiece is depicted the typical sacrifice of Abraham, which reminds us of the Eucharistic sacrifice. The other scenes surrounding that of the breaking of the bread are symbolic and throw light on the various aspects and effects of the Eucharist as a sacrifice and as Holy Communion. It is worthy of remark that it is only in the Greek Chapel and in Lucina's crypt that both Eucharistic species are represented, and that in later paintings the wine is wanting, and in the miracle of the loaves the bread alone appears. The aforesaid highly significant fresco represents that moment of the Eucharistic service when the celebrant divides the consecrated bread, to distribute it with the blood of Christ in the chalice to the faithful present.⁶²

In the larger chapels there is usually placed on or beside a martyr's grave an altar, upon which the Eucharistic sacrifice was celebrated. The credence table, on which to place bread and wine, was a niche arranged in the wall or a projecting slab. In addition, many liturgical representations are found. Let us enter the Catacomb of St. Callistus and there consider more closely two Eucharistic paintings.

⁶² Cf. Wilpert, *Fractio panis* (Freiburg: Herder, 1895).

Upon a three-legged table are depicted three loaves and a fish; near by on the floor are seven baskets filled with bread. What does this mystical representation illustrate? The table can be but the table of the Lord, the table (altar) of the Eucharistic sacrifice. The fish lying on it is an ancient Christian emblem of "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour." As the artist has placed the fish on the table with the loaves of bread, it is natural to imagine his idea was that Jesus Christ the divine Fish, under the appearance of bread, is truly present and offered on the altar. The seven baskets filled with bread, that surround the table, are doubtless intended to insinuate that it is, at the same time, a dining table, a table from which the faithful, as St. Paulinus of Nola (d. 431) says, receive the "true bread and the fish of living waters."

The sacrificial character of the Mass is still more emphatically symbolized in a painting found in the so-called "chapel of the sacrament" of the same cemetery. On the main wall, adjacent to the martyr's grave or the altar, there is painted a three-legged table upon which are represented bread and a fish; alongside the table stands a man to one side, his right hand extended in blessing above the offerings (fish and bread), while on the opposite side there is seen a female with hands uplifted, praying (an orante). Who can fail to see in this picture the representation of the Eucharistic sacrifice? The man vested in the reddish ascetic cloak, extending his right hand over the paten, is evidently a priest who blesses (consecrates) the bread, that is, who changes it into the living and divine Fish, into the body of Jesus Christ, and in this manner offers the Eucharistic sacrifice. The figure of the woman in prayer is a common symbol of the virginally pure and maternally fruitful Church, in whose name the priest at the altar celebrates and prays.⁶³ To show the meaning and object of this picture in a still clearer light, the figurative sacrifice of Abraham is represented on the opposite wall; here this is, as is usually the case, the special type of the Eucharistic

⁶³ According to Wilpert's latest explanation, it is not the act or moment of the Eucharistic consecration that is depicted in this famous picture, but a realistic appendix to the adjoining scene of the Last Supper; the priest puts forth his hand, not to bless or consecrate, but is about to take up the Eucharistic food in order to distribute it to the faithful; and the figure standing at the right is the representation of a soul thinking itself to be in heaven, by which an allusion is made to the effects of Holy Communion. See *Fractio panis*, pp. 81 f.

sacrifice, not of the bloody sacrifice of the cross. Abraham did indeed sacrifice his son. But in reality the blood of Isaac was not shed; he was only "as it were slain" (Apoc. 5:6). Abraham "received him for a parable" from death, that is, as though he had been resuscitated (Heb. 11:19). By this the unbloody sacrifice of the altar is pre-figured: for here Christ is the Lamb that dieth no more, but liveth eternally, although He is forever mystically immolated.

These glorious testimonials of the Eucharistic sacrifice are so much the more precious because they originated at times in which the situation of Christians was painful and oppressive, as is described in the inscription on the grave of the martyr Alexander in the Catacomb of St. Callistus: "Alexander is not dead, but above the stars, and his body reposes in this grave. Kneeling in order to sacrifice to the true God, he was led to death. O deplorable times, in which we cannot even offer the holy mysteries and safely say our prayers in caves! What is more miserable than life?" In the quiet enclosure of this city of death, the mysterious sounds of the sublime psalmody of the faithful resounded; here at the graves of the martyrs the Holy Sacrifice was celebrated; here the faithful received the bread of the strong, and, strong in faith, they hastened to the battlefield of martyrdom, to shed their blood and to die for Christ. To this day the odor of sanctity, the perfume of sacrifice, the spirit of martyrdom, emanate from these silent caves and chambers of the catacombs, in which the venerated traces of the faith and life of the early Christians, throughout the centuries to our own time, have been preserved for our joy and consolation.

The Church has received and faithfully retained the blessed inheritance [of the Eucharistic sacrifice] transmitted to her, mindful of the divine commission: "Do this in commemoration of Me." When the storm of persecution was at its height, she went down into the subterranean catacombs; she retired into lonely vales and sequestered mountain caves. Amid the silence of night and deep under the ground on rude altars, she performed the mysterious service of the sacrifice of the Lord's Supper, and sent forth her confessors, fortified thereby, to give testimony for the Lord in the world before their persecutors, under the sword, on the rack, among wild beasts, into the billows and every kind of torture, and, after His example, to seal their testimony with their blood. The death of the Christian became continually the seed of new confessors to the cross. And as the Lord had been three days in the

grave, and afterward had risen in power and gloriously ascended into heaven; so the Church also, after years of persecution, arose from the bosom of the earth, from the catacombs and caves, and triumphed over all the powers of the world and hell. Thus risen, the Church went into the cities, villages, and valleys, and far up mountainous heights, entering into the basilicas, marble temples, grand cathedrals, numberless churches and chapels, built therein altars, and celebrated, as formerly in the stillness of the night, but now in the light of open day, in the presence of the assembled congregations, the heritage of the Lord, the mystery of His Last Supper, the perpetual sacrifice of His death on the cross. From this time on she fulfilled for all ages her mission of carrying to all countries of the world her most holy inheritance. She gathered nation after nation around her altar, celebrated with them, generation after generation, the sacrificial death of the Redeemer, distributed to them the body of the Lord (and the chalice of His blood), and thereby accomplished the new and eternal covenant: "Do this in commemoration of Me," and fulfilled the testament of the Lord: "It is consummated." As the Prophet had predicted, she offered the new and clean, the true and perfect, sacrifice of the New Law everywhere, thus glorifying the name of the Lord in all parts of the globe, from the rising of the sun until the setting thereof. (Geissel.)

CHAPTER VI

THE ESSENCE OF THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE

THE ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE

ALL that we have demonstrated from the written and traditional word of God, the infallible Church has solemnly and formally declared in the Council of Trent, defining that in the Mass “a true and real sacrifice” is offered to the triune God.¹ This revealed truth of salvation is eminently included in the “divine mysteries, which by their nature so far transcend created intelligence, that even when divinely revealed to us and received by faith, they yet remain hidden to our eyes by the veil of this very faith, and enveloped in a certain obscurity, as long as we are pilgrims in this mortal life, not yet with God. Reason, indeed, enlightened by faith, if it inquires diligently, devoutly, and prudently, may with the assistance of God, attain some, and that a very fruitful, understanding of mysteries,” and, consequently, of the mystery of the sacrifice of the Eucharist.² Therefore we should not be contented with the proof that the Mass is a true sacrifice, but we should endeavor to acquire a fuller and more profound knowledge of this adorable mystery.

In the first place, the question arises about the essence of the Eucharistic sacrifice. To answer it, we must show to what extent in the celebration of the Eucharist are found all the conditions necessary for a true sacrifice. To every sacrifice, and consequently to the Eucharistic sacrifice, appertain a sacrificial gift, a sacrificing priest, and the action of sacrifice.

1. Which is the sacrificial gift in the Mass? The Church has declared that upon the altar precisely the same sacrificial gift is offered

¹ Sess. XXII, can. 1.

² *Vatican. constit. de Fide*, chap. 4.

as was once offered on the cross.³ But Christ, with His sacred humanity, with His body and blood, was offered on the cross: consequently He is likewise the sacrificial gift on our altars. Hence upon them there is offered nothing less than the God-man Himself. The Mass is the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ. Some theologians⁴ have indeed taught that bread and wine belong also to the matter of the Eucharistic sacrifice, that is, that besides and with the body and blood of Christ they are truly offered in the Mass. But evidently this is incorrect. Neither the substances nor the appearances of bread and wine constitute a part of the matter of the sacrifice,⁵ although they are necessarily required for the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice. The substances of the bread and wine disappear, in order that, under the species remaining, the divine victim of sacrifice may take their place, that is, that they may be changed into the host of salvation. The sacramental species render the offering of Christ a visible sacrifice; they form the sensible, perceptible covering, under which the body and blood of Christ are offered. The body of Christ, once immolated in a bloody manner, and the blood of Christ, once shed unto death on the cross, and consequently the whole Christ, once sacrificed upon Golgotha, by the sacrifice of His body and the shedding of His blood (Heb. 10: 10; 9: 12), is also on the altar the gift or object of our unbloody sacrifice. A higher and holier sacrificial action, one better and more precious, than Christ the Lord, can be neither presented nor imagined.⁶ To possess so glorious a sacrificial victim is for us an inappreciable grace, and it imparts to us unspeakable dignity.

2. Who offers the Eucharistic sacrifice?

a) It is beyond question that Christ is not only the victim sacri-

³ Trid., Sess. XXII, cap. 2.

⁴ Suarez., disp. LXXV, sect. 1; Coninck, *De sacrament.*, q. 83, a. 1, d. 4, concl. 3; Tanner, IV, disp. V, q. 9, dub. 2, n. 28.

⁵ Dicendum est, panem et vinum quoad suam substantiam nullo modo esse materiam oblatam in sacrificio Missae, sed tantum terminum a quo materiae oblatae; similiter species panis et vini non pertinere ad rationem victimae tamquam partem ipsius et proinde non esse rem oblatam (Pasqualigo, *De sacrif. Nov. Leg.*, I, q. 29).

⁶ Sacerdos perpendat, quid offerat, videlicet corpus et sanguinem Salvatoris, imo ipsummet Christum, Unigenitum videlicet Dei, qui secundum naturam suam divinam est dignitatis et excellentiae penitus infinitae; secundum naturam vero suam humanam, ut Verbo aeterno unitam, est toto dignior universo (Dion. Carthus., *De vita Curator.*, a. 15).

ficed in the Mass, but also the sacrificing priest (*sacrificium et sacerdos mirabiliter et ineffabiliter constitutus*; Oratio S. Ambros.); for, as He once offered Himself on the cross, He now also offers Himself on the altar, but in an unbloody manner and through the ministry of the priests.⁷ Christ in the Eucharist is both the one that sacrifices and the object sacrificed. As the true Melchisedech, He possesses an imperishable priesthood and unceasingly exercises the priestly office, inasmuch as He daily offers Himself on the altar as a gift and an oblation of sweet odor unto God (Eph. 5:2), to save those who by Him come to God (Heb. 7:25).

If Christ in the Mass truly makes the offering, and this by the visible priest, then it follows that He is the principal celebrant. To be such in reality it does not suffice that the Lord instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice and commanded the celebration of it; nor that He imparts power and efficacy to it; He must rather cooperate directly, through His holy humanity, in performing the Eucharistic sacrifice. He must always and everywhere be found acting as priest wherever Mass is celebrated. Condescending to the words of the visible priest, Christ as invisible high priest changes the elements of bread and wine into His body and blood, that is, He places His body and His blood, His humanity, Himself, in a state of sacrifice. And this action of sacrifice of Himself, He at the same time directs to the glory of God, to propitiate Him and also to contribute to the salvation of mankind. In the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice, the Lord indeed is, in a certain sense, dependent upon the ministry of visible priests; yet He Himself always performs directly and principally the real act of sacrifice. At the celebration of every Mass, Jesus with His soul, with His human will and heart, gives proof anew of His priestly sentiments, His unchangeable love of sacrifice, His inexhaustible devotedness to the honor of God and the salvation of the world. From what has just been said, we may draw several conclusions. Since Christ on the altar is the direct and principal offerer, because He Himself by His high priestly act celebrates and offers the Eucharistic sacrifice, therefore, like the sacrifice of the cross, the Mass possesses absolutely infinite value and infinite perfection. For the excellence of the sacrifice depends chiefly upon the merit and dignity of the person who offers it. Furthermore, it follows that the Eucharist always and everywhere remains the spot-

⁷ Trid., Sess. XXII, cap. 2.

less sacrifice, as the chief offerer, Jesus Christ, is at all times infinitely holy, although the visible and representative priest be ever so imperfect and unworthy.

b) As the eternal high priest according to the order of Melchisedech, Christ does not and will not cease until the consummation of time to offer Himself in the Mass to His heavenly Father; but now He no longer does so alone in a personal, visible manner, as He did at the Last Supper and upon the cross, but invisibly and with the assistance of a human representative. Christ is indeed the principal celebrant at the altar, for He has the primary and chief part in the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice; still He does not perform this action alone and without assistance, but employs for it specially authorized servants and instruments, namely, validly ordained priests. The visible priest acts as the living and free agent of Jesus Christ; therefore he performs in a real manner, though only as the instrument of the Lord, the act of consecration or sacrifice at the altar. At his ordination he receives the exalted, superhuman, and divine power to change the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, that is, to celebrate Mass; for only God can impart such power. This power, like holy orders in general, can neither be lost nor be destroyed; just as little as the sacerdotal character can be effaced from the soul of the priest, so in like manner the power of sacrificing cannot be taken away from him. Every validly ordained priest, and only such a one, can offer the sacrifice of the Eucharist. In this action he always represents the person of Christ and, as an authorized minister, acts in His name. Here the privileged character and dignity of the officiating priest are in contrast with the condition of the faithful, to whom such a heavenly sacrificial power has not been imparted.

c) At the altar the officiating priest acts not merely as the representative and as the organ of Christ, but also in the name and under the authority of the Church. For the Eucharist is the property of the Catholic Church: to her our Lord bequeathed the Eucharistic sacrifice, that she might always be able to render to the Most High due honor and glory, as well as to dispense with lavish hand to her needy children the fullness and riches of all blessings. Christ our Lord, in the excess of His divine bounty and goodness, made over to the Church His body and blood, Himself with all the treasures of His grace, placing this as an offering in her hands, that she might

offer it in sacrifice to God. By the Church we understand all the faithful so far as they, united to one another and under submission to their lawful pastor, form but one fold and one kingdom, the one mystical body and the one spouse of Christ. The entire Church, therefore, offers the Eucharistic sacrifice; for it is a public and solemn act of worship, which is always celebrated in the name and for the welfare of all the people of God.⁸ Now, the Church cannot celebrate without a priest; he is ordained to be the representative of men (Heb. 5:1) that he may really celebrate and offer sacrifice in the name of the faithful as mediator between God and the people. Therefore at the altar the priest is the authorized representative of Jesus Christ and of the Church, but in a twofold manner: Jesus Christ, the divine high priest, celebrates by the priest who is His subordinate minister; the Church, on the contrary, celebrates in the person of the priest, who is the superior mediator given her by God. When he consecrates, that is, celebrates the Eucharistic sacrifice, the priest represents, first, the person of Jesus Christ, and then the Church. Then also he acts and speaks in the name of the Church, inasmuch as he performs the remaining acts of divine worship, that is, the ceremonies and liturgical prayers accompanying and surrounding the sacrificial function. Hence the Mass prayers are not the private prayers of the priest, but public prayers, the prayers of the Church; and there is attached to them a special, efficacious, impetratory character, independent of the disposition of the priest celebrating (*valor ex opere operato*).⁹

⁸ Datum est hoc sacrificium universae Ecclesiae, ut ipsa illud offerat, quamvis per sacerdotes, quibus potestas offerendi specialiter commissa est, ut dicit Trid.; et ideo Sess. XXII, cap. 6 addit, Missae omnes, quantumvis privatim dicantur, communes esse censendas, quia a publico Ecclesiae ministro, non pro se tantum, sed pro omnibus fidelibus, qui ad corpus Christi pertinent, celebrantur; dicuntur enim pro eis celebrari, non tantum, quia pro eis offeruntur, sed etiam, quia ipsorum nomine, tanquam eorum sacrificia offeruntur (Suarez, disp. LXXIV, sect. 3, n. 1).

⁹ In Missa duo est considerare, sc. ipsum sacramentum quod est principale et orationes quae in Missa fiunt pro vivis et mortuis. Quantum ergo ad sacramentum non minus valet Missa sacerdotis mali quam boni, quia utrobique idem conficitur sacramentum. *Oratio* etiam quae fit in Missa potest considerari dupliciter: *uno modo* in quantum habet efficaciam ex devotione sacerdotis orantis et sic non est dubium quod Missa melioris sacerdotis magis est fructuosa; *alio modo* in quantum oratio in Missa profertur a sacerdote in persona totius Ecclesiae, cujus sacerdos est minister, quod quidem ministerium etiam in peccatoribus manet sicut ministerium Christi. Unde etiam quantum ad hoc est fructuosa non solum oratio sacerdotis peccatoris in Missa, set etiam omnes

The priest, therefore, celebrates in the name of the Church, in the name of the whole Christian people, so that so far as they are members of the Church, all the faithful at least habitually offer the Eucharistic sacrifice through him as their representative. For this reason also the Prince of the Apostles calls all Christians a holy and a kingly priesthood (I Pet. 2:5, 9), that is, called "to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." The actual participation of each individual faithful in the Eucharistic sacrifice takes place in different ways and in different degrees, according as their activity and cooperation are merely interior or also exterior.¹⁰ For example, he who assists devoutly at Mass, he who receives Communion during Mass, he who serves at the altar, he who has a Mass said or who contributes what is necessary for the sacrifice, participates in a more especial manner in the celebration of the sacrifice, than he who merely interiorly, that is, without being present in body, unites his intention with the sacrifice and the prayers of the priest at the altar.

3. In what does the sacrificial act of the Eucharistic service properly consist (*sacrificatio vel immolatio hostiae*)?

a) The Eucharistic sacrificial action consists in the double consecration, by which the body and blood of Christ, under the appearances of bread and wine, are placed in a state of sacrifice and are, therefore, sacrificed. All the prayers, ceremonies, and actions that partly precede and partly follow the Consecration in the celebration of the Mass are, consequently, not essential to the Eucharistic sacrifice. The oblation prayers at the Offertory and after the Elevation, the breaking of the consecrated host and the commingling of a particle of it with the sacred blood, are important and significant constituent parts of the venerable rite prescribed for the sacrifice by the Church, but in nowise are they integral or essential portions of the sacrificial action instituted by Christ. That the Com-

orationes, quas facit in ecclesiasticis officiis, in quibus gerit personam Ecclesiae, licet ejus orationes privatae non sint fructuosae (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 82, a. 6).

¹⁰ Cum ad proprie dictum sacrificium offerendum haec duo requirantur: hostiae *immolatio*, hujusque immolationis *oblatio*, improprie dicentur sacrificium offerre, qui sacrificium a sacerdote celebratum interne aut etiam externe in Dei honorem referunt, vel qui aliqua ratione sacerdoti in sacrificii oblatione subveniunt eumque adjuvant (Lambrecht, *De ss. Miss. sacrif.*, III, iii, 3).

munion of the faithful who are present is not necessary for the sacrifice, is admitted by all Catholics.

But the case is quite different with regard to the Communion of the officiating priest. The officiating priest must communicate at the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice, not merely by reason of a command of the Church, but in virtue of a divine ordinance from Christ Himself. The Communion of the celebrant, therefore, is so necessary because, although it does not appertain to the essence, it is indispensable to the external completeness of the Eucharistic sacrifice; for by this Communion the sacrifice attains its end as a food offering and consequently by it the sacrifice is in a certain sense perfected and consummated.¹¹ The celebrating priest must partake of the same sacrificial matter which he has just consecrated, that the unity of the visible sacrifice may in its essence and integrity be perfectly secured. The so-called Mass of the Presanctified on Good Friday is, therefore, no sacrificial celebration, but only a Communion celebration; for it is without Consecration and consists only of the reception of the Sacrament consecrated on Holy Thursday. This Communion of the priest may be regarded as a continuation and completion of the Mass celebrated on Holy Thursday; and this throws sufficient light and explanation on the liturgical formulas of prayer occurring in this service.¹²

That the essence of the Eucharistic sacrifice depends neither wholly nor in part on the Communion of the celebrant, but rests solely and entirely in the Consecration, is the most solid and the more general opinion. As is frequently repeated in the ancient liturgies and by the Fathers, the Communion of the priest and of the people is a sacrificial banquet, a partaking of the accomplished sacrifice, or the reception of the Lamb of God offered in sacrifice. The sacrificial banquet must, in fact be preceded by the sacrificial

¹¹ *Partes alicujus rei compositae aliae sunt essentialia, aliae integrantes: sine partibus essentialibus res non est talis naturae; essentia vero rei salva consistit sine partibus integrantibus. Hac distinctione in sacrificio Eucharistiae facta, juxta communem Theologorum sententiam dicimus, in sola Eucharistiae consecratione essentiam sacrificii consistere, et ad integritatem ejus referri utriusque speciei consecratae sumptionem, quae a sacerdote fit in Missa (De Augustinis, S.J., *De re sacramentaria*, Bk. II, Part II, a. 5).*

¹² *Aliud est conficere sive consecrare, aliud est offerre; et quamvis in die Veneris sancto non fiat confectio, fit tamen oblatio, quia sacerdos corpus in praecedenti die consecratum offert in altari (S. Bonav., IV, dist. 12, p. 2, dub. 2).*

action; only the immolated or sacrificed victim can be partaken of as food. St. Gregory of Nyssa thus appropriately expresses this truth.

Christ, who is both priest and victim, offered Himself mystically for us in sacrifice. When did He do this? At the Last Supper; for when He gave to the disciples, assembled around Him, His body to eat and His blood to drink, He publicly declared that the sacrifice of the Lamb was already accomplished. The body of the victim to be slain cannot be eaten as long as it is in a natural, living state; as He then gave His disciples His body to eat and His blood to drink, His body was already sacrificed in an unspeakable and inconceivable manner, as it pleased the Lord to perform this mystery by His power.¹⁸

What is here said of the first celebration of the sacrifice of the Eucharist, naturally holds good with respect to the daily repetition of this unbloody sacrifice on our altars. The Eucharistic sacrifice is perfectly the same here as it was there: its essence consists in the act of the twofold consecration.

b) The mysterious obscurity in which the mystery of the Eucharist is shrouded from our weak vision, extends particularly to the question, how far by the act of the dual consecration Christ is really and actually sacrificed. According to the teaching of our holy faith, we must hold firmly that the Eucharist is not merely a simple oblation or a consecrated gift, but much more, truly and properly a sacrifice. Now, for this a sacrificial action, that is, an actual sacrificing and not a mere offering, is required: a sacrificial action in which both an interior and an exterior quality are taken into consideration and distinguished. The interior consists in the disposition of the heart to sacrifice, in the hidden intention of the will to sacrifice, on the part of the priest who celebrates; the exterior, by which the real sacrifice essentially differs from the simple oblation, consists in this, that the offering to God of the sacrificial object, even in its visible form, is accomplished by a change or transformation, corresponding also to the meaning of the sacrifice. Conflicting answers are given to the question, whether and how far there takes place a similar change or transformation of the matter of the Eucharistic sacrifice by the dual consecration, as is essentially the case in every sacrifice. In order to throw some light on this much disputed ques-

¹⁸ First Sermon for Easter Sunday.

tion (under what aspect the Eucharistic consecration is a true sacrificial act), we will here make a few observations.

The Eucharist is a sacrifice wholly peculiar and singular and of a higher and mysterious order.¹⁴ The essence of the Eucharistic sacrifice is of divine institution and therefore must not be indiscriminately decided or judged by the same standard as other known sacrifices. First and chiefly the peculiarity of the Eucharistic sacrifice consists in this, that the object sacrificed is offered under foreign or sacramental species, whereas in other sacrifices the sensible objects are always offered in their own natural forms. Another peculiarity is that in the Eucharist the living, glorious God-man is the matter or object of the unbloody sacrifice, although always and everywhere living beings can be sacrificed only by the actual shedding of their blood and by their immolation. According to the correct conception of the Eucharistic transubstantiation, there can be no question of the destruction of the bread and wine, nor of the production of the body and blood of Christ, so that evidently the explanation of the essence of our sacrifice cannot be based on either of these suppositions. In like manner every attempt to prove a real change in the sacrifice of the Eucharistic body must end in failure. Numerically the same glorious Christ, reigning in heaven, is indeed present on the altar, without undergoing any change in Himself; only the external relation of His humanity to space and the surroundings is different. On the altar, then, we have a true and real sacrifice without any real change in the Eucharistic victim. So peculiar a sacrifice is rendered possible only by Christ being offered as a living victim, not in His natural form, but under the symbolic envelope of the sacramental species. The Eucharistic sacrifice takes place simply and merely by Jesus Christ becoming present, by virtue of the words of consecration, under the separate species in a state of immolation or death, that is, of sacrifice, so far as external appearances go.¹⁵

Sacramentally, according to external signs, the blood of Christ

¹⁴ *Deus hoc sacrificium instituit modo extraordinario et singulari aliis victimis et sacrificiis non communi (Mastrius, disp. IV, q. 4, a. 1, n. 72).*

¹⁵ *Exhibetur Christus per modum mortui sub speciebus, quamvis in se non sit mortuus, et hoc fit ex vi actionis sacrificativae; haec autem exhibitio sufficit ad protestandum totum id, quod protestari posset realis destructio, nempe totalem submissionem respectu Dei et recognitionem supremae majestatis (Pasqualigo, I, q. 43, n. 5).*

is separated from His body, and therefore shed, since by the words of consecration there is designated and effected, on the one hand, the presence of the body of Christ under the solid species of bread, and, on the other hand, the presence of His blood under the fluid species of wine.¹⁶ This sacramental separation of the blood of Christ from His body, or this mystical immolation of Christ, is fully sufficient for the actual and symbolic expression of the Saviour's interior intention of sacrificing Himself, that is, for the consummation of a real sacrifice.¹⁷ Sacrifice is, indeed, an exterior symbolic sign of the interior sacrifice; according to this, the mystical shedding of blood on the altar performs the same office as did the real shedding of blood on the cross. The unbloody immolation of the Eucharistic victim through the sacramental shedding of blood proves the reality of the sacrifice of Christ under foreign sacramental species. The Eucharist is a mystical, that is, a sacramental, and, at the same time, a real or actual sacrifice. *Mystica nobis, Domine, prosit oblatio.* (*Miss. Rom.*)

The Eucharistic service is not only a true sacrifice, accomplished in the present on the altar, but also the mysterious copy and representation, or renewal, of the past sacrifice of the cross. The dual consecration should be considered under a twofold aspect; first, inasmuch as it is a mystical immolation, making the present offering of the body and blood of Christ a real sacrifice; and secondly, inasmuch as it represents in a visible manner the past sacrifice of the cross.¹⁸ Therefore by one and the same thing, namely, by the

¹⁶ Quantum est ex vi verborum consecrationis, corpus et sanguis Christi sistuntur et exhibentur seorsum, unum ab altero, sicut in cruce separatus fuit sanguis a corpore, atque ita Christus mystice et incruente immolatur (Sylvius, III, q. 83, a. 1, concl. 4.)

¹⁷ Cum Christus sit principalis offerens, dum in se ipso facit repraesentationem propriae mortis se offerendo Patri, declarat affectum se totum tradentis in obsequium Patris, qui est interius sacrificium, atque adeo oblatio externa cum illa repraesentatione mortis declarat hunc affectum et ideo hujusmodi repraesentatio est sufficiens destructio pro sacrificio: nam illa tantum destructio requiritur, quae possit declarare interius sacrificium (Pasqualigo, I, q. 43, n. 4).

¹⁸ Christus Dominus vi consecrationis tamquam verus Agnus et victima sistitur in altari sub speciebus panis et vini, et in quodam statu mortis constituitur, quatenus per spiritualem verborum gladium sub diversis et separatis speciebus immolatur et offertur Deo Patri. Porro haec mystica, quae vi verborum fit, separatio corporis ac sanguinis, apte separationem cruentam sanguinis a corpore in cruce peractam repraesentat (Puig et Xarrié, *De Euchar.*, chap. 4, § 1, n. 620).

transubstantiation of the two elements, the Eucharistic offering acquires the character of an absolute and a relative sacrifice, of a true sacrifice in itself, which, according to its intrinsic nature and constitution, not only relates to the sacrifice of the cross, but also visibly copies it. There was something similar in the bloody sacrifices of the Old Testament. One and the same immolation, or blood-shedding, rendered them not only peculiar sacrifices of the worship then obtaining, but also figures of the future sacrifice of Christ. In the Eucharist a merely mystical shedding of blood suffices to constitute a true sacrifice, for on the altar there is question, not of acquiring the merit of propitiation, but only of applying the fruits of redemption acquired on the cross. For this purpose the victim actually immolated on Golgotha, with His inexhaustible treasures of merits, is continually represented and sacrificed to the Lord God in the Eucharistic service through unbloody immolation.

The complete essence of the Eucharistic sacrifice consists, therefore, in the mystical shedding of blood wrought by the words consecrating both elements; and, indeed, it consists in this blood-shedding, inasmuch as this blood-shedding is a real expression of the present intention of sacrifice and of the self-offering of Christ taking place on the altar, and inasmuch as it represents and renews the sacrifice of the cross. This conception of the Eucharistic sacrifice commends itself, not only on account of its simplicity and theological foundation, but also on account of its positive basis in the words of the institution by our Lord and in the ecclesiastical tradition. The Saviour Himself characterizes the Eucharistic sacrifice as an unbloody offering, or breaking, of His body, and as a mystical shedding of His blood "for the remission of sins." In agreement with this, the ante-Tridentine theology always taught that the formal character of the sacrifice of the Eucharist consists only in the mystical immolation of Christ through the words of the dual consecration.¹⁹

4. The priest should frequently reflect that it is God who has called and consecrated him to the exalted office, as a servant of Christ and in the name of the Church, to accomplish and offer the adorable sacrifice of the Eucharist. The most sublime act of his priestly power consists in the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, in his power "to call the Lord of Glory with holy words down upon

¹⁹ Cf. Pasqualigo, I, qq. 42-44; Billot, *De sacram.*, I, 556 ff.

the earth, to bless Him with his lips, to hold Him in his hands, to receive Him into his mouth, and to distribute Him to the faithful," while at the same time, "the angels stand about him to honor Him who is sacrificed." Hence the strict obligation incumbent on the priest to preserve his body and soul pure, and continually to work at his sanctification. "In the Lord," said the seraphic Francis to his spiritual sons, "I entreat all my brethren who are priests of the Most High that, as often as they celebrate Mass, they be spotless and that they thus offer with purity the sacrifice of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ." To animate them still more, he draws their attention to the Virgin who conceived our Lord by the power of the Holy Ghost and who, in the days of His childhood, touched Him with her most pure hands and carried Him in her most pure arms. And in truth, the priest has reason to regard with special veneration that blessed one, the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, of whom was born for us the God present in the Sacrament, and with peculiar fervor to endeavor to make his heart like unto her holy and immaculate heart.

As Mary, in a marvelous manner, conceived and gave birth to the Son of God, the priest has received power to call Jesus Christ from heaven to earth. As Mary, standing to the last at the foot of the cross, offered her divine Son to the heavenly Father, in like manner does the priest offer Him daily upon the altar of the cross. As Mary was overshadowed by the Holy Ghost, so are priests, the instruments of the Holy Ghost, to continue in the Church the mystery of the Incarnation for man's salvation. As Mary gave herself unreservedly to God, the Church requires of all her priests a cheerful and self-sacrificing love. As Mary, who conceived the Son of God and carried him in her womb, excelled, as a vessel of the Holy Ghost, all creatures in purity of heart, so Christ and the Church require a special purity of heart in the priest who places the Eucharistic Christ upon the altar, carries Him in his hands, receives Him, and gives Him to others, and thus in a more special manner appears as a vessel of the Holy Ghost. This Virgin is, consequently, the honor and joy of all good priests. A priest, inflamed with love for Christ in the Eucharist, clings also with the most tender devotion and truly filial love to the Virgin Mother of God, and such a sentiment obtains for him the special protection of this powerful Virgin. Under her kind auspices he is enabled to live a pure life and to

celebrate in a holy manner the sacrifice of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. His filial piety at all times urges him to implore the holy Virgin to permit him to participate in her profound humility, her exceptional purity, and ardent charity. A priest, assiduously intent on this object, will learn from experience that the mother of the eternal Word will be propitious to him.

THE RELATION OF THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS TO THE SACRIFICE OF THE CROSS

In the Eucharistic celebration are found all the conditions essential to a sacrifice; hence it is a true and real sacrifice. The God-man, His body and His blood, is in reality immolated upon the altar and not merely represented and offered to the heavenly Father. To the essential characteristics of the Eucharistic sacrifice belongs its interior peculiar relation to the sacrifice of the cross. The sacrifices prior to Christ did indeed prefigure the future sacrifice of the cross; but the Sacrifice of the Mass is in an infinitely more perfect manner a copy of the sacrifice of the cross accomplished on Calvary. The Eucharist is in its nature a relative sacrifice, that is, a true sacrifice in itself, but which at the same time relates to the sacrifice of the cross and objectively represents it. It is in consequence of Christ's institution that this relation to the sacrificial death of Christ is an essential feature of the Mass. While setting this forth, we shall also clearly show the identity of the sacrifice of the Mass with that of the cross, as well as the difference that exists between them.

1. Jesus Christ left to His Church in the Eucharist a true and real sacrifice, "whereby that bloody sacrifice once to be accomplished on the cross might be represented, the memory thereof remain even to the end of the world, and its salutary effects applied to the remission of those sins which we daily commit."²⁰ According to the doctrine of the Church, the Mass is not a mere memorial of sacrifice, but a true memorial sacrifice, that is, a real sacrifice en-

²⁰ Trid., Sess. XXII, cap. 1. According to the teaching of St. Thomas, the essence of the Eucharistic sacrifice consists in the *immolatio Christi*; therefore the sacrifice of the Eucharist is also an *imago repraesentativa, repraesentatio, figura quaedam et exemplum dominicae passionis*, that is, a living likeness of the passion of Christ, the actual representation of the sacrifice of the cross; moreover, at the same time it is also the *applicatio et participatio fructus dominicae passionis* (the application and participation of the fruits of the sacrifice of the cross). Cf. S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 1 et 2.

dowed with a commemorative character. The Mass is not a mere shadowy copy, but the living and essential representation of the sacrifice of the cross.

a) That the celebration of the Eucharist is the representation of the sacrificial death of Christ, is evident even from the words of its institution. Our Lord Himself calls the Eucharistic sacrifice the giving of His body and the shedding of His blood. In making choice of these words, He would not merely signify the true sacrifice of His sacramental body and blood, but He would, at the same time, designate that the mode and manner of this sacrifice by the mystical shedding of blood under the separate species should represent symbolically the violent separation of His body and blood, the real shedding of His blood on the cross. He then gives to His apostles and to their successors in the priestly office the command and the power to celebrate the Eucharist in remembrance of Him. The Apostle explains and proves this command by adding that the celebration of the Eucharist is of itself always an actual announcement of the death of Christ and must, therefore, be perpetuated among Christians until our Lord shall return in glory at the consummation of time to judge the world (I Cor. 11:26).

b) The sacramental offering of the body and blood of Christ on the altar is frequently styled in tradition the figure, the representation, the symbol of the passion and sacrificial death of Christ on the cross. Gaudentius expresses himself happily on this subject:

Christ willed that His benefits should be permanently imparted to us; He willed that souls should be sanctified by the representation of His own passion. Therefore He commissioned His faithful disciples, whom He ordained the first priests of His Church, unceasingly to celebrate these mysteries of eternal life, which all priests should celebrate in all the churches of the universe until He returns from heaven, in order that the priests themselves and all believing nations also may have a copy [a true representation] of the passion of Christ daily before their eyes, may bear it in their hands, receive it into their mouths and hearts; and thus by this celebration the remembrance of our redemption may ever be indelibly impressed on their minds.²¹

St. Gregory the Great writes:

The Eucharistic sacrifice in a unique manner preserves the soul from eternal perdition, as it renews mystically the death of the only-begotten

²¹ *Serm.*, II.

Son of God. For although Christ be risen from the dead, He dieth no more, and death has no longer dominion over Him; yet in His immortal and imperishable life He is sacrificed anew for us in this mystery of sacred oblation. Let us, therefore, consider attentively all that this sacrifice is for us, since for the remission of our sins it represents continually the passion of the only-begotten Son of God.²²

In a similar sense, the words of consecration separately spoken over the bread and wine, which cause Christ's body and blood to be present under the separate species, are designated as a spiritual, reasonable, and incorporeal sword, by which the victim is slain upon the altar. Hence St. Gregory of Nazianzus addresses the following petition to Amphilochius: "Delay not to pray for me, when by the word [of consecration] you call down the Word [the Son of God], when by an unbloody separation you slay the body and blood of the Lord with the sacrificial knife of His word."

c) Lastly, how dear to Catholics and how widespread among them is the hearing of Mass; they look upon it as a mystical representation, an unbloody celebration of the passion and death of Christ.

To our churches Christ could not have given any more effectual or more proper means to preserve the remembrance of our redemption than His body and blood, the price of our ransom. How could we be unmindful of our redemption, when we have before our eyes the body of Christ mystically sacrificed in death for our salvation, and His blood shed for our sins? At the very sight of these visible signs (in which we behold with unwavering faith the true body and blood of Christ) our hearts should be encouraged to think upon the redemption of the human race, saved by this body and blood, and we should be inflamed with devotion and be moved to implore from our inmost heart that God, on account of this holy and precious sacrifice which in this body and blood was once offered for the redemption of mankind, may grant that it profit us for our reconciliation with Himself, and through His mercy for our salvation and beatitude. That this remembrance might remain in ceaseless practice in the Church of Christ, He conferred upon His apostles the priesthood of the New Law, commanding them to celebrate this sacrifice: "Do this in commemoration of Me."²³

The words of the Saviour and of the apostles, the teaching of the Fathers and the prayers of the liturgies, the conviction and acknowl-

²² *Dialog.*, IV, chap. 58.

²³ *Ein Vergissmeinnicht*, p. 45.

edgment of the faithful, place it beyond doubt that the celebration of the Eucharist has also for its object to bring before our eyes and to represent to us Christ's sacrificial death, that the memory thereof may always be preserved fresh and living in all hearts.²⁴

2. A painting or a crucifix may represent the Lord's death on the cross; but this is an imperfect representation of that divine sacrificial drama, once enacted on Mount Calvary. Quite different, infinitely more complete and actual, is the bloody sacrifice of Christ represented by the Mass. It is the real and objective, the living and essential, representation of the sacrifice of redemption accomplished on the cross.²⁵ The reason for it lies in the inmost nature of the

²⁴ Notandum, quia quotidianum nostrum sacrificium idem ipsum dicit [S. Chrysostomus] cum eo, quo Christus semel oblatus est in cruce, quantum at eandem veram hic et ibi corporis Christi substantiam: quod vero nostrum quotidianum illius semel oblatis dicit esse exemplum, i.e. figuram vel formam, non dicit, ut hic vel ibi essentialiter alium Christum constituat, sed ut eundem in cruce semel, in altari quotidie alio modo immolari et offerri ostendat: ibi in veritate passionis, qua pro nobis occisus est, hic in figura et imitatione passionis ipsius, qua Christus non iterum vere patitur, sed ipsius verae memoria passionis quotidie nobis iteratur. . . . Non ergo est in ipsius Christi veritate *diversitas*, sed in ipsius immolationis actione, quae dum veram Christi passionem et mortem quadam sua similitudine figurando repraesentat, nos ad imitationem ipsius passionis invitet et accendat, contra hostem nos roboret et muniat, et a vitiiis purgans et virtutibus condecorans, vitae aeternae nos idoneos ac dignos exhibeat (Alger., *De sacramentis corp. et sanguin. domin.*, I, xvi, 109).

²⁵ Triplex habemus *memoriale passionis*, sc. in *scripto*, in *verbo* et in *sacramento*. In *scripto*, ut quando passio describitur vel narratur per scripturam, vel quando imaginibus exprimitur; et hoc est memoriale quasi mortuum et habet fieri ad visum, qui apprehendit magis de longinquo. In *verbo*, utpote cum aliquis verbotenus narrat passionem Christi; et illud partim est vivum, partim mortuum. Vivum est in corde bonorum praedicatorum, sed mortuum in corde tepidorum et malorum; vel vivum in corde et cogitatione, non vivum in voce; et hoc est ad auditum, auditus autem non ita apprehendit de longinquo. In *sacramento* vero est memoriale, cum ipsum corpus Christi significatur et continetur in specie panis et sanguis in specie vini; et hoc est memoriale vivum, quia ipse Christus seipsum ibi praebet, offerens nobis corpus, quod pro nobis fuit occisum, et sanguinem, qui pro nobis fuit effusus, et hoc est ad gustum, qui de proximo apprehendit, ut jam non quasi speculatione, sed quadam experientia passionis ejus memores simus. Si ergo accendit affectum nostrum passio descripta, et amplius ferventer praedicata; multo magis inflammare et afficere debet in hoc sacramento expressa. Et hoc absque dubio facit, si quis sensum habet et illum convertit ad hoc sacramentum. Ille ergo est, qui ex hoc sacramento efficaciam reportat, qui se convertit; ille vere audit Missam, non qui tantum verba dicit vel audit sine devotione, sed qui ad hoc memoriale totam mentis intentionem convertit (S. Bonav., IV, dist. 12, p. 2, a. 1, q. 1 ad 3).

Eucharistic sacrifice as it was instituted by Christ. Upon the altar appear the same priest and the same victim as upon the cross. For in the Eucharist, Jesus Christ offers Himself, His body once immolated on the cross and His blood once shed on the cross, with all the merits there acquired, in an unbloody manner, yet in a real and true manner.

We should, moreover, consider the way and manner in which Christ's body and blood are to be offered. This consists in the mystical shedding of blood, that is, in the separate consecration of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. The separate species, under which Christ's body and blood are rendered present by virtue of the words of consecration, that is, mystically immolated, are symbols of the violent and bloody death of Christ on the cross.²⁶ The separation of Christ's body and blood takes place on the altar, not in reality, but only in appearance: for the Eucharistic victim can no longer be slain in a bloody (physical), but only in an unbloody (mystical) manner.²⁷ This mystical immolation, therefore, in consequence of which the divine victim under the two species appears "as if slain" (*tanquam occisus*), is well calculated to represent Christ's body and blood in that form of separation which took place on the cross.²⁸ By this mystical shedding of blood, which brings the real shedding of blood on the cross vividly to view, the Eucharistic sacrifice becomes, in a most perfect manner, a memorial sacrifice.

The distinct consecration of the elements of bread and wine, the

²⁶ Consecratio utriusque speciei valet ad repraesentandam passionem Christi, in qua seorsim fuit sanguis a corpore separatus: unde et in forma consecrationis fit mentio de ejus effusione (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 76, a. 2 ad 1). Ipsum corpus et sanguis Domini, ut sunt sub illis speciebus (panis et vini), signa sunt ejusdem corporis et sanguinis, ut fuerunt in cruce; repraesentat enim Eucharistia passionem Christi (Bellarm., *De sacramento Euchar.*, II, chap. 15).

²⁷ Quod consecratio ex vi verborum ponat sub una specie corpus, non autem sanguinem, et sub altera specie sanguinem, non autem corpus, minime probat, consecrationem esse actionem realiter destructivam Christi, sed solum quod sit mystica mortis ejus representatio: quia consecratio non pertingit ad causandam illam separationem inter corpus et sanguinem Christi in se, sed solum in sacramento, i.e. in signo et repraesentatione (Salmant., disp. XIII, dub. 2, n. 38).

²⁸ Consecratio est maxime expressa significatio sacrificii crucis, quatenus per eam ex vi verborum seorsim ponitur sub specie panis corpus Christi velut occisum et sub specie vini sanguis velut effusus: unde haec separatio, quantum est ex vi verborum, passim dicitur mystica Christi mactatio et immolatio (Platelius, *Synopsis tot. curs. theol.*, X, chap. 4, § 6, n. 469).

separate representation of the body and blood of Christ under the two species, that is, the mystical shedding of blood, is, in virtue of the institution by Christ, absolutely necessary, not merely for the licit, but also for the valid celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice. If, culpably or inculpably, but one substance is consecrated, then Christ is indeed present under one species, but the sacrifice is not accomplished, because an essential characteristic and requisite, the twofold consecration, is wanting.²⁹ Hence it is of divine ordination that both elements, bread and wine, must always be consecrated in order that the Eucharistic sacrifice may take place. Our Lord instituted the unbloody sacrifice of the altar in this manner because He willed that by its very nature it should be a visible representation of the sacrifice of the cross, which was accomplished by a violent shedding of blood unto death.

3. The Mass, accordingly, is a relative sacrifice which, as a living copy, represents the original of the sacrifice of the cross. Between the two there exists the most perfect unity so far as we consider the victim and the priest; for it is Christ who offers upon the altar His body and His blood, consequently the same gift which He once offered on the cross. Still the sacrifice of the altar and that of the cross differ in several respects. The Church says that the way and manner of offering differs, that is, the sacrificial act is differently constituted (*ratio offerendi diversa*).³⁰

On the cross, the sacrifice of Christ consisted in the bloody offer-

²⁹ Ut hoc mysterium absolute et simpliciter sit verum sacrificium, prout a Christo est institutum, essentialiter requiritur utriusque speciei consecratio. . . . Quia de essentia hujus sacrificii est expressa repraesentatio mortis et passionis Christi; sed haec intrinsece requirit consecrationem utriusque speciei . . . quando sanguis statim post corpus separatim consecratur, quasi in viva imagine repraesentatur ipsa effusio sanguinis et consequenter separatio animae a corpore, quae ex effusione sanguinis secuta est; nam (ut Scriptura interdum loquitur) vita hominis in sanguine est et ideo solet anima per sanguinem repraesentari (Suarez, disp. LXXV, sect. 6, n. 7). Cf. Salmant., *De Euchar. sacr.*, disp. IV, dub. 5, n. 92.

³⁰ Trid., Sess. XXII, cap. 2. In order to judge of the specific and numerical unity and of the dissimilarity of the sacrifices, the sacrificial offering and the sacrificing priest, as well as the sacrificial action, must be taken under consideration. The sacrifice of the cross and the Sacrifice of the Mass are identical, that is, they are one and the same sacrifice, inasmuch as on the part of each there is one and the same victim, the same offerer (Trid.). But, as in the bloody sacrifice the shedding of blood is real and in the unbloody sacrifice only mystical, the sacrificial act is different both as to number and as to species (*specie*). Therefore the majority of theologians rightly understand the words of the

ing of His life and divine self to an actual death: on the altar it consists also in the offering of His holy humanity, but in an unbloody manner, to the mystical sacramental death under the two Eucharistic species. On Calvary Christ offered Himself in His own natural and human form, and without the assistance of a subordinate priest; He offers Himself here under the veil of the Sacrament and by the ministry of visible priests. There the human nature of Christ was susceptible of suffering and death; the sacrifice of the cross, therefore, was infinitely painful. Here on our altar His human nature is glorified and immortal; the Sacrifice of the Mass, consequently, is a sacrifice free from pain. The object of the sacrifice of the cross was to obtain the price of the redemption of the world; the purpose of the Sacrifice of the Mass is to apply to individual man the treasures of grace merited and massed by the sacrifice on the cross. The bloody sacrifice of the cross Christ offered but once, to acquire for the redemption of fallen man an inexhaustible treasure of satisfaction and merits; the unbloody sacrifice of the altar He offers often in order to apply to us "the fruits of the bloody sacrifice of the cross in a most abundant measure."³¹ On the cross the inexhaustible fountain of eternal redemption was opened; from the altar it perpetually pours forth its streams into the hearts of men. Neither amid the glory of heaven nor in His sacramental state can Christ any longer merit nor can He satisfy any more; for by divine disposition both are possible only in this mortal life, that is, as long as we are pilgrims on earth. The Sacrifice of the Mass, therefore, draws its power and efficacy, its fruit, from the sacrifice of the cross; that is, the Mass applies to us the graces and blessings of Calvary. On the cross and

Council of Trent to mean that "only the manner of offering varies" (*sola offerendi ratio diversa = modus sacrificandi diversus, actio sacrificativa diversa*). *Sacrificium Missae non differt specie aut essentia a sacrificio incruento, quod Christus obtulit in coena, distinguitur tamen numero et quibusdam accidentalibus conditionibus* (Suarez, disp. LXXVI, sect. 1, n. 2). In like manner, the daily sacrifices of the altar, in consequence of the continually repeated sacrificial act, differ according to number (numerically), not merely from the sacrifice of the cross and from that of the Last Supper, but even from one another, and only *ratione victimae et sacerdotis principaliter offerentis* are all these sacrifices identical. Cf. Vasquez, disp. CCXXII, chap. 2; Tanner, disp. V, *de ss. Euchar. et Miss.*, q. 9, dub. 2; Pasqualigo, *De sacrif. N.L.*, I, q. 52.

³¹ Quia fructu dominicae passionis quotidie indigemus, propter quotidianos defectus, quotidie in Ecclesia regulariter hoc sacramentum offertur (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 2).

upon the altar there is the same sacrificial fruit; the distinction consists only in this, that in the former it was merited, and in the latter it is applied.

4. Let us, in conclusion, adduce another difference. The sacrifice of the cross was exclusively the sacrifice of Christ; the Eucharist is at the same time the sacrifice of the Church and that of Christ, inasmuch as the Church offers it and is offered together with it at the altar. Christ left the Eucharistic sacrifice to His Church; it is her chief dower, her glorious mine of wealth, her greatest joy, her all-hallowed sanctuary. At the altar she enters into living communion of sacrifice with Christ; the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered not alone for the Church, but also by her and through her to the Most High. And this is the principal reason why the Eucharist is and is called the sacrifice of the Church. To this is added the circumstance that the Church militant during Mass offers herself and is at the same time offered. Christ has placed Himself in the hands of the Church that she may offer Him to the heavenly Father; with the infinitely meritorious and acceptable sacrifice to God of the body and blood of Christ, the Church unites the offering of herself. In union with the sacrifice of Christ the faithful should offer themselves with all their labors, sufferings, and prayers, with body and soul. St. Augustine expresses this sentiment in an appropriate manner when he says: "The whole body of the redeemed, that is, the society and communion of saints (of Christians), is presented to God as a joint sacrifice by the high priest, who in His passion also offered Himself for us in the form of a servant, that we might become the members of so exalted a head. . . . The Church celebrates this in what is known to the faithful as the Sacrament of the altar, in which she also is offered while offering it." And in another place he says that the Church as the mystical body of Christ "learns to offer herself through Him."³² This truth obtains its most beautiful expression in the prayers and ceremonies of the rite of the Mass: it is signified, not only by the mixing of wine with water, but by the two sacrificial elements of bread and wine. As the Fathers remark, the bread is made of many grains of wheat, and the wine from many grapes; therefore the sacrificial bread, as well as the sacrificial wine, is a symbol of the mystical body of Christ, consisting of many mem-

³² *De civ. Dei*, X, chaps. 6, 20.

bers, which in union with the true and natural body is offered on the altar.³³

With Christ, in Christ, and through Christ, the Church during Mass daily offers herself to the Most High as “a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God” (Rom. 12:1). With Christ: at the sight of the divine victim, whose body is daily mystically broken upon the altar and whose blood is daily mystically shed before our eyes, she is encouraged and animated cheerfully to drink with Him of the chalice of bitter affliction, to joyfully embrace labors and sufferings, persecutions and calumnies. In Christ: for in Him as her head, that is, in her most intimate connection and fusion with His sacrifice, the Church offers herself to tread the weary and painful way of the cross, until she arrives at the heavenly Jerusalem. Through Christ: for the true and mystical body of Christ constitutes the sole sacrifice, whose sweet odor ascends to heaven, “through Christ our Lord,” through whom alone we may approach to God, and by whom alone we can please Him.

How boundless in goodness, how unspeakably rich in mercies is the Lord in presenting us with so precious a sacrifice! Let us also remember how highly favored we are, how enviable is our lot, since the well-beloved Son of the eternal Father is and will forever remain our victim, that we may not have to appear before God empty-handed, but may have a rich and worthy gift to offer Him, and that in union therewith we may offer ourselves also. Since He was once “born and given to us by the immaculate Virgin,”³⁴ He wished to be always our own. His love can be requited only with love, and His sacrifice only with sacrifice.

5. From all that has hitherto been said about the relation of the sacrifice of the altar to that of the cross, it is evident how distasteful and ridiculous is the offensively oft-repeated objection that the Sacrifice of the Mass undervalues and detracts from the worth and dignity of the sacrifice of the cross. The sacrifice of the altar is, by its very nature and very object, the living re-presentation of the sacrifice of the cross and the perpetual application of its fruits.

³³ Quoniam corpus [Christi] mysticum est ex multis aggregatis in unum, talia elementa esse debuerunt, quae ex multis aggregantur in unum; tale autem est panis, quia est ex multis granis puris, tale etiam est vinum, quod est ex multis racemis puris; ideo recte unionem corporis Christi mystici signat (S. Bonav., IV, dist. 11, p. 2, a. 1, q. 1).

³⁴ *Pange lingua.*

Therefore the Mass does not cast Christ's death on the cross in the shade, but, on the contrary, rather sets it forth in the clearest and most refulgent light.³⁵ There certainly is not a more glorious testimony to the necessity and profitableness, to the inexhaustible graces and blessings, of the bloody sacrifice of redemption, than precisely this perpetual celebration of the sacrifice of the Eucharist. At the altar millions draw and drink from the fountain of grace of the sacrifice of the cross, without its healing waters ever drying up or becoming diminished. The bitter sacrificial death of Christ on the cross should be profoundly engraved upon our minds, and should live unchangeably fresh in our memories and in our hearts. How can this be more easily and surely attained than by the daily celebration of the Eucharist, in which Christ's bloody sacrificial death, with all its blessings, is presented to us so vividly and so touchingly and, in a certain sense, is even renewed? Where is the devotion to the passion and death of Christ more highly esteemed and more fervently cultivated, where is the love of the cross and of the Crucified more strongly inculcated and more fervently practiced, than in the bosom of the Catholic Church, in which upon thousands of altars the bloody death of Christ is daily celebrated in an unbloody manner, mystically proclaimed and held in constant remembrance? Every altar is a mystical Mount Calvary, upon whose summit waves "the banner of the cross," at the sight of which the believing soul, deeply moved, entering seriously into herself, exclaims: "My Love is crucified." But take away the memorial sacrifice of the altar, and sooner or later the great sacrifice of atonement, offered on Golgotha nearly nineteen centuries ago, will disappear in a mythical distance, and with it the personality of the Saviour and the entire work of the Redeemer will fall more or less into a deplorable oblivion.

Ah! my own sweet Good, sovereign Lord, and sweet Guest of my soul, I would fain ask yet one more question. Tell me, dear Lord, what

³⁵ Nulla ratione sacrificium Missae, quod aiunt impii homines, derogat peracto in cruce sacrificio; quinimo ejus merita ac beneficia quam latissime propagat, atque in omnes uberrime diffundit. Siquidem Christus in hoc sacrificio pro iis, quos redemit, omnibus eundem pretiosum sanguinem et vulnera Patri suo ostendit ac offert, quibus ad dexteram ejus in coelis sedens gratiam nobis apud eum conciliat. Utrobique enim sempiterno sacerdotio fungitur, ut possit salvare in perpetuum accedentes per semet ipsum ad Deum, semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis (Heb. 7:25). *Collectio Lacensis*, III, 493.

advantage is to be derived from the Mass? Is it necessary that every day Thy death should be celebrated anew, for assuredly Thou didst enough for the whole world on Good Friday? Yes, though there had been a thousand worlds, Thou wouldst still have done sufficient for them all. And Thou dost reply: This I have done out of My great love, and for mankind have I planned this delightful invention of love; for since men daily need it because of their human frailty, I have willed that that worthy sacrifice be daily offered anew for the sins and weakness of men, according to the words of St. Thomas: All the fruitfulness and advantages wrought by God on the day upon which He died, are daily to be found in every Mass, and the same grace is received by all who partake worthily of the body of our Lord. Our fervent desires should lead us to have a longing to assist at all the Masses celebrated throughout the world. At every Mass at which we assist we should endeavor to receive the Blessed Sacrament, recommending to God in our prayers all whom in our love we bear in mind, whether living or dead. In this manner we participate not only in the Mass at which we assist, but, moreover, in all the Masses celebrated throughout the world. (Tauler.)

CHAPTER VII

THE VALUE AND THE EFFICACY OF THE EUCCHARISTIC SACRIFICE ¹

IN the midst of the earthly Paradise stood "the tree of life" (Gen. 2:9), that is, the tree the fruit of which was destined to impart to man perpetual youth, strength, and beauty. It was a figure of the true tree of life that stands in the midst of the new paradise, holy Church. We are to understand by this true tree of life, first, the cross of Christ, and then the Eucharist, which imparts fullness of heavenly and imperishable life to all who desire it. We have already investigated the root and the trunk of this tree of life; we must now endeavor to know the quality of its rare and plenteous fruit, "beautiful to behold and agreeable to the taste." This tree of life of the Eucharistic sacrifice, planted by God in the garden of the Church, rears its blooming top high toward heaven, and spreads wide its shady branches over the earth, dropping down graces and blessings on all men.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass may also be considered as the golden bridge uniting heaven and earth, for, while clouds of incense of adoration and thanksgiving rise unceasingly from the altar to the throne of God, the blessed clouds of grace and mercy descend on mankind. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will" (Luke 2:14). This chant of the angels, which at the birth of Christ resounded for the first time on the plains of Bethlehem, "as the voice of many waters," echoes and re-echoes throughout all ages, and finds its most splendid fulfillment in the

¹ *Valor sacrificii Missae est ipsa dignitas et virtus, qua pollet, ratione rei oblatae et principalis offerentis. Efficacia est complexus effectuum ejus in se inspectorum et modus quo illos operatur. Fructus est effectus sacrificii quatenus nobis applicatur* (Schoupe, *Element. theol. dogm.*, II, chap. 3, a. 2, n. 339).

celebration of the Eucharist. Inasmuch as it is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, the Mass procures all honor and glory to God; inasmuch as it is a sacrifice of propitiation and petition, it obtains for men the plenitude of peace, that is, of all graces and blessings.² That the Sacrifice of the Mass possesses in reality the above-mentioned fourfold character of praise and thanksgiving, propitiation and petition, that in these four characteristics it unfolds its efficacy in a striking manner, is evident even from the fact that it not only replaces and transcends the figurative sacrifices of the Old Testament, but also that it infinitely surpasses them. For as the fulfillment and completion of the sacrifices prior to Christ, the Mass includes in itself all the goods foreshadowed by them.³ Now, in the Old Law different sacrifices were prescribed for the above-named fourfold object; consequently, the Eucharistic sacrifice alone must, in the most perfect manner, answer all these various objects for which sacrifices were chiefly offered.⁴ The sole and perpetual sacrifice of the New Testament, therefore, enables us to cancel all our indebtedness toward God and to fulfill all our obligations towards Him, to avert from ourselves all evils, and to implore all favors. However, before we explain how the Mass is the most perfect sacrifice of praise and the most precious and worthy sacrifice of thanksgiving to God and the fullest sacrifice of propitiation and the most powerful sacrifice of petition for men, some preliminary questions remain to be answered relating to the value of the Eucharistic sacrifice and to the reason and nature of its efficacy.

The value (*valor*) and efficacy (*efficacia*) of sacrifice in general depend chiefly upon its essence and form. The more excellent and precious the object sacrificed, and the higher the dignity and holiness of the priest sacrificing, and the more perfect his intention and

² Tibi, Domine, sacrificia dicata reddantur: quae sic ad honorem nominis tui deferenda tribuisti, ut eadem remedia fieri nostra praestares (*Secreta Dom. X post Pent.*).

³ Haec oblatio illa est, quae per varias sacrificiorum, naturae et legis tempore, similitudines figurabatur, utpote quae bona omnia, per illa significata, velut illorum omnium consummatio et perfectio complectitur (*Trid., Sess. XXII, cap. 1*).

⁴ Deus, cui, omnium sacrificiorum varietate finita, hostiam nunc offerimus singularem, adesto votis tua inspiratione conceptis (*Liturg. Gallic.*). Legalium differentiam hostiarum unius sacrificii perfectione sanxisti (*Secreta Dom. VII post Pent.*).

his sacrificial act, the more valuable in itself and the more efficacious for the attainment of its object will be the sacrifice. First we shall consider the person of him who sacrifices, as well as the way and manner of the sacrifice. As there are more than one person offering the Eucharistic sacrifice, who offer it in different ways, we shall examine and explain its value and efficacy under this aspect.

1. First of all, the Eucharistic sacrifice is to be considered in so far as in it Jesus Christ offers Himself, that is, He is not only the sacrificial gift, but also the most eminent sacrificer. In this respect the Sacrifice of the Mass is not inferior in value to that of the cross: both are equally infinite, equally beyond all estimation, and equally valuable. The infinite value of the Sacrifice of the Mass consists, indeed, also in the immensity of the object offered; but principally in the infinite dignity of the sacrificing God-man. The object offered on the altar is the richest and most glorious, the very best and most precious that can be imagined, for it is Christ Himself, His body and blood, His holy humanity, which of itself, that is, by virtue of its natural and supernatural prerogatives and perfections, is incomparably more noble and valuable than all other creatures, and which by the hypostatic union with the eternal Word, in which it is offered, even attains and possesses infinite dignity and sublimity above every creature.⁵ But although Christ's precious blood, which is mystically shed in the chalice, has an infinite, eternal, and imperishable value, nevertheless, this of itself would not suffice to impart infinite value to the Eucharistic sacrifice, since for this purpose it is requisite, above all, that the person who sacrifices should possess infinite greatness and majesty, as is the case with the God-man, and with Him alone. Mary, the ever-blessed Virgin, offered her Son in the Temple and at the foot of the cross; but, however holy and perfect her sentiments, however acceptable to God her offering may have been, still it was not infinite in value, not infinitely meritorious. The divine dignity and grandeur of the person sacrificing would, on the contrary, impart infinite value to a trifling gift. But since Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God and the splendor

⁵ *Christus secundum quod Deus, est dignitatis prorsus incomparabilis et immensae; secundum assumptam vero humanitatem ut Verbo aeterno unitam et omni gratiarum plenitudine perornatam, dignior est toto universo (Dion. Carthus., In I Petr., 2:6).*

of the glory of the Father, offers in the Mass His own self, His own flesh and blood, the sacrifice of the altar is in every respect infinitely valuable and precious.⁶

The infinite value of the Eucharistic sacrifice must be distinguished still more minutely, that is, considered in a twofold sense. First, we may thereby mean the infinite grandeur, excellence, and perfection peculiar to the Eucharistic sacrifice, because Christ is the sacrificing priest and the victim offered. This value, this moral dignity of the Eucharistic sacrifice, depends upon the grandeur and holiness of Christ, inasmuch as He in the present sacrifices Himself and is sacrificed on the altar. But if we understand thereby the infinite value of the satisfaction and merit, that is, the infinite price and ransom, the inexhaustible treasure of the redemption contained in the Eucharistic sacrifice, it also originates from Christ, but not in so far as He now offers Himself on the altar, but in so far as He once offered Himself on the cross; for by the Eucharistic sacrificial act Christ can no longer make satisfaction and acquire merit, but merely continually apply to us the treasure of merit fully acquired on the cross.⁷

Now, if we consider the Eucharistic sacrifice in itself, that is, the divine dignity of the sacrificing priest and victim,⁸ as well as the inscrutable treasures of the fruits of the sacrifice of the cross contained in the sacrifice of the altar, we then perceive how the Mass possesses a value absolutely infinite. As an infinitely valuable and infinitely perfect sacrifice, the Mass evidently possesses also power infinitely great to produce those effects which by Christ's institution belong to it and are peculiar to it. But, it may be asked

⁶ Res oblata in hoc sacrificio est infinita et offerens est etiam persona infinita, nempe Christus, qui est principalis offerens, et proinde actio quoque offerendi est infinita, utpote correspondens infinitati offerentis: ergo consurgit sacrificium valoris infiniti; nam non alia ratione sacrificium crucis fuit infinitum, nisi quia res oblata et offerens fuerunt infiniti (Pasqualigo, *De sacrif. N.L.*, I, q. 117, n. 9).

⁷ Omnis efficacia hujus sacrificii debet fundari in aliquo merito et satisfactione Christi, sed non in novo merito et satisfactione, quae Christus habeat incruente offerendo. . . . Christus namque jam non est in statu merendi vel satisfaciendi . . . ergo fundatur in merito et satisfactione, quae Christus habuit in vita mortali et in cruce consummavit (Suarez, disp. LXXIX, sect. 1, n. 10).

⁸ Dignitas carnis Christi non est aestimanda solum secundum carnis naturam, sed secundum personam assumptam, in quantum sc. erat caro Dei, ex quo habebat dignitatem infinitam (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 48, a. 2 ad 3).

further, are the effects actually brought forth by the infinitely valuable and efficacious sacrifice of the altar likewise infinite and unlimited, or are they not rather finite and limited? In order to answer this question, we must consider the Eucharistic sacrifice in its relation to God, to whom it is offered, and afterward in its relation to man, for whom it is offered.

The relation of sacrifice to God is always its first and most essential feature, since, according to its very nature, sacrifice is an act of religion. Therefore the Sacrifice of the Mass is primarily to be regarded as an act of divine worship, *latria*. It serves to honor and glorify God, not only in its quality of a sacrifice of praise, adoration, and thanksgiving, but also as a sacrifice of propitiation and petition, for God is always honored and glorified, both when we endeavor to appease His justice and to move His goodness to impart graces to us, and also when we worship His majesty and pay Him our grateful thanks for His liberality. Since the Eucharist, in reference to all these ends, possesses infinite value and infinite power, that is, since it is a sacrifice infinitely worthy and perfect of adoration, thanksgiving, propitiation, and petition, there is given to God on the altar always the greatest possible homage, that is, homage infinitely great. If, therefore, we consider the feature of *latria*, or divine worship, which chiefly consists in adoration, praise, and thanksgiving, and also in propitiation and petition, then beyond a doubt the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice contains in itself a worship of infinite value and, in fact, renders such worship to the Most High. In this regard, the sacrifice of Christ, which in itself is infinite, always displays its full power: for by the celebration of the Mass the triune God infallibly and at all times receives a truly infinite homage, that is, perfectly worthy adoration, praise, and thanksgiving.

But the case is different when the Eucharistic sacrifice is considered in its relation to man. From this point of view it aims at procuring our salvation and sanctification, and is, consequently, a means of grace, or rather a source of grace, bringing us the riches of heavenly blessings. The Mass, especially as a sacrifice of propitiation and petition, produces for men the operations of grace. Assuredly, acts of propitiation and petition are offered to God in the Mass, but with the intent and purpose that He may be moved by reason of the sacrifice of propitiation and petition to restore us again

to His favor and to impart to us His gifts. As has already been indicated, the value and dignity, that is, the intrinsic efficacy, of the Eucharistic sacrifice is infinitely great in this respect also, in appeasing an irritated God and moving His mercy to grant us His benefits. For the entire ransom paid for our redemption, the immense treasure of satisfaction and merit which was acquired on the cross, are all upon the altar ever presented anew and offered by Christ to His heavenly Father, that they may be applied to mankind. The Sacrifice of the Mass thus contains, not only a superabundant atonement for the remission of all possible sins and punishments, but also an inexhaustible fund for the purchasing of innumerable graces and goods. Nevertheless, the Mass cannot produce for man or in man infinite effects. For positively infinite effects are impossible as to number or magnitude; nor would the finite creature be capable of receiving them. The fruits which the Sacrifice of the Mass obtains for us from God are only finite, that is, restricted to a certain number and determined measure, as is also the case with regard to the sacrifice of the cross.⁹ The Sacrifice of the Mass, therefore, with respect to man can have only a restricted efficacy, and in its fruits is capable of only a limited application. This restriction and limitation of the fruits of the Eucharistic sacrifice may be understood in a twofold sense: intensive and extensive.

a) The Sacrifice of the Mass does not always produce effects so great and so manifold as the recipients' capacity would warrant; intensively it acts rather in a limited degree, that is, its effects are restricted to a definite measure, even if they are different in individual cases: sometimes greater, sometimes less. This fact is confirmed by the practice of the Church, according to which the Holy Sacrifice is sometimes repeatedly offered for obtaining some benefit, for example, the deliverance of a suffering soul from purgatory, the conversion of a sinner, health of body. If the Eucharistic sacrifice always yielded the entire efficacy of which it is capable, a single Mass would actually suffice to obtain as many blessings and as great as are desired. Evidently the reason for its limited efficacy does not lie in the essence and value of the sacrifice, since it possesses infinite

⁹ Quoad efficaciam sacrificium Eucharistiae non potest esse infinitum, cum nec sacrificium crucis hoc habuerit, quia efficacia respicit effectum in re ipsa dandum; non datur autem nec dari potest effectus infinite intensus (Suarez, disp. LXXIX, sect. 9).

power for producing every effect; nor is it solely due to the greater or less susceptibility of the person for whom the fruit of the sacrifice is applied. This susceptibility, nevertheless, is duly considered, for it exerts its influence upon the measure of the fruit of the sacrifice to be obtained; but the final and decisive reason for the more or less plentiful application of the sacrificial graces is the will of Christ, in other words, it is to be sought in the positive ordinance of God.¹⁰ The Sacrifice of the Mass is a means of grace, for it is intended to convey to us the riches of redemption. But for this effect there is need of a positive ordinance on the part of God. The Eucharistic sacrifice can communicate graces to us only in as much and in so far as it is destined by God for this purpose.

Now, in the distribution of His gifts, God requires our cooperation; the better our preparation, the more liberal is He, as a rule, in the dispensation of His graces. This is the case not only with the sacraments, but also in regard to the Mass. The greatness of the fruit of the Eucharistic sacrifice to be derived by us, therefore, is determined by God, but with regard to the dispositions of those for whom the Mass is offered. But here, above all, the good pleasure and the wise providence of God, who lovingly ordains all things, must be taken into consideration; then the merciful will of the high priest, Jesus Christ, who offers and presents on the altar the price of His blood to the heavenly Father for specific effects, more or less great; finally the subjective state of the recipient of the effects of the sacrifice.¹¹ As we are bound to pray without intermission, the

¹⁰ Instituit et voluit Christus Deus, ut sacrificium offeratur et prosit ad finitum tantum et certum effectum satisfactionis et impetrationis, a se determinandum ac juxta dispositionem offerentium dispensandum, ut ideo tantum sacrificium frequentius et ferventius offeratur. Et confirmat hanc doctrinam efficaciter praxis Ecclesiae, quae est infallibilis interpret institutionis Christi: et ipsa ad eundem effectum obtinendum, ut maxime pro eadem anima defuncta multas Missas offerre consuevit, eo ipso indicans, valorem seu fructum unius sacrificii esse finitum et limitatum. Quodsi enim fructus satisfactorius esset infinitus, ut quamvis poenam majorem et majorem in infinitum delere possit, posset unico sacrificio totum Purgatorium exhauriri, nedum una anima, quamvis gravibus poenis obnoxia, liberari: ad quid ergo tot repetita sacra pro defunctis, etiam unica anima? Et si fructus impetratorius esset infinitus, ita ut unico sacrificio posset impetrari quodcumque bonum majus et majus in infinitum, certo et infallibiliter, quid opus esset pro eadem re impetranda, v.g. sanitate, serenitate aeris, peste avertenda, multiplicari tot sacra juxta praxim Ecclesiae? (Sporer, *Theol. sacram.*, II, chap. 4, sect. 3, § 3.)

¹¹ Efficacia sacrificii est limitata ex institutione Christi. Quia cum consistat in applicatione virtutis sacrificii crucis, unde habet, quod sit applicativum

sacrifice also must be offered without ceasing, in order that we may obtain the fruit and the graces desired. God has so ordained it, because the uninterrupted celebration of the Mass more effectually promotes His honor and our salvation.

b) Of greater importance practically is the other much-discussed question, namely, whether the effects of the Sacrifice of the Mass, considered as to its extension, that is, in relation to the participants, are unlimited, or rather, on the contrary, limited and restricted. Here we must make a distinction. The faithful who personally and actively take part in the sacrifice, that is, who devoutly assist thereat and unite in the celebration, gain thereby a special sacrificial fruit. This fruit, obtained by participation in the sacrifice, is, as is universally admitted,¹² of unlimited extension: it is applied undiminished to all present, however numerous they may be. Whether there be many or few assembled around the altar, each receives undiminished the full fruit of grace, corresponding to his piety, his intention, his devotion, and his zeal. When several priests concelebrate, that is, consecrate the same sacrificial species, as is the case at the ordination of priests and the consecration of bishops, we have in reality not merely one sacrifice; for each of the celebrating priests performs a true sacrificial act and, consequently, each one's sacrificial act bears fruit entirely equivalent to that same fruit which would result, had he alone celebrated the Mass.¹³

*ipsius, habet etiam, quod applicet secundum hanc vel illam mensuram. Habet autem ex institutione, quod sit applicativum virtutis sacrificii crucis (Trid., Sess. XXII, cap. 1). Efficacia ita est determinata, ut tamen habeat operari secundum mensuram dispositionis. Determinatio non tollit, quin effectus crescat ad mensuram dispositionis. Unde est veluti duplex determinatio: altera independens a dispositione et altera respiciens dispositionem (Pasqualigo, *De sacrific. N.L.*, I, q. 119).*

¹² Quod hic fructus non minuatur in singulis ex aliorum consortio, a nemine, ut arbitror, negari potest (Suarez, disp. LXXIX, sect. 12).

¹³ Fructus sacrificii per respectum ad offerentes sive primarios ut sacerdotes, sive secundarios ut assistentes, potest dici infinitus syncategorematicè, i.e. major et major. si plures et plures fuerint offerentes. Ratio est, quia fructus proportionatur offerentium concursui: ergo quo magis augetur vel multiplicatur ille concursus, eo magis augetur et multiplicatur fructus; unde singuli tantum fructum obtinent, quantum obtinerent, si soli in suo ordine offerrent; et ideo non minorem fructum recipiunt Neo-mystae consecrantes cum Episcopo (si vere consecrent) ac si singuli consecrarent seorsim, sicut nec minorem habent mille assistentes sacrificio quam si quilibet assisteret solus. Cujus ratio ulterior est, quod multiplicatis offerentibus, multiplicantur et oblationes (Henno, *De Euchar. sacram.*, disp. XI, q. 7, concl. 1).

The question that now engages our attention relates to another fruit, namely, to that fruit which, by special application of the priest, is imparted to some particular person or persons. The question is, does the Sacrifice of the Mass, when it is offered for many, impart to each the entire fruit, that is, as much fruit as it would have procured an individual, had it been offered for him alone, or does the sacrificial fruit, limited intensively, when divided among the many thus become proportionately less for each individual participant, the greater the number of those for whom the sacrifice is especially offered? Some theologians of ancient times, and more still of recent date, answer the former question in the affirmative and the latter in the negative, that is, they assert, but probably without solid proof, that the efficacy of the sacrifice, unlimited extensively, is applied to the many. The majority of theologians, on the contrary, maintain with full right that the fruit of the Mass, when divided among many individuals, becomes thereby proportionately less for each one, the greater the number of the participants for whom it is offered.¹⁴

By its nature the Mass could, nevertheless, show forth an extensive-unlimited efficacy, had it been thus ordained by Christ; for it depends wholly on the will of Christ. But that Christ did impart to the Eucharistic sacrifice such an efficacy, cannot be proved. The opinion and practice of the Church, so important in such matters, is rather the opposite. For centuries, even from apostolic times, the Church has approved of and encouraged the custom of offering the Mass specially for individuals. Now, it would evidently seem to favor a practice unwise and detrimental to the faithful if the Mass could procure for hundreds and thousands equally great advantages, as much for the many as for one individual. By the special application in behalf of individuals, an immense amount of fruit would be lost to the remainder of the faithful, who, without reason, would

¹⁴ *Sententia communior et verior negat simpliciter hanc infinitatem (extensivam) in Missae sacrificio (Lugo, disp. XIX, sect. 12, n. 264). Effectus sacrificii, respondens oblationi uniuscujusque sacerdotis, quem ipse suo arbitratu potest aliis per modum operis operati applicare, finitus est; qui proinde diminuitur tanto magis in singulis, quanto in plures dividitur, ut ex communi contra nonnullos superius dictum (Tanner, IV, disp. V, q. 9, dub. 4, n. 106). Dicendum est, efficaciam sacrificii quoad fructum medium seu fructum applicabilem a sacerdote esse determinatam seu finitam extensive, ita ut quo magis extenditur, eo magis minuat* (Pasqualigo, *op. cit.*, I, q. 123).

be excluded from this gain. Why, then, should not the Sacrifice of the Mass be continually offered for all, the living as well as the dead? ¹⁵

By the decision of the Church it has been determined that a priest who receives several stipends and, in return, celebrates but one Mass, sins not only against the commandment of the Church, but also against justice, and, consequently, he is obliged to make restitution. This presupposes that the individuals offering stipends in such a case are actually wronged, that is, that they do not receive as much fruit from the sacrifice as the exclusive application of the Mass would procure for each individual. The intrinsic reason consists chiefly in the circumstance that the sacrificial fruit in question is limited intensively, that is, the fruit is confined to a certain measure.¹⁶ Now, nothing justifies the assertion that this fruit ever increases by the mere fact of the priest's offering the Mass for several, and that thus this presupposed fruit is communicated undivided to each and every one.¹⁷ Accordingly, the universal conviction of the Catholic people, that a Mass celebrated exclusively for an individual is of more benefit to him than if it were at the same time offered for others, is entirely founded on truth.

The reasons adduced show that the sacrificial fruit in question, taken in its entirety, is limited in its extension. We make this remark because some theologians draw here a distinction between the effects that the Mass produces as a sacrifice of propitiation, and the effects it produces as a sacrifice of petition. They are of the opinion that the fruit of propitiation is limited to a certain measure in its ex-

¹⁵ Si sacrificium tantum prodest omnibus et singulis, quantum si pro uno tantum applicetur, cur non applicantur omnes Missae pro omnibus defunctis, imo et pro omnibus vivis et pro omnibus aliis necessitatibus? (Lugo, disp. XIX, sect. 12, n. 246.)

¹⁶ Ad illud quod obicitur de sacrificio crucis et altaris, dicendum, quod quamvis idem sit, non tamen utrobique uniformiter; nam in cruce effusum est pretium in omnimoda plenitudine, sed in altari habet effectum determinatum, cum quotidie assumatur. Et propter hoc prima oblatio non iteratur, sed secunda iteratur (S. Bonav., IV, dist. 45, a. 2, q. 3 ad 4).

¹⁷ Quamvis virtus Christi, qui continentur sub sacramento Eucharistiae, sit infinita, tamen determinatus est effectus ad quem illud sacramentum (*also as sacrifice*) ordinatur. Unde non oportet quod per unum altaris sacrificium tota poena eorum, qui sunt in purgatorio, expietur, sicut etiam nec per unum sacrificium, quod aliquis offert, liberatur a tota satisfactione debita pro peccatis: unde et quandoque plures missae in satisfactionem unius peccati injunguntur (S. Thom., *Supplem.*, q. 71, a. 14 ad 2).

tension, but not so the fruit to be obtained by way of petition.¹⁸ With regard to the latter they hold the application to be unlimited in its extension; but the reasons they allege for this view merely prove that this application is possible in virtue of the infinite value of the Eucharistic sacrifice, but not that it was really intended by Christ and, therefore, actually takes place.¹⁹

Up to the present time we have considered the value and efficacy of the Eucharistic sacrifice, in so far as Christ is not only the victim, but also the sacrificing priest, in other words, in so far as the visible priest accomplishes and offers the sacrifice as the servant and living instrument of Christ. From this aspect, the Mass is that essential "clean oblation," which cannot be defiled by any unworthiness or sinfulness either of the celebrating priest or of the faithful assisting thereat, or become displeasing to God or diminished in value or efficacy. Inasmuch as Christ Himself offers His own self by the hands of His visible representative, the value, efficacy, and fruit of the sacrifice of the altar do not depend upon the holiness and devotion of the priest and faithful, but solely and only on the infinite dignity of Christ and the merits which He acquired on the cross. This is what is meant when it is said that the sacrifice of Christ is always pleasing to God and efficacious *ex opere operato*, that is, by virtue of its valid performance without any further human cooperation. This fruit, which has its foundation immediately and solely in Christ and His infinite merits, is the greatest and most precious of the sacrifice, the essential or real sacrificial fruit: it is always meant when reference is made to the fruit of the Mass.

¹⁸ Qui non offerunt, ii non aequalem partem accipiunt, si pro pluribus ac si pro uno dumtaxat offerretur . . . *ad satisfactionem* loquor; *ad impetrationem* namque nulla vis minor in sacrificio est, quod pro multis offertur, quam in eo, quod pro uno solo (Canus, *De locis theolog.*, XXII, xxiii, 10).

¹⁹ Etsi sacrificium ex parte rei oblatae et principalis offerentis, sc. Christi, sit infinitae virtutis, non tamen, ita ejus institutore Christo volente, infinitos producit effectus: secus si finem excipias colendi Deum et supremum patriae actum, qui sane ex qualibet quantumvis crebro repetita divinae victimae oblatione semper Deo exhibetur, superflua esset ejusdem iteratio; semel autem posita quod effectus sacrificii finitus sit, perspicuum jam est, illud plus ei prodesse, cui applicatur, quam aliis: nam aut consideratur tanquam propitiatorium seu satisfactorium et certe pro illo speciatim satisfacit, in cujus debiti solutionem Deo exhibetur, aut consideratur tanquam impetratorium et profecto ad beneficia illi uberius elargienda Deum movet, pro quo nominatim sacerdos divinam hostiam immolans Deum exorat (Bened. XIV, *De ss. Missae sacrif.*, III, xxi, 6).

2. In the second place, the value and efficacy of the Eucharistic sacrifice are to be considered in so far as the celebration of it is an act of the united Church, or, in other words, in so far as the priest in the name and by the commission of the entire Church performs this sacred function at the altar. The Eucharistic sacrifice and the prayers of the breviary form the principal part of public divine worship, which, by the ordinance and for the welfare of the Church, is conducted by ministers specially ordained and appointed for this purpose. At the altar the united Church offers and prays through the priest, her representative and delegate; there she presents to God the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, of propitiation and petition. Under this aspect the value and efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Mass is measured by the dignity, merit, and sanctity of the Church. From this it follows that the value of the Eucharistic sacrifice, inasmuch as the Church offers it, is always finite and limited, for at no time has she been nor can she be infinitely holy. It is self-evident that on the part of the Church the effects which follow the celebration of Mass are always limited in degree and greatness. It must here be noted, however, that the Church, inasmuch as she offers the Holy Sacrifice and prays through the priest, cannot merit and satisfy, since for this purpose there is required a positive action or suffering of a person pleasing to God. But in the celebration of Mass there is, on the part of the Church, no such positive activity to which could be attached the power of meriting or satisfying. Accordingly the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice by the Church has only impetratory power, that is, she can draw down graces and blessings from heaven only by way of petition.²⁰

Holiness is an essential mark of the Church and, therefore, it can never be wanting to her; the Church ever shines in the splendor and adornment of purity, for she is the spouse of Christ. Conse-

²⁰ Quatenus Missa nomine totius Ecclesiae offertur, propitiatorium non habet effectum; nam quamvis sacerdos ab Ecclesiae superioribus deputetur, ut nomine omnium fidelium celebret, omnesque fideles in hanc deputationem saltem implicite consentiant, nihilominus in singulis Missae oblationibus haec Ecclesiae voluntas non existit nisi habitualiter. Atqui nemo potest mereri aut pro peccato satisfacere, nisi quando actu operatur, ac proinde ex illa habituali Ecclesiae oblatione propitiationis fructus profluere nequit. . . . Ipsa Ecclesia, Missam per sacerdotem tanquam per suum legatum offerendo, apud Deum impetrat; nam hic non obstat defectus voluntatis actualis, siquidem oratio non minus per legatum ac proprio postulantis actu fieri possit (Lambrecht, *De ss. Missae sacrif.*, IV, i, 2 f.).

quently the sacrifice offered by her hands, accompanied with many petitions and supplications, is always favorably regarded and received by God, and rewarded by Him with bountiful graces and blessings. But since the holiness of the Church consists in the sanctity of her members, it is not always and invariably the same, but greater at one period than at another; therefore the sacrifice of the Church is also at one time more pleasing to God and beneficial to man than at another.²¹

The Church not only offers the sacrifice, but she moreover unites with its offering various prayers and ceremonies. The sacrificial rites are carried out in the name of the Church and therefore powerfully move God to impart His favors and extend His bounty to the living and the dead. By reason of the variety of the formulas of the Mass, the impetratory efficacy of the sacrifice can be increased in an accidental way, and the efficacy be directed in a special manner to different objects. The sacrificial fruit to be obtained by petition through the mediation of the Church, is neither as to kind nor degree previously determined and limited. Therefore the Church herself in her prayers is accustomed so to express her intentions and desires that it can be known what benefits she wishes to obtain by the Mass and to whom she wills to apply them. Hence special prayers are more useful and more beneficial than general ones.²² Not only the degree of the Church's holiness, but also the nature of the prayers of the Mass and even of its whole rite exerts an influence upon the measure and nature of the fruits of the sacrifice.

From what has been said there follow several interesting consequences. Among others, that, on the part of the Church, a High Mass solemnly celebrated has greater value and efficacy than merely a Low Mass;²³ and also with regard to the Church's impetratory

²¹ Purifica nos, misericors Deus: ut Ecclesiae tuae preces, quae tibi gratæ sunt, pia munera deferentes, fiant expiatis mentibus gratiores (*Secr. in fer. V post Dom. IV Quadrag.*).

²² Orationes eo magis et efficacius impetrant, quo sunt magis propriae et expressae (*Quarti, In Rubr. Missal.*, I, tit. 5, dub. 7).

²³ Quo solemnior est Missa, nempe cum pluribus assistentibus ministerialiter, cum pluribus cantantibus consuetas preces, cum pluribus luminibus, cum pretiosioribus vestibus sacris, eo magis est fructuosum sacrificium ex parte Ecclesiae offerentis. Ratio est quia haec omnia augent pompam et majestatem sacrificii atque adeo etiam sensibilem cultum Dei et consequenter augent aestimabilitatem sacrificii et plures actiones satisfactoriae interveniunt. *Effi-*

power, a Requiem Mass or a votive Mass for a special intention is more valuable and efficacious than a Mass harmonizing with the office of the day.

At a Solemn Mass the external display is richer and more brilliant than at a Low Mass; for at a solemn celebration the Church, in order to elevate the dignity of the sacrifice, manifests greater pomp, and God is more glorified thereby. Let us consider the assistants (deacon, subdeacon, acolytes), the precious vestments and sacred vessels, the greater number of lights, the incensing and the choral singing. This grander and more solemn celebration of the sacrifice is more acceptable to God and, therefore, better calculated to prevail upon Him to grant us, in His mercy, the favors we implore; that is, to impart greater efficacy to the petitions and supplications of the Church.²⁴

Votive Masses deviate from the office of the day and hence may be celebrated only for a reasonable motive and only on certain days. They are offered for special intentions and according to special formulas answering to the particular purposes. These liturgical formulas are, with respect to their contents (their Collects and lessons), so arranged that the desired object or intention for which the Mass is offered can be the more easily and more surely attained. From this it follows that the votive Mass in regard to the special

cacia autem sacrificii ex parte Ecclesiae offerentis crescit secundum mensuram aestimabilitatis, quam recipit ab ipsa Ecclesia (Pasqualigo, De sacrif. N.L., I, q. 131).

²⁴ Dicendum, Missam solemnem esse magis efficacem ad impetrandum pro eo, pro quo sacrificium offertur, quantum est ex parte oblationis Ecclesiae. In Missa solemnem interveniunt plura ex parte Ecclesiae offerentis, quae augment majestatem sacrificii et acceptabilitatem apud Deum et quae valde augment cultum et obsequium Deo exhibitum: ergo augment etiam efficaciam ipsius ad impetrandum, quia efficacia impetrandi consistit in eo, quod adsint motiva apta ad movendum Deum ad concedendum, quod petitur. Supponendum est, quod quando cum hac solemnitate offertur sacrificium ad instantiam alterius, non solum pro ipso offertur nudum sacrificium, sed tota illa solemnitas, quae stat in persona Ecclesiae, ordinatur simul cum sacrificio ad ipsius utilitatem. Quod ex eo constat; nam qui petit offerri pro se sacrificium cum tali solemnitate, nedum petit nudam oblationem, sed etiam illam solemnitatem, et ideo, qui se obligat, nedum se obligat ad sacrificium, sed etiam ad solemnitatem et ad exhibendum Deo hujusmodi cultum cum tota illa pompa in ejusdem beneficium. Deinde cum Ecclesia per suum ministrum applicet sacrificium ad favorem petentis, applicat etiam omnia connexa, cum quibus in persona ipsius offertur, et ideo stante applicatione sacrificii ex determinatione Ecclesiae, remanet etiam applicatus totus cultus, qui consurgit ex pompa et solemnitate sacrificii (*Ibid.*).

intention possesses a greater impetratory power on the part of the Church than the ordinary Mass of the day.

The same may be said of Requiem Masses.²⁵ Their whole rite aims so exclusively to implore for the suffering souls comfort, alleviation, and shortening of their pains, as to admit of no Collect whatever for the living. As a tender, interested mother, the Church makes every effort to free her suffering children from purgatory and to lead them to eternal rest.

The essential fruit of the Mass has its immediate and only source in the self-immolation of Christ, and is, therefore, independent of the contents of the formulas of the Mass rite of the Church. Hence there is here question only of the accidental, or subordinate, fruit arising from the liturgical prayers of the Mass, but added to the essential fruit and benefiting directly those for whom the Mass is celebrated. Now, if the priest has obligated himself to offer a votive Mass, he does not perfectly satisfy his obligation if he says the Mass of the day; nevertheless, since the essential fruit of the sacrifice is the same in all Masses, he is not obliged to make restitution.²⁶ We see from several decrees that the Church is far more reluctant in permitting the Mass of the day to be said instead of the prescribed votive Mass than instead of a Requiem Mass.²⁷ The rea-

²⁵ Quod Missa de Requiem magis prosit defunctis, quam quaelibet alia Missa, ex eo manifeste constat, quod habet specialem fructum ordinatum ad suffragandum ipsis, quem non habent ceterae Missae. Siquidem cum preces, quae in ipsis recitantur, et totus ritus sit institutus ab Ecclesia pro suffragio defunctorum, et nomine Ecclesiae preces illae Deo offerantur, intervenit ex parte Ecclesiae offerentis aliquis specialis fructus seu suffragium, quod non intervenit in aliis Missis. Et cum Ecclesia sit sancta et Deo accepta, non possunt non esse acceptae preces ipsius et suffragia exhibita pro defuncto. Et proinde Missae de Requiem ex parte Ecclesiae offerentis magis prosunt defunctis (*Ibid.*, q. 287). In officio Missae non solum est sacrificium, sed etiam sunt ibi orationes. . . . Ex parte ergo sacrificii oblata Missa aequaliter prodest defuncto, de quocunque dicatur; et hoc est praecipuum quod fit in Missa. Sed ex parte orationum magis prodest illa, in qua sunt orationes ad hoc determinatae. Sed tamen iste defectus recompensari potest per majorem devotionem vel ejus qui dicit Missam vel ejus qui jubet dici vel iterum per intercessionem Sancti, cujus suffragium in Missa imploratur (S. Thom., *Supplem.*, q. 71, a. 9 ad 5).

²⁶ Certum est, quod hujusmodi sacrificantes, dummodo Missam applicent ad finem praescriptum, ad restitutionem minime tenentur, quia fructus principalis et satisfactorius, cui respondet stipendium, aequalis est in Missis omnibus (Cavalieri, III, x, 19). This *non satisfacere* in such cases is of itself only a venial sin.

²⁷ On days that the rubrics do not prohibit it, the private votive Mass must

son for this may be that in Masses for the suffering souls the fruit of the sacrifice depends chiefly on its satisfactory effect, which is independent of the rite, while in votive Masses the impetratory fruit is more prominent and principally intended; in this respect the liturgical prayers of the Mass are specially efficacious, particularly when they are, as is the case in the formulas for votive Masses, chiefly composed with regard to specified intentions.

This efficacy and fruit of the sacrifice, like the essential sacrificial fruit, is likewise independent of the worthiness or unworthiness of the officiating priest, and it can in regard to him be called *ex opere operato*; but with respect to the Church it is *quasi ex opere operantis*. This impetratory fruit on the part of the Church is entirely wanting in a Mass celebrated by an interdicted priest, for such a one cannot offer and pray in the name of the Church.²⁸

3. Thirdly, the value and efficacy of the Mass are to be considered in so far as its celebration is a personal good work of the officiating priest and of the faithful assisting thereat. The priest who celebrates the Mass and the faithful who participate in it by hearing it, by serving at the altar, by giving a stipend, by procuring the requisite sacred vessels, and so forth, perform, without doubt, the holiest and most salutary of the acts of divine worship; for the Church herself says that there "can be no other work so holy and so divine performed by the faithful" as the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice. Considered from this point of view, the value of the Sacri-

be celebrated if a priest has so obliged himself, since the Church has declared the application of the daily Mass in this case insufficient; while, on the other hand, she declares that the priest fulfills his obligation to the celebration of a nonprivileged Mass for the departed even when he adheres to the rite of the day, although the celebration of a Requiem Mass is allowed on that day, except, however, if the Requiem Mass is expressly desired or required for gaining the indulgence of the privileged altar (S.R.C., Sept. 12, 1840). Hence on all days on which there is an impediment, the private Requiem Mass, but not the private votive Mass, may always be satisfactorily replaced by the Mass of the day; for, as is evident from some of the decisions of the S.R.C., a dispensation of the Apostolic See is necessarily required for the satisfaction on these days of the obligation of a votive Mass.

²⁸ Sacerdos in missa, in orationibus quidem loquitur in persona Ecclesiae, in cujus unitate consistit, sed in consecratione sacramenti loquitur in persona Christi, cujus vicem in hoc gerit per ordinis potestatem. Et ideo si sacerdos ab unitate Ecclesiae praecisus missam celebret, quia potestatem ordinis non amittit, consecrat verum corpus et sanguinem Christi, sed quia est ab Ecclesiae unitate separatus, orationes efficaciam non habent (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 82, a. 7 ad 3).

fice of the Mass is evidently only finite, its efficacy only limited, and its fruitfulness only a restricted one.

The celebration of the Mass by the priest and the participation of the faithful in this most sacred function have, if the required conditions are complied with, not only the power to obtain favors and blessings and to remit the temporal punishment of sin, but also to merit an increase of sanctifying grace and heavenly glory. Of this threefold fruit, the impetratory and satisfactory, but not the meritorious, may be given to others and benefit them. For the merit is wholly personal and cannot be transferred to others; whereas we may satisfy for others and obtain by prayer many graces for them. This fruit originates *ex opere operantis vel operantium*; to gain it in full one should be in the state of grace, act and pray with a good intention, with faith, and with reverence. It is evident that this fruit will be so much the more plentiful, the greater the piety and holiness, the love and devotion of the priest and of the faithful.²⁹ The essential sacrificial fruit (*ex opere operato*) and the Church's impetratory efficacy derived from the liturgy of the Mass cannot indeed be intrinsically either increased or diminished by the good or bad dispositions of the officiating priest, but virtue, holiness, and devotion are necessarily demanded of him that the Mass may, in every respect, be perfect, pleasing to God, and rich in blessings.³⁰

All that has been said respecting the dignity and value, the power and efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Mass, demonstrates that in the Mass there is the inexhaustible ocean of the divine mercies. Admission to this ocean of graces is easy and free to all. God's liberality wills to enrich us with blessed gifts and fill us with heaven's blessing. Oh, that our hearts were not full of earthly thoughts and worldly attachments! Would that we knew how to esteem and profit by this

²⁹ Quo quis melior, melius dispositus, sanctior est, quo ferventius et devotius in Missa pro se et aliis orat, eo plus gratiae et gloriae apud Deum sibi meretur, eoque, plus sibi et aliis impetrat et pro peccatis satisfacit (Sporer, *Theol. sacram.*, II, chap. 5, sect. 2, § 2).

³⁰ Missa a malo sacerdote celebrata aequè valet *ex opere operato*, ac illa quae a bono offertur; item aequè valet *vi orationum*, quatenus eas nomine Ecclesiae sacerdos offerens fundit; at nequaquam, quatenus orat ut privata persona. Etenim certum est, sacerdotis sanctitatem ex hoc capite in fructum impetratorium orationis non parum influere, adeoque sacerdotem bonum et sanctum multo plus prodesse Ecclesiae et fidelibus, pro quibus celebrat, quam improbum aut minus pium (Schoupe, *De Euchar.*, II, chap. 3, a. 2, n. 347). Cf. Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Second Epistle to Timothy*, II.

Eucharistic sacrifice for our sálvation: this "precious pearl," this "hidden treasure" in the field of the Church; how soon should we become enriched with every grace! If the blessed mystery of the altar were celebrated in only one place, or the sacred elements could be consecrated by only one priest, with what ardent longing would not all Christians desire to hasten to that spot and to that priest, in order to assist at the celebration! But now many men are ordained priests, and Christ is offered on many altars in many places, that God's grace and love for men may shine so much the brighter as the reception of Holy Communion is spread more widely throughout the globe. It is truly distressing and deplorable that, in consequence of our tepidity and sloth, we do not feel ourselves drawn toward God with more ardent desires, although in Him rest all the hope and all the merit of those destined to receive the inheritance of salvation. He is our Sanctifier and Redeemer, He is the source of comfort for the pilgrim in time and the enjoyment of the blessed in eternity. Therefore with pain and sorrow ought it to be deplored that many pay so little attention to so salutary a mystery which rejoices heaven and preserves the whole world. Oh, the inconceivable blindness and hardness of the human heart, not to value more highly so ineffable a gift and, although afforded daily opportunity of hearing Mass, to fall into total indifference in its regard! (Cf. Imitation of Christ, IV, chap. 1.)

CHAPTER VIII

THE FOUR ENDS OF THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE

THE MASS, A SACRIFICE OF PRAISE AND ADORATION

1. It was for Himself that God made all things (Prov. 16:4) and created all things (Isa. 43:7); therefore the end of all creatures is to glorify their Creator. All creation should form but one choir of joyful praise and exulting adoration of God. All that is in heaven and upon the earth and under the earth should bend the knee before the Lord of all things and praise Him according to the multitude of His greatness (Ps. 150:2). But how could this universal praise be possible? Without measure and without end is His majesty and praiseworthiness. "Great is the Lord, and exceedingly to be praised, and of His greatness there is no end" (Ps. 144:3). Numberless are the proofs of His power, of His wisdom, and of His love, exhibited in the kingdom of nature, of grace, and of glory.¹ Hence "glorify the Lord as much as ever you can, for He will yet far exceed, and His magnificence is wonderful. Blessing the Lord, exalt Him as much as you can, for He is above all praise" (Ecclus. 43:32 f).

The works of the Lord do indeed praise Him, and His saints magnify Him (Ps. 144:10): still, how could the worship of finite creatures be fully worthy of His infinite name? Tempestuous oceans and towering mountains, murmuring brooks and silent valleys, dark

¹ *Quamvis inter laudare, benedicere et glorificare Deum soleat assignari distinctio, nunc tamen laudationem Dei tam extense accipio, quod benedictionem et glorificationem ejus includit, ut Deum laudare sit bonitatem, virtutem et perfectionem ejus recta intentione proferre atque extollere: sicque laudandus et superlaudandus est Deus in se ipso et in suis operibus, in suis beneficiis ac promissis, in operibus naturae et gratiae ac gloriae, in operibus creationis, reparationis et glorificationis. Etenim justus Dominus in omnibus viis suis et sanctus in omnibus operibus suis, in quibus omnibus excellentia, bonitas, sapientia, omnipotentia et incomprehensibilitas Creatoris relucet (Dion. Carthus., *De orat.*, a. 31).*

forests and smiling plains, fields of waving corn and blooming meadows, singing birds and roaring lions, all join in the full accord, in the marvelous harmony which resounds from one end of creation to the other in honor of the Creator. If we ascend upward from the earth, the heavens show forth the glory of God (Ps. 18:2): the azure hue and the bright sunbeams of the firmament, the flying clouds and the majestic, rolling thunder, the morning flush and the sunset glow, the vivid lightning and the mysterious, quiet reflection of the nightly world of stars announce how great, how unutterably great, how exalted and worthy of all adoration is God our Lord.

And beyond the stars, there "the abode of the blessed resounds with canticles of praise to the triune God in unceasing jubilation." The saints of heaven trembling in joyful fear are prostrate in adoration before the throne of the eternal Father, offering to Him glory and honor throughout eternity (Apoc. 4:9-11). And the angels, those indescribably beautiful and exalted spirits, those morning stars and first fruits of creation, those princes of heaven, whose brightness outshines and dims all earthly splendor as the sun eclipses the stars, they, with their wings, cover their countenances before the majesty of God and, trembling with profound love and reverence, sing their never-ending hymn: "Holy, holy, holy!" And finally, the Virgin Mother of God, the glorious Queen of Angels and Saints, is decked with the plenitude of grace and the ornaments of every virtue, robed in the glory and splendor of heavenly gifts, crowned with dazzling light and radiance. From the pure heart of this Queen of Heaven there issued and shall eternally issue forth the ecstatic joyous chant of the *Magnificat* in homage to the power, holiness, and mercy of God; her whole being and life was and is nothing else than a humble and reverential adoration and glorification of God. Yet however great and however glorious in its power the eternal canticle of praise and adoration in which all creatures in heaven and upon earth unite, what is it in comparison with the majesty, glory, and greatness of Him who alone is great, who is infinitely great?

"Lord," prayed Blessed Henry Suso, "if the cherubim and seraphim and the immense number of exalted spirits all praise Thee to the best of their ability, what more can they do to enhance Thy unapproachable, immeasurable merit, than does the most insignificant creature? He that hopes worthily to praise Thee acts as he who

runs after the wind and would seize the shadow.”² But shall we by no means be able to render due honor and glory to the Most High? Oh! let us thank the Lord. In the Sacrifice of the Mass He has given us an infinitely perfect means of praising and glorifying Him commensurately with His dignity. Yes, a single Mass procures God more honor and praise than all the worship that all the citizens of heaven and of earth can offer Him throughout eternity.

2. The celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice, indeed, contains an infinitely perfect adoration of God. Sacrifice by its nature and destination is an act of adoration and glorification of God; it is an efficacious, solemn acknowledgment of the supremacy and dominion of God over all creatures. The more perfect the sacrifice, the greater the honor rendered to God. From this it follows that the Mass, being a sacrifice of infinite value, includes in itself infinitely worthy praise and adoration of the triune God. Upon the altar it is not merely a man who offers, it is not a mere creature who is offered, but it is the God-man who offers Himself to the heavenly Father as a holocaust of adoration and an incense-offering of praise. It is a divine Person, it is the Son of God, eternal and infinite, like unto the Father and the Holy Ghost; it is Jesus Christ, the first-born of all creatures and the head of the whole creation, who in the Mass, according to His humanity, sacrifices and is sacrificed. Could God's majesty and sovereignty be declared and be acknowledged more emphatically than is done upon the altar, where the Son of God, under the sacramental species, conceals, annihilates, and humbles to the very depths His most glorious, noble, and precious humanity; that is, sacrifices it to the honor of God?

The Mass is also the re-presentation of the sacrifice of the cross. All the honor and glory rendered to the heavenly Father upon Golgotha is re-presented and offered anew to Him upon the altar by the mystical sacrifice of His beloved Son, in whom He is eternally well pleased. To honor and glorify the Father, Christ descended to the most profound abyss of abasement, became like unto a leper, as the least of men, like unto the decayed root of a tree (Isa. chap. 53). His whole life was a life of incomparable adoration, praise, and glorification of God. An ardent zeal for the house of God, for the kingdom and the honor of His Father consumed Him. In the Mass, Jesus Christ ever presents to His heavenly Father all the prayers, labors,

² Denifle, *Das geistliche Leben*, p. 487.

and fatigues of His humble life, His painful passion and death, and offers them anew to the Father with the same inflamed heart, with the same reverential submission, as when He was upon earth, in order to honor and glorify Him. Therefore a more worthy adoration, a more profound worship, and a greater homage than that offered to God by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, is impossible and even inconceivable. The Mass is an infinitely worthy sacrifice of praise and adoration; consequently it is the most sublime glorification of the divine Majesty.

3. But not only does Christ render upon the altar infinite homage and adoration to the divine Majesty, but through and with His sacrifice the Church and we all are enabled perfectly to honor and adore the Most High in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). The Eucharistic sacrifice is the property of the Church; she offers it through the priest, in order to render due worship to God in the name of all. In our hands also Christ has placed Himself as a victim, that we may be able to offer a gift to God capable of rendering Him infinite honor. While offering the divine victim in the Mass, we render to God inexpressible homage and adoration, fully proportionate to His divinity and dominion. How exceedingly joyful and happy are not the souls that love God at the thought of being able, by the Sacrifice of the Mass, worthily to honor, praise, and adore the Lord of heaven and earth! For "to praise God is the sole occupation of the angels and saints in heaven, and of loving souls here upon earth; for them it is the most pleasing and most delightful occupation."³ The desire of praising God was beautifully expressed by Blessed Henry Suso:

Oh, woe is me! Who will grant to my overflowing heart, that before my death its desire of praising Thee may be fulfilled? Who will obtain for me that in my own days I may worthily praise this loving Lord, for whom my soul craveth! Ah, my beloved Lord, though I am unworthy to praise Thee, yet my soul desires that heaven may praise Thee with its ravishing beauty, with the splendor of its sun and the brightness of the countless stars in its lofty, transparent firmament. I desire that the beautiful meadows may praise Thee, when under summer skies they clothe themselves in floral beauty and with nature's grandest and fairest charms. Ah! and may all the sweet thoughts and ardent desires that ever a pure,

³ Ruysbroek, quoted by Denifle, *op. cit.*, p. 483.

loving heart experienced in Thy regard, O Lord, when absorbed in the joy and happiness of Thy enlightening Spirit, praise Thee.⁴

Our sweetest occupation and happiest employment should be to magnify God every day and to praise His name forever, yea, forever and ever (Ps. 144: 2). As the Psalmist exhorts us, we will adore the Lord, we will bring praise and honor to the Lord, to the praise of His name (Ps. 28), and this we will continue to do all the days of our life, in hours of sunshine and of gloom.⁵

*Sit laus plena, sit sonora,
Sit jucunda, sit decora
Mentis jubilatio.*⁶

Full of devotion be the praise of God, and sweetly sounding in His ears, joyous from mind's gladness, beautiful the heart's exultation. Alas! our praise of God is frequently very imperfect and worthless; therefore we should unite it with the infinitely perfect praise and adoration which our head and mediator, Jesus Christ, presents to His heavenly Father on the altar. By this union alone is our insignificant worship made holy and meritorious, so as to ascend as clouds of fragrant incense before the face of God. Then the reflection that God is so often forgotten and despised in the world, His holy name reviled and blasphemed, should deeply wound our hearts and inflame them with holy ardor, in order, as an atonement, to

⁴ Denifle, *op. cit.*, p. 485.

⁵ Laudabit usque ad mortem anima mea Dominum. Sicut orare convenit civibus militantis ac triumphantis Ecclesiae, magis tamen civibus Ecclesiae militantis, quoniam amplius indigent adiutoris Dei atque Sanctorum, et in medio ambulant laqueorum periculisque diversis vallantur et viatores existunt, ita laudare utriusque Ecclesiae civibus ac filiis convenit, potius tamen civibus Ecclesiae triumphantis, qui ad terminum pervenerunt beatum suntque confirmati in bono nec ulli subjacent unquam periculo nec indigent pro seipsis orare: ideo cum incessabili atque plenissima jucunditate laudes et gratiarum actiones suo offerunt Creatori. . . . Majus est Deum laudare quam orare, quia laudare est actus magis angelicus ac coelestis. Laudare quoque Deum est actus simplicior et minus ad commoda sua reflexus quam orare. Verumtamen imperfectis et pusillis magis convenit orationi quam laudationi insistere, quoniam egent purgatione multisque defectuositatibus involvuntur, propter quas ad laudandum Altissimum nondum satis aptati sunt; perfectis vero et contemplativis, quorum conversatio est in coelis, competit laudibus Dei jugiter immorari atque angelicam vitam inchoare ac quantum possibile est continuare in terris; nam et futurae illius beatitudinis suavi praegustu jam recreantur (Dion. Carthus., *De orat.*, a. 31).

⁶ *Lauda Sion.*

praise and magnify God with greater fervor, especially by celebrating and assisting at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. For in the Mass, from the rising to the setting of the sun, the name of the Lord is infinitely extolled, and there is given to Him the greatest honor and glory. Not only our heart and lips should praise the Lord, but our life, our whole conduct ought to be a continual praise, a perpetual adoration of God.⁷ At all times and in all places we should have God before our eyes, we should realize His blessed presence and, consequently, be penetrated with the spirit of profound reverence and adoration; then will our prayers be full of recollection and devotion, our works perfect and holy, our conversation circumspect and edifying, our thoughts noble and chaste, our desires pure and heavenly, our whole deportment modest and unassuming.⁸

THE MASS, A SACRIFICE OF THANKSGIVING

Inasmuch as in the Mass we adore, praise, and magnify God through and with Christ, we fulfill in a perfect manner that first duty which as creatures we owe to the Creator. Since God is the origin of all things, He is also the source of every good we possess, that is, He is our first and greatest benefactor, unto whom it behooves us to render due thanks. This duty of gratitude toward God we can discharge in no better way than by the celebration of Mass, which by preference is called the Eucharist, or the sacrifice of thanksgiving. We shall, therefore, clearly show that the Mass is the most perfect, an infinitely valuable, sacrifice of thanksgiving for all the graces and favors received from God.

1. Gratitude to benefactors is not only a great and sacred obligation, but also an exceedingly beautiful and precious virtue, which seeks to repay favors freely, lovingly, and graciously bestowed. Sin-

⁷ Ego, fratres, non tantum ad sonum attendite: cum laudatis Deum, toti laudate: cantet vox, cantet vita, content facta (S. August., *Enarrat. in Ps.*, 148:2).

⁸ Meditatio praesentis vitae nostrae in laude Dei esse debet, quia exsultatio sempiterna futurae nostrae vitae laus Dei erit, et nemo potest idoneus fieri futurae vitae, qui non se ad illam modo exercuerit. Modo ergo laudamus Deum: sed et rogamus Deum. Laus nostra laetitiam habet, oratio gemitum. Promissum est nobis aliquid, quod nondum habemus, et quia verax est qui promisit, in spe gaudemus: quia tamen nondum habemus, in desiderio gemimus. Bonum est nobis perseverare in desiderio, donec veniat quod promissum est, et transeat gemitus, succedat sola laudatio (*Ibid.*, 148:1).

cere thankfulness is the mark of a noble soul, rendering one amiable before God and man, whereas ingratitude is peculiar to a mean and proud spirit and renders one displeasing to everybody. A humble, childlike disposition sees "in every blossom eternal love bloom"; an arrogant, self-conceited disposition claims everything as its due in strict justice. The grateful man endeavors to make a return for favors received, first and chiefly by interiorly acknowledging, honoring, and esteeming the noble disposition and liberality of the benefactor;⁹ then he expresses his gratitude also by exteriorly manifesting in word and deed his grateful feelings, thanking his benefactor and performing good acts for him.

There are various circumstances that increase the value of a benefit and oblige the recipient to still further gratitude. A gift is to be particularly esteemed, when it is *a*) in itself noble and precious, *b*) useful to the receiver, and *c*) frequently and generously bestowed. With regard to the benefactor two things are to be observed: *a*) whether he is of exalted dignity, and *b*) whether he imparts his gifts with very great love. In regard to the recipient it is to be considered whether *a*) he is mean and abject, and *b*) utterly undeserving of the gift, having perhaps even rendered himself unworthy of it. All these qualities are combined in the highest degree as regards the graces and benefits which we have received from God and still daily receive from Him. Let us, therefore, ever seek more clearly and more fervently to acknowledge the preciousness of the divine gifts, the greatness and love of the divine benefactor, and our own wretchedness and unworthiness, so that by this knowledge we may be induced all the more to faithfully and humbly prove our gratitude toward God.

Even the natural benefits of God are precious, but far more so are the supernatural benefits, "for whatsoever may be desired cannot be compared" to them (Prov. 8:11). God bestows these gifts on us, not as though their bestowal would in any way redound to His advantage, for He is, indeed, infinitely rich and happy in Himself, but to make us happy in time and blessed in eternity. How abundant, lasting, and salutary to us are these excellent gifts of God! "He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all; how hath He not also with Him given us all things?" (Rom. 8:32.) The days of our life are like a wreath plaited wholly of graces and bene-

⁹ Cf. S. Thom., IIa IIae, q. 106, a. 3-5.

fits by divine love. As fishes in the waves of the ocean, so are we immersed in the divine favors; it would be easier to count the stars of heaven, the snow-flakes in winter, than to enumerate the blessings of ineffable sweetness wherewith God forestalls us (Ps. 20:4). As the sun never fails to cast his rays upon the earth, as the spring unceasingly bubbles forth from the depths of the earth, so likewise the torrent of divine goodness and liberality will never cease to flow.

The value of these benefits is greatly enhanced by the infinite dignity and majesty of the divine giver, as well as by His immeasurable goodness and mercy. The most pure, disinterested, and benevolent love of God is the source whence all these indescribable goods flow unto us. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love," says the Lord, "therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee" (Jer. 31:3). St. Paul says that God hath overwhelmed us with heavenly gifts because of "His exceeding charity" (Eph. 2:4).

What are we, poor, frail, miserable, and sinful men, that the Most High should be mindful of us, should turn His heart toward us, and visit us with His grace? (Ps. 8:5.) Indeed we have by our guilt frequently rendered ourselves unworthy of His benefits.

Whenever I calmly and seriously reflect upon all that God has done for me, I must exult in grateful love and exclaim: "What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me?" (Ps. 115:12.) Even if I consecrate myself entirely to Him with all that I am and all that I have, my goods, my life's blood, my body, my soul: how can this be a worthy return for His benefits? (Job 12:2.) How can an earthly gift, a finite thanksgiving, suffice to outweigh and adequately repay the infinitely valuable gifts of God? Lord, I am not worthy of the least of Thy mercies (Gen. 32:10), and I am unable to offer Thee due thanks for Thy boundless love and liberality.

2. What is impossible to man, God hath made possible; what our weakness cannot perform, we accomplish through Christ our Lord. "Give to the Most High according to what He hath given to thee" (Ecclus. 35:12), the Holy Ghost admonishes us; but how can we do this? By thanking God and the Father through Christ (Col 3:17) and giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:20). In the Mass, Christ offers Himself with the same infinitely perfect sentiments of gratitude with which His soul was inflamed upon earth during His life and passion, at the Last

Supper, and on Calvary. This gift of thanksgiving which He offers to His heavenly Father in return for all the benefits bestowed upon the human race, is the same as the divine oblation on the cross, namely, His most noble body and most precious blood. Consequently the Mass is an infinitely meritorious and acceptable sacrifice of thanksgiving, perfectly commensurate with all the benefits of God, with which heaven and earth are filled. Christ offers the Eucharistic sacrifice for us that He may in our stead thank God and supply for the deficiency of our thanksgiving.

With Christ and through Him, we also offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, for He has bequeathed it to us as our possession. Through Christ and His Eucharistic sacrifice we have become so enriched that we are enabled to present in return to the heavenly Father a gift inexpressibly glorious and sublime, as a worthy thanksgiving for every good and perfect gift which we receive from His hand (Jas. 1:17). Of ourselves we cannot, indeed, render suitable thanks for even the least benefit; but by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we are enabled fully to discharge our entire debt of gratitude, were it even infinite. At the altar we can adequately and worthily thank "the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort" (II Cor. 1:3), inasmuch as we can take the chalice of salvation and praise the divine name (Ps. 115:13).

In the liturgical prayers and hymns with which the Church accompanies the Holy Sacrifice, the most sincere gratitude and most exalted thanksgiving are expressed most excellently. The same sentiments should fill our hearts also during the celebration of the Mass. In His well-beloved Son the heavenly Father has given us all things; we should return all things to Him, by offering to Him in the sacrifice of thanksgiving His own divine Son, in whom He is well pleased. The prayer of thanksgiving is a rich source of new gifts. "I will remember the tender mercies of the Lord, the praise of the Lord for all the things that the Lord hath bestowed upon us, and for the multitude of His good things to the house of Israel [the Church], which He hath given them according to His kindness, and according to the multitude of His mercies" (Isa. 63:7).

3. Do we faithfully profit by the Holy Sacrifice, conscientiously fulfilling our duty of gratitude toward God, or are we like the slothful servant who buried in the earth the talent confided to him? Quite frequently the Mass is celebrated and heard to implore new

favors of God; but is this done with the intention of discharging a debt of gratitude for benefits received? How earnestly and assiduously should we cultivate the spirit of thanksgiving and prayerful gratitude to God, uniting ourselves to the Eucharistic sacrifice, in order to make atonement to God in some manner for the base and shameful ingratitude by which the world so often offends His goodness and irritates His justice! "What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard, that I have not done to it?" (Isa. 5:4) inquires the Lord with reason.

Ingratitude is the reward of the world, which does not like to give honor to God and will not. Not only through thoughtlessness and indifference, but even by abuse, contempt, and disdain of His most noble gifts and graces, the world wounds His paternal heart. To very many Christians may be applied with more reason what Moses complained bitterly of in the Israelites' conduct: "They have sinned against Him. . . . They are a wicked and perverse generation. Is this the return thou makest to the Lord, O foolish and senseless people? The beloved grew fat and kicked: he grew fat and thick and gross, he forsook God who made him and departed from God his Saviour" (Deut. 32:5, 6, 15). The world is, for the most part, a land of forgetfulness (Ps. 87:13), a barren desert, in which the venom of ingratitude thrives. We have in this thought a new and powerful incentive to fervently thank God; for "we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God: that we may know the things that are given us from God" (I Cor. 2:12).

Behold the example of the saints. How their hearts and lips overflowed with grateful sentiments! When the mortified St. Paul of the Cross, so severe to himself, walked through the woods and fields and meadows, all that he saw reminded him of God's goodness. Inflamed with love, he would cry out to the flowers and trees: "Be silent. Be silent. Preach no more." Once, perceiving a flower by the wayside, he plucked it and, full of joy, showed it to his companion, saying: "Do you not see how the flowers exclaim: Love God. Love God." And with a radiant countenance, as though he were in an ecstasy, he several times repeated the words: "And why do you not love God?" If the sight of a flower sufficed to inflame the soul of a saint with ecstatic love, should not our hearts burn (Luke 24:32) with grateful love as incense on glowing coals, or as a lighted taper consuming itself, when at the foot of the altar we devoutly

reflect what wonderful mysteries of divine favor, mercy, and condescension are accomplished in the celebration of the Mass? For the Eucharistic sacrifice is not only our best and perpetual thanksgiving to God, but at the same time it is the living source whence we can and should unceasingly draw the spirit of thanksgiving.¹⁰

THE MASS, A SACRIFICE OF PROPITIATION

The object of the Mass, as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, is to glorify God as our Supreme Master and greatest benefactor: it renders to Him infinite honor and offers Him infinite thanksgiving. Inasmuch as it is a sacrifice of propitiation and petition, its celebration produces the most manifold effects for the welfare and salvation of men. These effects of the Mass flowing to men are properly called the fruits of the Sacrifice of the Mass. A right understanding of the Catholic doctrine shows us that this efficacy of the Mass does not detract from the sacrifice of the cross, but rather brings out in clearer light the latter's inexhaustible virtue and fully infinite value. The Church by no means teaches that the sacrifice of Christ on the altar adds new satisfaction or new merits to the treasure of salvation acquired on the cross, but she teaches only that the price of our redemption paid by the sacrifice of the cross, being incapable of increase and inexhaustible in its fullness, is actually applied to individuals and benefits them by means of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Christ's treasure of grace remains always the same; only its application to individuals and realization in them are new, and will continue to be so as long as there shall be men capable of and in need of redemption. The fruits of the Sacrifice of the Mass are, therefore, in general all those and only those which were borne by the noble tree of the cross. What was acquired on the cross for the whole human race, is applied to individual men in the Mass, for it is a sacrifice of propitiation as well as of petition. The Church expressly teaches that the Mass "is truly propitiatory and has this effect, that if we, contrite and penitent, with sincere heart and upright faith, with fear and reverence, draw nigh to God, 'we obtain mercy and

¹⁰ *Suscipe, Domine, sacrificium placationis et laudis, quod nos . . . et perducatur ad veniam et in perpetua gratiarum constituat actione (Sacramt. Gregor.).*

find grace in seasonable aid' ” (Heb. 4:16). The Church condemns the heresy “that the Sacrifice of the Mass is one only of praise and thanksgiving, or that it is a mere commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross but not a propitiatory one; and ought not to be offered for the living and the dead, for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities.”¹¹ In the first place, we shall here show that the Mass is truly a sacrifice of propitiation, and then, what and how it effects as a propitiatory sacrifice.

1. The Church often emphasizes and clearly sets off, both by her teaching and practice, the propitiatory character of the Eucharistic sacrifice. As quoted above, the Council of Trent solemnly declares that the Mass is a true propitiatory sacrifice, and in the Roman Catechism also we read that the Mass is “truly a propitiatory sacrifice, whereby we are reconciled to God and regain His favor.”¹²

a) Since sin entered the world as a heavy yoke weighing upon the poor children of Eve, a longing for reconciliation and pardon has everywhere obtained the primary place in sacrificial worship. “Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy, and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my iniquity” (Ps. 50:3). This is the predominant cry that breaks forth from the bosom of sinful, yet contrite, man, who sorrowfully longs to be free from debt and punishment. This consciousness of sin, this desire for redemption, finds its strongest expression in the offering of sacrifice. Hence in the Old Law propitiatory sacrifices were the most frequent and prominent. Now, the Mass, being the accomplishment and consummation of all the sacrifices prior to Christ, satisfies all the objects of sacrifice, and consequently must also have the character and effect of an atoning sacrifice, that is, it must be propitiatory. In this respect the truth and reality of the New Law cannot be inferior to the figure of the Old Law.

b) Among the effects of the death of Jesus, as Scripture often indicates, are: the effacing of sin, the redemption from the curse of sin, the destruction of the handwriting that is against us, the reconciliation of heaven and earth. Now, if the Mass as a celebration of our redemption, as a renewal of the death of Christ, as a repre-

¹¹ Trid., Sess. XXII, cap. 2 and can. 3.

¹² II, chap. 4, q. 63. Eucharistia in quantum est sacrificium, Deum placat: hostiae enim placant, et quoniam Deus iratus est, non affectione, sed poenae inflictione: ideo Deum placando non sedat ipsius affectionem, sed remitti facit poenae acerbiteratem (S. Bonav., IV, dist. 45, dub. 3).

sentation and continuation of the sacrifice of the cross,¹³ is intended to obtain for individual men the various effects of the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross, it must then possess a power to efface sin and apply to them the satisfaction rendered on the cross. In other words, the Mass must be a sacrifice of propitiation. Moreover, our Lord Himself expressly declared at the institution of the Eucharistic sacrifice, that His body under the appearance of bread would be broken and delivered, His blood be shed in the chalice for "the forgiveness of sin."

c) The ancient liturgies¹⁴ and the writings of the Fathers most clearly testify to the constant and universal belief of the Church in the propitiatory character of the Sacrifice of the Mass. In the liturgy of St. James, the priest prays in this manner: "O Lord, may our sacrifice be pleasing to Thee and be sanctified by the Holy Ghost for the atonement of our sins and of the ignorance of the people, and for the repose of those who have fallen asleep. . . . Lord, have mercy on us; for in fear and trembling we draw nigh to Thy holy altar, to offer this tremendous and unbloody sacrifice for our sins and for the ignorance of the people." In the Liturgy of St. Basil we read: "According to the abundance of Thy mercy, receive us who approach to Thy altar, that we may be worthy to offer Thee

¹³ Per haec divina mysteria ad novi, quaesumus, testamenti mediatorem Jesum accedamus: et super altaria tua, Domine virtutum, aspersionem sanguinis melius loquentem, quam Abel, innovemus (*Secreta in festo pret. Sanguinis D.N.J. Chr.*). Benedictio tua, Domine, larga descendat, quae munera nostra . . . nobis sacramentum redemptionis efficiat (*Sacrament. Gregor.*).

¹⁴ The following excerpts from the Gregorian Sacramentary indicate the propitiatory character of the Mass:

Hostia, quam offerimus, vincula nostrae pravitatis absolvat.

Haec hostia emundet nostra delicta.

Hujus sacrificii munus oblatum fragilitatem nostram ab omni malo purget semper.

Hostias tibi, Domine, placationis offerimus, ut delicta nostra miseratus absolvas.

Per haec sancta commercia vincula peccatorum nostrorum absolve.

Suscipe, Domine, sacrificium, cujus te voluisti dignanter immolatione placari.

Supplices, Domine, te rogamus, ut his sacrificiis peccata nostra mudentur.

Munera nos, quaesumus, Domine, oblata purificent et te nobis jugiter faciant esse placatum.

Mystica nobis, Domine, prosit oblatio, quae nos et a reatibus nostris expediat et perpetua salvatione confirmet.

Iisdem, quibus famulamur, mysteriis mundemur.

Haec sancta, quae gerimus, et praeteritis nos delictis exuant et futuris.

gifts and sacrifices for our sins and for those of the people." St. Augustine declares that "it must not be doubted that the departed receive help by the prayers of the Church and the life-giving sacrifice." "For," he says further on, "thus it has been handed down to us by the Fathers, thus the entire Church observes it for those who have died in the communion of the body and blood of Christ, when during the sacrifice their memento occurs at the prescribed place, prayers are recited and attention is directed to the fact that for them also the Mass is offered."¹⁵ St. Monica at her death had no other desire, no other request to make to her family than that "everywhere, wherever they might be, they would remember her at the altar." The holy doctor then relates that, after her death, prayers and the sacrifice of our redemption (*sacrificium pretii nostri*) were offered for her.¹⁶ St. Cyril of Jerusalem calls the Mass "a sacrifice of reconciliation" and then continues: "For the departed, though even they be sinners [that is, in venial sin], we offer supplications to God, yes, not only supplications, but Christ also, who was slain for our sins; thereby for them as well as for ourselves to propitiate the divine goodness."¹⁷

2. The propitiatory power and efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Mass extends, as the Church says, to "sins, punishments, satisfactions." By divine institution the Eucharistic sacrifice serves to bring about for man forgiveness of mortal and venial sins, and also the remission of the temporal punishment due to sin.

a) The Sacrifice of the Mass cannot directly and immediately cancel mortal sins, but it can indirectly contribute to their effacement.¹⁸ Man can be washed and cleansed from the stain of mortal sin only by the infusion, that is, by the first imparting or by the

¹⁵ *Orationibus sanctae Ecclesiae et sacrificio salutari et eleemosynis, quae pro eorum spiritibus erogantur, non est dubitandum mortuos adjuvari, ut cum eis misericordius agatur a Domino, quam eorum peccata meruerunt. Hoc enim a Patribus traditum, universa observat Ecclesia, ut pro eis qui in corporis et sanguinis Christi communionem defuncti sunt, cum ad ipsum sacrificium loco sua commemorantur, oretur ac pro illis quoque id offerri commemoretur (Serm., CLXXII, n. 2).*

¹⁶ *Confess.*, IX, chaps. 11 f.

¹⁷ *Catech. Mystag.*, V, n. 8-10.

¹⁸ *Sacrificium Missae vere est propitiatorium, causans aliquo modo ac conferens ad remissionem peccatorum mortalium, justificationem peccatoris ac primam gratiam obtinendam ex opere operato: at non immediate est remissivum peccatorum mortalium (sicut sacramenta Baptismi et Poenitentiae) juxta communissimam Theologorum (Sporer, Theol. sacram., II, chap. 4, sect. 2, § 2).*

restoration, of sanctifying grace. This grace of justification and, consequently, of forgiveness of mortal sin, can by God's will be directly obtained only by the reception of baptism or of the sacrament of penance, or by making an act of perfect contrition. The sacraments were instituted for the justification and sanctification of man; moreover they serve directly to establish and to increase the supernatural life of the soul. Sacrifice, on the contrary, aims principally to promote the worship of God. The Mass, indeed, is also a means of salvation for man; but as such it is not destined directly to impart or bring about the grace of sanctification; consequently the Sacrifice of the Mass cannot, without the medium of another means, efface or remove mortal sins.

The propitiatory power and efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Mass is not accurately explained by the mere saying that it procures actual graces, by means of which the sinner is led to sincere conversion and true penance. Such a statement almost totally annuls the distinction that exists between the character of propitiation and the impetratory efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Mass, a distinction which must be strictly adhered to; for as a sacrifice of propitiation and as a sacrifice of petition the Mass has different effects, as well as different modes of operation. In so far as the Mass is a sacrifice of propitiation, it calms and appeases the righteous anger of God, disarms His justice, and induces the Lord to regard sinful man with favor and mercy. The effect of the atoning power of the Mass, therefore, is to induce God no longer to be angry and to punish; that is, it favorably disposes Him to remit wholly or in part the punishment due to guilty man.¹⁹ This reconciliation and this remission of punishment on the part of God are effected in virtue of Christ's vicarious service or payment (*per modum solutionis*) offered to God for this purpose; for the ransom purchased by Christ with His blood upon Golgotha for the atonement and satisfaction of sin is always presented anew in the Mass to the heavenly Father, and this for particular persons, that the Father may avert from them

¹⁹ Eucharistia instituta est, ut Ecclesia perpetuum sacrificium haberet, quo peccata nostra expiantur, et coelestis Pater, sceleribus nostris saepe graviter offensus, ab ira ad misericordiam, a justae animadversionis severitate ad clementiam traduceretur (*Catech. Roman.*, II, chap. 4, q. 55, n. 1). Est hoc proprie sacrificii effectus, ut per ipsum *placetur* Deus, sicut etiam homo offensam in se commissam remittit propter aliquod obsequium acceptum quod ei exhibetur (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 49, a. 4).

their well-merited punishment and impart to them again His mercy more bountifully. While the Mass, as a sacrifice of propitiation, restrains or disarms God's avenging justice against the sinner, it has, as a sacrifice of petition, the power, through the divine goodness and liberality, to dispense manifold graces and benefits (*per modum impetrationis*).

Accordingly the Mass as a sacrifice of atonement helps to cancel all mortal sins, whereas, as a sacrifice of petition, it is an extremely powerful means to effect the grace of true repentance and sincere conversion. Propitiation and petition act in unison in the Mass; they support and perfect each other in order to draw down upon man graces which enlighten him and incite him to turn to God by faith, hope, love, and sorrow, and to receive worthily the sacraments, whereby he is interiorly sanctified and made once more a child of God. This is expressed by the words: "For appeased by the sacrifice, the Lord grants the grace and gift of penitence and pardons even the gravest crimes and sins."²⁰ Above all, God's justice must be propitiated, and only after it has been satisfied does His mercy impart to sinful man particular graces that dispose him to sorrow and sincere conversion. By the commission of sins, especially if they be numerous and grievous, is God's majesty offended and His avenging justice provoked against the sinner. But among the punishments which the just and holy God inflicts on account of the commission of sin, one of the most severe consists in this, that He refuses or deservedly withholds special and more abundant graces. For what St. Bernard says of ingratitude, that "it is like unto a scorching wind which dries up the fountain of compassion, the dew of mercy,"²¹ applies to all offenses, especially to mortal sins; and these, being a neglect and abuse of grace, are acts of ingratitude toward God, and therefore check the more abundant flow of graces which God would otherwise grant to prayer. The refusal of this abundance of grace, so necessary for frail man tainted with sin to enable him to work out his salvation, is certainly a very fatal punishment. For without many and great graces, man will, alas! remain in sin, will commit sin upon sin, and, dying in sin, will thus fall into eternal perdition. In this

²⁰ Trid., Sess. XXII, cap. 2.

²¹ Ingratitudo inimica est animae, exinanitio meritorum, virtutum dispersio, beneficiorum perditio. Ingratitudo ventus urens, siccans sibi fontem pietatis, rorem misericordiae, fluenta gratiae (S. Bernard., *In Cantica serm.*, LI, n. 6).

respect the Sacrifice of the Mass exercises its propitiatory power, inasmuch as it reconciles the divine justice and averts from sinful man the severe punishment of the withdrawal of the abundant helps of grace.

But if by means of the propitiatory power of the Mass, the demands of divine justice are satisfied and the obstacle removed that prevented the free and full flow of graces from the fountains of the Saviour, then, as a sacrifice of petition, the Mass can obtain from the divine mercy and liberality powerful aids of grace to enable sinful man to bring forth worthy fruits of penance, to be converted and restored to the life of grace. The reconciliation, by virtue of the satisfaction of Christ, of the irritated and avenging justice of God must therefore precede, that is, previously remove the obstacles and prepare the way, so that the divine goodness, through Christ's merits and mediation, may be moved to impart those graces which lead man again to the path of salvation and virtue. Accordingly, the Mass contributes indirectly as a propitiatory sacrifice, and directly as a sacrifice of petition, to the effectual acquirement of the implored grace of conversion.²²

This atonement is produced *ex opere operato* by the offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass, but only in a limited measure, dependent chiefly on the will of God, but likewise on the disposition of the sinner. How far God's justice is placated by a single Mass, and to what extent the punishment of the withdrawal of abundant graces is removed, we know not; for all this depends upon the free ordinance of God, as well as upon the number and gravity of the sins to be atoned for. Hence it follows that it is not alone useful, but often necessary, to offer Mass repeatedly for the same intentions and for the same persons, in order that full satisfaction may be made to God, and that the obstacle to the plentiful outpouring of the divine goodness and liberality may be entirely removed. When the divine justice has been appeased by the Mass, God is again disposed to impart abundant grace, which in punishment of sin He had previously withdrawn. In other words, there is no further obstacle to the Mass's impetratory power of drawing down abundant graces of conver-

²² This teaching finds support in the authority of the liturgical prayers; see, for example, the *Secreta* for the thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost: *Propitiare, Domine, populo tuo, propitiare muneribus: ut hac oblatione placatus et indulgentiam nobis tribuas et postulata concedas.*

sion into the soul that is in the state of mortal sin. These graces are not always immediately granted, but in God's own time and at His pleasure. However, the sinner must on his part dispose himself to receive them and must freely cooperate with the graces bestowed. Should he neglect to do this, they remain without effect, and no real repentance and forgiveness of sin follow. Consequently, however capable and efficacious the Sacrifice of the Mass may be to move God to dispense greater and often extraordinary graces,²³ yet the actual conversion and restoration of the person to the state of grace may, through the fault of the individual, result in complete failure. Hence the Church teaches that by the Sacrifice of the Mass we obtain mercy and grace in due time, "if we, contrite and penitent, with sincere heart and upright faith, with fear and reverence, draw nigh to God."²⁴

b) By the Sacrifice of the Mass, the fruits of the death of Christ are also "applied to the remission of those sins which we daily commit,"²⁵ among which are chiefly to be understood venial sins. Only a few theologians have affirmed that the offering of the sacrifice suffices of itself to directly efface smaller sins and transgressions; the common and correct opinion maintains that venial sins are also, like mortal sins, effaced only indirectly by the salutary efficacy of the sacrifice;²⁶ for sentiments of sorrow and penance are required to effect the remission of venial sins. Also smaller faults, infidelities, and negligences displease God, excite His disfavor, and prevent a more abundant bestowal of His grace. This obstacle must first be removed by the atoning efficacy of the Mass, that God may allow Himself to be moved to awaken in us by special graces that devout, contrite, and penitential sentiment which, with or without the re-

²³ Oblationibus nostris, quaesumus Domine, placare susceptis: et ad te nostras etiam rebelles compelle propitius voluntates (*Secreta in Sabb. post Dom. IV Quadrag.*).

²⁴ Trid., Sess. XXII, cap. 2.

²⁵ Trid., Sess. XXII, cap. 1.

²⁶ Dubitatur, an virtute hujus sacrificii possit immediate haberi remissio peccatorum venialium. Communis sententia negat, quam sequitur Suarez et Vasquez cum aliis recentioribus, quam ego etiam veram existimo (Lugo, disp. XIX, sect. 9, n. 152). This view must be adhered to if we admit the more probable opinion that in the present order of salvation no venial sin is pardoned to the just without a simultaneous increase of sanctifying grace; for the Mass cannot directly effect the infusion of sanctifying grace. (Cf. Suarez, disp. LXXIX, sect. 4 f.)

ception of the sacrament of penance, is required, and which suffices to efface venial sins. But we should here especially bear in mind that even venial sins, if frequently and deliberately committed, besides the other evil effects following them, prevent the reception of many favors and graces which God's bounty has in reserve for the just, who thereby become weaker and run great risk, during some violent temptation, of plunging into the abyss of mortal sin. Therefore frail man, for this very reason also, has great need of a perpetual propitiatory sacrifice, that God may not in just punishment for his venial sins refuse to him the abundant graces he so much needs in order to be preserved from the greatest of all evils, mortal sin. To assist at Mass or to have it celebrated for our intention, is assuredly one of the most available means for obtaining in plenteous measure the pardon of venial sins and imperfections.

c) As a sacrifice of propitiation, the Mass has especially the power of satisfying for those temporal punishments which, after the pardon of mortal or venial sins, would otherwise have to be undergone either in this world or in purgatory.²⁷ The Eucharistic sacrifice is offered for the living as well as for the dead for the remission of the temporal punishment still due to sin. But while it effects the pardon of sin only indirectly, the sacrifice directly cancels the temporal punishment due to sin, and so cancels it by the vicarious payment (*per modum solutionis*) out of the merits and satisfactions that Christ acquired for us on the cross.²⁸ By His infinitely bitter passion and death, our Saviour on Calvary canceled the penal debts of all men; the ransom there paid He Himself now presents upon the altar to His heavenly Father for the living and the dead, that they may be released from their justly merited punishment. For upon Golgotha Christ bore our sorrows, and the chastisement of our peace was placed upon Him (Isa. chap. 53); there He was overwhelmed with shame and bitterness, bruised with pain and torture, that we guilty men might not be visited and humbled under the chastising rod of divine justice. This remission of punishment is imparted to us;

²⁷ *Sacrificium Missae ex sua institutione habet valorem et vim satisfactivam ad remittendam ex opere operato aliquam poenam temporalem debitam pro peccatis mortalibus et venialibus jam remissis fidelium vivorum et defunctorum. Ita omnes orthodoxi (Sporer, Theol. sacram., II, chap. 4, sect. 2, § 2).*

²⁸ *Immediate remittit sacrificium poenam peccatis debitam, nimirum per modum solutionis jam pro nobis factae in cruce et nobis per sacrificium applicatae, in subjecto tamen capaci, nimirum constituto in gratia (Ibid.).*

Christ's passion is placed to our account and applied to us; it benefits us.

But the Mass is offered, not merely for the remission of punishment, but also as a satisfaction. Temporal punishment still due to sin can be liquidated in a twofold manner: (*a*) by real, personal satisfaction (*satisfactio*): by the performance of good deeds, by works of penance, by the voluntary and patient endurance of suffering, all outweighing or equivalent to the punishment due, thus meriting its remission; (*b*) by undergoing the punishment itself imposed by God (*satispassio*). The possibility of meriting and of satisfyng in a strict sense ceases with death; hence the souls in purgatory can only suffer, can only endure their punishment until the requirements of divine justice are satisfied and the last farthing has been paid. On the contrary, the living who are in the state of grace, can by prayer, fasting, alms, and other penitential works satisfy the divine justice, that is, merit the remission of those punishments which otherwise they would be obliged to undergo in purgatory. The Church appears to allude to this distinction when she says that the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered "for punishments and satisfactions": the propitiatory virtue of the Mass supplies for the punishment otherwise to be undergone by the departed (*poena-satispassio*); but for the living the propitiatory power of the sacrifice supplies principally for the satisfaction to be rendered (*satisfactio*). For both it removes the last impediment to their entrance into heavenly glory.

Those for whom the Mass is celebrated always and infallibly receive the satisfactory fruit of the remission of punishment if they are capable of receiving it, and this applies not only to the living, but also to the dead.²⁹ For the rest, it is not known in what degree and measure this punishment is each time canceled, but it is certain that the punishment due is not always entirely and completely removed by one Mass; for this complete remission the repeated offering of the Mass is frequently required. To participate in this effect of the sacrifice, the state of grace and probably also the baptismal character of the recipient are necessarily presupposed. So long as one is in the state of mortal sin and an enemy to God, no punishment

²⁹ *Sacrificium Missae remittit poenam peccatis debitam ex opere operato, lege infallibili, adeo, ut fructus hic satisfactorius de lege ordinaria sit infallibilis idque non tantum respectu vivorum capacium, in quo omnes Doctores consentiunt, sed etiam respectu defunctorum secundum communem Theologorum sententiam (Ibid.).*

whatever, not even the least temporal punishment, can be remitted. According to the common opinion of theologians, the baptismal character is not only an essential preliminary condition for the valid reception of the other sacraments, but also for obtaining the remission of temporal punishment by means of the Eucharistic sacrifice (*ex opere operato*). If this opinion is correct, then all the unbaptized, living or dead, are excluded from participation in this satisfactory fruit of the Mass.³⁰ How much of the temporal punishment is remitted, rests wholly in the divine will. According to the well-grounded opinion of many theologians,³¹ so much the more of their punishment is remitted to the living as they are the better disposed; that is, as the more fervently they render themselves worthy of divine clemency by acts of penance, contrition, humility, submission to God, and other virtues.³² The souls in purgatory are at all times disposed for obtaining this fruit; God's wisdom, justice, and mercy, however, determine to what extent the Mass shall, each time it is offered, diminish or abridge their sufferings.

As a propitiatory sacrifice, the Mass has, therefore, the power to cancel temporal punishment, and, in consequence of the ordinance of Christ, has this for its object directly and infallibly, that is, in the strictest sense *ex opere operato*. But it can also as a sacrifice of petition bring about the remission of this punishment. This is done, moreover, when by way of petition it obtains assistance and strength for performing penitential works, by which we can satisfy the divine Majesty and merit the remission of punishment. According to a tenable and pious opinion, the Mass can also by way of petition directly obtain from the divine goodness and mercy a gracious remission of punishment.³³ At least the intention and practice of the Church seem to be in favor of this opinion, namely, that in this way we may by prayer and sacrifice implore and obtain the remission

³⁰ Quod fructus satisfactionis ex opere operato non communicetur ejusmodi personis (i.e. non baptizatis vel catechumenis), concors est theologorum sententia (Lugo, disp. XIX, sect. 10, n. 166).

³¹ Cf. *ibid.*, n. 200 f.; Pasqualigo, *De sacrif. N.L.*, I, q. 76.

³² Quamvis haec oblatio ex sui quantitate sufficiat ad satisfaciendum pro omni poena, tamen fit satisfactoria illis pro quibus offertur vel etiam offerentibus secundum quantitatem suae devotionis et non pro tota poena (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 79, a. 5).

³³ Hoc dubium tractat late Suarez; allegatis utrinque rationibus dicit posse pie sustineri partem affirmantem, quam ego etiam veram existimo (Lugo, disp. XIX, sect. 9, n. 158).

of merited punishment. Were this opinion denied, it would be difficult to explain satisfactorily many prayers in the breviary and in Masses for the dead.³⁴ Thus the Church implores that the suffering souls “may obtain by pious supplications the pardon which they have always desired.” And she has recourse to the clemency of God, that they who have departed from this transitory life may, “by the intercession of the ever blessed Virgin and all His saints, arrive at the enjoyment of eternal beatitude.”³⁵

d) Finally it is to be attributed to the continual celebration and propitiatory virtue of the Holy Sacrifice that so many well-merited punishments of God are delayed or even averted from entire countries and peoples, even from the whole world. The multiplicity of sin and of enormous crimes frequently provokes the divine justice to mete out without delay extraordinary punishments on men and to send fearful visitations on a godless and immoral world. But when the Lord is appeased, He withdraws His threatening or chastising hand. “The men of Nineve believed in God and they proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least. And God saw their works . . . and God had mercy with regard to the evil which He had said that He would do to them, and He did it not” (Jonas 3:5, 10). When Solomon had built the Temple, the Lord said to him: “I have heard thy prayer, and I have chosen this place to Myself for a house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven and there fall no rain, or if I give orders and command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, and My people, upon whom My name is called, being converted, shall make supplication to Me and seek out My face and do penance for their most wicked

³⁴ Quaestio haec est generalis ad omnes orationes, utrum scilicet praeter satisfactionem ex se respondentem orationi, ut est bonum opus, aliquid etiam respondeat de remissione poenae, eo quod a Deo petatur remissio: de ea egi in materia de suffragiis et in affirmantem opinionem consensi illamque probavi, quia Ecclesia videtur id omnino supponere ut certum; ea enim ratione in Sacro pro defunctis habet speciales orationes petentes pro illis eam remissionem. Si autem oratio qua oratio non extingueret immediate poenam, sed quatenus est opus poenale et bonum, non essent illae orationes utiles ad effectum, quem Ecclesia intendit (Arriaga, *De Euchar.*, disp. LI, sect. 3).

³⁵ Oratio duobus modis juvat defunctorum animas: uno modo, ut est opus quoddam poenale et laboriosum . . . , alio modo ut est *impetratoria*, quod est ipsi orationi proprium, quomodo etiam Beatorum orationes prosunt nobis et animabus Purgatorii, licet satisfactoriae non sint (Bellarm., *De Purgat.*, II, chap. 16).

ways; then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land" (II Par. 7:12-14).

The severity of the divine Judge and Avenger has often been displayed in a terrible and frightful manner in the Old Law. If now the highly favored Christian peoples are, for the most part, spared such fearful visitations, is it perhaps because they do not commit such grievous crimes? Assuredly not! For behold how the world is inundated with works of darkness and of the flesh! With frightful fertility the poisonous weeds of sin sprout out and grow luxuriantly throughout the earth. Ever longer and darker does the night of unbelief and of error cast its dismal shadow. Incalculable is the number of the enemies of the cross of Christ, who by wallowing in the mire of sensuality and lust, trample under foot the precious blood of their redemption. The anti-Christian host assail always more and more audaciously the rock of Peter, and in many ways the abomination of desolation dwells in the holy place. Is not the earth fairly crushed under the burden of crime? Is not the measure of sin filled up? Is not the world, fallen away and estranged from God, ripe for judgment? Why does not the Almighty arm all creatures against those whose wickedness and arrogance has reached its climax, in order to destroy them in His wrath? (Wisd. 5:18; Ps. 93:23.) How can the infinitely holy eye of God behold such godlessness, brook such immorality, without sending fire and sulphur from heaven, or opening the fountains of the abyss to destroy from the face of the earth man whom He created? (Gen. 6:5-7.) Why does the Most High deal so leniently and so tenderly with a world steeped in sensuality, avarice, and pride? Why are the riches of God's goodness and longanimity not exhausted, and why does He grant to the sinner so long a respite of grace for penance and amendment of life? For this favor the world is principally indebted to the propitiatory sacrifice which is offered daily and hourly upon thousands of altars for our salvation and for that of the whole world. The voice of the blood of Jesus offered in sacrifice loudly and powerfully cries to heaven without intermission, not for vengeance, as did the blood of Abel, but for pardon, grace, and mercy in behalf of sinful man. By Christ's blood in the Mass the anger of God is daily placated, the vengeance of the divine Judge disarmed, that He no more curses the earth on account of man's crimes.

3. The atoning virtue and fruit of the Sacrifice of the Mass is essentially necessary for us, since in many things we all offend (James 3:2); consequently we must at all times pray for the pardon of our offenses (Matt. 6:12). Before we venture, by means of the Mass as a sacrifice of petition, to present our desires and concerns before the throne of God, we should strive, by means of the Mass as a sacrifice of propitiation, to appease God's just anger for our sins and to disperse the dark threatening clouds of His countenance, so that He might turn to us again His looks of clemency and let the sun of His love again shine upon us. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and His ears are inclined unto their prayers; but His angry look is upon them that do evil. The just cry, and the Lord hears them and delivers them out of all their troubles (Ps. 33:16-18). If we bear this fact in mind, we shall understand why the Church, in the celebration of Mass and especially in the secret collects, so frequently implores the Lord for reconciliation.³⁶ In the course of this holy action she does not weary of repeating this cry for reconciliation, and she places it before her petitions for God's grace. Thus the Church prays because she well knows and wishes to impress upon her children that we poor men laden with sins must, before all things, be reconciled to God and, by turning away the scourges of His anger, be made worthy to participate in His manifold blessings.

How necessary for us is a perpetual sacrifice of propitiation! Upon Golgotha the fountain of atonement was opened; on the altar it continues to flow. From there we can and should draw its waters, that God may be gracious and merciful to us, that He may remit our debt and punishment. Is there a greater evil than sin and its fearful punishments? From this evil we can free ourselves by means of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, "for God's grace in Jesus's blood repairs every injury." Precious is the fruit of the Eucharistic propitiatory sacrifice. Let us remember that God's holiness and justice are equally as infinite and unfathomable as His goodness and mercy; let us reflect how wicked and deserving of punishment is

³⁶ The following excerpts from the missal are given by way of illustration: *Oblatis placare muneribus; placare humilitatis nostrae precibus et hostiis; concede propitius; sacrificiis praesentibus placatus intende; Ecclesiae dona propitius intuere; hostias placationis offerimus; propitius averte; esto propitius plebi tuae; tua propitius dona sanctifica; a cunctis nos reatibus et periculis propitiatus absolve; respice propitius ad munera; haec hostia salutaris fiat tuae propitiatio majestatis; custodi Ecclesiam tuam propitiatione perpetua.*

every sin, even the least; let us represent to ourselves how long and severe are the pains of purgatory; let us be thoroughly penetrated with the greatness of our misery and weakness, which causes us to fall so easily into venial sin, thereby burdening ourselves with new debts; let us consider the mystery of the passion and the propitiatory death which Christ endured out of love for us: then our flesh shall be penetrated with a salutary fear of God's inviolable majesty, and we shall tremble at the severity of His judgments; then we shall be cautious and always upon our guard to avoid even slight faults; then, filled with the spirit and fervor of penance, we shall seek ever more and more to purify and sanctify ourselves; then we shall spend carefully and gratefully the blessed time of the Holy Sacrifice, that we may ever wash again our garment white in the blood of the Lamb. How immeasurably great is the goodness and kindness of God in making it so easy for us here below to be delivered from sin and its punishment, so that after death we may speedily be with Christ!

Let us daily seek at the altar the efficacious grace of an earnest and sincere spirit of penance. Let us faithfully make use of the great sacrifice of propitiation, that we may obtain clear light to comprehend how hideous and ruinous sin is, and that we may possess a more resolute will to entirely break off sinning and to wholly rid ourselves of sin. As often as the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, is offered in our presence "for the remission of sin," we should in all humility acknowledge ourselves guilty and deserving of punishment; then we ought ardently to implore that God may, out of regard to this propitiatory sacrifice, fill us more and more with a tranquil, tender, and permanent sorrow for sin, with a holy and wholesome fear of sin, with great delicacy of conscience, with an ineffable uprightness and purity of heart. By means of works of penance we should again enkindle the ardor of our first fervor in the divine service. For does not this severe admonition of the Lord apply to each one of us: "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first charity. Be mindful, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and do penance and do the first works" (Apoc. 2:4 f.). For this reason let us in the Mass daily mingle our tears of sorrow, join our penance and mortifications, with the blood of Jesus in the chalice, in order to make them worthy of God's acceptance and to impart to them full value in the sight of God.

THE MASS, A SACRIFICE OF PETITION

That the Mass is also a most powerful and efficacious sacrifice of impetration, is incontestably clear from the doctrine and practice of the Church. She has declared that the Mass may not only be offered for the remission of sins and their punishment, "but moreover for all other necessities," that is, for obtaining whatever we require in the order of grace and salvation. A rapid glance at the various liturgies suffices to convince us that the Mass has always and everywhere been regarded as the most efficacious means to obtain assistance in all the necessities and concerns of life. It now but remains for us to explain how the Mass acts and what it effects as a sacrifice of petition.

1. As a sacrifice of petition the Mass produces its effects by way of prayer (*per modum orationis vel impetrationis*);³⁷ the offering of Mass is essentially prayer or actual petition, and therefore proper to incline the heart of the heavenly Father to impart to us the riches of His graces and blessings. On the altar Jesus Christ as high priest offers Himself and intercedes in our behalf by presenting and offering to the eternal Father His painful death and all its merits, to induce Him to impart His gifts to us. From this aspect the impetratory fruit of the Eucharistic sacrifice originates *ex opere operato*; for it has its foundation in the celebration of the sacrifice, in the acts and merits of Jesus Christ, and not in the devotion of the priest celebrating nor of the faithful for whom it is offered.

Do the impetratory effects follow infallibly or not? This question is answered in various ways, but the difference lies more in the expression than in the matter itself. The propitiatory efficacy of the Mass is indeed more certain than the impetratory; but the latter also can be called infallible when all the requisite conditions exist. In case one or the other of the conditions is wanting, we do not obtain the favors desired. Above all, it is requisite that the object of our petition be conformable to the will of God, that is, it should harmonize with the divine economy and the supernatural order of salvation.³⁸ Frequently this is not the case, inasmuch as the faithful

³⁷ Sicut oratio ex se et ex proprio officio impetratoria est, sic etiam sacrificium, quod est quaedam oratio, ut sic dicam, realis, non verbalis, proprie impetratorium est (Bellarm., *De Missa*, II, chap. 4).

³⁸ Non habemus de ejusmodi impetratione promissionem absolutam Dei, sed tantum conditionatam, si nobis, quod recte petimus, secundum divinae provi-

endeavor to obtain special fruits from the Mass; "for we know not what we should pray for as we ought" (Rom. 8:26).³⁹ But those graces which our Saviour wills to bestow and apply to us, we always infallibly obtain, provided we place no obstacle in the way; for He wills to procure only such favors for us as God is disposed to grant us.⁴⁰ What Christ asks in our behalf He always obtains: His will can never be unfulfilled. If He lives always in the glory of the Father to intercede for us, how much more will He, in His character and office of "merciful and faithful high priest of God," employ in our behalf His all-powerful aid at that time and hour when He is mystically immolated as a victim upon the altar! Then will He, as "in the days of His flesh," send forth prayer and supplication to God, because of His reverence and dignity He shall be heard (Heb. 5:7). The Father always hears Him (John 11:42); for in the Mass Christ always offers anew to Him the price of His divine-human life: His blood, His wounds, His love, His obedience, His humility—the whole immeasurable treasure of His merits, which He accumulated from the crib to the cross. Should not the heavenly Father, on beholding the face of His Christ (Ps. 83:10), for His sake grant us favors and bless us with every heavenly blessing? The Lord does not pray for graces as we do; He has full claim to them since He has merited them. For these graces are so much the more the outpouring of the purest goodness and mercy of the Lord, the higher and the more painful the price wherewith He purchased them for us, who are so undeserving of favor.

In order to obtain a superabundance of grace from God through the Eucharistic sacrifice, the Church, the priest, and the faithful offer the Mass, joining their petitions to it. Undoubtedly the result of the petitions which are borne and supported by virtue of the Eucharistic sacrifice, is more certain than that of a simple prayer.⁴¹ For at

dentiae ordinationem, dari expediat (Sporer, *Theol. sacram.*, II, chap. 4, sect. 1, § 2, n. 238).

³⁹ Hence the Church prays God: Ut petentibus desiderata concedas, fac eos quae tibi sunt placita, postulare (*Orat. Dom. IX post Pent.*).

⁴⁰ Christus non offert semper in ordine ad illos effectus, quos nos desideramus obtinere, sed solum in ordine ad illos, quos Deus decrevit concedere (Pasqualigo, *De sacrif. N.L.*, I, q. 133, n. 20).

⁴¹ Orationes muneribus conjunctae multo pluris valent ad impetrandum quam solitariae et sine oblatione. Cum ergo per sacrificium offeratur Deo munus acceptissimum et hostia gratissima, consequenter orationes sacrificio innixae multo pluris valent ad impetrandum. Confirmatur, quia hoc sacri-

the altar it is not we alone who cry from the depths of our misery and poverty to the throne of God, but it is Christ, our head and mediator, who prays and offers with us and for us. We do not merely implore, but at the same time we offer to the eternal Father the most precious of gifts, the body and blood of His well-beloved Son, to move Him to impart to us, according to the extent of His mercies, all manner of blessings. Notwithstanding all this, the grace implored is sometimes denied. But even in this case we may be confident that the Mass has not been altogether without fruit and effect; in place of the gift desired, we receive another which is better and more profitable for us. Even though we are not heard according to our desire, yet this refusal on God's part will conduce to our salvation. "The Lord either gives us that which we ask, or He bestows something else which He knows will be more advantageous to us." ⁴² For the sacrificial fruit which, according to our narrow-minded views, we expect, is not always granted, but another more suitable is given to us; thus God does not always give the graces of the Mass at the time we desire them, but at another and better moment, when it pleases Him. ⁴³ "Some gifts are not refused us, but granted later at a more proper time." ⁴⁴ If, therefore, we place no obstacle in the way but prepare ourselves worthily, we at all times obtain some salutary fruit by reason of the impetratory power of the Sacrifice of the Mass.

2. In general it may be said that the Mass as a sacrifice of petition has precisely the same effects as prayer: ⁴⁵ both prayer and sacrifice can obtain all gifts for us and avert from us every evil. The object

ficiam vim habet placandi Deum: ergo remoto obice divinae indignationis certum est, orationes reddi majoris efficaciae. Requiritur tamen ad hunc impetrationis effectum oratio seu petitio expressa vel tacita ipsius offerentis seu celebrantis, quia non dicimus impetrare nisi quod petimus (Quarti, *De sacrif. Miss.*, q. 2, punct. 6).

⁴² S. Bernard., *In Quadrag. serm.*, V.

⁴³ Quamvis non semper obtineatur id, quod petitur, semper tamen obtinetur aliquid vel idem alio tempore opportuno vel aliud quid et prout Deo melius visum fuerit. Ut notant P.P. et D.D. communiter (Sporer, *Theol. sacram.*, II, chap. 4, sect. 2, § 2).

⁴⁴ S. August., *In Joann.*, CII.

⁴⁵ Hoc sacrificium per modum impetrationis potest habere eosdem effectus, qui habentur per orationem. Quidquid enim Sacerdos potest pro se vel aliis impetrare per orationem extra sacrificium Missae, potest facilius multo impetrare per orationem conjunctam cum sacrificio Missae (Becanus, *Summ. theol. schol.*, III, Tr. II, chap. 25, q. 13).

of a prayer of petition may also be the fruit of the petition of the Eucharistic sacrifice, provided it directly or indirectly promotes God's honor and is beneficial to our salvation. Yet chiefly through the channel of the Mass there flow to us supernatural or spiritual gifts appertaining to the order of grace; natural and temporal gifts, whether something spiritual for the soul or something material for the body, can be petitioned for and obtained only in so far as they are relative to eternal salvation and subordinate to our final end.⁴⁶

The Sacrifice of the Mass draws down upon the soul the light and the dew of heaven, so that all the fruits of the Holy Ghost, "charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity" (Gal. 5:22 f.), therein attain their most beautiful bloom. The Mass obtains for us grace, strength, and courage to perform good works, to overcome the flesh and its concupiscence, to despise the world with its allurements and threats, to resist the attacks of Satan, to endure, not only patiently but with joy and thanksgiving to God, the hardships and troubles, the sufferings and evils of this life, to fight the good fight, to finish our course, and to persevere in the way of salvation to the end, and thus to bear off the crown of life and of eternal glory.⁴⁷

But not only treasures of grace, not only supernatural and im-

⁴⁶ Cf. the *Orationes diversae* in the missal; for example: Da nobis, quaesumus Domine, piae supplicationis effectum, et famem propitiatus averte: ut mortalium corda cognoscant, et te indignante talia flagella prodire, et te miserante cessare. And: Deus in quo vivimus, movemur et sumus: pluviam nobis tribue congruentem; ut praesentibus subsidiis sufficienter adjuti sempiterna fiducialius appetamus.

⁴⁷ Alter hujus sacrificii pretiosissimus effectus est, gratiae omniumque virtutum infusarum in iis, pro quibus offertur, augmentum, non quod homine nihil operante, dum Sacrum pro ipso fiat, gratia eidem augeatur (hic enim sacramentorum digne perceptorum proprius effectus est), sed quod per illud Deus magna auxilia communicet et sanctas potentesque det inspirationes animabus, pro quibus id offertur, per quas inspirationes et auxilia excitantur et animantur ad resistendum tentationibus, ad exercendas virtutes et ad facienda poenitentiae, misericordiae humilitatisque opera, et ad vitae hujus calamitates ac miseras, hominum persecutiones, morbos et dolores, quos Deus immittit, majore cum resignatione, patientia ac conformitate cum divina voluntate tolerandos. Et sic homo mirabiles in gratia, virtutibus infusus et donis Spiritus Sancti progressus facit atque etiam pretiosissimum perseverantiae donum acquirit, qui alius divinissimus est effectus, quem hoc dignissimum sacrificium operatur in iis, qui diligenter ac devote favoribus per id communicari solitis utuntur (Arias, *Thesaur. inexhaust.*, I, Tr. IV, chap. 8).

perishable riches, but temporal benefits and blessings also flow to us from the Mass. But as we know not which may the more surely lead to the possession of heaven, fortune or misfortune, joy or sorrow, health or sickness, a long, or a short life, we ought to address such petitions to God only conditionally, submitting our will to His paternal wisdom and goodness. "Commit thy way to the Lord and trust in Him, and He will do it" (Ps. 36:5). You desire by means of the Mass to obtain restoration to health, but instead our Lord gives you the gift of patience and detachment from what is earthly; is not this a more precious gift? In the missal we find different prayers, prayers for assistance, for safety in dangers, for deliverance from suffering and tribulation; in these prayers the Church reveals at the same time the spirit in which she prays, subordinating the temporal and earthly to the eternal and heavenly.⁴⁸

These impetratory fruits of the Mass are the more bountifully imparted to us, the more our hearts are open to them and the more worthy we are disposed to receive them; ⁴⁹ therefore we should prepare our hearts to receive them by a purification of our interior being by penance, by withdrawing our affections from earthly things, and by inflaming our desires for heavenly goods.

3. The dangers and conflicts of our earthly pilgrimage are manifold. Man's needs are many, his poverty is great. Yet all who are weary and heavily laden find at the altar refreshment, security, and assistance in all the necessities of soul and body. The Mass is an ocean of all grace; why, then, should anyone go from it in want? It is an inexhaustible fountain of blessings, from whose fullness we may, as much as we can and according to our need, draw grace upon

⁴⁸ Deus, qui in omni re bonum nostrum vult, virtute hujus sacrificii liberat eos, pro quibus offertur, a multis malis poenae, quae ipsorum animabus obsesent, et saepe iisdem temporalia bona tuendae vitae statuique christiano necessaria concedit, quando scit ea ipsis ad bene vivendum Deoque cum majore quiete ac stabilitate serviendum profutura. Atque in hoc sensu Ecclesia in communibus suis orationibus, in quibus a Deo per hujus sacrificii virtutem pro ipsis fidelibus petit spiritualium donorum ac divinarum gratiarum abundantiam, postulat etiam, ut eos liberet a temporalibus periculis et damnis et a persecutionibus et adversitatibus utque illis det salutem et fructus terrae. Et in earum multis se declarat, in quo sensu haec temporalia petat, dicens: Da, Domine, famulis tuis salutem mentis et corporis, ut te tota virtute diligant et quae tibi placita sunt, tota dilectione perficiant (*Ibid.*).

⁴⁹ Dicendum est, impetrationem sacrificii esse magis vel minus efficacem juxta majorem vel minorem dispositionem illius, cui impetratur (Pasqualigo, *De sacrif. N.L.*, I, q. 87, n. 5).

grace. By means of this sacrifice we have become rich in all things, so that no grace is wanting to us (I Cor. 1:4-7). Therefore in all thankfulness and with holy joy we ought to make use of the inexhaustible riches of divine mercy presented to us on the altar and placed at our disposal. But not merely earthly and perishable goods, not merely "the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth, abundance of corn and wine" (Gen. 27:28) should we endeavor to acquire, but above all, we should strive to satisfy the thirst and the desire for supernatural and eternal goods, to enrich ourselves with treasures which "neither the rust nor the moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. 6:20). Let us pray for that which truly conduces to our salvation and happiness, for that which may advance the kingdom of God within and around us. "It is," as St. Gregory says, "the Lord's will, that we love Him above all that which He has created, and that we implore Him to grant us eternal goods preferable to earthly goods."⁵⁰

Never should we "separate our prayers from Jesus Christ, who prays for us and in us, and to whom we pray: He prays for us as our high priest; He prays in us as our head; we pray to Him as our God."⁵¹ This is done in a perfect manner during the celebration of Mass. Let us, therefore, unite our petitions and supplications with the sacrifice and the mediation of Jesus Christ. For, supported by His immolation and merits, our prayers will be more availing and efficacious, they will be more speedily and perfectly answered. But our prayer must be properly made; it must be made with faith and confidence, with humility and perseverance, that it may pierce the clouds and, in union with the Eucharistic sacrifice, ascend to the throne of the Most High. St. Alphonsus Liguori thus expresses this sublime thought:

Reflect how God more readily hears the prayers of the priest during Mass than at any other time. He does indeed at all times impart His graces, as often as they are asked of Him through the merits of Jesus Christ, but during Mass He dispenses them in more abundant measure; for our prayers are then accompanied and supported by the prayers of Jesus Christ, and they acquire through His intercession an incomparably greater efficacy, because Jesus is the high priest who offers Himself in the Mass to obtain grace for us. The time of the celebration of Mass is

⁵⁰ *Moral.*, XV, chap. 20.

⁵¹ S. August., *Enarrat. in Ps.*, 85:1.

the hour in which our Lord sits upon that throne of grace to which, according to the counsel of the Apostle, we should draw near to find mercy and help in all our necessities. The angels also look forward to the time of Holy Mass, in order that the intercession they then make for us may be more availing and acceptable before God; and what we do not obtain during Mass, we can scarcely expect to be granted us at another time.

4. Thus the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the most profound and significant expression of all our petitions and intercessions in spiritual and temporal concerns. We offer it when weighed down by adversity of all kinds, imploring therein consolation and assistance from Him who for our sake underwent so much sorrow and pain. We offer it when the Lord in His just anger, provoked by our sins, visits us with His chastisements, strikes our fields with drought, destroys our crops by rain and flood; then we implore His paternal goodness that He would in due season give to our lands needed sunshine and rain. When the angel of death moves amongst us in times of contagion, we offer the Mass, imploring the Lord of life and death that He would stay the horrors of death. In behalf of the faithful who in the presence of God and of the Church are united in the sacred bond of matrimony, we offer the Holy Sacrifice, imploring for them the grace of fidelity and love and all the blessings of a Christian union until death shall part them. We offer it when our young Levites are chosen for the service of the altar of the Lord by the imposition of hands; and when those selected from among the priests are consecrated to the office of chief shepherd, we implore for them the assistance of the great shepherd of souls (I Pet. 2:25), that in word and deed they may be good shepherds and worthy dispensers of the mysteries of God, and may be able to stand in judgment on the day of reckoning. We offer it for our brethren whom our Lord has called from this world, imploring the Judge of the living and the dead to be merciful to their souls and grant them eternal rest. We offer it for all the faithful, that God may impart to them grace and blessing and admit them to the eternal kingdom of heaven.

CHAPTER IX

THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE FRUITS OF THE MASS

THE principal purpose of the Eucharistic sacrifice is to render to God due worship of adoration and thanksgiving, of propitiation and petition;¹ at the same time it is also offered for men and it benefits them. Among the effects flowing from the Mass, those graces, those spiritual advantages and blessings, those temporal gifts and favors which God bestows by reason of the sacrifice offered, are in a more restricted sense called sacrificial fruits.² As a rule, the application of the fruit is meant when it is said that the Mass is offered for some particular person. It is evident that herein the propitiatory and supplicatory character of the Mass is to be chiefly considered, since, as a sacrifice of petition and propitiation, it procures for man the fullness of blessings. Considered therefore in this twofold character, the Sacrifice of the Mass is in a strict sense offered for the

¹ Sacrificium Missae principaliter et universaliter semper offerendum est ad finem colendi Deum: non quidem semper ad solum finem latreuticum, sistendo solum in intentione colendi Deum in recognitionem supremi ejus domini, in actu signato, absit; sed simul etiam ad finem eucharisticum, impetratorium et satisfactorium. Quemcunque enim ex his finem expresse intendas, eo ipso etiam implicite, imo in ipso actu exercito etiam intendis et exerces cultum divinum soli Deo debitum. An non etiam, si sacrificio tuo Deo gratias agis pro beneficiis acceptis, supplicas pro nobis accipiendis, deprecaris remissionem peccatorum: in actu exercito et ipso facto Deo divinum cultum exhibes, ejus supremum in te dominium, potestatem, eminentiam tuamque humillimam submissionem, dependentiam, indigentiam contestaris? Quis enim peccata remittit nisi solus Deus? Quis beneficia et bona salutaria ad ultimum finem aeternae beatitudinis conferre potest efficienter nisi solus Deus? Laudandus esses et laudabilis valde, mi sacerdos, si praedictos fines omnes semper explicite et expresse intenderes et bene applicares tanquam fidelis dispensator (Sporer, *Theol. sacram.*, II, chap. 5, sect. 3, § 1).

² Fructus sacrificii sunt ipsa bona, quae sacrificium oblatum vel potius ratione et intuitu sacrificii oblato motus ipse Deus confert offerenti et iis pro quibus offertur (*Ibid.*, chap. 4, sect. 2, § 1).

needy.³ To offer Mass for someone may be understood also to mean, to offer it in the name and in the place of another, but rarely so. In this sense the Mass may likewise, in so far as it is a sacrifice of adoration and thanksgiving, be offered for (in the place of) others without any sacrificial fruits being specially applied to them or falling to their share. The adoration and thanksgiving offered to God by Christ in the Mass is, indeed, beneficial to men also, but only in as far as the adoration and thanksgiving of the Eucharistic sacrifice supplies for the defects that invariably accompany their imperfect adoration and thanksgiving. On the contrary, as a sacrifice of propitiation and petition, the Mass tends in quite a different manner to the benefit and advantage of persons for whom it is offered; for by its propitiatory and impetratory efficacy it procures for them benefits and graces of all kinds. We have in view these blessings accruing to man when we treat of participation in the fruits of the sacrifice.

We have previously mentioned the different sources whence the fruits of the Mass flow and descend upon man. Here we shall chiefly treat of the participation in the essential sacrificial fruit (*ex opere operato*), which has its source directly from Christ as the chief priest. This principal fruit of the sacrifice is shared in by different participants and is gained by them in different ways. Among the complicated questions which have been discussed on this subject, the following one occupies the first place. On what does the participation in the designated sacrificial fruit depend, and who then participates therein? Some⁴ hold that all have a share in this sacrificial fruit who in any manner cooperate in the offering of the Mass, whether or not the Mass is offered for them; others,⁵ on the contrary, are of the opinion, and justly so, that the Sacrifice of the Mass (*ex opere operato*) benefits persons only in so far as it is offered for them.⁶ In reality both conditions usually concur, that is, it is always at least in a general way offered for those who themselves

³ *Sacrificium sub hac duplici ratione—quatenus propitiatorium et impetratorium est—fructum aliquem seu effectum habere potest praeter ipsum cultum, et ideo sub his rationibus proprie offertur pro aliquo (Suarez, disp. LXXVIII, sect. 1, n. 1).*

⁴ Suarez, disp. LXXIX, sect. 8.

⁵ Pasqualigo, *op. cit.*, I, q. 57; Stentrup, *Soteriologia*, thes. 101.

⁶ *Eucharistia effectum sacramenti habet in eo qui sumit, effectum autem sacrificii in eo qui offert vel in his pro quibus offertur (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 79, a. 5).*

offer it or who offer it along with them; thus far both requisite conditions may conduce to secure the sacrificial fruit. In this fruit there share the entire Church, the faithful who actually take part in the Mass, the celebrating priest, and they to whom the priest specially applies the fruit of the Mass.

1. The sacrificial fruit which falls to the share of the whole Church is called the general fruit (*fructus generalis vel generalissimus*). It has a twofold source: first, the offering of Christ, inasmuch as He offers Himself for the Church; and then the offering of the Church, inasmuch as she also offers the Mass herself through the priest for her own welfare. Both sources flow into each other and pour out a stream of blessings throughout the Church and to all her children.

a) Every Holy Sacrifice of the Mass has its efficacy and advantage for the whole Church, for all who are incorporated in the mystical body of Christ and still need to be assisted by grace, whether they be numbered among the living or the dead. And in a less degree and at least indirectly, this general fruit is diffused even among those outside the pale of the Church, who, though out of it, are called and required to enter or return into its bosom. The chalice of the precious blood daily rises heavenward from the altar, that all men may come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved (I Tim. 2:1-4). Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of the world (John 3:17), for He shed His blood and underwent the torments of the cross, to obtain for all men without exception the forgiveness of sin, grace, and eternal happiness. Without intermission and in all places there gushes forth this universal wellspring of grace and of salvation of the sacrifice of the cross in the Mass, whose blessings benefit the entire world. To this Holy Sacrifice, as a very sun of grace, these words of the Psalmist are applicable: "His going out is from the end of heaven, and his circuit even to the end thereof; and there is no one that can hide himself from his heat" (Ps. 18:7). To thousands of hearts that are unaware of it, there radiate from the altar rays of supernal light to enlighten and to lead back the stray sheep to Christ, the great shepherd and bishop of souls (I Pet. 2:25), into His sheepfold, to the maternal home of the one true Church, in which the treasures of all the ways of grace and its gifts are unfolded to them and placed at their disposal.

Far more abundantly and more richly, certainly, is the blessing of the Mass poured out over the Church militant on earth and the

Church suffering in purgatory; for the Mass is, by the will and institution of Christ, the property of the Church. It is for the welfare and benefit of the Church that the daily sacrifice was instituted, and for this end it is principally offered. The general fruit accruing from the Mass is applied, in the first place, for the common welfare of the Church; that is, it is bestowed on the Church in its entirety, inasmuch as the Church is a divine work and institution, the kingdom and spouse of Christ. With His heart's blood Christ purchased the Church; upon the altar He continually renews, in an unbloody manner, the bloody sacrifice of Golgotha for His Church, so as always "to present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing," but holy and immaculate (Eph. 5: 27). By virtue of the blood of the Lamb (Apoc. 12: 11) that daily flows in the chalice, the Church gains the victory over her enemies and invariably comes forth triumphant from her combat with the gates of hell and the anti-Christian powers of the world. In the sacrifice of the altar, Christ comes forward as mediator and advocate with God in behalf of the Church, to sustain and exalt her in all her necessities and tribulations, to humble her enemies and put them to confusion. From this we may conclude that those members of the mystical body of Christ have a particularly large share in this universal sacrificial fruit who chiefly contribute to the common welfare of the Church: the pastors and teachers of the Church (pope, bishops, and priests). It behooves them principally to promote the glory and holiness of the Church. They stand in great need of supernatural light, of strength and endurance, courageously to persevere in the distressing combats which they are continually obliged to wage in behalf of the flock of Christ which is confided to them, for the unity and freedom, for the treasures of faith and grace of the Catholic Church. The guardians and protectors of the spouse of Christ, therefore, in the first place experience the salutary influence and the beneficent effects of the Eucharistic sacrifice bestowed on them in order that they may ever prove themselves servants of God by "much patience in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, . . . in watchings, in fastings, . . . in the word of truth, in the power of God, by the armor of justice" (II Cor. 6: 4-7).

In what this fruit of the sacrifice actually consists, and whether it extends to each individual member of the Church, cannot be posi-

tively determined. Some theologians⁷ are of opinion that the general sacrificial fruit includes, not only those blessings obtained by way of petition, but also a satisfactory effect, namely, the remission of temporal punishment due to sin, a remission, moreover, more or less abundantly imparted to all the members of the Church who are disposed to receive it.

b) Christ, the invisible priest, therefore, continually offers Himself for the entire Church by the hands and through the ministry of the visible priest. At the same time the latter stands at the altar in the name of and by the commission of the Church. The Church offers and prays by the lips of the priest who, in every Mass, is her delegate and mediator with God for all her children upon earth and in purgatory. As she, the holy and well-beloved spouse of Christ, is ever acceptable to God, her petitions, especially when united to the Mass, are always answered; hence, in consideration of the sacrifice and prayer of the Church, the Most High day after day pours out the richest blessings upon her needy children. In the liturgical prayers of the Mass, mention is usually made of those gifts and graces which the Church desires to obtain, by means of the Mass, for herself in general or for individual members in particular. Thus, for example, she implores the Almighty during the celebration of Mass for the grace "that, after overcoming all attacks and errors, she may serve God with perfect liberty" and "be able to enjoy undisturbed devotion."

c) Christ and the Church offer the Mass continually for the body of the faithful. Therefore the general fruit of the sacrifice benefits the Catholic people simply because the priest exercises his ministry at the altar as prescribed; for this a special and express application on his part is not required. Excommunicated persons, who are excluded from the Church, do not share in the general sacrificial fruit; those of the faithful who are in the state of mortal sin, participate proportionately in a much less degree than do persons in the state of grace, who are more intimately incorporated in the mystical body of Christ. The better the faithful dispose themselves by virtue and piety, the more closely they unite themselves to the Mass, and the more perfectly they cooperate in its offering, the more abundant will

⁷ Valentia, *Comment. theol.*, IV, disp. VI, q. 11, punct. 1; Gotti, *Theol. schol. dogm.*, Tr. VIII, *de Euch.*, q. 2, dub. 1, § 3; Tanner, *Theol. schol.*, IV, disp. V, q. 9, dub. 4, n. 98; cf. in particular Stentrup, *op. cit.*, thes. 112.

be their share in the general sacrificial fruit of the Church. For this reason it is a pious custom and a very salutary practice of many Christians each morning in spirit to commend themselves to and to include themselves in all the Masses that may be celebrated at all hours of the day throughout the world; for they thereby draw upon themselves in greater abundance the blessing and fruit of the Holy Sacrifice.⁸

How great in this respect also is the happiness of being of the household of Christ and one of the fellow citizens of the saints (Eph. 2:19), that is, a believing, faithful, and obedient child of the Catholic Church, sharing in the grace of Christ! Whoever remains a spiritually living member of God's great family, spread all over the earth, can draw his full share of the stream of blessings and mercies that is daily poured out over the Church from Masses innumerable. Again, how consoling to the heart is the thought: Even were I to die on the most isolated spot of the earth, forgotten by everybody, the Church, my spiritual mother, forgets me not; for upon thousands of altars she prays and offers for my poor soul Christ's precious, reconciling blood, letting it trickle down into the flames of purgatory in order to relieve or abridge my painful banishment in that abode of suffering.

2. All the members of the Church do not gain in the same manner and measure this general sacrificial fruit. Those of the faithful who personally cooperate in the celebration of Mass, who share in the offering of the sacrifice, and who thus, in a certain sense, appear

⁸ Die quadam, cum (sancta Mechtildis) prae debilitate longius ire non valens, Missam in ambitu audiret, ingemuit, conquerendo se Deo esse remotam. Cui Dominus statim respondit: "Ubicunque tu es, ego sum." Tunc illa requisivit, si aliquid obsesset quod homines de longe Missam audirent. Cui Dominus: "Bonum est ut homo praesens sit; quod dum nullo modo potest, sic tamen prope sit, ut verba valeat audire, quia secundum quod Apostolus dicit: Sermo Dei vivus est et efficax et penetrabilis (Heb. 4:12). Verbum enim Dei animam vivificat, infundens ei spirituale gaudium, sicut etiam apparet in hominibus laicis et idiotis, qui licet non intelligant quae leguntur, sentiunt tamen gaudium Spiritus, et inde ad poenitentiam animantur. Verbum etiam Dei efficacem reddit animam ad virtutes et quaeque bona, et penetrat eam, omnia ejus interiora illustrando. Sed cum infirmitate vel obedientia vel alia rationabili de causa praepeditur, ubicunque tunc homo est, ibi eidem praesens et cum illo sum . . . dico tibi: qui Missam devote et studiose audierit, in extremis ejus tot nobiles Sanctorum meorum personas in ejus consolationem et defensionem, ad animam ejus cum honore deducendam, sibi transmittam, quot Missas in terris audivit" (S. Mechtild., *Lib. special. grat.*, III, chap. 19).

as joint celebrants (*coofferentes*), obtain without doubt a greater share of heavenly blessings, and this not only *ex opere operantis*, but even *ex opere operato*.⁹ These graces, imparted to the faithful who cooperate in the sacrifice, are termed the special fruit (*fructus specialis*). Among the various ways of participating by personal cooperation in the offering of the sacrifice, chiefly to be mentioned is the assisting at Mass. Whoever assists at Mass with reverence and devotion, enters into the closest and most intimate connection with the sacrifice, because, as the priest prays and offers the Mass, such a one join his prayers with those of the priest, and the Church, moreover, also prays and offers for all there present. The faithful who worthily assist at Mass gain thereby a special sacrificial fruit, more or less abundant according to the measure of their cooperation, their worthiness and devotion. Justly, therefore, is the devout attendance at Mass regarded as one of the most efficacious means to draw on ourselves and others the fullness of spiritual and temporal blessings.¹⁰ The Mass is a spiritual mine of gold, where we may dig and

⁹ Suarez holds (disp. LXXIX, sect. 8, n. 5), as a "devout and reliable opinion," that an impetratory and satisfactory fruit is bestowed *ex opere operato* from the sacrifice on all the faithful who, through and with the priest, actually offer the sacrifice. Lugo remarks thereon: *Haec sententia probabilis est et deservit ad commendandam magis utilitatem audiendi Missam; but adds: sed non video firmum fundamentum ad eam persuadendam.* He believes that there is no well founded reason for the assertion that those who assist at Mass are granted a *remissio poenae residuae ex opere operato*; on the contrary, he regards it as an established doctrine that the assistants receive a fruit *ex opere operato, quatenus per modum saltem impetrationis sacerdos offert specialiter pro circumstantibus* (disp. XIX, sect. 11, n. 230-38). Cf. also Arriaga, VII, disp. LIII, § 3.

¹⁰ *Magna dignitas est, quam Deus homini christiano Missam cum spiritu devotioneque audienti impertit, et magna valdeque mira sunt bona, quae sic illam audiens lucratur. Quantae dignitatis, gloriae utilitatisque homini christiano est, quod Deo Patri donum offert ac munus infiniti valoris, et quod illi infinite gratum est, et quo ipsum placat propitiumque reddit, si peccatis iratus est, voluntatem ejus conciliat, summamque ei voluptatem affert et in ejus amore ac gratia crescit, familiarior eidem Domino fit, majorem cum ipso amicitiam contrahit, novos ab illius liberalitate favores, dona et gratias percipit, et ab eodem suorum bonorum desideriorum complementum consequitur, quoque non soli sibi tantum bonum procurat, sed etiam a Deo ingentia bona ac misericordias pro omnibus illis impetrare potest, pro quibus idem sacrificium vult offerre? Nam Missam audiendo, quemadmodum offert sacrificium corporis et sanguinis Christi pro seipso, sic etiam potest illud offerre pro omnibus iis, quibus bene vult, et omnibus magno adiumento erit pro anima proque salute ac vita temporali, quae animae bono conducit (Arias, *Thesaur. inexhaust.*, II, Tr. VII, chap. 7).*

enrich ourselves with little labor; it is a treasure house inexhaustible in its riches, which is ever open to us and to which we can always gain admittance. But where are our faith and love? Do we esteem and make use of this overflowing fountain of heavenly blessings? Is the holy hour of Mass, so full of graces, the most precious portion of the day and that dearest to us? Do we consider the celebration of the Mass or assisting thereat as the highest and most important action of our daily duty? We have in this certainly much to lament, much to atone for. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass should be the treasure, the joy and comfort of our life.

3. While the whole Church receives the general fruit of the Mass, and the assisting faithful the particular fruit, the very special or personal fruit (*fructus specialissimus vel individualis*) is imparted to the celebrant.¹¹ This is easy to understand. The priest has the closest and most prominent part in the celebration of Mass. By virtue of his ordination he is empowered and called to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice in the name of Christ and of the Church. He is not only the real offerer, but according to the will of Christ and in the name of the Church he also expressly offers the sacrifice for himself. Should not then the Mass, as a sacrifice of propitiation and petition, be rich in graces and blessings for him? It is a never-failing fountain of salvation, open more especially to the celebrant than to anyone else. Therefore he cannot fail to be enriched in quite a special manner with the blessings of heaven, if, besides approaching the altar in the state of grace, he also celebrates with attention and devotion.¹² This personal sacerdotal fruit the celebrant receives by simply performing his sacrificial duty in the proper manner. No special application or wish to gain this fruit of the sacrifice is re-

¹¹ The worthy celebration of Mass is, indeed, in the highest degree meritorious, satisfactory, and impetratory for the priest *ex opere operantis*. The *fructus specialissimus*, on the contrary, of which there is question here, is *ex opere operato*. Some theologians (for example, Suarez, Henriquez, Amicus, Laymann) assert that this *ex opere operato* fruit redounds to the priest inasmuch as he offers the sacrifice (*quatenus offert*); others more correctly affirm (for instance, Vasquez, Coninck, Isambert, Pasqualigo) that it is granted to him because the Mass also is specially offered for him (*quatenus pro ipso offertur*). The opinion that the *fructus specialissimus* of the celebrant and the *fructus specialis* of the assisting faithful cannot be applied to others is better founded than the contrary view. Cf. Pasqualigo, *De sacrif. N.L.*, I, q. 99, 115; Stentrup, *op. cit.*, thes. 113.

¹² *Nemo plus utilitatis recipit ex sanctissimo Missae sacrificio, quam sacerdos ipse qui offert; nemo enim tam est propinquus, intimus et, ut sic loquar,*

quired, its source is not in the priest's devout sentiments, which are only a necessary condition to gain this fruit in a more plentiful measure.

For this reason also it is of vital importance that the priest do his utmost to prepare well for the daily celebration of Mass. If he wishes to obtain at the altar the many and great graces of which he stands in need for the discharge of his responsible office in an edifying manner, he must endeavor to lead a spotless life and ever celebrate the divine mysteries with ardent love. The Church admonishes him to use every exertion and care to always celebrate the Holy Sacrifice with the utmost purity and devotion. Before approaching the altar, let him ask himself the following questions: ¹⁸ How sinful, how full of imperfection, how slothful am I in the service of God, I who venture to offer the Holy Sacrifice? How unspeakably exalted, glorious, and precious is the divine victim, who is about to rest in my hands and in my heart? How inconceivably sublime the greatness and the majesty of the Most High, whom I am expected to honor and glorify by the celebration of Mass? How manifold, how weighty are the cares and tribulations of the Church and of her

practicus et totalis executor tanti operis, tam Deo placiti, tam ex sese natura-
que sua fructiferi, tam ad miserationes liberalitatesque divinas evocandas ac
emungendas instituti; nemo tam illimitatus et arbitrarius dispensator atque ar-
biter tanti thesauri fructuumque ac effectuum ejus quam sacerdos (Druzbecki,
Tract. de effect. fruct. et applicat. ss. Missae sacrif., chap. 8).

¹⁸ In omni sacrificio quatuor sunt pensanda, ut puta *quis, quid, cui et quare*.
Ideo antequam celebremus aut communicemus, perpendamus haec omnia.
Imprimis unusquisque attendat, *quis* sit, i.e. quam fragilis, defectuosus, in-
dignus et reus: ac per hoc indignissimum se recognoscat sicque pro viribus ad
communione[m] seu celebrationem se praeparet ac suo modo se dignificare Deo
auxiliante conetur. Secundo consideret *quid*, i.e. quale et quantum sit sacri-
ficio[m] istud, in quo Christus Deus et homo offertur; et ita cum ingenti hu-
militate, filiali amore, reverentia praecordiali, puritate praecipua, charitateque
fervida progrediatur ad Sancta sanctorum. Tertio penset, *cui* fit ista oblatio,
ut puta Deo Patri, Regi ac Domino majestatis immensae, cui cum omni sin-
ceritate, humilitate, attentione, diligentia adstare et immolare oportet. Nam
et oblatio sacrificii hujus opus est valde privilegiatum, ad cujus dignam exe-
cutionem devotio requiritur actualis et esse in charitate, quam qui habuerit,
ceteris non carebit virtutibus. Quarto advertat, *quare*, i.e. propter quas causas
institutum sit et imoletur sacrificio[m] istud, videlicet pro communi bono
totius Ecclesiae, pro vivis et mortuis, pro ereptione ab omni periculo et pec-
cato, pro virtutum et gratiae incremento, pro pace patriae et omni rationabili
causa. Idcirco cum pro tot tantisque causis nequaquam sit segniter depre-
candum nec tepide offerendum, satagamus cum grandi instantia integroque
affectu sancti fervoris celebrare ac celebrando aut communicando orare
(Dion. Carthus., *In hymn. "Verbum supernum"*).

children, for which they expect help and assistance by the power of the Eucharistic sacrifice? Such reflections will inflame the soul with love and devotion.

4. Finally there proceeds from the Mass a propitiatory and impetratory fruit (*ex opere operato*), which is imparted to those for whom the priest, in a special manner, celebrates the Sacrifice of the Mass, and this fruit is called the ministerial or mediatorial fruit (*fructus ministerialis vel medius*). Inasmuch as the priest is a servant of Christ and a dispenser of the mysteries of God (I Cor. 4: 1), he has the power, not only to offer the sacrifice, but also to determine to whom the fruit of the sacrifice should be applied. With regard to the ministerial fruit of the sacrifice, the priest can freely dispose of it in his own favor or in favor of others, and to the celebrant and to him only does it appertain to make the special application of the Mass.¹⁴ The power and the right of specially offering the Holy Sacrifice for others, of applying its fruits in their behalf by special intention, is inviolably imparted to the priest at his ordination. And the obligation of celebrating the Mass for such special intention can arise from various causes. It arises in general from the order of ecclesiastical authority or from the free consent of the priest, who, on receiving an alms or some stipend (*eleemosyna vel stipendium*), obliges himself to applying the Mass for a special intention.¹⁵ That such a special application of the sacrificial fruit is lawful, useful, and salutary, is manifest, not only from the nature of the sacrifice considered in itself, but also from the constant practice from ancient times and the explicit teaching of the Church. From the very beginning it has always been the practice of the Church to offer Mass for individual persons and for certain intentions. Thus pastors are strictly obliged on Sundays and holydays to celebrate Mass for the flock committed to their care. The assertion that the special application of the Mass for certain persons or certain classes of people is of no special advantage to them, has been condemned by the Church.

¹⁴ Dicendum est, sacrificium determinari, ut huic potius prosit speciali modo quam illi, ab ipso offerente, quatenus determinat offerre pro hoc vel pro illo, et in hoc consistere applicationem, qua dicitur applicari (Pasqualigo, *op. cit.*, I, q. 161, n. 1).

¹⁵ Sacerdos non accipit pecuniam quasi pretium consecrationis Eucharistiae aut Missae decantandae (hoc enim esset simoniacum), sed quasi stipendium (*gifts, alms*) suae sustentationis (S. Thom., IIa IIae, q. 100, a. 2 ad 2).

As this application of the sacrificial fruit is exclusively an act of the power received at the ordination of the priest, it can always be validly (*valide*) made for all who are capable or in need of the effects of the Mass; but in order that it may be lawfully (*licite*) done, no prohibition of the Church must intervene or be opposed to the application. By the will of Christ, the Eucharistic sacrifice is the property of the Church; He has commanded it to be celebrated by her and in her. The highest ecclesiastical authority, consequently, has the power to limit and regulate more definitely the right of application. Therefore this question still remains to be considered: in behalf of what persons may the priest celebrate Mass with a special intention, that is, to whom specially may he apply the ministerial sacrificial fruit? To answer this question, we must distinguish several classes of persons, among the living as well as among the departed.

a) The living are either members of the Catholic Church or outside of her communion.

a) The members of the Church are either in the state of grace or in the state of sin: for either class the Mass may be offered. The just members of the Church, animated by an active charity, are alone disposed to gain the fruits of the Mass in their fullness; for the participation in the Mass is so much the greater, the more intimate is one's communion with Christ and the Church. To the dead members of the Church, that is, to those of the faithful who are deprived of the life of grace, who are spiritually dead through mortal sin, not all the fruits of the sacrifice can be applied; for as long as they are enemies of God, they cannot receive remission of temporal punishment. The chief and weightiest need they have, the one which oppresses them and from which they should be freed by the propitiatory virtue of the Mass, is the need entailed by sin. The Sacrifice of the Mass will, above all, obtain for them the mercy of God and reconciliation with Him, light and strength from on high, so that with a resolute will they may be enabled to abandon the path of sin, sincerely turn to God, and be restored to the life of grace. Moreover, for baptized children who have not as yet attained the use of reason, the Mass can be celebrated, but only as a sacrifice of petition and not of propitiation.

b) If we consider now those persons who are outside of the Church and are separated from her visible communion, there is no

doubt that at least indirectly and in a general way they are included in the sacrifice, since the Mass is celebrated for the conversion of Jews and pagans, the extirpation of heresy and schism, to promote the increase and exaltation of the kingdom of God. The first object in this is, indeed, the welfare of the Church; but at the same time the greatest benefit and advantage accrues from the Mass to those who receive the grace of becoming children of the true Church. On the contrary, according to the positive definitions of the Church, the direct and special application of the Mass is not permitted so unconditionally to all classes of persons. Thus it is strictly forbidden to offer the Holy Sacrifice for those excommunicated persons who are not tolerated but are to be avoided (*excommunicati vitandi*), and this prohibition holds good so long as the ban of excommunication has not been removed by absolution. On the other hand, according to some theologians, such an application for the excommunicated who are tolerated is regarded not only as valid, but also as permitted. The Holy Sacrifice may be lawfully offered, but only under certain restrictions, for schismatics and heretics, as well as for the unbaptized or unbelievers (Jews, Turks, heathens). But in so doing everything is to be avoided that would cause scandal or offense to the Christian people. The Mass may be offered for schismatics and heretics first and chiefly to obtain their conversion, that is, with the intention of appeasing the anger of God in their regard, as well as of obtaining for them from the goodness of God various graces and benefits, whereby they may the more easily work out their salvation and be brought to the knowledge of the true faith and into communion with the Church.¹⁶

b) The salutary and saving influence of the Holy Sacrifice ex-

¹⁶ Proposito dubio: Utrum possit aut debeat celebrari Missa ac percipi eleemosyna pro Graeco-schismatico, qui enixe oret atque instet, ut Missa applicetur pro se sive in ecclesia adstante sive extra ecclesiam manente? S. Congr. Officii die 19 April., 1837, respondit: "Juxta exposita non licet, nisi constet expresse, eleemosynam a schismatico praeberi ad impetrandam conversionem ad veram fidem." Quam resolutionem P. M. Gregorius XVI approbavit.

Proposito dubio: Utrum liceat sacerdotibus Missam celebrare pro Turcarum aliorumque infidelium intentione, et ab iis eleemosynam pro Missae applicatione accipere? S. Congr. Officii die 12 Julii, 1865, respondit: Affirmative, dummodo non adsit scandalum, ac nihil in Missa specialiter addatur, et quoad intentionem constet, nihil mali aut erroris aut superstitionis in infidelibus eleemosynam offerentibus subesse.

tends even beyond the tomb. May the Mass be offered for all the departed? They who have departed out of this world have either entered heaven, where they rejoice in happiness and reign in glory; or they are buried in the abyss of hell, whence there is no redemption; or thy sojourn in the abode of purification where they are purified in the pain of fire until they are cleansed from all defilement and found worthy to appear before the face of God.

a) Only for the last of these three classes of deceased persons can the Mass strictly be offered and according to apostolical tradition is truly offered.¹⁷ The Syriac bishop, Balaeus, who lived at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century, declares that prayer and sacrifice are useful to the departed. "It is evident to all reasonable minds that the faithful departed have the benefit of the Church vigils and of the Sacrifice of the Mass and of the incense of propitiation, when the priest is mindful of them at the altar. Then the citizens of heaven rejoice, and they that live upon earth are gladdened, and the departed, too, exult, for they are summoned in order to be refreshed by the heavenly sacrifice." The suffering souls, who are helplessly suffering and enduring pains in purgatory, stand in great need of the propitiatory Sacrifice of the Mass, that the divine justice may be induced to shorten their tedious punishment or alleviate their intense sufferings. The Church has declared that the Mass most especially procures help and relief for the faithful departed.¹⁸ The sacrifice of the altar, accordingly, is the most effectual, all-sufficient, and sure means of obtaining for the suffering souls in purgatory comfort and refreshment; for it helps them more than prayers and indulgences, more than fasting, alms, and night-vigils, more than works of charity, mercy, and piety, which the living may offer for the departed. As these suffering souls are always in the best dispositions, the Mass, in all probability, is never without effect when said for them.

That is all we know; the rest is entirely enveloped in great dark-

¹⁷ Trid., Sess. XXII, cap. 2. Cum alia sacramenta non prosint post mortem, unde est, quod hoc sacramentum altaris prodest? Dicendum, quod aliorum sacramentorum dispensatio respicit actum in persona vel circa personam, sicut patet in baptismo, et ideo non potest baptizari, nisi qui praesto est in aquam mergi; sed sacrificium est actus pro persona. Et quoniam actus in personam requirit personam actu existentem, sed pro persona non; sicut Christus obtulit se Patri pro illis, qui fuerunt et qui futuri sunt, sic sacrificium prodest his qui finierunt vitam (S. Bonav., IV, dist. 45, dub. 3).

¹⁸ Trid., Sess. XXV de Purgat.

ness, for it is hidden from us in what measure and to what extent the Holy Sacrifice each time abridges or relieves the sufferings of a poor soul. How soon such a soul may be released from purgatory depends upon the will of God, whose justice is equally as infinite and impenetrable as His mercy. Therefore it is not useless, but rather necessary, to have the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass repeatedly offered for one and the same soul, to help it all the more speedily to enter into the joys of heaven. This is true also of the so-called privileged Mass, in which, by virtue of the privileged altar, there is added a plenary indulgence to the fruit of the sacrifice for the benefit of the soul in behalf of whom the Mass is celebrated; for the real effect of such an indulgence, which can be applied to the departed only by way of petition, remains yet subject to the merciful acceptance of God.

Of the different effects of the Mass, the faithful departed can receive but a single one, namely, the remission of the temporal punishment by satisfying the divine justice. These punishments are the last impediments which withhold them from entering into the longed-for rest and joy of the Lord. As a sacrifice of propitiation, the Mass disarms God's justice resting heavily upon these souls, and cancels the punishments to be undergone by them. As a sacrifice of petition, the Mass may also contribute to the alleviation and deliverance of the suffering souls: on the one hand, by procuring for them from the goodness of God a gracious release from punishment; on the other, by obtaining many graces, whereby the living are incited and animated to offer continually for the departed penitential works, indulgences, and prayers.¹⁹

In a general way the Church in her liturgy offers and prays for

¹⁹ Constat inter omnes doctores catholicos, sacrificium Missae vere prodesse defunctis, nedum quatenus satisfactorium, sed etiam ut est impetratorium, ut colligitur ex Trid., Sess. XXII, cap. 2, et ex praxi Ecclesiae, quae orat in sacrificio pro defunctis, etiam pro illis, quibus non applicatur fructus satisfactionis ex opere operato, et quia praescribit, ut oretur pro illis in secundo *Memento* post consecrationem, propter solum fructum impetrationis, quia tunc facta est jam applicatio et distributio fructus satisfactionis ex opere operato (Quarti, *In Rubr. Missal.*, I, tit. 5, dub. 6). According to the opinion of this author, the Mass as a sacrifice of petition can benefit the departed only indirectly: quia per orationes sacrificio innixas impetramus a Deo, ut excitet fideles ad offerenda sacrificia et suffragia pro defunctis vel indulgentias, quibus immediate liberantur a poenis.

“all the faithful departed” and for “all resting in Christ,” therefore in behalf of all the souls suffering in purgatory. All who during life and at death were in visible communion with the Church, are after death considered as connected in a living manner with the Church, at least as being on the sure way to eternal blessedness, if they are not already in heaven. Therefore she allows the Holy Sacrifice to be publicly celebrated for all who have died in her fold. For important reasons, however, Mass may not be publicly offered for those who died outside the fold of the Church: for deceased pagans, heretics, schismatics, and excommunicated persons. For all these Mass may be offered privately if no scandal is given. The Church makes this distinction to impress upon her children, as well as upon those not in communion with her, the remarkable privileges enjoyed even after death by those who are in visible communion with that stream of life-giving grace that flows from the cross of Christ through His Church.

It is indeed true that the children of the Catholic Church in life and after death enjoy many graces and special advantages from which non-Catholics are excluded. This is an unmerited blessing and an inestimable privilege for which we should be most grateful to God. At the same time we ought to “praise and magnify His infinite goodness and benignity, by which we are enabled to make satisfaction for one another,” for in the Sacrifice of the Mass principally He has given us such an excellent and efficacious means of procuring untold comfort, relief, and solace in behalf of the suffering souls in their painful banishment. The ingenious love of the Church has appointed a special solemnity for the comfort and peace of these souls. For centuries on All Souls’ Day she stands in robes of mourning at the altar and at the tomb. It is a mournful day; but one on which Masses for the dead are multiplied, when prayers and sighs are more fervent, the faithful more recollected and better disposed, when streams of grace descend to the sufferers in purgatory, when heaven throws open its gates to them, and signs of peace hover over the abyss. Oh, what a blessed day! Though the darkness that envelops us be ever so dense and to us impenetrable, yet from thousands of altars shines the light of the glorified body of Christ, casting its rays into heaven, into the very face of the infinitely just Father, causing it to be lit up in friendly and gracious clemency, and, from

the throne of God, it reflects its rays downward into the darkness of the subterranean prison, in order that the perpetual light of the heavenly home may shine upon them.

b) For the reprobate the Holy Sacrifice cannot in any manner whatever be offered: for them there is neither redemption (*in inferno nulla est redemptio*) nor alleviation of their torments.²⁰ As withered branches they are completely severed from the true vine, Jesus Christ; for all eternity they are excluded from the communion of saints. Their torments in the ocean of fire and brimstone are not alleviated, even by a drop of cold water; no single ray of light or of hope ever penetrates the dark abode of hell. Equally unlawful is it to celebrate Mass for children who have not reached the age of reason and who have died without baptism. Whatever their eternal destiny may be, this much is certain: they are irrevocably excluded, not only from the bliss of heaven, but in general from all participation in the supernatural goods which Christ acquired for the human race and which are applied to individual men mainly through the Sacrifice of the Mass.

c) In contrast with the reprobate, whom, in their eternal separation from Christ, grace can neither reach nor influence, "the spirits of the just made perfect" in heaven are most intimately united to Him and consequently stand in no need of the help of grace. The blessed dwell in the land of the living, where they are free from all evil and in full possession of all the riches of the Lord. From this the reason is clear why the Sacrifice of the Mass can never properly be offered for them.²¹ They are free from all guilt of sin and its punishment; therefore the Mass as a sacrifice of propitiation cannot be

²⁰ Mitigatio poenae damnatorum dupliciter potest intelligi: aut quantum ad taxationem et inflictionem poenae et sic absque dubio est ibi mitigatio, quia divina justitia non totum exigit, pro eo quod, ejus pietate interveniente, aliquam partem poenae infligendo remittit.—Alio modo potest intelligi mitigatio post poenae taxationem et inflictionem, et hoc modo nulla cadit mitigatio a divina misericordia, quia ex tunc claudit eis Dominus viscera pietatis (S. Bonav., IV, dist. 46, a. 1, q. 2).

²¹ Pro Beatis sacrificium non dicitur offerri nisi improprie. Potest quidem offerri in gratiarum actionem pro beneficiis in Sanctos collatis; potest etiam offerri ad impetrandam gloriam et venerationem alicujus Sancti in terra: hoc tamen non sufficit ut dicamus offerri Missam pro tali Sancto, quia hoc videtur significare imperfectionem et indigentiam in illo, pro quo offertur. . . . Quando ergo apud aliquos antiquos reperitur ille modus loquendi, quod offerimus *pro* Sanctis, explicandus est in sensu minus proprio, quod vel offerimus loco illorum, h.e. ad agendas gratias pro beneficiis a Deo in eos collatis,

offered for them. Moreover, since their essential glory cannot be increased, for it remains unchangeably the same, Mass cannot be celebrated even as a sacrifice of petition for them, to obtain for them an increase of their essential glory. Now, although the Mass may not be offered to the saints or for them, still the celebration of it conduces in various ways to their honor and glory.

Inasmuch as the Mass is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, it may in a certain sense be celebrated or heard for the blessed, that is, in their name for the purpose of praising and thanking God for the gifts of grace and glory which He has bountifully bestowed upon them.²² For this the blessed rejoice; for the Mass is a more glorious homage of praise and of thanksgiving to the Lord than that which the combined choirs of the blessed and of the angels could render Him, and it is, therefore, a means of responding to their ardent desires of ever more and more glorifying God. The blessed also rejoice that their graces and virtues, their actions and miracles, their combats and victories, their power and greatness afford us an opportunity and give us reason to worthily praise and honor God, the bestower of all holiness, by the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice.²³

As a sacrifice of petition, the Mass may also be celebrated with the intention of promoting on earth the greater glory of the blessed. But offered in this way, the Mass is not so much for the advantage of the saints, to whom the increase of external glory brings no real profit, but rather for us men, for we are thereby enriched with spiritual favors. The fruit that God in this case imparts by reason

quas gratias ipsi libenter agerent; vel quod offerimus, ut redundet in eorum honorem, quem sensum significant illa verba Missae: ut illis proficiat ad honorem, nobis autem ad salutem; vel denique quod illos invocamus in oblatione sacrificii, ut ipsi pro nobis intercedant, quem etiam sensum significat Ecclesia in verbis sequentibus: et illi pro nobis intercedere dignentur in coelis, quorum memoriam agimus in terris; et eundem sensum expressit Concil. Trid., Sess. XXII, cap. 3. (Lugo, disp. XIX, sect. 10, n. 192). Ejus auxilio tua beneficia capiamus, *pro quo* tibi laudis hostias immolamus (*Secr. in festo s. Barthol. Apost.*).

²² Laudis hostia, Domine, quam pro sancto Ignatio gratias agentes obtulimus, ad perpetuam nos majestatis tuae laudationem, ejus intercessione, perducatur (*Postcomm. in festo s. Ignatii Conf.*).

²³ Ad sacra mysteria celebranda trahat te laus Dei et Sanctorum, cum non habeamus, quo possimus Deum et Sanctos pro sua dignitate laudare quam Christum sacramentaliter Deo Patri offerre et immolare (S. Bonav., *Tr. de praep. ad Miss.*, c. 1, § 4, n. 15).

of the sacrifice offered by way of petition, consists of graces by which the faithful are animated and spurred on to honor, invoke, and imitate the saints. The diffusion of the veneration of the saints on earth brings great blessings to man, and to the blessed in heaven new joy, since thereby the Most Blessed Trinity is glorified, the communion of saints made active, the life of the Church enhanced, and the salvation of the faithful promoted.

These effects, which the Mass produces with regard to the blessed in heaven, that is, for their honor and joy, proceed simply from the celebration of the Mass offered with an appropriate intention. The Church has connected with the divine sacrifice a copious rite, in which the veneration of the saints finds manifold expression. The liturgy of the divine sacrifice, in which their names occur, their intercession is invoked, and the example of their virtues is set forth to us, already in itself sheds great glory on the blessed friends of God and children of the Church, the saints of heaven.²⁴ This is especially the case with regard to the festal and votive Masses, composed expressly to honor individual saints or whole classes of them. In the Collects of these Masses the intercession of the saints holds a prominent place; in the Secret and Postcommunion prayers it is brought in the closest connection with the sacrifice. Very frequently the petition is addressed directly to God as follows: that He may, through the merits and intercession, or through the intercessory merits of the saints,²⁵ whom we honor and whose feast we celebrate, take us under His merciful protection, or favorably receive the sacrifice of the Church and of the faithful, and abundantly grant them its fruits. Often the petition addressed directly to God runs thus: that He grant that this or that particular saint may be our constant intercessor, obtain pardon for us, assist us by his prayers,

²⁴ In manibus est hostia et omnia parata prostant: adsunt angeli, archangeli, adest Filius Dei: cum tanto horrore adstant omnes, adstant illi clamantes omnibus silentibus. . . . Quid putas, pro martyribus offerri, quod nominentur in illa hora? Licet martyres sint, etiam pro martyribus magnus honos nominari Domino praesente, dum mors perficitur illa, horrendum sacrificium, ineffabilia mysteria (S. Chrysost., *Homil. in Act. Apost.*, XXI, n. 4).

²⁵ In the missal we find the following expressions: Ejus meritis et precibus; ejus suffragantibus meritis; ejus exemplo et intercessione; ejus patrocinio; intercessionis ejus auxilio; ejus interventione; ejus meritis et intercessione; ejus intercedentibus meritis: ejus interventu; intercedentibus sanctis Martyribus; ejus supplicatione; ejus suffragiis.

that we may partake of his assistance, be supported by his intercession, and be defended by his protection.

In these liturgical prayers the intercession of the saints is placed in a dual relation to the Eucharistic sacrifice. On the one hand the petition is frequently repeated that the sacrifice, inasmuch as it is offered by us sinful men, may, through the merits and intercession of the saints, be more pleasing to the divine majesty and more advantageous to us; ²⁶ on the other hand the intercession of the saints is again implored after a manner more intimately connected with the Holy Sacrifice offered in their honor and to their memory, ²⁷ or to speak more correctly, the intercession of the saints is invoked because of the efficacy of the Holy Sacrifice; and this is but proper, since the saints possess and exercise the right of intercession in our favor only by the power of Christ and of His sacrifice. For whatever the saints are and whatever they can do, they hold and accomplish in virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, which is now renewed upon the altar in an unbloody manner. By virtue of this sacrifice they became holy and persevered in holiness until the end of their life; by its virtue they overcame themselves, the world, and the devil; by its virtue they entered, rich in merits, into the glory of heaven, where they have become intercessors in our behalf; by its virtue God listens to their petitions: hence the confidence which we have in the merits and intercession of the saints and with which we invoke their intercession, is based upon the efficacy of this sacrifice. It is indeed but proper, then, that in offering the Eucharistic sacrifice

²⁶ Oblationes populi tui, quaesumus Domine, beati Jacobi Apostoli passio beata conciliet: et quae nostris non aptae sunt meritis, fiant tibi placitae ejus deprecatione (*Secr. in festo s. Jacobi Apost.*). Munera, quae conscientiae nostrae praepediuntur obstaculis, sanctorum Apostolorum meritis grata reddantur (*Secr. in Vigilia ss. Ap. Sim. et Jud.*). Sanctifica, quaesumus Domine, oblata libamina; et beatæ Dei genitricis Mariæ saluberrima intercessione, nobis salutaria fore concede (*Secr. in festo B.M.V. de Monte Carmelo*). Ut nobis, Domine, tua sacrificia dent salutem: beatus Confessor tuus Augustinus et Pontifex, quaesumus, precator accedat (*Postcomm. in festo s. August.*).

²⁷ The following excerpts from the prayers of the missal are given by way of example: Dum eorum merita recolimus, patrocina sentiamus; quorum solemniam celebramus, eorum orationibus adjuvemur; cujus natalitia colimus, de ejusdem etiam protectione gaudeamus; quorum gloriamur triumphis, protegatur auxiliis; quae pro illorum veneranda gerimus passione, nobis proficiat ad medelam; quorum festa solemniter celebramus, continuis foveamus auxiliis.

for the honor of God and His saints and for our own salvation, we acknowledge and confess this confidence in their intercession; and this we do by beseeching the heavenly Father, to whom the Mass is offered, that He would deign, by virtue of this sacrifice, to make us benefit by the intercession of the saints and, in view of the merits they have acquired by their union with the selfsame sacrifice and through their intercession, the efficacy of which is derived from this sacrifice, to grant us His powerful protection. Want of confidence in the divine mercy cannot be associated with such a petition, based as it is upon the sacrifice of His infinite love and goodness. On the contrary: such a petition serves to promote the honor of Christ, since we thereby acknowledge and confess that it is Himself who has glorified the saints by the power of His sacrifice; yet more, this petition conduces to the praise of the saints, who, by the grace of the sacrifice of Christ, have offered themselves for Christ and consequently now reign with Him as our intercessors. Thus, while the celebration of Mass covers the saints of heaven with honor and glory, it confers on us men, in need of assistance, every spiritual advantage.²⁸

²⁸ The following excerpts from the Missal are given by way of example: *Illis proficiat ad honorem, nobis autem ad salutem; quod pro illius gloria celebramus, nobis prosit ad veniam; quae pro illius celebrata sunt gloria, nobis proficiat ad medelam.*

CHAPTER X

THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

THE MASS, CENTER OF CATHOLIC WORSHIP

It yet remains for us to explain at least briefly the central position and fundamental signification pertaining to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the Catholic Church, which was instituted for the salvation of souls.¹ Then it will be seen that it is of vital importance for the very life and operation of the Church.

1. The Catholic Church is the divinely instituted means of salvation established by Christ for the entire world and for all times; as such she has the sublime mission to continue and accomplish throughout all ages the work of Christ's redemption by the conversion and salvation of all nations. God wills that all men by means of the Church and in the Church should receive heavenly light and life, and come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved (I Tim. 2:4.). For this purpose the Lord remains with His Church; in her He lives and acts all days until the end of the world. In sacramental truth and reality the God-man continues always His mediatorship on earth by the ministry of His Church. As He redeemed mankind especially by the bloody sacrifice of the cross, so He carries out the work of redemption in His Church chiefly by the unbloody sacrifice of the altar, since it is the essential representation and mystical renewal of the world's redeeming sacrifice of the cross. This the Church concisely and appropriately expresses when it says of the Mass: *Quoties hujus hostiae commemoratio celebratur, opus nostrae redemptionis exercetur.* "As often as this memorial sacrifice is

¹ Tolle hoc sacramentum de Ecclesia, et quid erit in mundo nisi error et infidelitas? Sed per hoc sacramentum stat Ecclesia, roboratur fides, viget christiana religio et divinus cultus (S. Bonav., *Tr. de praepar. ad Miss.*, chap. 1, § 1, n. 3).

celebrated, the work of the redemption is performed.”² These simple words not merely express that by the Eucharistic sacrifice the fruits of the sacrifice of the cross are bestowed on men in regard to the redemption taken subjectively, but they also declare that all the features of the work of the redemption, taken in its objective sense, are mystically renewed and represented on the altar.³ All this is done already by the mere accomplishment of the sacrifice at the Consecration, but still more strikingly in the ecclesiastical rite which accompanies the sacrificial action, that is, in the liturgical celebration of Mass. From a twofold aspect the Mass represents the entire work of redemption, for in the Eucharistic service the three offices of Christ, as well as the different mysteries, are represented.

a) Christ redeemed the world: as supreme teacher, inasmuch He announced the truths of faith; as high priest, inasmuch as He established peace between heaven and earth and regained for us the gifts of grace; as divine King, inasmuch as He founded a kingdom which, although in this world, is not of this world, a supernatural kingdom of truth, of grace, and of love, wherein He reigns over hearts. Christ continues to exercise His office of teacher, of priest, and of shepherd over the whole world in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. As in the earthly life of Christ, so likewise in the Eucharistic sacrifice, the sacerdotal operation of the Lord holds the prominent place; for the radiant central and culminating portion of the Mass lies in the Canon, in the course of which the real sacrificial act is accomplished, which secures for us reconciliation and mercy. Before our Saviour died in sacrifice on the cross, He taught the divine truth by word and deed; corresponding to this, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the oblation (His mystical death) is preceded by a preparation or an interior service, in which the prophetic teaching of Christ is represented and repeated, that we may be filled with the light and wisdom of faith. “For the ministry of Jesus Christ continues to live throughout all time and in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass moves around the earth to serve ignorant and erring humanity. In the Holy Sacrifice, wherein Christ appears as the victim which upon the altar of the cross allowed itself to be consumed by

² *Orat. secret. Dom. IX post Pent.* Dicitur exerceri, non tantum secundum representationem, sed etiam secundum efficaciam, quia nobis applicatur (Suarez, *In S. Thom.*, IIIa, q. 83, a. 1).

³ In celebratione hujus mysterii attenditur repraesentatio dominicae passionis et participatio fructus ejus (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 2).

the torments of death, He is seen also as the heavenly teacher of men. As victim He is veiled under the material appearances of bread and wine. His voice is concealed and yet ever present by the voice of His messengers in Holy Scripture: in the Epistles and the Gospels" (Eberhard). Finally, as the Saviour by His sacrificial death entered into glory, as He established by means of the cross His supernatural kingdom and eternal dominion, thus the act of consecration or sacrifice in the Mass is followed by Holy Communion as the completion and conclusion of the sacrifice, and, by means of Holy Communion, Christ as a meek king takes possession of our hearts, and as Prince of Peace extends and consolidates the kingdom of God, the dominion of grace and love in our souls.

b) The work of redemption considered historically, namely, in its gracious beginning, in its blessed progress, and in its glorious completion, is also in this aspect represented in the Eucharistic sacrifice, for it is a living memorial of all the wonders and mysteries which the redeeming love of the triune God wrought for the salvation of man. *Memoriam fecit mirabilium suorum, misericors et miserator Dominus; escam dedit timentibus se* (Ps. 110:4 f.). The joyful, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries of the Incarnation, the life, death, and glory of the Saviour of the world are placed before the eyes of faith in the celebration of Mass. To the presence of the Lord on the altar in the unbloody Sacrifice of the Mass, the words of the prophet may be applied: *Ecce Salvator tuus venit: ecce merces ejus cum eo, et opus ejus coram illo*. "Behold thy Saviour cometh: behold His reward is with Him, and His work before Him" (Isa. 62:11). Yes, the God-man comes on the altar to sacrifice Himself for us; but where His presence is, there also appears the work and the price of the redemption accomplished by Him; with Him both are inseparably united.

In the Mass, first of all, Christ's painful and bloody death on the Cross is celebrated and represented. Now, as in Christ's sacrificial death on the cross all the other mysteries of redemption partly culminate and partly have their root, so also they must come together in the unbloody sacrifice of the altar, since it is the living and real representation of the bloody sacrifice of the cross.⁴ By the separate consecration of bread and wine, Christ's body and blood are offered

⁴ *Missae sacrificium est expressa quaedam et viva imago passionis Christi et consequenter incarnationis et aliorum Christi mysteriorum, quibus nihil altius et excellentius operatus est Deus* (Suarez, disp. LXXVI, sect. 2).

under the symbol of death; therefore, the altar becomes Mount Calvary, the cross saturated with His blood. The wonders of the Incarnation, of Bethlehem, are likewise repeated: the altar becomes the crib, the infant Jesus lies concealed therein in the humble little host.

Likewise renewed in mysterious reality upon the altar is all that transpired during the life of Christ, from Bethlehem to Golgatha. In the intervening period "three and thirty years of the Lord's earthly pilgrimage elapsed, such years as had never before been seen on earth, years that shone out in brighter light, resplendent with grace and benediction, truth and mercy, crowned by the presence, the dwelling and journeyings of the Son of God here below" (Eberhard). This silent, humble, hidden, obedient, adorable life of prayer and sacrifice is continued by the Saviour until the end of time under the veil of the Eucharistic species for the honor of God and the welfare of man. Finally, the Eucharistic sacrifice is also a memorial of the glory of the Lord, of His resurrection and ascension.⁵ As the risen, transfigured Saviour appeared unto His own, saying confidently to them: "Peace be to you; it is I, fear not," so He now is with us, remaining in our midst in His concealed glory and with His painless wounds, to console, to rejoice, to bless, and to protect us.

We thus not only behold in the Eucharistic sacrifice the glorious crown of the great work of redemption, but we also have there the summary and renewal of those adorable mysteries of profound annihilation and supreme glory which Christ once accomplished upon earth for the love of us and for our redemption. In a manner as simple as it is grand, the celebration of Mass places before the eyes of the faithful the way in which our Lord descended from the heights of heaven to live amongst us (Luke 1:78); how He "did not abhor the Virgin's womb" (*Te Deum*) and the hard manger (*Hymn. Eccl.*); how as a giant He entered with joy and hastened with exultation through the thorny career of our redemption (Ps. 18:6); how He dwelt and walked among men under the

⁵ Resurrectio et ascensio Domini eo ipso commemoratur, quod Christus sub speciebus panis et vini praesens est immortalis et gloriosus, prouti est post resurrectionem et ascensionem: ideoque in oratione post consecrationem dicitur, Missae sacrificium offerri in memoriam passionis, nec non ab inferis resurrectionis, sed et in coelos gloriosae ascensionis Domini nostri Jesu Christi (Müller, *Theol. moral.*, III, tit. 1, § 15, n. 11).

humble appearance of a servant, teaching, healing, doing good, bestowing blessings; how He finally descended to the lowest depths of sorrow and disgrace, and from the shadows of the tomb raised Himself to the brightest glory of heaven.

These holy mysteries, contained as in their germ in the Eucharistic sacrifice, are fully developed and beautifully shown forth in the sacrificial rite of the Church; for in the course of the year the formulas of the Mass, alternating in due order, place before us and prominently represent in turn the great mysteries of our redemption. The Eucharistic sacrifice is most intimately connected with the celebration of the ecclesiastical year; for the Holy Sacrifice finds therein its full illustration. The cycle of feast days and holy seasons casts its refulgence and its shadows upon the altar: the silent longing and joyful anticipation of Advent, the heartfelt blessedness and the delicious peace of soul of Christmas night, the serious penitential spirit of Lent and its sentiments of bitter regret, the unspeakable sorrows and the gloom and mourning of Holy Week, the joyous glory and the alleluias of Eastertide, the joy and supernal happiness of the grace of the octave of Pentecost, all find in the liturgical celebration of Mass appropriate and touching expression. At the altar our ears are greeted at one time with the sound of doleful lamentation, at another with the tones of joy and praise; we there behold the priest, now in the color of love or of hope, and again in that of joy or of sorrow.

2. The work of redemption accomplished by Christ on the cross is always included and mystically represented in the Eucharistic sacrifice, to render due honor and worship to God as well as to apply to man all the benefits and blessings of redemption. It follows, then, that the Eucharistic sacrifice must be the center, the heart and soul of the entire liturgy: of divine worship and the dispensing of grace. The principal object of the liturgical activity and efficiency of the Church consists in rendering to God in the highest all honor, adoration, and glory, and to obtain for man on earth reconciliation, remission of sin, and sanctification. In the liturgy praise and thanksgiving ascend to heaven, blessing and grace descend upon earth; in the liturgy man elevates himself to God, and God descends to men. The liturgy daily procures and maintains the supernatural relation, the reciprocal intercourse, the mystical communion of life and love between heaven and earth, between God and men. This object is

most perfectly attained by the celebration of Mass, which excels all other acts of worship.⁶ These acts are numerous and manifold; for in her liturgical worship the Church has always bestowed her heavenly treasures of grace with more lavish a hand and has exteriorly revealed more fully and universally her interior plenitude of life.

In the beauty and splendor of her liturgy she appears as that new and heavenly Jerusalem which the evangelist St. John saw descending from heaven as a bride richly adorned (Apoc. 21:2); therein she appears as the spouse of the King, betrothed to the Lord (II Cor. 11:2), standing at the right hand of the King in garments of gold, clothed round about with variety of splendor (Ps. 44:10-14): yet the most brilliant diadem and the most precious jewel of her rich, her divine bridal attire is the exalted and elevating sacrifice of the altar. It forms not merely the crown of her liturgy, but is also, in a certain sense, its vivifying root and noble stock. Catholic worship possesses, so to speak, the Eucharistic stamp, the Eucharistic color, and the Eucharistic perfume, since all acts of worship are referred proximately or remotely to the Eucharistic sacrifice, or are joined to it, drawing thence fresh life, power of attraction, and consecration. Without the sacrifice this noble worship would be impoverished and stunted, would fade and die away, as is evident from non-Catholic denominations. This unrivaled supremacy the Eucharistic sacrifice obtains throughout the entire sphere of religious worship. To show this more in detail, let us first consider the divine service, that is, those acts of divine worship which relate principally to the honor of God; and secondly, the dispensation of grace, that is, those acts of worship which directly and chiefly relate to the sanctification of man.

a) The celebration of Mass is the most worthy and the most perfect divine service, for it procures to the Most High a worship and a veneration which millions of worlds would be incapable of rendering Him.⁷ The Eucharistic sacrifice is of itself the most glori-

⁶ In the liturgy the Eucharistic and Communion service are often designated by the words *veneranda, sacrosancta commercia*, and the Incarnation as *admirabile commercium*, to signify that by both these mysteries a real commerce and exchange is negotiated between heaven and earth, between God and men. Cf. *Secret. in Nativ. Dom.* and *in Domin. XVIII post Pent.*

⁷ *Alia institutionis hujus sacramenti causa est quotidiana et jugis honoratio et glorificatio Dei Patris, imo totius superbeatissimae Trinitatis, quia in hujus sacramenti celebratione ac sumptione magnalia et beneficia Dei recoluntur, gratiarum actio Deo offertur, bonitas et majestas Omnipotentis laudatur et*

ous chant to the praise and glory of the triune God. It is the summary of divine worship, for it is our highest adoration and best thanksgiving, our most efficacious propitiation and most powerful petition. The duty of praising God, of thanking Him, of rendering Him due honor and satisfaction, and of petitioning Him, can and must be complied with also by prayer; but how naked, poor, and deficient would this divine service be if we had not the sacrifice of the altar, whereby the name of the Lord is magnified and glorified among all nations! (Mal. 1:11.) This unique sacrifice infinitely excels in value and dignity, in power and efficacy, all the many prayers of the Church and of the faithful. Christ offers Himself on the altar by our hands, and we, as intimately united with Him as the branches are with the vine, should enter wholly into His sentiments and unite ourselves to His sacrifice. It is only by such a union that our praise, thanksgiving, petition, and atonement become meritorious and pleasing in the sight of God. The ivy vine left to itself can but creep on the ground and must miserably decay; but if planted near a tree, it finds a support, it clings to it and climbs upwards. In like manner our divine worship would be of itself very weak and imperfect, and would hardly rise above the dust of the earth; but when in union with the worship of the sacrifice of Christ it ascends even to heaven. At the celebration of Mass we say:

Behold, O heavenly Father, to Thee we owe infinite praise on account of Thy infinite majesty; because of Thy numberless graces and benefits, we owe infinite thanks; for the innumerable offences we have committed against Thee, we owe infinite atonement; and because of our manifold needs and dangers, we owe the tribute of our humble supplication; but all our acts of praise, of thanksgiving, of atonement, and of supplication, how miserable they are, and how unworthy to be offered to Thee! Still we unite them to the sacrifice of praise, thanksgiving, propitiation, and petition of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, infinitely pleasing to Thee, with which we offer them to Thee, imploring Thee that for His sake Thou wilt graciously accept this our unworthy homage, with all that we are and have, and be merciful and favorable to us.⁸

multiplex honor Altissimo quotidie exhibetur: imo per hujus sacramenti celebrationem ac sumptionem cultus christianae religionis praecipue conservatur, fideles ad ecclesiam conveniunt, confitentur, coadunantur. Estque sacramentum hoc incomparabile et pretiosissimum Ecclesiae militantis clenodium (Dion. Carthus., *De vita Curator.*, a. 15).

⁸ Martin, *Das christliche Leben*, p. 275.

Since in the Eucharistic sacrifice the divine history of the Redeemer and of His redemption are mystically represented, the Holy Mass, too, takes precedence in the ecclesiastical festivals. What the sun in the heavens is to all nature, shedding light and imparting warmth, the Eucharistic sacrifice is in the house of God, beautifying and adorning its every feast with celestial splendor. Wherefore the Church of Christ celebrates the mysteries of grace by the Eucharistic sacrifice, with which the faithful unite acts of adoration, praise, thanksgiving, petition, propitiation, and love. We likewise celebrate the mysteries, the privileges, the graces, the virtues, the glories, the power, and the goodness of the Virgin Mother of God by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. In what way do we most worthily celebrate the annual commemoration of the saints? By offering the Eucharistic sacrifice in order to praise and thank God, because He is wonderful in His saints, because He has adorned them with the greatest diversity of graces, virtues, and miracles, crowned them with honor and glory, and given them to us as bright models and powerful patrons. Thus the Eucharistic sacrifice, like a gold ring, moves around the liturgical cycle of the holy feasts and seasons. On the most pleasant of all feasts, Christmas, "when the heavens are overflowing with honey, and true joy hath come to us from on high," the Church permits her priests to celebrate three Masses, in order to express more perfectly her exceeding exultation over "this day of the new redemption of the ancient reconciliation and eternal bliss."⁹ On sorrowful Good Friday, on the contrary, when the Church with deepest compassion is entirely absorbed in her meditation and contemplation of the cross and of her divine spouse dying

⁹ In die Nativitatis plures Missae celebrantur propter triplicem Christi nativitatem. Quarum una est *aeterna*, quae quantum ad nos est occulta, et ideo, una Missa cantatur in nocte, in cuius Introitu dicitur: "Dominus dixit ad me! Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te." Alia est *temporalis*, sed *spiritualis*, quae scilicet Christus oritur tanquam lucifer in cordibus (II Petr. 1:19) et propter hoc cantatur Missa in aurora, in cuius Introitu dicitur: "Lux fulgebit hodie super nos." Tertia est nativitas Christi *temporalis* et *corporalis*, secundum quam visibilis nobis processit ex utero virginali carne indutus et ob hoc cantatur tertia Missa in clara luce, in cuius Introitu dicitur: "Puer natus est nobis." Licet e converso posset dici quod nativitas aeterna secundum se est in plena luce et ob hoc in Evangelio tertiae Missae fit mentio de nativitate aeterna. Secundum autem nativitatem corporalem ad litteram natus est de nocte in signum quod veniebat ad tenebras infirmitatis nostrae, unde et in Missa nocturna dicitur Evangelium de corporali Christi nativitate (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 2 ad 2).

in torments for the sins of the world, on this great day of mourning the Church, so to speak, forgets what is dearest and most precious to her, the joy and consolation of the Holy Sacrifice, denying herself the chalice of refreshment and salvation in view of the bitter cup of sorrow which her divine spouse drank upon Golgotha.¹⁰

Finally, all that the faithful do for and give to His service, is referred principally to the worthy celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice. For what purpose are all those magnificent churches and altars built, dedicated, and furnished with every adornment that art and nature can produce? Principally for the celebration of Holy Mass. For what purpose are the gold and silver sacred vessels and the magnificent vestments? Chiefly for the celebration of the Mass. For what purpose the lights that burn on the altar, the flowers that exhale their perfume, the clouds of incense that fill the sanctuary, for what else than to honor and to place before our eyes the majesty of the Eucharistic sacrifice?

It must not be forgotten, in fine, that the Eucharistic sacrifice is an inexhaustible source of holy thoughts and pious emotions, always refreshing, comforting, and quickening both mind and heart.¹¹ At

¹⁰ *In hoc sacramento recolitur passio Christi, secundum quod ejus effectus ad fideles derivatur, sed tempore passionis recolitur passio Christi secundum hoc quod in ipso capite nostro fuit perfecta, quod quidem factum est semel, quotidie autem fructum dominicae passionis fideles percipiunt, et ideo illa commemoratio fit semel in anno, haec autem quotidie et propter fructum et propter jugem memoriam. . . . Veniente veritate cessat figura. Hoc autem sacramentum est figura quaedam et exemplum dominicae passionis. Et ideo in die quo ipsa passio Domini recolitur, prout realiter gesta est, non celebratur consecratio hujus sacramenti. Ne tamen Ecclesia ea etiam die sit sine fructu passionis per hoc sacramentum nobis exhibito, corpus Christi consecratum die praecedenti reservatur sumendum illo die, non autem sanguis propter periculum, et quia sanguis specialius est imago dominicae passionis. Nec verum est quod quidam dicunt, quod per immisionem particulae corporis Christi in vinum convertatur vinum in sanguinem. Hoc enim aliter fieri non potest quam per consecrationem factam sub debita forma verborum (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 2 ad 1 et 2).*

¹¹ *Hoc Ecclesiae sacramentum, quoniam assidua sui repraesentatione memoriam innovat, fidem auget, spem roborat, charitatem confirmat, non superfluum, sed valde necessarium est. . . . Solvit quidem et plene tollit peccata mundi Agnus Dei in cruce immolatus; nec tamen idcirco, ut dixi, superfluum est in altari oblatum. Et ut in teipso hoc dicas, adverte quicumque haec legis, teque ipsum interroga, quando magis movearis, si tamen quod profiteris firmiter credis, utrum quando dicitur: Christus olim inter homines apparuit; an quando dicitur: Christus nunc inter homines conversatur; quando dicitur: Olim in cruce pependit; an quando dicitur: Nunc in altari offertur: utrum, inquam, te magis moveat et ad admirandum et amandum accendat ejus prae-*

the altar all the rays of heavenly truth and grace meet as in a focus. Who can approach this glowing hearth without being inflamed with ardent devotion and a fervent love of God? The altar on which the God-man day after day offers Himself before our eyes and by our hands, is the holy hearth where faith, hope, and love are enkindled and inflamed, where the spirit of prayer is enlivened and devotion is aroused and ascends to heaven itself. "The fire on the altar shall always burn," God said in the Old Law (Lev. 6:12). But in reality it is upon our altars that God has enkindled a fire that shall never be extinguished. All the mysteries and truths which are hidden in the Sacrifice of the Mass and which appeal to the heart with a wonderful force from the altar, call forth the spirit and words of prayer. Is it difficult to raise ourselves in thought to heaven, to lift our mind to God, although the earth as a leaden weight ever drags us downward, when in the Mass heaven descends to us, when our God and Redeemer stands before us, humbly veiled under the appearances of bread and wine? Christ descends under the mean appearances of material food, with which our thoughts and cares are concerned, that silently and gently He may wean us from those thoughts and cares and raise our hearts heavenward.

We are in a wonderland of mysteries, where under the shadow of foreign appearances the manna of life eternal grows and the waters of salvation rush along. Our Lord and Saviour is there awaiting the tribute of our adoration. Behold! the Church raises aloft the cross of the Redeemer, crying unto us: "You are poor sinners, altogether destitute of honor before God," and she points out to us the avenging hand of justice raised above our life and our sins. Then we strike our breast; our conscience awakes, accuses and convicts, so that we exclaim: Through my fault! And we bow our head under the weight of the reproaches and accusations of our

dicata absentia quam demonstrata praesentia? Sed scio quia non diffiteris, quod verum est, magis humana corda moveri praesentibus quam absentibus rebus. . . . Movetur igitur magis ad praesentem quam ad absentem, movetur magis ad visum quam ad auditum Christum, movetur ad admirandum, movetur ad amandum, quo amore amanti generatur remissio peccatorum. . . . Non est ergo superfluum Christi corporis et sanguinis sacramentum, quo vivacior memoria excitatur, quo ferventior dilectio provocatur, quo plenior peccatorum remissio comparatur. Non est superfluum, quia non tantum per id quod Deus est, sed etiam per id quod homo est, nobiscum est usque ad consummationem saeculi (Petrus Venerab., *Tractatus contra Petrobrusianos* [Migne, P.L., CLXXXIX, p. 813]).

thoughts. But we do not sink into the abyss of despair. The night, through the mercy of God, has become light. For "Peace to men of good will" the angels sang; and over the cross this peace embraced impending justice and disarmed it. We have before us Christ's body and blood, which prove to us the great love of God and wrest from our hearts a thanksgiving full of joy.¹² As our Saviour has given us the most encouraging assurance in the words: "If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you" (John 16:23), our courage must then be boundless when we hold in our hands Christ, the well-beloved Son Himself, when we pray to Him and He Himself prays for us. Then our gaze falls upon the great community of those who are united with us at the sacred family table of Jesus Christ, upon His holy Church, upon our brothers and sisters gone before us and detained in the purification and expiation of purgatory, upon all for whom Christ died. Our heart, enlarged to embrace them all in view of the love of Christ, includes them in our prayers. Thus naturally prayers crowd each other within us and on our lips.

Prayer finds forcible expression in the numerous ceremonies performed by the priest: in bowing, kissing the altar, in the sign of the cross, in genuflecting, and in many other symbolic actions. The Church would do violence to herself and act contrary to the current of her feelings if she did not thus in a variety of ways reveal the spirit of prayer. Who would not be moved on beholding in the spirit of faith our wounded Saviour stretched on the hard wood of the cross, His body bruised and torn, His blood poured out, and all the love blazing out from His wounds? Hence it is not surprising if these lively sentiments burst forth into unceasing prayers and into a multitude of ceremonies surrounding the Holy Sacrifice, down even to the color of the sacerdotal vestments. These are not mere empty forms, they are customs disposed to move the very soul of man, in which the ever youthful and fresh emotions of our Church find expression. These noble and holy sentiments manifest themselves in the ancient prayers and chants woven into the

¹² Vere dignum et justum est . . . tibi debitam servitutem per ministerium hujus impletionem (*sacrificial celebration*) persolvere, quia non solum peccantibus veniam tribuis, sed etiam praemia petentibus impertiris. Et quod perpeti malis operibus promeremur, magna pietate depellis, ut nos ad tuae reverentiae cultum et terrore cogas et amore perducas (*Sacrament. Gregor.*).

rite of the Mass: in prayers which for their sublime simplicity cannot be surpassed, in choral chants which resound through the halls of the Church as melodies from a better world. They are prayers and chants that bloom in an eternal youth, ever full of the vigor of life, ever attractive, as is all that emanates from the mind of the highly gifted human soul when filled with God.

b) Among the ordinances for the dispensation of grace which principally and immediately relate to the sanctification of man, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass holds, in many respects, the most prominent place. This is based on the relation which the Sacrifice of the Mass bears to the sacrifice of the cross. The sacrifice of the cross is the original source of all grace; for from the sacrifice of the cross all the blessings of redemption proceed and all the means of grace draw their virtue and efficacy. Now, in the Sacrifice of the Mass the inexhaustible source of grace and salvation of the sacrifice of the cross is transferred from the past to the present; from a distance it is brought near to us. For this reason and under this aspect, the Eucharistic sacrifice can, in a certain sense, be designated as the source of the grace-giving sacraments and sacramentals.¹³

If we consider the Sacrifice of the Mass chiefly as a means of grace,¹⁴ it is inferior, indeed, to the sacraments, inasmuch as it cannot, as they do, directly efface sin and impart sanctifying grace; but in other respects the sacrifice excels them, since by the sacraments only certain graces are obtained and those merely for the recipient, while the Mass can obtain directly or at least indirectly all

¹³ *Missae sacrificium non quidem uti sacramenta, immediate institutum est ut gratiam ex opere operato conferat, sed fontem constituit unde sacramenta vim suam hauriunt, et thesaurum bonorum, quibus miseriae fidelium ex omni parte subvenitur: hic obtinent peccatores gratiam sese disponendi ad conversionem, hic succurritur insufficientiae adorationis et gratiarum actionis quas Deo offerimus, hic satisfit pro peccatis, hic impetrantur quaecunque bona sive temporalia sive spiritualia. Atque idcirco, quemadmodum sacrificium crucis est opus salutis nostrae consummativum et prima origo omnis santitatis et justitiae, ita sacrificium Missae est praecipuum medium meritorum crucis applicativum et proinde totius oeconomiae gratiae centrum (Lambrecht, *De ss. Miss. sacrif.*, V, i, 4).*

¹⁴ *Alia causa institutionis Eucharistiae est copiosa et multiplex et misericordissima subventio indigentiae nostrae. Hujus quippe dignissimi celebratio ac sumptio sacramenti est nobis quotidianum contra quotidiana nostra peccata remedium, infirmitatis ac fragilitatis nostrae praesidium ac munimen, paupertatis nostrae ditatio, passionum dejectio, expugnatio vitiorum, confirmatio et auctio gratiarum: imo ineffabiles utilitates ex hoc sacramento nostris proveniunt animabus (Dion. Carthus., *De vita Curator.*, a. 15).*

divine graces and blessings, and those not only for the one who celebrates, but also for others, especially those in whose behalf it is celebrated.¹⁵ Consequently the efficacy of the Mass is more universal and comprehensive than that of the sacraments. The Eucharistic sacrifice is truly a means of salvation; for it has great power to avert all evil from us and to procure for us all goods, all kinds of benefits and blessings. The Mass reconciles God's justice and leads us to the treasury of graces, by which we are disposed worthily to receive the sacraments and to obtain sacramental graces. In this manner the Eucharistic sacrifice tends to the possession, increase, and preservation of sacramental grace; but in how far has it its origin in the Holy Sacrifice?

The chief blessing of grace is contained in the holy sacraments. The sacraments are "stars that light up the firmament of fallen humanity, wellsprings in the desert of the pilgrimage of life, miracles of the love of God, mercies of Jesus Christ." They obtain those graces which correspond to and relieve the general continual necessities of Christian life. Their efficacy consists essentially in removing the curse of sin and in infusing into the soul the great grace of sanctification. They were instituted by Jesus Christ to produce and awaken, to preserve and strengthen, to heal and restore, to increase and perfect, the higher, supernatural life of the soul, that mystical life of grace of the children of God. The sacrifice of the cross is the primary source, which, at the altar in the Mass, gushes forth anew day by day to refill continually the channels of the sacraments which bring to us the saving waters of redemption. Inasmuch as on the altar the same sacrifice is offered as was offered on the cross, we may designate the Mass also as the sacrificial source whence flow the sacramental streams of grace and salvation.¹⁶ Or the Mass may be regarded as a daily rising sun of grace whose pure, white rays of light are refracted sevenfold in the sacraments, and thus form the golden peace bow which connects the riches of heaven with the poverty of the earth.

The relation of the sacraments to the sacrifice of Christ is mys-

¹⁵ Suarez, disp. LXXVI, sect. 3, n. 4.

¹⁶ Vere ac necessario [Eucharistia] fons omnium gratiarum dicenda est, cum fontem ipsum coelestium charismatum et donorum, omniumque sacramentorum auctorem, Christum Dominum, admirabili modo in se contineat, a quo, tanquam a fonte, ad alia sacramenta, quidquid, boni et perfectionis habent, derivatur (*Catech. Rom.*, II, chap. 4, q. 40, n. 2).

tically indicated, inasmuch as from the pierced heart of the Saviour on the cross flowed forth a stream of water and of blood. The water flowing from the side of Christ symbolizes the water of baptism, which cleanses from sin; the stream of blood refers to the blood of Christ, wherewith the soul in the sacrament of the altar is nourished and strengthened unto life eternal. In these two sacraments the others are comprised, since baptism is the beginning, the Eucharist the term and consummation of them all. Hence by the flow of blood and water from the heart of the Crucified is mystically indicated that the sacraments draw their power from the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross and, consequently, also from the renewal of this sacrificial death on the altar in the Mass.

The sacramentals are also means of salvation, but in a weaker sense and in an essentially different manner from the sacraments. The sacramentals have been instituted by the Church. As the divine institution of salvation, the Church has received from Christ the mission and the power to impart in full measure, not merely to man, but also to nature, the blessings of redemption, and to make all things new. We know that in consequence of sin the entire creation is in mourning and misery, enslaved and liable to perish, and therefore longs to be freed from the thralldom of corruption and, with the children of God, to be glorified in liberty (Rom. 8:19). This final renovation and transformation of all creation is begun, or anticipated, by the use of the sacramentals, which are destined to remove as far as possible the consequences and misery of sin, not merely among men, but throughout the domain of created nature; for this also pertains to complete redemption. Through the merits and intercession of the Church, the sacramentals acquire a special power to remove the curse of sin, to destroy the dominion of Satan or to render it harmless, to free man from manifold wants, to impart temporal welfare and blessings, to obtain for us the divine protection and assistance, to dedicate and sanctify persons and objects destined to the service of God.

The sacramentals are divided into exorcisms, blessings, and consecrations; their salutary effects extend to mankind and to the work of man's hands, as well as to objects of nature. The Church employs her exorcisms over man and irrational creatures to expel from them the influence of the evil spirit who by sin has obtained power to injure and ruin us and our belongings. Man and objects in nature

withdrawn from evil influence are then dedicated and sanctified for the service of the Lord. The blessings obtain for man, both spiritually and corporally, and for all that belongs to him or serves to his use, the divine protection against evil and the divine favor for all that is good and salutary.

The Church blesses and consecrates to God not only persons, but also inanimate things: thus she blesses or dedicates or consecrates churches, cemeteries, altars and bells, crosses and pictures, candles and incense, water and oil, the vessels and articles for Mass, the vestments of the priest, candles for the feast of the Purification, the ashes on Ash Wednesday, the palms of Holy Week, and so forth. She blesses what is necessary for the support of the body: food and medicine, cattle and the fruits of the field; as well as the requirements of human society: weapons and tools, houses and ships, bridges and streets. In brief, there is scarcely an important requisite of the natural and supernatural life of man to which the Church denies the protection and blessing of her sacramentals.¹⁷ Like the sacraments, the sacramentals are also connected with the Eucharistic sacrifice, the source of blessings, from which they, in a certain sense, draw their salutary efficacy; for on the altar in the Mass that stream of blood and water from Golgotha continues to flow, in whose flood the earth, the sea, the starry firmament, in a word, the universe is cleansed, that is, touched with the blessing of redemption and led on to its future transformation: *Unda manat et cruor: terra, pontus, astra, mundus quo lavantur flumine!* (*Hymn. Eccl.*)

Therefore, while Christ's sacrifice is the fountainhead of all the blessings of redemption, the sacraments and sacramentals should be regarded as brooks and rivulets which convey to all who are well disposed the inexhaustible blessings of that sacrifice. This connection of the sacramental means of salvation with the Mass is expressed and sanctioned in various ways in the liturgy of the Church. At the ordination of priests the Church says: "It behooves the priest to offer sacrifice, to bless, to baptize"; and at the consecration of bishops, she says: "It behooves the bishop . . . to consecrate, to offer sacrifice." Here the power of offering sacrifice is placed in the closest relation with the power of blessing and consecrating. The administration of the sacraments and the sacramentals is en-

¹⁷ Cf. H. A. Reinhold, "The Hallowing of All Life," *Commonweal*, XXXVIII (1943), 607 ff.; *Catholic Digest*, VIII (1943), 93 ff.

trusted to the same persons (priests and bishops) who are called and authorized to offer the Eucharistic sacrifice; for the power of administering the sacraments and the sacramentals has, so to speak, its source in the higher and more eminent power of celebrating Mass. Because priests and bishops offer sacrifice, they can and may in the name of Christ and of the Church dispense graces and blessings. The power of blessing is, so to speak, the outcome and extension of the power of offering sacrifice, an accessory to the divine service.

The connection of the sacramental graces with the Eucharistic sacrifice is, moreover indicated by the fact that many liturgical formulas of blessing are inserted in the missal, and still more so by the regulation of the Church requiring that the administration of the sacraments and sacramentals should take place, as much as possible, in connection with the Mass. Thus the sacrament of the altar is consummated and prepared during the celebration of Mass and should also, as much as possible, be then administered and received.¹⁸ Minor orders and especially major orders are conferred on clerics at the altar during the celebration of Mass. In connection with the Mass the material of many sacraments is blessed; thus baptismal water on Holy Saturday and on the eve of Pentecost, the holy oils on Holy Thursday.¹⁹ Immediately before Mass the blessing of the

¹⁸ The interior relation between the sacrifice and the sacrament of the Eucharist finds a manifold expression in the liturgy. Whenever possible the Communion is to be given *intra missam statim post communionem sacerdotis celebrantis*, and only *ex rationabili causa* is it to be administered outside of Mass. In the latter case the stole to be used is not always white, but it should be of the color of the office of the day, thus corresponding to the Mass of the day, so that at least by the color of the stole the receiving of Communion may be characterized as a participation in the sacrifice (*Rituale Romanum* and S. R. C., March 12, 1836). The time of day for distributing Communion (except *per modum viatici*) is limited to the hours when it is permitted to celebrate Mass (S. R. C., September 7, 1816). On the feast of Christmas Holy Communion may be distributed *post mediam noctem* only in those places where an Apostolic indult expressly allows the midnight Mass or an existing custom sanctions it (S. R. C., March 23, 1866; December 3, 1701; February 16, 1781). In Holy Week from the time that the Blessed Sacrament is removed on Holy Thursday until the Communion of the High Mass on Holy Saturday, the Eucharist may not be given to those who are in good health (those who are grievously ill may receive it *per modum viatici*). On Holy Saturday it may be given to all the faithful, but only during the Mass or immediately after it (can. 867).

¹⁹ The Mass for the blessing of the holy oils is called *Missa chrismalis* in the Sacramentary of St. Gregory. It was preceded by a *Missa ad reconciliationem poenitentium* and followed by a *Missa serotina vel vespertina*.

candles, of the ashes, and of palms takes place. The coronation of the pope, the clothing and profession of religious, the anointing of kings, the consecration of churches and altars, are rites and ceremonies most closely connected with the celebration of Mass.

In the Eucharistic sacrifice originates also the sacredness and sublime dignity of the Catholic priesthood, which imprints on the soul at ordination the ineffaceable sacerdotal character. The grades by which the ministers of the Church step by step ascend to the highest (the episcopal) dignity, are chiefly distinguished according to the power concerning the Sacrifice of the Mass. The first, the minor orders, empower the cleric with a more remote participation in the service of the altar; while the subdiaconate and diaconate have closer participation in the Holy Sacrifice and permit a closer assistance in its celebration. The priest possesses the power to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, that is, to celebrate the sacrifice of the New Covenant, which imparts to him an indescribably sublime dignity. Finally, the bishop is raised and exalted above the simple priest in this, that he not only possesses this heavenly power of sacrifice for himself, but he can also communicate it to others, and propagate it by the sacramental ordination of priests.

3. The Eucharistic sacrifice is, therefore, the soul or life of the entire divine worship, the sun that illumines all religious celebrations, the heart that gives pulse to all sacramental cult, the fountain-head of the whole ecclesiastical life of grace; in short, it is the center of the Catholic liturgy. If the Catholic liturgy is a mighty stream with its sweet salutary waters cleansing, sanctifying, vivifying, fructifying, beautifying, transforming, inundating, the entire Church, all this is due to the holy fountain of the Mass, which ceases not to flow on the altar and to diffuse the vigor of life throughout all the members of the mystical body of Christ. Every grace, every consecration, every blessing issues from the depths of the sacrifice of Christ. Under the influence of the celestial light and supernal heat which daily radiate anew from that sun of grace, the Eucharistic sacrifice, all creation tends towards its final consummation and eternal transfiguration.

The Sacrifice of the Mass is the center of the Christian religion, the sun of spiritual exercises, the heart of devotion, and the soul of piety; hence

that ever-new, never-failing power by which the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass attracts all Catholic hearts and gathers Catholic nations around its altars. Already before the dawn of day, before the morning flush enters our churches, the bells ring out their summons to the Holy Sacrifice; and soon here and there a light appears at the window; over the crisp snow steps are hastening to the house of God, while the moon still looks down from heaven. "Happy does he rise at early dawn who strives after what is good." Everywhere the Mass retains this magnetic power of attraction, whether celebrated within the marble walls of St. Peter's at Rome, in gorgeous vestments, amid thousands of brilliant lights, encompassed with the master-pieces of Christian art, and adorned with its fairest festal robe of flowers and blossoms; or whether it is celebrated without pomp under a canopy of branches of tress or in a poor wooden shed erected by the hands of new converts now gathered around the missionary celebrating the holy mysteries. All this is but a striking proof that Catholics do not worship the exterior, but the substance, and that it is not the charm of religious pageantry but the reality which attracts them. Who has not from childhood the sweetest and purest recollections of the celebration of the Mass, even though he witnessed it in only a poor village church? And this magnetic attraction is not of today, nor was it but of yesterday, nor will it perhaps tomorrow die away. It is not the fictitious power of novelty. More than fifteen centuries ago the Holy Sacrifice drew our forefathers around the altar with a power that overcame all the terrors of persecution, which often broke in upon the peaceful celebration of Mass. Thus St. Dionysius of Alexandria, who lived in the third century, relates: "Though hunted after and persecuted by everybody, even then we did not omit the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. In every place, wherever we, torn from each other, bore our numerous trials, the field, the desert, the ship, the habitations of animals served us as temples for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice." When the storm of persecution raged throughout the whole world, the stream of grace and benediction poured from the Holy Mass celebrated in the catacombs, or underground caverns; just as at a much later period this Holy Sacrifice, persecuted by Protestantism, took refuge in the garrets. But even in this dire extremity the attractive power of the Mass was not weakened. Catholics went down into underground dens, into the catacombs, and climbed up under the rafters of houses, to pray for those whose hatred had driven to the most wretched nooks what was most holy to them, and who were vaunting themselves in edifices reared by Catholic piety.²⁰

What should not the Holy Sacrifice, therefore, be for us priests, and what should not we priests be for the Holy Sacrifice? The

²⁰ Eberhard, *Kanzelvorträge*, I, 317.

priesthood was instituted for the Eucharist. Our priestly life is made up of duties connected with it. To this end we have been chosen out of the world and separated from it. The seal of Jesus Christ is stamped upon us; the spirit and the ways of the world, and even the permissible things of the world, should not be for us what they are for others. By the chisel of the Holy Ghost an invisible character has been engraved on our soul that we may forever be the property of the Blessed Sacrament. What are we, and what should we be? Once only did Mary draw the eternal Word down from heaven, whilst every day we priests draw Him down from heaven to earth. She carried Jesus in her arms until He had reached the age of boyhood, but for us He prolongs His childhood throughout our lifetime. Can we look into the face of our Mother and tell her that in this respect we are greater than she was, and not think on the sanctity that our awe-inspiring office requires of us? Oh, how happy would the long martyrdom of our spiritual life be if we but aspired to priestly holiness! The attraction of the Eucharist should be our vocation, our ecclesiastical spirit, our joy. The fires of hell cannot in all eternity burn out the sacerdotal character imprinted on our soul in ordination; but the splendors of heaven will make that sacred character shine out with so much the greater luster.²¹

THE MASS, SCHOOL AND SOURCE OF CATHOLIC LIFE

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the soul and the heart of the liturgy of the Church; it is the mystical chalice which presents to our lips the sweet fruit of the passion of the God-man, grace. Hence we may conclude what influence the Mass must and will have upon true Christian life and upon all who are striving after perfection. The impious world, estranged from God, seated in wickedness (I John 5:19), has a desolate aspect; it resembles a sterile, barren wilderness, "devoid of fruit and divested of flowers." But in the midst of this desert stands the Church like a blooming, fruitful oasis, like a paradise of God, wherein dwell joy and gladness, thanksgiving and the ringing hymn of praise (Isa. 51:3). To the delight of God and of the angels, this garden of the Church, planted by the Lord, shines with the most beautiful and the most fragrant variety of flowers, with the abundance of heavenly blossoms and fruits. Rav-

²¹ Cf. F. Faber, *The Blessed Sacrament*.

ishly beautiful is this garden, where "the violets of humility bloom, the lilies of purity shine brightly, and the roses of martyrdom glow." But whence do these noble, heavenly plants draw their life's sap, their nourishment, their growth, their perfume and their bright colors? Chiefly from the Eucharistic sacrifice and fountain of grace. The fountains of the Saviour, which in the garden of the Church unceasingly flow on thousands of altars, irrigate and fructify the soil, refresh and strengthen the tender shoots, and cause the seed of virtue to blossom and ripen. If the just man flourishes like the palm and is likened unto a tree planted near the running waters and producing fruit in due season, all this is to be attributed principally to the stream of grace issuing from the Sacrifice of the Mass. Where, on the contrary, the altar has been buried under ruins and the Eucharistic source of grace has been obstructed, there all growth of higher virtue and heroic perfection languishes, withers, and dies. That Christ's sacrifice, celebrated day after day, is the deep mystical source of all fullness of virtue in the Church, will appear evident when we show that Christian perfection must be acquired and preserved by the spirit of sacrifice, and that the supernatural, heroic spirit of sacrifice can be drawn only from the fountain of the perennial Sacrifice of the Mass.

a) Christ's doctrine and example prove that every true Christian life must be a life of perpetual sacrifice, a life of self-denial and mortification. To live in a Christian manner is to follow the teaching of Jesus; and what else is this teaching than the word from the cross? (I Cor. 1:17.) "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23). In this saying the Lord included all His commandments and encouraged us to imitate Him; for the Christian life is a copy and imitation of the life of Jesus on earth, which in its whole course, from the crib to the cross, was one great, uninterrupted sacrifice. Christ's life of sacrifice Christians must imitate and imprint on their own lives; for He has given us an example that we may follow in His footsteps (I Pet. 2:21), and as He walked, we must also follow (I John 2:6), that we may be conformed to His image (Rom. 8:9) and bear in ourselves His heavenly likeness (I Cor. 15:49).

That the life of the Christian must be a life of perpetual sacrifice is evident from its very nature. The Christian life consists essentially in loving God and our neighbor. Now, this mode of life can

endure, be developed, and attain the mastery, only when the inordinate love of the world and of self is destroyed in our hearts, that is, unremittingly sacrificed under the immolating knife of interior and exterior mortification. This latter demands a constant renunciation in the use of earthly goods and in the enjoyment of worldly pleasures, as well as a courageous endurance of temporal hardships and privations. In order that heavenly flames of everlasting love may burn brightly and purely and transform the life of the soul with supernatural beauty and holiness, all earthly love must be extinguished, nature prone to evil must be overcome, selfishness must be uprooted, and every worldly attachment must be sacrificed. But this is not yet sufficient. To become perfect we must do and suffer much for God, we must by interior recollection of mind walk continually in the presence of God, in all confidence communing with Him, following as much as possible on every occasion the inspirations and suggestions of divine grace. All this is hard, very hard indeed, for the natural man; it costs combat, self-denial, and exertion. It is only by dint of labor and energy that the reign of sin and sensuality is destroyed in the heart, and in its place the kingdom of grace and of the love of God is established and developed. The spirit of sacrifice is, therefore, the chief element, the touchstone of all true virtue and holiness. ✓

Self-sacrifice is absolutely necessary for solid asceticism, for the perfection of the love of God and of our neighbor. Ever true is the golden axiom: "The greater the violence thou offerest to thyself, the greater the progress thou wilt make."²² In order to ascend from a lower to a higher degree of the love of God, it is not merely sufficient to pray and to nourish devout affections, but much painstaking and self-renunciation are requisite. Whether you are a beginner in the way of purification, or have made some progress in the illuminative way, or are proficient in the unitive way, always and everywhere you must offer in sacrifice yourself and whatever you possess; you cannot stand still for a moment on the road of self-immolation. "Lord, how often shall I resign myself, and in what things shall I leave myself?" Thus the faithful soul inquires, and the Lord replies to her that the sacrifice of self must be uninterrupted and universal: "Always and at all times; as in little things, so also in great. I make no exception, but will have thee to be found in all

²² *De imit. Christi*, I, chap. 25.

things divested of thyself.”²³ If you would truly live as a disciple of the Crucified, you must be crucified to the world and the world must be crucified to you (Gal. 6:14), you must die daily to the world and to yourself, your life must be a perpetual death.²⁴ “The life of man upon earth is a warfare” (Job 7:1). In this Christian warfare many a hard and fearful battle must be fought against visible and invisible enemies; you will have to dispense with many things and deny yourself many things, to bear much and undergo much. “Thou must be willing, for the love of God, to suffer all things: labors and sorrows, temptations and vexations, anxieties, necessities, infirmities, injustices, contradictions, censure, manifold humiliations, confusions, corrections, and contempts. These sufferings help to acquire virtue; these prove the soldier of Christ, these prepare a heavenly crown.”²⁵ This combat against sensuality, pride, and the concupiscence of the eyes, against the temptations of the world and the assaults of the devil lasts during our whole life: it is a warfare for all time, from the beginning to the end.

b) The daily carrying of the cross, the holy hatred of self, and the Christian renunciation of the world; in short, the constant life of sacrifice which makes the Christian perfect and produces saints, is something so far removed from earth, so far surpassing all natural understanding and strength, that it is only from the heart, wounds, and sacrifice of Jesus that we can receive the light, power, and strength requisite for such a life. Such superhuman love of the cross, such a spirit and power of sacrifice, is a plant which not corrupt nature but only the soil of grace can produce and cause to fructify. It needs ever to be refreshed with the dew of heaven and the water of life, that it may not unhappily wither and die. The inspirations and helps of grace for constant self-sacrifice issue, therefore, principally from the altar, where Christ every day and at every hour gives Himself up for us as an offering and a sacrifice (Eph. 5:2). Day after day the Church offers the body and blood of Christ, and in union with this divine sacrifice she also immolates herself; the faithful assisting at Mass offer themselves likewise “in the spirit of humility and with a contrite heart.” This spiritual self-sacrifice

²³ *Ibid.*, III, chap. 37.

²⁴ *Scias pro certo, quia morientem te oportet ducere vitam (Ibid.*, II, chap. 12).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, III, chap. 35.

of the Church and of her children, which at the altar is made by the will, must then be realized in life "by the burden and heat of the day," by deeds. The Christian life is formed and developed according to the model and by the power of the sacrifice of Christ upon the altar. The Eucharistic sacrifice trains and forms us for the life of sacrifice and gives us strength to pursue it; for it is the school and the source of the disposition and courage necessary to lead such a life.

1. The worthy celebration of Mass and the devout attendance thereat, independently of the graces to be obtained, are among the chief means of virtue; for the liturgy of the Mass is by its nature calculated to impress and to move deeply all those who take part in it with faith and attention, to excite and awaken in the celebrant and the faithful pious thoughts and feelings, wholesome affections and resolutions, and virtuous acts acceptable to God. The Eucharistic sacrifice is so constituted as to be a school in which the most manifold virtues are awakened and nourished, strengthened and purified. From the altar proceeds the impulse to all who are striving after the higher virtues, after a life of perfection.

a) We must make progress in the way of salvation, we must grow in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ; but where else shall we find more incitement to piety, where a purer, healthier, and more strengthening food for the soul for a virtuous, religious life than in the Sacrifice of the Mass? Faith, hope, and charity, humility and meekness, obedience and patience, gratitude and resignation, self-denial and renunciation; in a word, all the virtues bloom in the heavenly atmosphere which surrounds the altar during Mass. For in the Mass our Lord mystically accomplishes, in the presence of the faithful, the entire work of redemption, He offers His life of sacrifice and His sacrificial death, and thus He appears in the closest proximity to us as the brightest and the most affecting model of all virtue and holiness.²⁶ Could the God-man practice and reveal His ardent and cheerful love of sacrifice, His humility and His obedience, His love of poverty, mortification, and obscurity in a more striking manner than He does in the Eucharistic sacrifice? Our Lord once showed St. Mechtilde a large ring which surrounded Himself

²⁶ Agnoscite quod agitis. Imitamini quod tractatis: quatenus mortis dominicæ mysterium celebrantes, mortificare membra vestra a vitiis et concupiscentiis omnibus procuretis (*Pontif. Roman., De ordinatione Presbyteri*).

and her own soul; this ring contained seven precious stones, signifying the sevenfold manner in which the Lord is present in the Holy Sacrifice for our salvation. He comes upon the altar in so great humility that no one is so lowly that the Lord will not stoop down to him, if he only desire Him; with so much patience that there is no sinner or enemy with whom He does not bear and to whom He will not grant full discharge of his sins, if he only seeks to be reconciled with Him; with such love that no one is so cold or hardened whose heart He will not inflame and soften, if he but will it; with such boundless generosity that no one is so poor whom He will not immensely enrich; as a food so sweet and so pleasant that no one is so sick or famished as not to be invigorated and fully satiated thereby; with such brightness that no heart is so blinded and obscured as not to be enlightened and purified by His presence; finally, with such plenitude of holiness and grace that there is no one so slothful and so distracted as not to be aroused and inspired to devotion by His love.²⁷

b) The Eucharistic sacrifice is the most glorious crown of the great work of salvation and at the same time the living memorial of all the mysteries of Christ. All that is mysterious and divine, majestic and edifying, in religion, in the Incarnation, in the Catholic Church and her holy year, all this is combined and enclosed in the liturgy of the Mass as in a focus. Whoever considers this devoutly in the spirit of a lively faith cannot fail to grow strong and increase in virtue and merit.

Above all, the Eucharistic sacrifice brings vividly before the mind the passion and death of Christ, the God-man.²⁸ Amidst the joys of Christmas and the triumph of Easter, Mount Calvary with its eternal seriousness remains the central point of every sacrificial celebration; the Confiteor and the Kyrie eleison are never suppressed from the Mass by the chant of the Alleluja. Hence it follows that the faithful, when hearing Mass, should devoutly dwell on and

²⁷ *Liber specialis gratiae*, III, chap. 18.

²⁸ Quia consacramentales et concorporales sumus Christo, licet non vera, sed imaginaria passione in seipso immoletur, vera tamen et non imaginaria passione in membris suis immolatur, quando nos, qui in memoriam passionis suae sacramentum tantae suae pietatis agimus sacrificando ipsum, flendo et cor nostrum vera compunctione atterendo, mortem tam pii et dilecti Domini et Patris annuntiamus (Alger., *De sacrament. corp. et sang. domin.*, I, xvi, 115).

revere the passion and death of Jesus. No time is more proper for this devout meditation than the sacred time of Mass, when the Lamb of God is mystically immolated before our eyes. Assuredly it is not difficult during the celebration of Mass to place one's self beneath the cross and embrace it; for the vestments of the priest, the crucifix on the altar, the many signs of the cross, the mingling of the water and wine, the separate elements of bread and wine, the elevating of the sacrificial offerings, the breaking of the host, the movements of the celebrant at the altar, in short, the entire rite of the Mass represents the various mysteries of the passion, reminding us what numerous and bitter sufferings Christ endured for us, giving His life by dying the most cruel death for us. At every Mass place yourself in spirit at the foot of the cross with the sorrowful Mother of God, with the virginal disciple St. John, and the penitent St. Magdalen, and there represent to yourself the precious blood of Jesus trickling down upon you, think of the pains and wounds of Jesus, of the vinegar and gall, the nails and the lance; and how can you remain cold and unconcerned? Should not your soul, at the thought of such awful mysteries as were accomplished on Mount Calvary for your sake and which are mystically renewed upon the altar, tremble with holy fear and your heart be inflamed with love, contrition, and gratitude? ²⁹ In the wounds and pains of Jesus there is a countless number of reproaches to us for our cowardice and sloth in the service of God, for the inconstancy of our will, for our aversion to trials, privations, and humiliations.

Daily the Mass displays before our eyes the tree of the cross with its arms raised heavenward, its withered branches bearing the sweet fruit of the body of Christ. Mount Calvary spreads itself out above the altar before our eyes, and the cup of the chalice receives anew the blood of Jesus Christ. But then few witnessed the bloody Mass which Jesus Christ, the high priest, Himself celebrated visibly on the altar of Calvary; ah, fewer still stood there to partake of the blessings that proceeded from the

²⁹ In sacrificio altaris magnus ignis devotionis et dilectionis exigitur, quia ibi est tota nostra salus. Certe indevotissimus est sacerdos, qui ibi non conteritur, ubi Filius Altissimi ante Patris oculos immolatur. Sane sacerdos devotus et prudens, dum mensae divinae assistit, nihil cogitat, nisi Christum Jesum et hunc crucifixum. Ponit ante oculos cordis sui Christi humilitatem et patientiam, Christi angustias et dolores; Christi opprobria, sputa, flagella, lanceam, crucem, mortem devote et sollicite recolit, et se in ipsa memoria passionis dominicae crucifigit (Petr. Blesens., *Serm.*, LVI).

cross. At that time, when men were wanting, nature herself performed the funeral rites for Him. The earth quaked, as if moved with compassion; the rocks were rent. The cracking of the rocks tolled His death. The brightness of day veiled itself in universal darkness, dark curtains hung in front of the bright temple of creation, and the sun, concealing his countenance, joined the funeral procession. This mourning throughout the vast temple of inanimate creation is indeed sublime in its grandeur and most awfully impressive in its beauty.

More beautiful still, viewed with the eyes of the soul, are the obsequies which take place in the Sacrifice of the Mass. By the institution of the Mass, that sacrifice which is offered at all times and which traces its course with the sun around the earth from east to west, every Christian is privileged to look upon this sacrifice of the Lord, to join in His funeral procession, and to be overwhelmed at the foot of the cross with sentiments of contrition, gratitude, and love. Now the Lord rends hearts of stone, now sorrow for sins fills souls and clothes them in mourning, now man's interior revives in the meditation on the unutterable sufferings and death of Christ. Thus is Christ's death daily placed before the hearts and the eyes of Catholics. They gaze upon the open book of His wounds and His death; the Mass itself proclaims His death. And this language is understood by all Christians who have not wholly given up the practice of their faith. This the peasants understand; when they join their hands, hardened by toil, and lean them on the pews, and when they recite the rosary, they represent to themselves in their prayers the mysteries of Christ's presentation, passion, and death.

The fervent were wont at all times, even in the early ages of the Church, to meditate profoundly on the passion of Christ. Thus the amiable Dominican, Henry Suso, relates that his simple mother once told him that for thirty years she had never assisted at Mass without dwelling upon the passion of Christ and without being moved to tears by its consideration. But we are not to imagine that the Sacrifice of the Mass, which leads us deeply into the mysteries and places us beneath the cross of Christ, is an obstacle to the ordinary active life, that it engenders only sentiments pertaining to the contemplative life, that it enervates the will and mind for the daily life, and causes us to underrate and to neglect the duties of our state of life. Not at all, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass refers us unceasingly to the hard, prosaic, practical life. It invites the Christian to bring with him to the Holy Sacrifice the burdens and trials of life, to offer himself to God together with his cross in union with Christ. It inspires and persuades us to exemplify in our own conduct the spirit of sacrifice of Jesus Christ, so that our entire life may be animated with the resolution of making every necessary sacrifice. Such is the greatness and

the grandeur of the Mass. It leads us in its mysteries up to the very gates of heaven and, at the same time, embraces the humblest duties and hardships of daily life.⁸⁰

“As often as thou sayest or hearest Mass, it ought to appear to thee as great and as new and as delightful as if Christ had that very same day for the first time descended into the Virgin’s womb and become man, or, hanging on the cross, was suffering and dying for the salvation of mankind.”⁸¹

Thus the frequent and devout participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is a school spurring us on to the practice of every virtue and perfection. In this school we shall be instructed in the science of salvation and of the saints only when the liturgy of the Mass is for us not a closed book sealed with seven seals, but when we penetrate through the shell into the kernel and understand what mysteries are therein concealed and what is the meaning of the rite of the sacrifice and of its prayers and ceremonies.

2. The Mass is not only a school which directs us and incites us to the practice of the different virtues, it is also an inexhaustible fountain from which gushes forth grace and strength necessary to lead the life of sacrifice enjoined on the Church militant and her children to the end of the earthly pilgrimage, when all sorrow will be changed to joy and the brief combat will be followed by an eternal triumph in heaven.

a) To the end of time, as St. Augustine says,⁸² “the Church will go forward on her pilgrimage amid the persecution of the world and the consolations of God”; during all time the Church continues on her pilgrimage here below, rejoicing in hope and patient in tribulation (Rom. 12:12) until the miseries of this life are over. She ever lives a life of sacrifice; from the beginning she shines in the color of sacrifice, for her apparel is red and her garments like those worn by them that tread in the wine press (Isa. 63:2). The Church’s life of sacrifice is mainly revealed in a twofold aspect: the sacrifice of love and the sacrifice of suffering. When Jesus was asleep in death on the cross, the Church came forth from the open wound of His pierced heart; she then inherited from her divine spouse, as her most beautiful bridal ornament, that excess of love and of suffering

⁸⁰ Eberhard, *Kanzelvorträge*, I, 338.

⁸¹ *De imit. Christi*, IV, chap. 2.

⁸² *De civit. Dei*, XVIII, chap. 51.

which animated and flooded the divine heart of Jesus at His death. On the day of her espousals with the crucified Son of God, she was adorned on Calvary with a bridal crown of thorns, and veiled in the festal garment of sacrifice. These her bridal ornaments she will not lay aside until she has finished her course of sacrifice through this dreary time and has reached the bright, happy eternity, where at last the heavenly wedding feast shall forever be celebrated in imperishable glory and endless hymns of victory.

a) "Jesus . . . went about doing good and healing" (Acts 10:38). These words comprise the entire earthly life of our Lord; they also express the action and operation of the Church, which is nothing else than Christ continuing to live and operate through His representative organ. Like the Redeemer, the Church is also "the image of the divine goodness" (Wisd. 7:26), of the merciful and communicative love of God. That great canticle of love, of the purest, most noble-minded, and most generous self-sacrificing love, which was intoned on the cross by the Saviour, resounds in His Church throughout all times and countries. The spirit of the Lord continues to hover over the Church; He has anointed and sent her to announce glad tidings to the poor and to heal the contrite of heart (Luke 4:18). As it is natural for the sun to give forth light and heat, so it is the peculiar mission of the Catholic Church to give refreshment to "all that labor and are heavily burdened" and to make them happy. Always and everywhere she is occupied in alleviating sorrow, pouring oil and wine into wounds, drying up tears, consoling the afflicted, succoring the abandoned, bringing peace and salvation to all. With maternal solicitude she is intent on relieving the corporal wants, the earthly miseries, and the many troubles of mankind; she seeks to comfort and to gladden with the gifts and services of corporal mercy the poor and the sick, the feeble and the infirm. In the words of Eberhard:

Where was there ever a corporal misery to which the Church did not lend a nursing and a healing hand? Where has she not lovingly devoted herself to raise up the mourning and withering plants? Where was ever the plague of infection too great for the Church to encounter, capable of driving her from the scene in order to leave the field to the enemy of life? To relieve the distress of the most fearful epidemics, she has ever offered her best and noblest forces. The Church has ever taken under her care the whole life of the body, from birth to death,

with all its wants and miseries. Under the wings of her charity she has comforted the whole course of the life of man, of which Holy Scripture says, "great labor is created for all men . . . until the day of their burial" (Ecclus. 40:1).

But far more intent is the Church in relieving spiritual misery, in awakening to a life of grace those who are spiritually dead, in healing the wounds and infirmities of the soul, in withdrawing man from eternal woe and perdition, in nourishing hearts desirous of salvation, with the pure, strong, and heavenly food of divine truth and grace.³³

The entire history of the Church is one of inexhaustible mercy and charity. Who could enumerate all the grand institutions of Christian charity, the orders, the congregations, and societies of Christian love and mercy, which age after age have sprung up in the soil of the Church of God and flourished for the boundless blessing and comfort of poor, suffering humanity? There is no kind of suffering, no form of bodily or spiritual misery, that has not found and does not still find alleviation and relief through these religious associations which, according to the wants of the times, have sprung up like blossoms on the living tree of the Church under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. The Church sends forth her missionaries to deliver the poor heathen from the darkness and the shadows of death; by instruction she leads the youth to Christ; to orphaned and abandoned children she is a tender, loving, and solicitous mother; she strives to bring back the erring to the way of truth and the fallen to the way of virtue; to the sick and to the imprisoned, the suffering, the distressed, and the unhappy, she is an angel of love and consolation. Along with the supernatural and overflowing good of the redemption, the Church has also brought temporal blessings, true civilization, and genuine love of mankind. She has broken the chains of the slave, restored womanhood and childhood to their rightful dignity, and purified, ennobled, and consecrated with the blessings of heaven all the circumstances of man's temporal life. Eberhard thus describes the Church's contribution to civilization:

³³ Non sicut secularis beneficentia, corporales dumtaxat necessitates sublevat Ecclesia; verum, ad exemplum benignissimi Salvatoris, omnem semper curam et operam contulit, ut duplicis substantiae totum cibaret hominem (*Collect. Lacens.*, IV, 355).

The Church, which sows broadcast the spiritual seed of the word of God and ploughs up the soil of souls with the plough of the cross of Christ, took up also the material hoe and spade and drove the plough over the fields. She has cleared forests, drained marshes, brought cheerfulness into desolate places, and changed earthly deserts into blooming gardens. And where the earth produced nothing, she by her mercy sheared the poverty of the wilderness of its terrors. Upon the eternal snow-capped Alpine summits flourish her works of charity. There in a desert of snow stand her monasteries, like plants of heaven, to refresh with generous shelter and nourishment the traveler journeying through the dreary waste.

Thus has the Church renewed and changed the face of the earth. But this she could effect only because she is the focus of the heavenly fire of love which Christ brought and kindled upon the dark, cold, and dreary world. Truly such heroic deeds of corporal and spiritual mercy, with which the Church has at all times filled the earth, could have been performed only by a charity that is patient and kind, that seeketh not itself, that endureth all things, hopeth all things, believeth all things, expecteth all things (I Cor. 13:7), and sacrifices all it possesses and its own self besides (II Cor. 12:15). Who can enumerate the sacrifices which the Church has had to make in order to accomplish the mission of peace confided to her by Christ? "Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24 f.). These words apply no less to the Church than to our Lord. For the Church is the most munificent benefactress of humanity; but the blessings she dispenses and the works of mercy she exercises cost her most noble children the greatest sacrifices; it costs them the sacrifice of their worldly goods, of honors and pleasures, of their liberty and health, of their will and the affections of the heart, of the pleasures and comforts of life, yes, even of life itself. It is only through a virginal priesthood freed from family ties, and only through poor, chaste, and obedient religious, that the Church is enabled to disseminate throughout the world the spiritual and temporal blessings of Christianity. Those, indeed, who are called to labor and to accomplish much in the world, to preserve many from its corruption and to rescue them from it, must in their sentiments be raised above the world and in heart be sincerely detached from it; they must be dead to it and to all its vain and transient

show. On the other hand, they must by a lively faith and continual devotion commune with God, walk in holy recollection and solitude of heart, and by persevering prayer and meditation keep united with God, that they may lead an unworldly, heavenly life, a life of uninterrupted penance and prayer, a life of perfect sacrifice.

This heroism, this fullness of a love that renounces the world and sacrifices itself, is to be found only within the bosom of the Catholic Church, since it is only within her pale that these fountains of the Saviour flow, whence streams forth that energy of life and love into weak human hearts in order to strengthen and animate them to a life of superhuman sacrifice. The manifold societies and institutions of Christian charity and good works, which the spirit of sacrifice has at all times founded in the Church, are precious fruits of the Eucharistic tree of life. Wherever the sacrificial altar has been destroyed or broken down, such institutions are no longer seen, or at least they do not thrive, but merely eke out a scanty and miserable existence.³⁴ For only where such works and services of benevolence are undertaken out of love for God and permeated with the sweet spirit of sacrifice, will they bear the impress of a higher motive, receive the benediction of heaven, and attract and win the hearts of men. Where, on the contrary, society fosters similar works independently of religion and "without God and without Christ," they degenerate into secular or social institutions and are regarded merely as means for obtaining subsistence, emolument, wealth, temporal rewards, or advantages. Wherever religious faith, Christian hope, and a holy spirit of self-sacrifice no longer exist in a community to inflame and enlarge the heart, there base, chilling egotism spreads its baneful blight throughout all ranks and conditions of life.³⁵

b) Although the Catholic Church, by such grand institutions of love for mankind, by such glorious proofs and results of her Christian charity, which fill every unprejudiced observer with astonishment, lavishes blessings on the world, still she has to endure from the world scorn and affliction, imprisonment and chains, contumely and death (Heb., chap. 11), to tread the thorny path of

³⁴ Cf. Allies, *The Formation of Christendom*, IV, 276-79.

³⁵ Multa sane videre est a secularibus viris ad miserorum levamen tentata, sed quae parum prospere successerunt; nam sola charitas, quam non gignit et inspirat nisi Christi fides, intelligit super egenum et pauperem (Concil. Avenion., 1848).

suffering and drink the bitter chalice of suffering and sacrifice. At the very time she becomes for the world a holocaust of love, the same world makes her the victim of its persecution. In this respect also she follows, step by step, in the blood-stained footprints of her divine spouse. Men devoid of all gratitude and feeling, pierced the hands, the feet, and the heart of Jesus: those hands dripping with nought but graces and mercies; those feet that were weary and sore in seeking the lost sheep; that heart wholly inflamed with heavenly charity, on fire with love and consuming itself in sacrifice for sinners. The Saviour led His people out of Egypt, sustained them with bread from heaven, refreshed them with sweet waters from the rock, and gave them a royal scepter; and in return what did His people do to Him? They made a cross for their Saviour, with a lance they pierced His side, they loaded Him with blows and stripes, they drenched Him with vinegar and gall, they implanted a crown of thorns on His head.⁸⁶ The Church is treated in the same manner. Our Lord bequeathed to her the heritage of His sufferings; indeed, it is He Himself who continues to suffer in His Church, it is He Himself who is persecuted in His Church (Acts 9:4).

The Church is the spouse of Jesus Christ, the crucified one; but as the true spouse of a thorn-crowned King, she appears only in the ornaments of sufferings, inasmuch as she too, laden with the cross and with brow encircled with a crown of thorns, journeys through many tribulations to the glory of heaven. The passion of the Lord is continually repeated and renewed throughout the life and history of the Church. At all times there are to be found dishonorable traitors, false accusers, unjust judges, cruel tormentors, bloody executioners; and whenever the warfare is against the Church; Herod and Pilate become fast friends. The Church must here below pass through her Holy Week, must endure a bloody sweat on the Mount of Olives, and upon Calvary she must abide the torment of the cross; she must struggle and combat, labor and suffer, endure and bleed; in a word, she must continually lead a life of more or less painful sacrifices. It is the same mystery of the cross which operates and manifests itself in the life of Christ as in the life of the Church. The bloody and unbloody martyrdom is a special characteristic of the Catholic Church, by which she resembles her divine Master and Founder and is distinguished from all religious sects.

⁸⁶ Cf. The *Improperia* of the liturgy of Good Friday.

The Lord Himself frequently and emphatically predicted this martyrdom to His Church and all true Christians, by prophetically announcing that "for His sake" and "in His name" they would suffer from the world hatred, persecution, accusations, chains and imprisonment, torments and tortures, and every manner of death. "They will lay hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and into prisons, dragging you before kings and governors for My name's sake . . . and it shall happen unto you for a testimony" (Luke 21:12 f.).

Let the world rage and nations threaten, let people devise vain things, let the princes of the earth rise and come together against Christ and His Church (Ps. 2:1-3), the Church, however, always looks with confidence to the future; for the roaring of the waters does not terrify her (Ps. 45:4 f.), and the powers of hell do not prevail against her. *Per crucem ad lucem*: the way of the cross leads to the joys of victory; through want and death triumph is reached. As in the earthly life of Christ, so in the life of the Church, warfare and toil, sorrow and pain predominate; but just as Christ, even in the days of His humiliation and the abasement of His divinity under the form of a servant, revealed His power and divine glory, so also in the history of the Church brilliant victories and glorious triumphs are not wanting. Since judgment has been passed upon the world and the prince of the world has been cast out (John 12:31), the Church remains, even in chains and amid oppression, the moral ruling power of the world. But as the Church is not a kingdom of this world, so also her combats, her victories and triumphs are not of an earthly character. She combats and conquers, as did Christ, by the apparent folly and weakness of the cross; by apparent defeats she attains triumph;³⁷ and, as often as the world would chant her funeral dirge, she raises anew her head, triumphant in the joyful consciousness of her imperishable life, and, looking down on her enemies and persecutors groveling in the dust, she each time exultingly intones her canticle of thanksgiving: "Let us sing to the Lord; for He is gloriously magnified: the horse and the rider he hath thrown into the sea!" (Exod. 15:1.)

³⁷ *Ecclesiam tuam inter adversa crescere tribuisti, ut cum putaretur oppressa, tunc potius praevaleret exaltata, dum simul et experientiam fidei declarat afflictio, et victoriosissima semper perseverat te adjuvante devotio (Sacrament. Gregor.).*

The glory of the victories of the Church here on earth consists principally in her indestructible duration in spite of the assaults and persecutions of all epochs, in her interior, inexhaustible plenitude of life and power of sanctification, in her external growth and development, in her sovereignty over hearts, in the bestowal of spiritual blessings and heavenly consolations, in the promotion of the temporal welfare and the true happiness of mankind. The complete victory, the eternal triumph, the fullness of glory, will, according to divine promise, be the lot of the Church only beyond this world, in the next life, in the heavenly Jerusalem.

Here below the Church glories only in the cross of her Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 6:14), and she will know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified (I Cor. 2:2). But because she adores and preaches, sacrifices and dispenses Jesus Christ crucified, it behooves her in her own life and operation also to copy, portray, and represent Him crucified. The glorious history of the martyrdom of the Church testifies that the Christians, with heavenly peace and meekness, with quiet resignation and cheerful countenance, with great, unflinching courage, often even amid exquisite torture and frightful torments, broke out into hymns of praise and thanksgiving, esteeming themselves happy to be permitted to suffer outrages and persecution for the name of Jesus. This heroism, this cheerfulness in their sacrifice they drew mainly from the sacrifice and sacrament of the Eucharist; for the Church says that on the altar is offered that sacrifice in which all martyrdom has its origin and source,³⁸ and that the Lord by His wonderful mysteries imparted to the martyrs that invincible strength and grace by which they in their bloody combat triumphed over the pains and terrors of a violent death.³⁹ The intimate and striking connection between Christian martyrdom and the Eucharistic sacrifice is symbolically expressed by the enclosing of the relics of the martyrs in the altar on which Mass is celebrated.

³⁸ In tuorum, Domine, pretiosa morte justorum sacrificium illud offerimus, de quo martyrium sumpsit omne principium (*Secret. fer. V post Dom. III Quadrag.*). Quatenus martyres pro fratribus sanguinem suum fuderunt, hactenus talia exhibuerunt, qualia de mensa dominica perceperunt (S. August., *In Joann.*, LXXXIV, 2).

³⁹ Pro sanctorum tuorum Basilidis . . . sanguine venerando hostias tibi, Domine, solemniter immolamus: tua mirabilia pertractantes per que talis est perfecta victoria (*Secret. in festo ss. Martyr. Basilidis et soc.* [June 12]). The *Codex Rhemensis* of the *Liber Sacramentorum* of St. Gregory the Great has, instead of *per quem (Dominum)*, *per quae (mirabilia)*.

Thus the Catholic Church as a whole leads a life of constant sacrifice, a life spent in deeds of mercy and in acts of charity, as well as a life full of combats and sufferings. In all her sufferings she continues in loving her enemies, doing good to those who hate her, blessing those who curse her, and praying for those who calumniate her (Luke 6:27 f.). The heavenly strength needed to accomplish this she draws from "the divine mysteries of the altar, by which she is continually fed and nourished."⁴⁰ As long as the Church wanders upon the earth, this abode of sorrow, tribulation, and misery, Christ wills to remain with her as a victim of sacrifice to be daily immolated in her midst in a mysterious manner, in order to imbue her continually with the spirit of martyrdom, with the spirit of cheerful endurance and privation. Eberhard states that, inasmuch as the Church offers herself in the Mass with Christ,

she takes along with her from the Holy Sacrifice a twofold resolution and a twofold strength: the resolution and strength to bear and practice in patience and ready obedience whatever God may decree in her regard, to be content in every state, in every circumstance of life, to be content in suffering, patient in death, to offer life and death to God; then the resolution and the strength freely and lovingly to offer sacrifices, and to sacrifice herself for the brethren. Blessed be that divine service which puts into practice this twofold offering of obedience and of a willing love, and with it turns even our own wretched life into a divine service. Blessed be our altars, upon which heaven itself descends in obedience and love, to pour itself out over the discontented, complaining, and selfish world. The world accepts all these benefits and sacrifices without inquiring where grows the tree that furnishes this heavenly fruit. The world idly suffers itself to be fairly inundated with blessings without asking where the fountain of these blessings is, just like the Egyptians, who allow the Nile to irrigate their lands without inquiring for its source. Where is the source of all this self-sacrifice? In our churches, on our altars, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. There day after day the boundless sacrificing love of Christ reveals itself. Thence gushes forth the strength into the poor human nature to sacrifice itself also. Therefore also the higher and nobler souls thirst after this Holy Sacrifice. The living fountain of blessings would be closed, were the Holy Sacrifice abolished from among the faithful. Where the Holy Sacrifice no longer exists, there also has disappeared the grand Catholic

⁴⁰ *Sacrificia, Domine, immolamus, quibus Ecclesia tua mirabiliter et pascitur et nutritur (Secret. fer. IV post Pascha).*

spirit of self-sacrifice and love. To us has come down the sacrifice of the cross, and along with it, as our heritage, the mystery of our own sacrifice, the mystery and the strength of patience and obedience, as also of freely self-sacrificing love. Let us, therefore, go to assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, daily offering as a sacrifice to Jesus, who offers Himself therein for us, ourselves, our thoughts, words, and actions, our joys and our sufferings.

b) The sacrificial life of the Church can assume form and manifest itself only in its members, the individual Catholic. But the life and actions of the children of God will bear the character of sacrifice in a degree so much the higher, the more they are filled and penetrated with the spirit of Christ and of His Church, that is, the better, the more virtuous, the more perfect, the more holy they are. Holiness essentially consists in the intention and will to sacrifice one's self, in actual sacrifice and suffering. Without the spirit of sacrifice, perfection and holiness can neither be attained nor preserved nor increased. However varied the interior and exterior life of the saints of God, all agree in this, that their whole life and their deeds bear the character of sacrifice, the stamp of self-sacrifice.

The immense multitude of the saints is composed of martyrs and confessors.⁴¹ The martyrs sacrificed themselves once, inasmuch "as they imitated Christ in their death, shedding their blood for Him"; the confessors sacrificed themselves in an unbloody manner, but countless times, by the heroic practice of all virtues and by the constant discharge of all the duties of their state and calling, until they peacefully slept in the Lord. Both martyrs and confessors were, therefore, for Christ's sake prepared to die daily, and were accounted as sheep for the slaughter (Rom. 8: 36). They are all children of the Church; wherefore Venerable Bede exclaims: "O Mother truly blessed, who adorns the glorious blood of the victorious martyrs and clothes the immaculate purity of the pure confessors! To her crown are wanting neither roses nor lilies."⁴²

⁴¹ In toto mundo lilia pacis pullulare coeperunt, et Ecclesia mater jam martyrum purpura decorata, confessorum quoque candore adornari gaudebat. Non enim in uno tantum loco fulsit gratia, sed ad finem usque orbis terrarum venantia spectacula ager plenus benedictione pandebat. Nam et deserta in ubertatem versa infusionem pinguedinis supernae dum acciperent, in jucunditate floruerunt (Hugo de s. Victor., *De vanit. mundi*, IV).

⁴² O beatam Ecclesiam nostram, quam sic honor divinae dignationis illuminat, quam temporibus nostris gloriosus martyrum sanguis illustrat. Erat ante in operibus fratrum candida; nunc facta est in martyrum cruore pur-

Self-sacrifice was the vocation and the office, the life and the death of the apostles: they left all to become all to all and to gain all to Christ. Like their divine Master, they gave their life for the brethren and planted the Church in their blood.

The host of the martyrs shines in the blood of the Lamb and in their own: *Martyrum candidatus exercitus*. The martyrs triumphed over all human weakness and over all human and diabolical malice and cruelty, inasmuch as they passed through great tribulation and confessed Christ in life and in death, and sacrificed themselves for the name of Jesus, that from their blood might spring forth abundant Christian seed, and a plenteous harvest ripen for the granaries of the heavenly Father.

The confessors belonged to all ranks of life. Were they not all copies of the divine victim, even though they were not permitted to shed their blood? Their whole life was a "cross and a martyrdom,"⁴³ for they, "of whom the world was not worthy," were "crucified to the world, and the world was crucified to them." Their life was spent in serving God in uninterrupted devotion and severe penance, in great poverty and in arduous labors. As the fruit of their life of sacrifice, they left to their fellow men the good odor of their sanctity, the luster of their example, and the efficacy of their prayers.

The holy virgins renounced all earthly love in order to consecrate themselves entirely to the heavenly love of their divine spouse and to "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth" (Apoc. 14:4). They kept themselves pure in body and soul to serve undisturbed the Lord of heaven and earth, the King of their heart, and to please Him alone. With St. Agnes they joyfully exclaimed: "To Him am I espoused, whose beauty the sun and moon admire," and on their lips was incessantly the favorite saying of St. Cecilia: "My heart and my body shall remain undefiled, that I may not be put to shame." The heavenly flower of virginity and purity they were able to pre-

purea; floribus ejus nec lilia nec rosea desunt. Certent nunc singuli ad utriusque honoris amplissimam dignitatem. Accipiant coronas vel de opere candidas, vel de passione purpureas. In coelestibus castris et pax et acies habent flores suos, quibus miles Christi ob gloriam coronetur (S. Cyprian., *Epist.*, 8[10], *Ad martyres et confessores*).

⁴³ Of St. Martin the Church sings: O sanctissima anima, quam etsi gladius persecutoris non abstulit, palmam tamen martyrii non amisit. St. Bernard in one of his sermons (*In Cantica*, XXX, n. 11) exclaims: Genus martyrii est spiritu facta carnis mortificare, illo nimirum, quo membra caeduntur ferro, horrore quidem mitius, sed diuturnitate molestius.

serve fresh and unsullied only by watering it with the dew of never-ceasing prayer and hedging it around with the thorns of constant mortification, that is, by a life of unceasing sacrifice.

These great and honored saints, who shine in the celestial firmament of the Church as numerous as the stars of heaven, by their light and brilliancy proclaim the glory of God, who "is wonderful in His saints," and the fame of the Catholic Church, in whose bosom they became saints. They are the ripest, the most precious fruit of the precious blood which sparkles in the chalice on the altar. No saint would be possible if the Church did not possess the Eucharistic sacrifice and banquet; for from the living, heavenly fountain of sacrifice alone flow the power, the courage, the inspiration, and the endurance necessary for the sacrifices required for a life of holiness.⁴⁴ For such a plenitude of heroic virtue, such a zeal for self-renunciation, such an unreserved devotedness in the service of God and our neighbor, such a universal and uninterrupted self-sacrifice, as is comprised in Christian sanctity, can develop and thrive only in the fertile, well-watered soil of the Church, where the waters of salvation and grace flow unceasingly from the altar into open and willing hearts, to enliven and refresh them, to inure and to strengthen them in a life and death of cheerful sacrifice.

Besides these eminent saints, the Church at all times possesses a countless number of other noble and perfect souls whose lives are stamped with a spirit of sacrifice far beyond what is required by the divine commandments. God alone knows and counts the number of magnanimous and noble souls⁴⁵ who, in the sanctuary of the cloister or in the world, have led and lead lives detached from the world, consecrated to God and full of sacrifices incomprehensible to the ordinary man. At no period in her existence did the Catholic Church ever cease to oppose to the prevailing passions of avarice, inordinate enjoyment, effeminacy, and sensuality, the example of generous renunciation of the world, of voluntary mortification of the flesh, of a self-sacrificing love of God and of neighbor. Hence we find within the Church religious orders and congregations ever springing up and flourishing, whose members, by their own free choice and with a holy emulation, break off and cast aside all worldly

⁴⁴ Sacrosancta mysteria, in quibus omnis sanctitatis fontem constituisti, nos quoque in veritate sanctificent (*Secret. festi s. Ignatii Confessoris*).

⁴⁵ Animae sublimiores (*Pontif. Roman.*).

ties in order that they may follow unimpeded the suffering, persecuted, crucified Jesus, and in perfect obedience, in holy poverty, in virginal purity, may climb the heights of sanctity and raise themselves to an intimate union with God, the Supreme Good. In the retirement and seclusion of the cloister some lead lives of devout contemplation, of angelic purity and heroic austerities, in order to make atonement to the divine Majesty for a world steeped in sin, and to invoke upon guilty man the mercies of heaven. Others, along with the endeavor to sanctify themselves by renouncing the world, by prayer, labor, and penance, engage in diverse kinds of exterior works for the salvation of their fellow men. The contemplative as well as the active religious orders can blossom and flourish on the tree of life of the Church, only because it is watered and made fruitful by the fountain of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

The human heart, left to itself and to its inclinations, does not attain to such heroic sacrifices. The mysterious sacrifice of the Eucharist alone creates and illumines the mystery of the Catholic life of sacrifice.⁴⁶ The sacrifice of the altar with its sacramental food furnishes us with the key wherewith to explain all the heroism, all the sanctity in the Church: by this we can understand the martyr and the confessor, the apostle and the missionary, the Carmelite, the Trappist, and the Sister of Charity. Thus Hettinger expresses this sublime thought:

On this altar, that source of holy love, grow the lilies of virginity, which unreservedly and forever espouse the Lord; here hearts derive the courage to become poor with Jesus poor in the manger; here they learn to love the brethren as He has loved them, and draw the strength that enables them to sacrifice themselves in the service of the poor and the sick. Where the Blessed Sacrament is wanting, there also is wanting the inspiring power of the love that creates saints and stoops even to the most degraded outcast to raise him up again. Here all wounds are healed, all noble resolutions mature; from this proceed all the deeds of a holy heroism overcoming the world. The faithful soul will never depart thence without hearing mysterious voices, without obtaining supernatural

⁴⁶ Our spiritual sacrifices—prayers, thanksgivings, alms, sacred chants, preachings, obedience, humility, martyrdom, good works—are only a dependence, an appendix, an extension, a consequence, an echo of the Eucharistic sacrifice, which combines all these various sacrifices as well as the various sacrifices of a material nature (Blot, *Marie Réparatrice et l'Eucharistie*, p. 207).

strength, without carrying away an ardent longing for the place of her rest, which constantly attracts her to that place where her God, her Supreme Good is.

At the altar steps there awakens in the heart of the young man the generous resolution to bid adieu to his home and to the world with its pleasures and charms, that he might travel to foreign lands, among savage nations and amid untold hardships, privations, and dangers, in order to carry to poor heathens the glad tidings of salvation. At the sight of the Lamb of God immolated on the altar, thousands of virgins⁴⁷ derive courage and energy to tread under foot the world and its allurements, to sacrifice to the Lord wealth, beauty, and the charms of youth, to choose a life of self-denial and of the cross. They do indeed love parents, brothers, and sisters, but Jesus, whom they love more than father and mother, has called them, and cheerfully responding to his call, they lay hold of the veil and the crown of thorns, saying: "I will renounce all things for the love of Christ, to serve Him in the person of the poor and the sick." In the hospitals, in the prisons, in the insane asylums, we behold what treasures of patient charity and of cheerful devotedness are bestowed for the relief and consolation of poor, oppressed, and afflicted humanity. Charity in the garb of religion, which from voluntary choice visits such dwellings of misery and suffering, not in a passing manner, transitorily, but as its constant place of abode, even choosing such a life among the poor and miserable as its own—such a charity gives more than bread, more than gold: it sacrifices liberty, health, and life to serve Christ, whom it beholds with the eye of faith concealed beneath the rags of the poor stretched on the bed of sickness. In the words of Hettinger:

To the altar, to the wedding feast of the Lamb does the Church lead her chosen virginal souls, who out of voluntary, devoted love have sacrificed themselves wholly to Him, who here daily celebrate anew their

⁴⁷ St. Ambrose relates that a noble virgin, when urged by her parents and relatives to marry, fled to the altar. "Where could the virgin find a better place than the one in which the sacrifice of virginity is offered? . . . She stood at the altar of God, an oblation of modesty, a sacrifice of chastity, and placing the right hand of the priest on her head, . . . she put her head under the top of the altar. 'Can any better veil,' she said, 'cover me than the altar which consecrates the veils themselves? Such a bridal veil is most suitable on which Christ, the head of all, is daily consecrated'" (*De virgin.*, I, xi [xii], 5).

espousals with the divine bridegroom, and who ask nothing else of Him than this, as the greatest of His favors, to be permitted to sacrifice themselves as He did for the brethren. There the sublime and holy love of sacrifice is daily enkindled anew, for sacrifice is love and in sacrifice does love prove itself. This holy love of sacrifice has not only erected hospitals for the poor and the abandoned, it has imprisoned itself with captives in their infected abodes, it has, like Sandoval and Blessed Peter Claver, become forever a slave of the slaves. Where was there ever a creature so unfortunate, so miserable and lamentable, so forsaken and such an outcast, into whose wretched hovel this holy love of sacrifice would not enter in order to embrace him and kiss his ulcers, at whose wretched couch it would not kneel as a cheerful, helping servant, in order to wash his feet? Such a charity has gone begging for the love of God at the doors of the wealthy, and bestowed the alms received upon those who were starving. It is this love of sacrifice which becomes a child with the child in order to lead the hearts of children to their Saviour, which, forgetting its learning, becomes weak with the weak, mourns with those who are in sorrow, becomes all things to all in order to gain all to Christ.

3. No pen is able to describe the ardent zeal, the generosity, the energy, the purity of heart and greatness of soul, the magnanimity and meekness, the patience and self-denial, in short, the spirit and love of sacrifice, which have flowed forth from the altar for more than nineteen centuries and made of millions of the children of the Church living sacrifices, holy, pleasing unto God (Rom. 12:1). We also should aspire to be of the number of these, her good children, who constitute her crown and joy (Phil. 4:1); we should make ourselves a sacrifice unto God and for our fellow-men by leading a pure and chaste, an active and patient, a devout and charitable life, a life of sacrifice. Can the life of the true children of God and of the Church, in an anti-Christian age and in a world estranged from God be anything than a life of continual sacrifice? "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12). Only in the glow of fire does incense exhale its sweet odors, only in the crucible does gold acquire all its purity and luster; thus also must we be tested, purified, and proved in the crucible of suffering and tribulation, that the fruitful seeds of virtue may blossom in us, and that we may attain eternal joy and glory, "A faithful saying: for, if we be dead with Him, we shall live also with Him" (II Tim. 2:11). Above all, persevering courage and patient love are

necessary to enable us to support the many sacrifices, little and great, that all go to make up the cross placed on our shoulders and to be borne during our pilgrimage through life. We should not painfully drag along our daily cross, but we ought to embrace it with courage and cheerfulness, for it then loses its weight, severity, and bitterness, and turns out to be for us a source of blessed peace and undisturbed joy. Since we are the children of God, a chosen generation, a holy and kingly priesthood (I Pet. 2:9), our aim and conduct in life should glow with a courageous, active, patient love of sacrifice, until we have offered in the service of God and of our neighbor all our strength and goods, and the sacrifice of our own self shall be consummated. Such a life of sacrifice is, indeed, hard and painful to nature, but by the grace of God it becomes sweet and pleasing. The sacrifice of Christ fortifies and strengthens patient endurance; from the altar peace and joy, comfort and refreshment, daily flow to us.

The way of sacrifice is the royal road that leads to true life, the outcome of which is glorious. Even amidst the hardships, difficulties, and tribulations of this way, the Lord replenishes and refreshes the generous soul with hidden sweetness, with heavenly consolation and peace, so that she, under the vivifying breath of grace, daily renews her strength, takes flight as that of the eagle, runs and grows not weary, flies and needs no rest (Isa. 40:31). Hettinger has well expressed this thought:

Man still combats, strives, suffers here on earth; therefore is he drawn to his Redeemer, who appears to him not in the splendor of His glory, but in unspeakable humiliation, who is present to him in sacrifice, whose descent upon the altar is an objective, real memorial of His passion. Thus the sinful, guilty human heart, having its God near it, requires that He should not appear as the just God avenging sin, but as the victim who hath borne our infirmities and taken away our sorrows, upon whom the Father hath laid the iniquity of us all (Isa. 53:6). Thus the weak, sorrow-stricken human heart requires that as long as trial and mourning, sin and temptation are our portion in this life, we may be able to look to the high priest who, tried in all things, "hath compassion on our frailty."

Again it is not all humiliation without prospect, nor all sorrow without hope, for it is the glorified Christ whom we behold present in His sanctuary, and therefore we behold in His glory the pledge of our transfiguration in good season. As in the life of the Church the gloom of Good Friday and the joys of Easter blend with each other, as in the life of every

individual, sorrow and hope of salvation, the daily need and confidence of redemption, follow upon one another and blend together, so Christ is here present poor and humble as He was once in the manger, and again He is here on the throne of His majesty and glory; for it is He that hath overcome the world, who, elevated upon the cross, draws all hearts to Himself, before whom all creatures bow down in adoration. Here is our Golgotha, where we grieve beneath the cross, and our Thabor, where we build tabernacles to receive the peace of heaven, dread Gethsemane and Easter morn, mystical death and the fountain of life. Thus our Saviour is here, invisible and yet visible, a hidden God and yet evident to our eyes. For in this Sacrament there has appeared for us all the goodness and kindness of our God (Titus 3:4). Thus the human heart needs not merely humiliation or merely grief, and again not mere exaltation, not all joy. For this earthly life is neither the one nor the other. But in Him, the friend and spouse of souls, who suffered all that man endures and yet much more, who in grief silently and yet so audibly speaks words of encouragement to us; in the glorified Redeemer, who cries out to us: "Have confidence, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33)—in Him the soul learns to understand the real meaning of life, and from Him she receives resolution and strength to immolate herself also with the sacrifice offered on the altar. Now she comprehends the Holy Sacrifice as the root and crown of all that is great, noble-minded, and sacred in mankind; now she takes pleasure in returning love for love, life for life, in giving herself in sacrifice unto Him who first offered Himself and all things in sacrifice for her. Thus the altar becomes the sanctuary of the Church, the fountain of living water from which flows all that is grand and sublime, all that is glorious and divine over the wide world. Upon the altar, where the First-born among His brethren dwells on His cross and on His throne, mankind beholds its model, its future, its whole history; here mankind understands all its sufferings, lays them on the altar, where the Man of Sorrows blesses them and turns them into benefits; here mankind understands all its joys, for His exaltation is man's exaltation, His victory man's victory; in the beauty of His body, once wearied of struggle and torn by torments, mankind beholds the image of its own glory.

The joyful, the sorrowful, and the glorious mysteries, which are represented and celebrated on the altar in the Eucharist, become so many figures of our own life, as it begins and passes upon earth and leads into eternity. For life is made up of joy and sorrow, which lead on to eternal glory. Alternate joys and sorrows, consolations and trials, hopes and visitations, make up our life, until all earthly joy and sorrow cease, until what is mortal is absorbed by

what is immortal and transfigured in the glory of heaven. At the same time we find at the altar powerful assistance and support always to preserve humility and gratitude amid joys and sorrows, and never to lose patience and endurance in the midst of pains and trials. "The love of Christ urgeth us," inflames and animates us to make every sacrifice; hence with the Apostle we exclaim in all confidence: "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? . . . In all these things we overcome (*supervincimus*) because of Him that hath loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, . . . nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:35-39).

BOOK TWO

Liturgical and Ascetical Part

PART ONE

Preparation for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

CHAPTER XI

THE BEAUTY OF THE HOUSE OF GOD

IN the Eucharistic sacrifice the Catholic Church possesses the sun of her divine worship, the heart of her life of grace and virtue, her supreme good, her greatest wealth, and her most precious treasure. Hence she has ever exerted all her energy and care to celebrate this sublime and exalted mystery of faith in the most worthy manner.¹ Christ Himself instituted and ordained merely the essential sacrificial act; but all that appertains to the liturgical development and investment of the divine sacrificial action, He left to His Church, directed and enlightened by the Holy Ghost.² The sublime and inspiring sacrificial rite created by the Church is not a purely human production, but a work of art and a masterly achievement accomplished with the divine assistance: a sacred edifice so beautiful, so harmonious, so wonderful, so complete in its entirety as well as in its component parts, that the invisible hand of a heavenly wisdom, which directed the erection and execution of it, cannot be mistaken and should not be heedlessly overlooked. However, before beginning the consideration of the ancient and venerable sanctuary of the liturgy of the Sacrifice of the Mass, the most important subjects of worship are to be treated briefly, namely, those most closely relating to the sacrifice and required by the ecclesiastical law for the becoming celebration of the sacrifice. The

¹ Hoc sacramentum cum omni diligentia est consecrandum. Et quantum istud opus et hoc sacramentum praececellit alia opera, tantum negligentia in hoc praeponderat aliis negligentis (S. Bonav., IV, dist. 11, p. 2, a. 1, q. 3 ad 8).

² Quaedam spectant ad hujus sacramenti necessitatem et integritatem, et talia Christus per se tradidit: quaedam ad solemnitatem, et haec Ecclesia superaddit; haec autem non sunt diminuentia, sed salvantia illa quae sunt de integritate sacramenti. . . . Additio harum solemnitatum est pro excitanda devotione et arctanda intentione, est etiam tertio propter expressiorem significationem (*Ibid.*, dist. 12, p. 1, dub. 5).

special explanation of the different kinds of vestments and vessels used in the Mass may be preceded by some general preliminary remarks.

1. It pertains to the Church to regulate and to prescribe all that concerns the liturgy: it is our duty obediently to comply with her injunctions and to submit our judgment and our inclinations to her ever-wise regulations. Therefore in the matter of procuring liturgical objects, neither the private taste nor the wishes of the individual, nor the fancy of a changing fashion should be taken as guide, but at all times the prescriptions and wishes of the Church, the approved traditions and customs of her practice, must be followed and carried out as minutely as possible. The Church desires and wills that all articles of worship, as to material and form, be as perfect as possible, that is, that they answer the requirements of Christian art as well as the practical demands of the liturgy. The materials employed for purposes of divine worship should be, not only genuine and solid, but also, as far as practicable, precious, rich, and excellent. The precious material, moreover, should have a form correspondingly beautiful, ornamental, and artistic, as well as practicably suitable to its purpose. But why does the Church have so much at heart the beauty of the house of God and the place where His Eucharistic glory dwelleth (Ps. 25:8), why does she delight in the display of pomp, riches, and splendor in the house of God and at divine worship, especially at the altar during the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice?

In answer to this question the heart of the devout Catholic will demand no lengthy reply; a mere glance at the altar, upon which day after day heaven with its majesty and grace descends in Mass, explains all, convinces him that it is just as it should be, that it ought not to be otherwise. The mysteries of the Eucharistic sacrifice are so exalted and sublime, so holy and so divine, that for their worthy celebration nothing can be too precious. With His precious blood the immaculate Lamb of God purchased and ransomed us; this world-redeeming blood, this inestimable ransom, compared with which all transitory things are but nought, all the treasures of the earth but vain dust and ashes, this precious blood poured out so abundantly and lavishly, flows daily on the altar and fills the chalice. Should not man then gladly and cheerfully offer whatever is noblest, most magnificent, and most beautiful in the productions of nature

and the creations of art, in order to celebrate as worthily as possible this sublime, heavenly sacrifice? Are gold and silver and the precious stones of the earth perhaps too valuable for the Eucharistic worship, at the celebration of which the children of the Church militant emulate the glorious choirs of the blessed spirits, who before the throne of God and of the Lamb throughout eternity sing the new canticle, the hymn of adoration: "To Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction and honor and glory and power for ever and ever" (Apoc. 5:13). Were the heavens to open and the King of Glory to appear in visible splendor upon the altar, with what ornaments and with what wealth would we not adorn the house of God in order properly to receive Him? Now, the fact that upon the altar He veils His glory under the humble sacramental appearances, comes to us and remains with us in such profound concealment, abasement, and humiliation, is assuredly no reason for honoring Him less; on the contrary, the more He abases and conceals Himself for the love of us, the more fervent should the gratitude of His children be intent on decorating His altars with all they have at their command of the most costly and precious materials. The King of Glory, who is infinitely rich on His throne in heaven, descends daily into the poor and mean appearances of bread, to enrich us with graces and bless us with all His gifts; should not, then, gratitude urge us to devote all the wealth our poverty can gather together in order to offer suitable worship to Him in His Eucharistic poverty?

All the gold, the magnificence of the fields, the earth and its fullness are the property of the Lord, which He has given over for the use of man; therefore it is proper that man should again place at the Lord's feet the richest and most splendid gifts, as the holy kings with princely liberality offered Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh. God, the Creator of all things, has assuredly no need of the gifts that His creatures offer Him (Ps. 15:2); but for us it is necessary and profitable that we again consecrate to Him that which He first gave us, in order thereby to pay tribute of honor due to His majesty and supreme dominion, to declare to Him our absolute dependence on Him and our submission to Him, to prove our love and gratitude, to increase our merit, and to work out our salvation; ³ for "in the sight

³ Cum laude nostra non egeas, grata tibi tamen est tuorum devotio famulorum; nec te augent nostra praeconia, sed nobis proficiunt ad salutem (*Sacrament. Gregor.*).

of the divine mercy all that is dedicated and offered to God has the value of the purest gold, which He, in His own good time, will reward with eternal joys.”⁴ Devotion and the spirit of sacrifice are evidenced in the rich adornment of divine worship, and God takes delight in them.⁵

When Mary Magdalen anointed the feet of our Lord in the house of the Pharisee with the most delicate spikenard, He praised her for it: “She hath wrought a good work upon Me” (Matt. 26: 10). After His death His body was embalmed with precious ointments. Our Lord, therefore, willed that His body during His mortal life should be honored; similarly He now wishes that His most holy body in the Eucharist should be treated with reverence, that His Eucharistic dwelling should be adorned and magnificently prepared, that the church and the altar should be conspicuous by their splendor and beauty. The Lord Himself promised that in the New Law He would fill the house of God with His glory, and with a far greater glory than was that of the old Temple of Jerusalem (Agg. 2:8-10). Now, if the people of Israel “in the simplicity of . . . heart have joyfully offered all these things” (I Par. 29:17) to build unto the Lord of hosts a magnificent temple, how much more should the highly favored children of the Church make every effort and exertion duly to honor the God and Saviour concealed in the Sacrament, since He, out of love for them, so graciously and so benevolently abases Himself on the altar.

Splendor and wealth of ornament serve, therefore, in the first place to glorify God, and secondly to promote the edification and salvation of men. When precious vessels and vestments are used in the celebration of the divine service, then the Christian faithful are in a more striking and lively manner impressed with the sublimity and adorableness of the mysteries celebrated; those present find themselves lifted up above the common, daily life, penetrated with

⁴ Fullerton, *Louisa de Carvajal*.

⁵ *Cultus exterior in vasis sacris, in apparatu altaris et ministrorum ejus semper quidem sanctus, sed pro dierum vel temporum diversa ratione interdum splendidior est. Auro et argento, lapidibus pretiosis pro posse fidelium singulis in locis splendet festiva devotio, quae cum in saecularibus ambitionis insignia sint, in ecclesiasticis et divinis rebus pietatis officia sunt; non quia Deum, qui spiritus est, plus aurea quam lutea, plus gemmata quam nuda delectent corpora, sed quia homines, quod diligunt, cum Deo libenter offerunt, dilectione Dei, qua illud a se separant, quidquid illud sit, Deo pretiosum efficiunt (Rupert. Tuitiens., *De divin. offic.*, II, chap. 23).*

a holy awe and reverence for heavenly things, more devoutly and seriously disposed, edified in heart, and refreshed in mind. For this reason the Church also celebrates her divine worship with more pomp in order to awaken and foster in the faithful the utmost esteem and reverence for the marvelous mysteries of Christ's sacrifice.

His temples are the most beautiful of artistic edifices and the richest and the most splendid of buildings; His altars are of precious stones, His tabernacles are masterpieces of artistic carving; His sacred vessels are of gold and silver, adorned with gems; His altar cloths and corporals are of fine and clean linen, ornamented with embroidery. As the king is surrounded by his courtiers, here Christ is surrounded by the images of His saints; He is served by priests and ministers in festive garments, amid the splendor of lights, the beauty of colored flowers, and the sweet perfume of incense, amid melodious chants, the harmony of the organ, and the ringing of bells.⁶

Thus has the Church at all times loved to adorn the sanctuary of the Lord with all that riches and magnificence can furnish. But her solicitude in this respect has never in any wise caused her to neglect those living temples of God, the poor and the suffering. She knows that Christ is assisted and cared for in the person of His needy brethren; hence she has called into existence benevolent foundations, institutions, and confraternities without number for the exercise of all the works of mercy. She knows furthermore that a devout, moral, and learned clergy serves as the most beautiful ornament of the house of God; hence to form such a body she spares no sacrifice, no effort. But the best and most perfect way of life consists in fulfilling the one duty and not omitting the other. Thus does the Church act, not only lovingly embracing and nursing Christ in the person of the poor and needy, but also, as far as possible, honoring and glorifying Him in His Eucharistic life and sacrifice,⁷ her zeal consuming her not only for the holiness of her ministers, but also for the splendor of His sanctuary and worship. Already in the first ages, the faithful of the Church made rich presents for the service of the altar. But when Christians were in great want, or when the persecutors of the Christians threatened to rob

⁶ Laurent, *Christol. Predigten*, I, 658.

⁷ Dum auro et lapidibus et sericis vestibus honoratur Christus in altaris apparatu, poterat et hoc dari pauperibus, sed non ideo jure ornatus mensae Domini reprehenditur, cujus habitus, dum est incultus, non sine culpa eorum despicitur, qui illam ornare posse videntur (Rupert. Tuitiens., *loc. cit.*).

the sanctuary of its treasures, then the ruler of the Church distributed these treasures in alms to the poor, as, for example, is evident from the history of the martyrdom of St. Lawrence.⁸

If, therefore, the Church has ever been concerned that in the house of God "marble should shine, gold should glisten from the ceilings, the altar be adorned with precious stones," only religious ignorance or indifference can accuse her of excess and extravagance. Certainly it cannot be too much deplored that the house of the Most High is, alas! frequently more wretched, poorer, and more miserably furnished than the dwellings of His servants and of the faithful. If, as is the case in certain religious orders, through poverty and the love of poverty, sacred vessels and vestments of little value are used at divine service, no censure or blame is to be attached; but if it be done through avarice, carelessness, and neglect, then it is a sign of utter disregard and of want of reverence for the Most Holy. The religious life of him who has no love and no zeal for the adornment of the sanctuary, must be very stunted and lukewarm. He who inveighs against the expense incurred for the adornment of the house of God and for divine worship, imitates the conduct of Judas. That unhappy disciple became incensed and offended when Magdalen anointed the head and feet of Jesus with precious spikenard, and he exclaimed: "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence (about \$50) and given to the poor?" Under the cloak of giving alms, the hypocrite concealed a base avarice. For he said this, remarks the Gospel, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief and had no faith in Jesus nor love for Him (John 12:1-6). As a rule, those of the faithful who possess an ardent and most practical love of their neighbor, are also the most generous and cheerful contributors to the splendor and rich adornment of the house of God.

Where means and circumstances do not permit much outlay for display in divine worship, at least care can and should be taken that all things pertaining to divine worship be kept neat and clean: to let them lie in dust and dirt, to use them in a torn and neglected condition for the celebration of the Mass, is highly unbecoming,

⁸ Thus spoke the glorious deacon to the pagan tyrant: *Facultates Ecclesiae, quas requiris, in coelestes thesauros manus pauperum deportaverunt. St. Ambrose enumerates the reasons which make it justifiable to place sacred vessels (vasa mystica s. initiata) under the hammer or to melt and sell them (De offic. ministr., II, chap. 28).*

irreverent, and more or less sinful. Rich and precious sacred vessels and vestments cannot always and everywhere be had, but at all times they can and should be entirely clean and sufficiently beautiful.⁹

2. However perfect be the articles destined for the Holy Sacrifice in their intrinsic value, their artistic decorations and beauty, they are not yet fit to be used for divine worship; most of them require a previous blessing or consecration in order to be fit for their exalted and sublime destination.¹⁰ Whatever is intended to be brought into direct and intimate connection with the Holy Sacrifice, must first be withdrawn from profane use and be specially dedicated to the service of the Most High, that is, it must be made a sacred object (*res sacra*).¹¹ By means of the blessing and prayers of the Church, liturgical objects are not only made sacred, but moreover they become capable of producing various salutary effects on those who devoutly use them and come in contact with them. These blessed or consecrated objects are, so to speak, transferred from the domain of nature into the kingdom of grace, and become the special property of God; thus they have in themselves something divine, on account of which due religious veneration is to be

⁹ Adverti volumus, nos verba facere non de sumptuositate et sacrorum templorum magnificentia nec de divite et pretiosa suppellectili; non enim nos latet, haec non omnibus in locis haberi posse, sed decentiam et munditiam desideramus, quas nemini detrectare licet, quia etiam cum paupertate bene convenire et componi possunt (Benedict. XIV, Encycl. *Annus*, February 19, 1749).

¹⁰ Here the *benedictio constitutiva* is meant, not the *benedictio invocativa*. If the articles are anointed with chrism or holy oil, then it is called consecration. The consecration (*benedictio constitutiva, resp. consecratio*) differs essentially from the *benedictio invocativa*, in that it impresses upon persons and objects a higher supernatural character, placing them permanently in the state of sanctified and religious persons and objects, by which they are in a special manner consecrated to the service of God. According to an ancient mode of expression, in formulas of blessing, even when there is no holy unction, the Church nearly always uses the words *benedicere, sanctificare et consecrare*; for example, at the blessings *indumentorum, mapparum, and corporalium*. Cf. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, II, 599-602.

¹¹ In his quae circumstant hoc sacramentum, duo considerantur: quorum unum pertinet ad repraesentationem eorum quae circa dominicam passionem sunt acta; aliud autem pertinet ad reverentiam hujus sacramenti, in quo Christus secundum veritatem continetur, et non solum in figura. Unde et consecrationes adhibentur his rebus quae veniunt in usum hujus sacramenti tum propter sacramenti reverentiam, tum ad repraesentandum effectum sanctitatis quae ex passione Christi provenit (Heb. 13:12). S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 3.

shown them.¹² They must in no wise be irreverently treated, nor ever be employed for profane uses, but should always be regarded, used, and kept with great reverence; in regard to the manner of using and dealing with them (touching and washing them), the Church has laid down directions which are to be conscientiously observed.¹³ The formula prescribed by the Church in her ritual for the blessing or consecration of these objects must precede their use at the Holy Sacrifice and cannot be supplied by such use.¹⁴ Inasmuch as the objects blessed for divine worship are brought more or less closely in connection with the holy mysteries of the Mass, they also acquire by their use in divine worship a sacred character.

3. Finally we are to consider the symbolical religious meaning of the objects used in divine worship. From many of the liturgical prayers it is evident that according to the intent and spirit of the Church a mystical or deeper meaning is to be attached to objects used in divine worship, by which they become a silent but eloquent sermon, announcing holy truths and wholesome doctrines. The Church loves this symbolical conception of the objects used in her worship; therefore she employs points of similarity that present themselves—their destination, name, material, color, and use, as well as the historical reminiscences connected therewith—in order to express and inculcate the mysteries of the life of Christ, truths of faith, admonitions to virtue and holiness.

Thus in the service of the altar nothing is insignificant or to be

¹² Ex hoc quod aliquid deputatur ad cultum Dei, efficitur quoddam divinum; et sic ei quaedam reverentia debetur, quae refertur in Deum (*Ibid.*, IIa IIae, q. 99, a. 1).

¹³ Jure ipso naturali prohibemur nos facere quidquid in injuriam vel irreverentiam harum rerum cedere potest, quod pertinet ad quemdam earum honorem ac reverentiam. . . . Speciali jure positivo et ecclesiastico quaedam sunt prohibita fieri circa hujusmodi res sacras ob reverentiam earum, quae si fiant, sacrilegium erit, saltem contra jus positivum (Suarez, disp. LXXXI, sect. 8, n. 2. 4).

¹⁴ The permanent sanctification and consecration to purposes of divine worship, that is required by ecclesiastical law for the articles used in that worship, is an effect which, according to the ordinance of the Church, can be produced only by using the formulas prescribed in the Ritual for this purpose. Cf. Quarti, *In Rubr. Missal.*, II, tit. 1, sect. 2, dub. 3. Reperitur apud Antonelli de *Regimine Ecclesiae Episcopalis*, I, cap. 17 haec assertio: Si sacerdos bona fide celebraverit cum vestimentis nondum benedictis, poterunt alii sacerdotes cum iisdem rite celebrare, quia per primam celebrationem bona fide factam consecrata seu benedicta remanserunt. Quaeritur an hoc in praxi sequi tuto liceat? S. R. C., August 31, 1867, respondit: Negative.

regarded as such, but everything, even the very least, is of great moment when viewed, as it should be, in the light of faith and reason.¹⁵ Therefore the faithful, and still more the priests, should show esteem and veneration, should manifest a noble disposition of sacrifice for all that relates to the house of God and its adornment, and for all that is more or less closely connected with the Eucharistic sacrifice.¹⁶ The priest Nepotian may serve as a model to all. In his life he despised himself, poverty he chose for his personal, most beautiful ornament, but he was all the more zealous in adorning the Church. A mind devoted to God is attentive to the least thing as well as to the greatest, knowing well that even an idle word must be accounted for. Thus Nepotian took care that the altar should be spotless, the walls free from dust, the floors well swept, the sacristy clean, the sacred vessels shining brightly; in a word, his solicitude, which took in all the ceremonies, neglected no duty, little or great. The basilicas and places of assembly at the graves of the martyrs he decorated with flowers, branches, and evergreen, so that the labor and anxiety of the priest appeared in everything that concerned the arrangement and exterior magnificence of the Church.¹⁷

¹⁵ Cum exterior cultus sit pietatis internae splendor et ad hanc refovendam non modicum conferat, omnibus Christi ministris commendamus, ut omnia et singula, quae de ritibus sacris ab Ecclesia decreta sunt, religiose observent (*Collect. Lacens.*, IV, 478).

¹⁶ Curam habeas diligentem de munditia et nitore paramentorum altaris et sacrorum vasorum, ut cum omni honore et diligentia tractetur ille, qui est Angelis et Archangelis tremendus et honorandus (S. Bonav., *Tr. de praepar. ad Miss.*, chap. 1, § 2).

¹⁷ S. Hieron., *Epist.*, 60, *ad Heliodorum*, n. 12.

CHAPTER XII

THE ALTAR AND ITS DECORATIONS

THE CHRISTIAN ALTAR ¹

THE Sacrifice must be offered somewhere; for the celebration of the adorable mysteries of the body and blood of Christ a sanctified place is certainly proper. Dedicated churches and chapels constitute the more remote place of sacrifice; the immediate place of sacrifice is the consecrated altar. With special permission Mass may be celebrated outside of a sanctuary, for instance, in the open air, in dwellings, in prisons. On the other hand, with greater difficulty could permission be obtained—and this most exceptionally and only in extreme necessity—to celebrate without a consecrated altar stone.² If the word altar is understood in a wider sense and is meant only to

¹ The exalted destiny and dignity of the Christian altar, although not exhaustively expressed by the different appellations, is yet sufficiently indicated. As it is principally the place for the Eucharistic sacrifice and sacrament, the Fathers, after the example of Holy Scripture (Heb. 13:10; I Cor. 10:21), as a rule use the name *θυσιαστήριον*, *altare*, seldom *ara* or *mensa*, of which the former refers more to the sacrificial action, and the latter, on the contrary, to the sacrificial banquet. Moreover, various predicates usually exalt the holiness and venerableness of the altar; for example, the *mensa* is called *sacra*, *mystica*, *tremenda*, *divina*, *regia*, *spiritualis*, *coelestis*, *immortalis*. The word *altare* is frequently abbreviated, especially by the poets, into *altar*; again it is extended into *altarium*. *Altare ab altitudine nominatur, quasi alta ara*, writes St. Isidore of Seville (*Etymolog.*, IV, chap. 4). Appellations which occur more rarely are, for instance, *memoria* (memorial place of a saint); *sepulchrum* (burial place); *martyrium*, *confessio* (place of martyrdom or confession), inasmuch as the altar covered the body of a martyr. Already at an early date the altar received the name of a saint, because it enclosed his remains or was at least dedicated to him. Thus St. Augustine mentions a *memoria s. Stephani* and a *mensa Cypriani*.

² In hoc sacramento continetur ille, qui est totius sanctitatis causa, et ideo omnia quae ad consecrationem hujus sacramenti pertinent, etiam consecrata sunt, sicut ipsi sacerdotes consecrantes et ministri et vestes et vasa et omnia hujusmodi, et ideo etiam debet in altari et in domo consecrata celebrari hoc

designate in general a place on which the Eucharistic species are deposited, then it is evident that Mass may never and nowhere be celebrated without an altar.³ Thus it was in the case of the martyr Lucian of Antioch (d. 312), who used his own breast as an altar on which to offer Mass. Shortly before his death, on the feast of the Epiphany, he celebrated Mass in presence of the imprisoned Christians; as there was no altar there, he said: "My breast is the altar, and you who surround me are the temple." He offered the Holy Sacrifice on his breast and then gave Holy Communion to those gathered around him. Since the altar is so intimately connected with the sacrificial action, we see it referred to in history before mention is made of a temple; only where there is no sacrifice, can there also be no question of an altar. We will here consider principally the most important liturgical features of the altar.

1. The first and most venerable altar, upon which the Lord Himself instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice, was a wooden table; it is still preserved in the Cathedral of Rome, the Basilica of St. John Lateran. When St. Peter had won over the senator, Pudens, and his family to Christianity, the holy apostle took up his permanent residence in his house.⁴ There also the Prince of the Apostles offered the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ on a wooden altar which the saintly pope, Silvester I (314-35) removed from the Church of St. Pudenziana to the Basilica of St. John Lateran, where it is still to be seen, encased in marble; it is exclusively reserved for the pope for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. Conformable to these models many altars in early Christian times were of wood and had likewise the form of a table. This form characterizes the Eucha-

sacramentum.—Si autem necessitas adsit vel propter destructionem ecclesiarum in aliqua terra vel in itinere constitutis, licet etiam in locis non consecratis celebrare, dummodo habeant altare portatile consecratum et alia hujusmodi, quae ad consecrationem hujus mysterii requiruntur (S. Thom., IV, dist. 13, q. 1, a. 2, sol. 5).

³ Victimam in altari ponere, est reipsa illam Deo offerre, et quia vi consecrationis fit, ut corpus Christi et sanguis incipiat reipsa esse super altare, mediante manu sacerdotis, ideo verbis consecrationis vera et sollemnis oblatio celebratur. Neque his repugnat, quod aliquando sine altari celebratum est sacrificium. Nam non disputamus hic de altari lapideo; sed id omne vocamus altare, ubi recipitur victima per verba consecrationis effectum (Bellarm., *De Missa*, I, chap. 27).

⁴ About the middle of the second century, the house of this venerable senator was turned into a church by St. Pope Pius I (140-55), which was named after a daughter of Pudens, St. Pudenziana, and is still the title of a cardinal.

rist, not merely as a sacrifice, but moreover as a sacrificial banquet or as sacrificial food. In the distracted times of persecution, wooden altars for the sacrifice could the more easily and the more quickly be moved from place to place. The use of the wooden altar was, in a measure, retained until the sixth century, but its use never formed the rule. For, from the time of the apostles, stone was used for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice and anointed for that purpose. Pope Evaristus (d. 105), to whom is ascribed the division of Rome into parishes under the direction of individual priests, is said to have ordered the erection and dedication of altars of stone, and Silvester I merely renewed this law.⁵

In the catacombs, as a rule, the martyr's grave, covered with a stone slab or with a large stone projecting from its side, formed the altar for the celebration of the sacrificial mysteries. This form of altar reminds us of the sepulcher in which the body of Christ reposed. Christian altars were, therefore, formerly made of wood and sometimes of stone; they were in the shape sometimes of a table and sometimes of a coffin. The rite and place of the Eucharistic sacrifice determined the shape of the altar. The top or surface of the table and of the tomb are similarly flat, while the lower part of the table is open and that of the tomb is closed.

Even during times of bloody persecution, and still more since the Christians came forth from their dark, underground caves, the silent catacombs, the faithful ever strove, at the cost of great sacrifices, to erect to the Most High glorious and magnificent churches, and especially to put up in them the most artistic altars of precious materials, as is becoming to their exalted dignity and sublime destination. The principal parts of the altar are the lower portion and the stone slab upon which the body and blood of our Lord are consecrated; the rest is an addition of artistic ornamentation which throughout the different ages has assumed various forms.

2. Without the approbation of the bishop an altar can neither be erected nor broken up. The decree of the Church ordering that the altar be of natural stone is based on practical and symbolical reasons.⁶ The altar is either immovable (*altare fixum, immobile*),

⁵ Cf. *Offic. dedic. Basilic. Petri et Pauli* (November 18), lect. 5.

⁶ The expressions used in the general rubrics of the Mass (tit. 20), *altare lapideum* and *ara lapidea*, mean that the whole altar should be of stone. The different parts which constitute the essential stability of the altar, must be made of natural stone. This is the case especially with the slab which closes

or movable (portable: *altare portabile, mobile*).⁷ An immovable altar necessarily consists of three parts: the altar slab or altar table (*tabula, mensa*), the lower part (*stipes, basis, titulus*), and the relic grave or sepulcher (*sepulchrum*). The stone altar slab should not be made up of several pieces of stone joined together, but must be one entire stone; otherwise it is not to be consecrated. On account of its sublime use and as a symbol of Christ (the cornerstone), the altar stone should not only possess solidity, but also entirety.⁸ As a rule, five crosses are cut into the altar stone, one on each of the four corners and one in the center. The lower part on which the altar rests either is formed of stone pillars, which give it the appearance of a table, or it is constructed of solid stonework,⁹ which imparts to the altar more the form of a tomb. The receptacle, that is, the opening or cavity into which the case containing the relics is placed, can be made on the surface of the altar slab or in the lower part.¹⁰

By a portable altar we understand a four-cornered stone slab (*ara lapidea*) in which a cavity for the relics is cut out; ¹¹ this altar stone

the grave of the relics (*sepulchrum, confessio*) and also with those parts of its supports which are connected with the table of the altar by means of mortar and are consecrated together with it by anointing. Dicendum, quod, sicut legitur (*De consecr.*, dist. 1, chap. 31), "altari, si non fuerint lapidea, chrismatis unctione non consecrentur." Quod quidem competit significationi hujus sacramenti, tum quia altare significat Christum: dicitur autem (I Cor. 10:3): "*Petra autem erat Christus;*" tum etiam quia corpus Christi in sepulchro lapideo fuit reconditum. Competit etiam quoad usum sacramenti. Lapis enim et solidus est et de facili potest inveniri ubique (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 3 ad 5).

⁷ The essential difference between the immovable and the movable altar consists in this, that the former is usually composed of an extended stone slab and a stone foundation, both of which are not only cemented together, but also consecrated together and joined as a whole by the anointing of the bishop, so that they cannot again be separated without losing the consecration. The movable altar, however, consists only of a stone slab, usually small, which is consecrated by itself and which can be inserted at will into any altar table and thence removed without losing the consecration.

⁸ Si tamquam altare fixum consecrandum sit, rite construi debet cum tota mensa ex uno et integro lapide juxta canonicas praescriptiones (S. R. C., August 29, 1885; March 20, 1891).

⁹ S. R. C., August 7, 1875 in una Cuneen. ad 2 respondit: Ut altare consecrandum sit lapideum, oportet, ut etiam in ejus stipite saltem latera seu columnellae, quibus mensa sustentatur, sint ex lapide.

¹⁰ In medio tabulae altaris a parte superiori; . . . in stipite a parte anteriori; in stipite a parte posteriori; in medio summitatis stipitis (*Pont. Roman.*).

¹¹ The receptacle for the holy relics of a portable altar must be placed in the upper side or surface of the stone and be closed with a small stone, as

must be sufficiently large to allow at least the host and the greater part of the chalice to rest upon it. It is placed upon the provisional altar table or, if it is to remain there in use for any length of time, it is so placed into the wood or stone of the altar table as to be near its front edge and easily noticeable. This altar stone can be taken from the altar table and placed elsewhere without losing its consecration. However, an immovable altar would lose its consecration if the top were removed from the base, for its table and base are united into one inseparable whole, not only by cement, but likewise by the holy anointings of the consecration.

The altar should be elevated; for it is indeed a mystical Mount Calvary. This applies especially to the main altar, up to which several steps should ascend.¹² Whenever practicable, the altar, as well as the body of the entire church, should face toward the east; for Christians have always wished to pray toward the east; and in so doing they would think of Jesus Christ as the Orient from on high and the Sun of Justice.

3. The altar must be consecrated.¹³ The consecration of an altar

this closing constitutes an essential part of the altar. *Reliquiae condendae sunt in sepulchro intra lapidem effosso et claudendae cum parvo operculo ex lapide etiam confecto.* (S. R. C., August 31, 1867.) The prescribed small stone may not be replaced by wood, hard putty, or sealing wax.

¹² Altar steps, desirable for practical and symbolical reasons, occur at quite an early period and have been in general use since the sixth century. Many expressions of the most ancient *Ordines Romani* (for example, *ascendere ad altare; altior vel superior gradus*) have reference to the elevation of the altar. These steps should be so constructed that one can ascend on three sides; the platform formed by the highest step (*suppedaneum, piedrella, pradella*) should be of such length and width that the priest may conveniently genuflect on it. For Solemn Mass several steps are required, so that the rank in the hierarchy of those who officiate may be shown by the different levels on which stand the celebrant (*in suppedaneo*), the deacon (*in gradu medio*), and the subdeacon (*in plano*).

¹³ The consecration of the altar in all probability had its origin in the most ancient times, although positive proofs of this consecration can be obtained only from the fourth century. Thus does St. Gregory of Nyssa (d. about 395) express himself in an exhortation on the Epiphany: "This holy altar at which we stand is in its nature an ordinary stone, different in nothing from the other stone slabs with which our walls are built and with which our floors are covered. But since it is dedicated to the service of God and has been blessed, it is a holy table, a spotless altar, not to be touched by all, but only by priests, and by them, moreover, with holy dread." The consecration of the altar, although not altogether necessary, is yet highly expedient, therefore since the earliest times it has been strictly prescribed by the Church. Not the altar stone in its natural state, but only one which has been raised to a

can be performed either separately or in connection with that of the church. In the latter case, and this is the rule, the two consecrations are combined, as if to represent the intimate communion of life of the mystical body (consecration of the church), and of the real body of Christ (consecration of the altar).¹⁴ Considering the fullness and the splendor of the ceremonies, the chants and prayers, the consecration of a church is, indeed, the grandest and most magnificent of all consecrations; the consecration of the altar being the most splendid part of the ceremony. This significant consecration embraces mystical prayers and chants, ceremonies and symbols, sprinkling with holy water and incensing, anointings and blessings.¹⁵

higher order by consecration, is a worthy place of sacrifice, as well as an appropriate symbol of Christ. An altar dedicated to God exhorts the faithful to participate with devout mind and heart in the Eucharistic service, and at the same time it possesses a mysterious power to infuse into susceptible souls pious and fervent sentiments. *Ecclesia et altare et alia hujusmodi inanimata consecrantur, non quia sint gratiae susceptiva, sed quia ex consecratione adipiscuntur quamdam spiritualem virtutem, per quam apta redduntur divino cultui, ut scil. homines devotionem quamdam exinde percipiant, ut sint paratiores ad divina, nisi hoc propter irreverentiam impediatur* (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 3 ad 3).

The bishop alone can *jure ordinario* consecrate altars. The stationary altar thereby receives the name of a mystery (*titulus altaris*) or of a saint (*patronus altaris*). In a church that is consecrated or merely blessed, newly erected altars may be consecrated by themselves (S. R. C., September 12, 1857). On the other hand, a new church may not be consecrated unless at the same time an altar, the high altar (*altare majus*), is constructed as a fixed altar and consecrated at the same time (S. R. C., September 19, 1665). However, if a church that has already a consecrated high altar is to be consecrated anew, then another altar must be consecrated with the church (S. R. C., August 31, 1872). The remaining altars of a consecrated church may be *altaria mobilia*, but exteriorly in form and decoration should resemble stationary altars (S. R. C., November 10, 1612).

¹⁴ *Ecclesia ipsa materialis rationabiliter consecratur ad repraesentandam sanctificationem spiritualem, qua Ecclesia fidelium consecrata est per passionem Domini nostri, insuper et ad sanctitatem significandam, quae requiritur in iis, qui sacramenta ecclesiastica ministrant, similiter et suscipere ibidem debent, ut eo reverentius tractent hujusmodi mysteria, quo locus ipse religiosior est et veneratior. Per altare vero significatur ipse Christus . . . et ipsa consecratio altaris designat ipsius Christi perfectissimam sanctitatem. . . . Quoniam autem Ecclesiae catholicae sanctimonia ex Christi sanctitate derivantur et pendet (nam haec fons est primarius totius ecclesiasticae sanctificationis), idcirco nunquam ecclesia sine altari consecratur. E diverso tamen interdum consecratur altare cum reliquiis Sanctorum in eo reconditis (quemadmodum et ipsorum Beatorum vita in Christo est abscondita) sine consecratione ecclesiae.*

¹⁵ In consequence of the consecration, the altar table and the lower part of

The enclosing of martyrs' relics in the altar constitutes one of the chief ceremonies in the rite of consecration.¹⁶ It is profoundly significant. For they who sacrificed their lives and gloriously shed their blood for Christ, should rest at the foot of the altar upon which is celebrated Christ's sacrifice that infused into them the

the altar, together with the receptacle of relics and the small stone closing it, form one solidly connected and consecrated whole. If this connection is severed, or if one of these essential constituents of the altar is essentially injured, then the altar is profaned and is, therefore, no longer a fit place for the offering of sacrifice. Such a profanation can occur in diverse ways:

1) By taking away the relics, or by injuring or merely momentarily opening the receptacle of the relics. Contrary to the opinion of ancient authors (Quarti, Vasquez, Coninck), the enclosure and the presence of the relics are to be regarded as essential to the validity of the consecration of the altar. As a pledge for the genuineness of the relics therein contained, the enclosure of the receptacle must be inviolable, and its permanence must be beyond all doubt (S. R. C., February 23, 1884). The loosened cover should be fastened again with mortar blessed for the purpose, and that by either the bishop or a delegated priest (S. R. C., September 25, 1875; September 3, 1879; May 18, 1883).

2) By a considerable crack (*fractio enormis*) of the altar table or of the body of the altar. In this we are to consider not only the material size, but also the special anointing or consecration of the broken piece. According to many authors, the altar table is to be considered as profaned if even only a small piece containing one of the anointed crosses is broken, or if a stone connected by anointing with the altar table is loosened. *Aliqua altaria portatilia, licet nec sepulchrum fuerit violatum nec enormis fractura adsit, tenui scissura laborant, quae per medium integrum lapidem decurrit. Quaeritur an per ejusmodi tenuem scissuram ad instar fili altare exsecratum censendum sit?* R. Affirmative (S. R. C., August 31, 1867).

3) By any separation, however small or momentary, of the altar table from the body of the altar, because in a fixed altar the essential connection established by consecration between the two parts is thereby destroyed (S. R. C., February 23, 1884). On the other hand, the whole fixed altar may be transported to another part of the church, provided both parts remain uninterruptedly united. *Non est verum, consecrari altare ut immobile respectu loci, sed respectu suarum partium seu ut fixum et firmum in se ipso per unionem partium* (Quarti, *In rubr. Miss.*, I, tit. 20, dub. 5).

¹⁶ In order that the celebrant, at the first kissing of the altar (after the prayers said at the foot of the altar), may in all truthfulness be able to say the prescribed words, *per merita Sanctorum tuorum, quorum reliquiae hic sunt*, the relics of several saints must be enclosed in the altar. These relics should be members or portions of bodies of saints; not clothing, girdles, cloths, instruments of martyrdom, and so forth. Finally, they must be relics of at least two martyrs, to which may be added, however, relics of holy confessors, especially of those in whose honor the church or altar is dedicated. (Cf. S. R. C., October 6, 1837, and April 13, 1867.) Relics of our Lord (particles of the holy cross) and of those who are only beatified may not be inserted without a special privilege.

heroism and the strength of martyrdom. The entombing of martyrs in or under the altar designates their close resemblance to the Lamb of God, first in suffering and now in glory. "Rightly do the souls of the just rest beneath the altar, since on it the body of the Lord is immolated. Quite properly by reason of a certain fellowship in suffering, so to speak, do the martyrs receive burial in the place where the death of the Lord is daily commemorated";¹⁷ for in honor and with the assistance of the divine Lamb did they shed their blood, inasmuch as they freely and cheerfully familiarized themselves with His sacrifice and death, suffering and dying with Christ in order to reign and triumph with Him in glory. When St. Ambrose discovered the bodies of the martyrs Gervasius and Protasius, he placed them under the altar. In an animated discourse to the people he said: "The triumphal sacrifices are to be placed where the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ is commemorated. Upon the altar is He that suffered for us all; beneath the altar are they who by His sufferings were redeemed; . . . the martyrs are entitled to this resting place."¹⁸ By their burial there, the vision of St. John is represented and realized in the Church upon earth. In the heavenly Jerusalem, he "saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held" (Apoc. 6:9). Thus the Church also describes the blessed, heavenly portion and lot of the Holy Innocents, those "blossoms of martyrdom" and that "tender flock of victims" for Christ, by saying of them in a lovely picture, that, "standing before the altar in simplicity and innocence, they play with palms and crowns."

The placing of relics in the altar is performed with much solemnity, according to a formula of the Ritual very similar to the burial of the bodies of the martyrs (*depositio martyrum*). On the day previous to the consecration of the church and altar, the relics are taken to the church in a vessel specially prepared; three grains of incense are enclosed with them. Before the relics, where two candles must be burning, the clergy recite the Matins and Lauds of the office of the martyrs whose relics are to be enclosed.¹⁹ On the day of the consecra-

¹⁷ *Serm.*, CCXXI, n. 1 (inter serm. suppositios s. August.).

¹⁸ *Epist.*, 22, n. 13.

¹⁹ *Celebrandae sunt vigiliae ante reliquias ipsas et canendi nocturni et matutinae laudes in honorem Sanctorum, quorum reliquiae sunt recondendae (Pontif. Roman.). The Commune Martyrum is recited "cum oratione de Communi sine expresso nomine."* Cf. S. R. C., October 6, 1837; April 13, 1867.

tion the relics are carried in solemn procession with cross, lights, and incense, first around the church and then into the church. At the same time responses and antiphons are sung; the Church calls out to the saints: "Arise from your abodes, ye saints of God; proceed to the place of your destination; sanctify all the places through which you pass, bless the people and preserve us sinful men in peace!" Amid clouds of incense, amid prayer and singing, they are placed in the receptacle anointed with chrism, and the opening is closed. After the relics are deposited, the text of the mysterious vision of the Apocalypse (6:9-11) is sung and the saints are invoked: "Under God's altar you have received your seat, ye saints of God; intercede for us with our Lord Jesus Christ." The mortal remains of the saints are "inestimable treasures," "more valuable than gold and precious stones," pearls more noble than those found in the depths of the ocean. In their possession the Church has an earnest of the intercession of the saints at the throne of God; and hence from their relics there streams forth spiritual and corporal help, salvation, and blessing.

4. Especially the center of the temple, the holy altar, in its construction and adornment presents a wealth of deep symbolism; for it is the representation and expression of various mysteries.

a) In the prayers for the consecration of the altar reference is made to the holy of holies of the Old Law, to the stone altar of Jacob, to the place which the blood of Abel sprinkled, to the spot where Isaac was to be immolated, to the altar on which Melchisedech offered sacrifice, and to that which Moses built. Our altar, therefore, recalls the places of sacrifice on which the figurative sacrifices were offered up. It is also a figure of that venerable table at which Christ celebrated the Eucharistic sacrifice and banquet; it is also likened to the sepulcher in which the wounded and sacrificed body of Christ reposed, and likewise to the cross,²⁰ where in the fullness of time the bloody sacrifice of our redemption was accomplished; it is the mystical Golgotha upon which the sacrifice of the cross is mystically shown forth and renewed. The altar, as "the seat of the body and blood of Christ,"²¹ is, moreover, a figure both of

²⁰ Sicut celebratio hujus sacramenti est imago repraesentativa passionis Christi, ita altare est repraesentativum crucis ipsius, in qua Christus in propria specie immolatus est (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 1 ad 2).

²¹ Quid est enim altare, nisi sedes corporis et sanguinis Christi? (Optat. Milevit., *De schism. Donat.*, VI, n. 1).

the heavenly throne upon which the Lamb of God rests, and of that altar in heaven beneath which repose, as so many sacrificial trophies, those "who were slain for the Word of God," awaiting their perfect glorification (Apoc. 6:9).

The altar chiefly symbolizes the God-man Himself, in whom and through whom alone we can present to God acceptable sacrifices and prayers.²² Since the altar symbolically represents Christ and His eternal high priesthood, the one to be erected should very appropriately be of stone, and if possible, even of more valuable stones. The altar stone is intended to represent Christ, that living foundation and altar stone²³ which imparts to the spiritual edifice of the Church its existence and strength, its immovable firmness and imperishable duration. Christ is that "living stone" which was "rejected" by an unbelieving and corrupt world, but "chosen and made honorable by God" (I Pet. 2:4). Since He, as chief cornerstone, imparts salvation and life to the faithful, so also is He as "a stone of stumbling" and "a rock of scandal" (I Pet. 2:8) to the unbelieving; for "whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder" (Matt. 21:44).

Like the stone walls surrounding the stone altar, the faithful, as "living stones," that is, filled with and enlivened by the Holy Ghost, should cling always more closely to Christ, the primeval,

²² Altare quidem sanctae Ecclesiae ipse est Christus, teste Joanne, qui in Apocalypsi sua altare aureum se vidisse perhibet, stans ante thronum, in quo et per quem oblationes fidelium Deo Patri consecrantur (*Pontif. Roman., De Ordin. Subdiaconi*). Altare, quod chrismate delibutum Domini nostri Jesu Christi, qui altare, hostia et sacerdos noster est, figuram exprimit (*Off. dedicat. Basilic. ss. Salv., Lect. 4*). Forma corporis altare est et corpus Christi est in altari (*De sacrament., IV, ii, 7*). Quid est altare nisi forma corporis Christi? (*Ibid., V, ii, 7*.) In this writing, which in all probability does not belong to St. Ambrose, but yet dates almost from his time, the altar is called *forma*, that is, *figura*, symbol of the body of Christ, because Christ offers on it His body, and by His body a perpetual sacrifice to the Father. Sicut Christus fuit non solum sacerdos, sed etiam hostia sive sacrificium, sic etiam fuit templum et altare: templum quidem, nam in eo specialissime habitavit Deus; altare vero, quia in eo fusus est sanguis, quo ipse aspersus: quare sicut templum et altare sunt loca, in quibus specialiter colitur Deus, sic etiam Christus dicitur saltem metaphorice templum et altare Dei, quia in illo exhibitus Deo fuit cultus omnium excellentissimus (*Salmant., De incarn., disp. XXXI, dub. 1, n. 8*).

²³ Te, Redemptor mundi, exoramus, ut lapidem istum seu mensam . . . consecrare et sanctificare digneris . . . et sacri hujus mysterii sicut institutor, ita etiam ut sanctificator appare, qui angularem lapidem et saxum sine manibus abscissum nominari voluisti (*Pontif. Roman., De altar. portat. consecratione*).

life-giving rock, and be built up into a spiritual temple for a holy service of sacrifice (I Pet. 2:4 f.), that, being daily the more firmly established in Christ and in all virtue, they may advance to eternal salvation. The faithful are living and chosen stones taken from the quarries of earth, "hewn by the salutary strokes of the hammer and much chiseling" (*Hymn. Eccl.*), in order that they may be joined together in the magnificent edifice of the heavenly Jerusalem.²⁴ At the consecration of the altar, holy chrism (balm mixed with oil) is freely poured over the surface of the stone, as a sign that the altar represents Christ, "the eternal Blessed One," "the one anointed" with "the blissful oil" of the Holy Ghost.

b) There are just grounds for attributing a moral signification to the altar.²⁵ The sanctified Christian is a temple of God, a dwelling place of the Holy Ghost, a spiritual sanctuary (I Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:22); therefore the heart can be symbolized by the altar, that is, it can be regarded as a spiritual altar of sacrifice upon which we continually immolate our earthly inclinations and desires, presenting to God our prayers, resolutions, and works, inflamed and burning

²⁴ Deus, qui de vivis et electis lapidibus aeternum majestati tuae praeparas habitaculum, auxiliare populo tuo (*Postcomm. in dedicat. Eccles.*).

²⁵ St. Polycarp (Epistle to the Philippians, chap. 4) calls widows an altar of God, inasmuch as they had consecrated themselves to God and to His holy service; and St. Ambrose designates the virgins espoused to God as *altaria quae (Deo) dedicantur*. Te nunc, Domine, deprecor, ut supra hanc domum tuam (*that is, the virgins who consecrate themselves to Thee*), supra haec altaria, quae hodie dedicantur, supra hos lapides spirituales, quibus sensibile tibi in singulis templum sacratur, quotidianus praesul intendas, orationesque servorum tuorum, quae in hoc loco funduntur, divina tua suscipias misericordia. . . . Cum ad illam respicis hostiam salutarem, per quam peccatum mundi hujus aboletur, respicias etiam ad has piaie hostias castitatis et diuturno eas tuearis auxilio, ut fiant tibi in odorem suavitatis hostiae acceptabiles (S. Ambros., *Exhortat. virginit.*, n. 94). God Himself has erected His altar, "not of stone, but of a material brighter than the heavens, of rational souls." This altar consists of the poor members of Christ's mystical body. This altar is even more terrible than the altar of the house of God. "If the latter altar becomes holy because, although built of stone, it receives the body of our Lord, then the former is holy likewise, because it is itself the (mystical) body of the Lord. . . . This altar you can behold erected everywhere, on the street and in the market place; on it you can offer at any hour; for here also a sacrifice is accomplished. And just as the priest stands at the altar and calls down the Holy Ghost, you also may call down the divine Spirit, not indeed by words, but by works. For nothing so maintains and inflames the fire of the spirit as does the oil of mercy, when it is plenteously poured out. . . . Therefore, when you behold a poor person, believe that you see an altar of sacrifice." St. Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, XX.

with the fire of charity.²⁶ Upon the altar of our heart we must offer to God the gold of charity, the incense of devotion, and the myrrh of mortification; there we must sacrifice ourselves and all that we have as a holocaust "for an odor of sweetness" (Eph. 5:2).²⁷ These ideas are expressed by the Church herself in a magnificent Preface sung at the consecration of the altar: "Upon this altar, therefore, let there be the worship of innocence, let pride be sacrificed, anger annihilated, luxury and all lust destroyed, and let there be offered instead of turtle-doves the sacrifice of chastity, and instead of young pigeons the sacrifice of innocence."²⁸ The high altar symbolically teaches the Christian that his heart must tend heavenward and strive after what is above, where Christ reigns at the right hand of the Father; that his heart must have noble aspirations, be raised above all that is earthly, and be greater and higher than the world, in order that the Most High may in all things be glorified.

5. "My eyes also shall be open, and My ears attentive to the prayer of him that shall pray in this place. For I have chosen and sanctified this place, that My name may be there forever, and My eyes and My heart may remain there always" (II Par. 7:15 f.). This chosen, blessed place of grace, in which the ancient and faithful promise of the Lord is most perfectly and wonderfully verified to the end of the world, is the Catholic church, especially the place of sacrifice with the tabernacle. Therefore at the consecration of the altar the antiphon is sung: "The Lord hath sanctified His dwelling (*tabernaculum*); for this is the house of God, wherein His name is invoked of whom it is written: And My name shall be there, saith the Lord." Just as the altar is like the place of sacrifice, so it is also the throne of grace and of the love of the Eucharistic Saviour. There is the Name, that is, our Lord in His infinite majesty, though veiled under the sacramental species, to offer for us to His heavenly Father to the end of time the sacrifice of praise and reconciliation; there His eyes and heart (inasmuch as He remains with us as the Good Shepherd)

²⁶ Per altare cor nostrum intellegitur, quod est in medio corporis, sicut altare in medio ecclesiae. Ignis semper ardebit in altari, quia charitas semper fervebit in corde nostro (Durand., *Ration*, I, ii, 11 f.).

²⁷ Justi qui spiritum Dei habent, . . . fide, quae charitate inflammatur, in altari mentis suae spirituales Deo hostias immolant, quo in genere bonae omnes et honestae actiones, quas ad Dei gloriam referunt, numerandae sunt (*Catech. Rom.*, II, chap. 7, q. 22).

²⁸ *Pontif. Roman.*, *De altar. consecratione*.

watch to direct and protect us in all dangers, difficulties, and combats, and to console and cheer us in all the hardships, wants, and sufferings of our earthly pilgrimage. The Lord fills this house with His glory, and His peace will He give in this place (IV Kings 6:12).

The altar, upon which the Eucharistic God and King is enthroned, is for all devout and faithful souls a most sacred place and a happy heaven upon earth, the dearest home and the most blissful paradise. The unbroken stillness, the solemn dim light, the mystic glow of the sanctuary lamp, the familiar nearness, the blessed presence of the Eucharistic Saviour, often enable the weary soul at the foot of the altar to enjoy a foretaste of heavenly bliss and a supermundane peace, while the restless world without is full of noise and tumult, fatiguing and torturing itself in its feverish race for gain and its pursuit of pleasure. Here the Lord dispenses grace, joy, peace, consolation, and bliss into the hearts that are still struggling in fear and want with the sorrows and hardships of this perishable life. Here is the river of the water of life which, pure as crystal, proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb (Apoc. 22:1). May the altar in this valley of tears be always thy favorite place of delights. Behold! there Jesus has prepared for thee a fresh and green pasture, shady and well watered, to refresh and comfort thee; there nothing can be wanting to thee that can insure thy salvation and thy peace. Is the altar dearer and more precious to thee than all things else? Is that ardent longing of the royal psalmist after the sanctuary of the Lord also the sentiment of thy soul?

How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God. For the sparrow hath found herself a house, and the turtle a nest for herself where she may repose her young ones. [I find] Thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God!

As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God! My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?

One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, that I may see the delight of the Lord and may visit His temple. For He hath hidden me in His tabernacle; in the day of evils He hath protected me in the secret place of His tabernacle.

O how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, . . . which

Thou hast wrought for them that hope in Thee, in the sight of the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy face from the disturbance of men, Thou shalt protect them in Thy tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues.²⁹

THE DRESSING AND THE DECORATION OF THE ALTAR

The purpose and the dignity of the altar require that it should, as far as possible, not only be of certain specified materials and fittingly constructed and solemnly consecrated, but also correspondingly decorated and provided with the required appurtenances.³⁰ At the consecration of the altar, the bishop blesses the cloths, ornaments, and other articles used on the altar, that they may be fit "for divine service and for the celebration of the sacred mysteries."³¹ While the priests of the Church clothe and decorate the altar, the following verses are sung: "Surround, ye Levites, the altar of the Lord God, clothe it with spotless vesture and sing ye a new hymn, saying: Alleluja!" "The Lord hath clothed thee with the mantle of gladness and hath crowned thee. And He hath adorned thee with holy ornaments."

While Mass is being celebrated, nothing is to be placed on the altar, but what is required for the sacrifice or useful for the adornment of the place of sacrifice.³² In dressing the altar, special regard must be paid to the various seasons and feasts of the ecclesiastical year. With respect to the liturgical appurtenances of the altar, partly prescribed and partly recommended by the Church, the following points are principally to be considered.

1. The altar must be covered with three clean and blessed linen cloths. The two under cloths, which may consist of a single one folded, should cover at least the entire surface of the altar, while the upper and finer cloth should reach almost to the ground on the

²⁹ Ps. 83:2-4; 41:2 f.; 26:4 f.; 30:20 f.

³⁰ Already St. Ambrose speaks (*De myster.*, chap. 8, n. 43) of a *sacrosanctum altare compositum*, that is, prepared and adorned for the offering of sacrifice.

³¹ The *Pontif. Roman.* has in the rubrics for the consecration of a church: *Ministri ponunt super altare Chrismale. . . . Deinde vestiunt altare tobaleis et ornamentis benedictis.*

³² *Altare sit coopertum mundis linteis, saltem tribus diversis. Et desuper nihil ponatur nisi reliquiae ac res sacrae et pro sacrificio opportunae (Pontif. Roman., Ordo ad Synodum).*

right and left sides of the altar.³³ Immediately over the altar stone, which has been anointed with chrism, is placed the *chrismale*, that is, a linen cloth saturated with wax (*pannus lineus ceratus*); it lies under the other altar cloths and protects them from the dampness of the altar stone.³⁴ As all the remaining white material destined for the service of the altar (corporals, palls, purificators, albs, amices, finger towels), so also the altar cloths must be made of linen (of flax or hemp); all other materials (for example, silk, cotton, muslin), although equal to linen in quality, firmness, and beauty, are strictly forbidden.³⁵

The Eucharistic sacrifice has always been celebrated with a suitable covering for the altar table; the altar cloths are probably of apostolic origin.³⁶ Early mention is made of their use; St. Optatus, Bishop of Mileve in Numidia (d. after 384), presupposes that their use is universally known when he says: "Who among the faithful are ignorant of the fact that in the celebration of the divine mystery the wooden altar is covered with a linen cloth?"³⁷

The reasons for this strictly enjoined triple covering of the Eucha-

³³ Altare operiatur tribus mappis seu tobaleis mundis, ab Episcopo vel alio habente potestatem benedictis, superiori saltem oblonga, quae usque at terram pertingat, duabus aliis brevioribus vel una duplicata (*Rubr. gen. Miss.*, tit. 20).

³⁴ When no service is going on, a cover of colored wool or silk (*tela stragula, verperale, vesperale*) should be spread over the entire surface of the altar to protect the altar cloths from dust. It is improper and forbidden to place instead of this cover a thrice-folded oilcloth on the altar and to leave it there continually, even during the celebration of Mass, at which time only the middle portion is removed or rolled up, so that the corporal may be spread out.

³⁵ The general decree of the Congregation of Rites, May 19, 1819, strictly prescribes the exclusive use of bleached linen (*linum et cannabis*) for making these articles used in the celebration of the sacrifice. Linen is prescribed out of regard for ancient custom and for the mystic symbolism and signification of linen; for the Church attaches much importance to these two points.

³⁶ The most ancient writers use various names to designate the altar cloths; for example, *pallae, velamina, indumenta, vela, pallia, mensalia, mappae, tobaleae*. According to Anastasius, Pope Sylvester I (314-35) promulgated an ordinance with regard to the material required, that is, he ordained that the sacrifice should be offered, not on a silk or colored cloth, but only on a white linen cloth (*ex terreno lino procreato*). From the very earliest times linen was generally used for symbolical and practical reasons to cover the altar, though even, through devotion, more precious materials were occasionally chosen. The number of altar cloths was not always and everywhere the same; from the sixteenth century three have been prescribed. Since the ninth century we meet with formulas for blessing them.

³⁷ *De schismat. Donat.*, VI, n. 1.

ristic table are founded partly on the propriety and necessity of securing cleanliness for the altar itself and of preventing any profanation of the precious blood in the event of its being spilled, and partly on the symbolical signification of the altar and the altar cloths. The altar symbolizes Christ, the source of all graces, and the dressing of the altar with clean white linen cloths reminds us of the linen cloths in which the body of Christ was wrapped while resting in the tomb. The linen cloths also symbolize the mystical members of Christ, that is, the faithful of God, by whom the Lord (symbolized by the altar) is surrounded as with precious garments, according to the words of the Psalmist: "The Lord hath reigned, He is clothed with beauty" (Ps. 92: 1). St. John also in his Apocalypse saw the Son of Man girded round about with a golden girdle, which signifies the hosts of the saints.³⁸ Of Christ it is likewise said: "Behold, the Lord cometh with thousands of His saints" (Jude 1: 14); thus they are the garment of His body, the girdle of His breast, the brilliant crown on His head. But if the saints constitute Christ's holy attire and garment of honor, we may recognize in the use of the three altar cloths an allusion to the threefold division of the mystical body of Christ: the Church militant, the Church suffering, and the Church triumphant. To express this symbolical meaning of the altar cloths the bleached linen is well adapted; for according to Holy Scripture "fine linen glittering and white . . . are the justifications of the saints" (Apoc. 19:8). White linen represents cleanliness of heart and purity of life; which can only laboriously be acquired and preserved by constant prayer, watching, and mortification, as fine linen is prepared only with much labor.

The altar is covered and adorned with linen cloths throughout the entire year until Holy Thursday, when after Mass the stripping of the altars (*denudatio altarium*) takes place, thus introducing the liturgical celebration of Good Friday. Until Holy Saturday the altars remain stripped of all ornament and of their usual covering. The touching ceremony of the stripping of the altars not only symbolizes the grief of the Church at the death of her divine spouse, but it also reminds us of the shameful stripping of Christ's body

³⁸ Altaris pallae et corporalia sunt membra Christi, scilicet fideles Dei, quibus Dominus quasi vestimentis pretiosis circumdatur, ut ait Psalmista: Dominus regnavit, decorem indutus est. Beatus quoque Joannes in Apocalypsi vidit Filium hominis praecinctum zona aurea, i.e., Sanctorum caterva (*Pontif. Roman., De ordinat. Subdiaconi*).

and of His cruel abandonment and desolation during His passion.

2. Even if the front (*frons*) of the altar displays in its design art and beauty, it should be covered and adorned with an antependium,³⁹ a curtain of precious material corresponding, as far as possible, in color to the office of the day,⁴⁰ and bearing pious emblems suitably illustrating the Eucharistic sacrifice.

3. Since the Holy Sacrifice must never be celebrated without light, that is, without burning candles, there must be two, four, or six candlesticks on the altar;⁴¹ if six candlesticks are used, they should not be equal in height, but should rise toward the middle of the altar in gradation, so that those placed next to the cross are the tallest.⁴² They should be of metal or of wood, of beautiful form, and should be kept clean and bright.⁴³

³⁹ The ornamentation and covering of the altar in front (as well as on the two sides) was, from the earliest times, made of metallic plates, of cloth, of stone, or of wood, and was partly movable and partly immovable. The *Cerem. Episc.* desires for great feasts *pallia aurea vel argentea* (embossed work) *aut serica auro perpulchre contexta* (gold brocade), *coloris festivitatis congruentis* (I, xii, 11). These hangings are mentioned under different names; for example, *circitoria, laminae, petala, platoniae, tabulae, coopertorium, frontale*; moreover, the words frequently occurring in the papal ceremonial, *vestes altaris, in altari, super altare*, probably have reference to the cloths which surrounded and adorned the altar table, not to colored altar cloths. The appellation *antependium* (= *velum ante pendens*) originated also during the Middle Ages. The rubrics use a name which likewise occurred in the Middle Ages: *pallium* (= covering, mantle). *Observandum est, ut mensa Christi, i.e. altare, ubi corpus dominicum consecratur, ubi sanguis ejus hauritur, ubi Sanctorum reliquiae reconduntur, ubi preces et vota populi in conspectu Dei a sacerdote offeruntur, cum omni veneratione honoretur: et mundissimis linteis et palliis diligentissime cooperiatur, nihilque super eo ponatur, nisi capsae cum Sanctorum reliquiis et quatuor Evangelia* (Ivon. Carnot., *Decret.*, II, chap. 132). The antependium must not be blessed.

⁴⁰ *Altare pallio quoque ornetur coloris, quoad fieri potest, diei festo vel officio convenientis* (*Rubr. gener. Miss.*, tit. 20).

⁴¹ The position of the candlesticks should be, according to the rubrics of the missal, *super altare*, and according to the *Ceremoniale, in planitie altaris*. It is nevertheless recommended to place them outside of the altar cloths on a step or stool. Candlesticks on the wall separated from the altar do not suffice (S. R. C., September 16, 1865).

⁴² *Cerem. Episc.*, I, xii, 11. This rubric, which recommends the gradual elevation of the candlesticks toward the middle of the altar, usually is not regarded as of precept; still the S. R. C. on December 24, 1849, answered: *melius esse servare regulam Ceremonialis*.

⁴³ The present custom of placing the candlesticks (*candelabra, phari, cereostata, ceroferaria*) on the altar, dates from the tenth century; previous to this period they were usually placed on the sides and around the altar. The

4. In the middle of the altar there must be a crucifix, that is, a cross with an image of the Crucified, so placed that it may easily be seen by the priest and the people.⁴⁴ The small crucifix which is usually carved on the door of the tabernacle, or a simple cross without the figure will not answer. If in the construction of the altar our crucified Lord is represented in painting or in sculpture and set forth as the prominent and main picture of the altar, or if the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, then a crucifix on the altar is not necessary; according to the custom of individual churches it may or may not be placed there.⁴⁵

The cross must be on the altar, to remind the celebrant and the faithful there present of the passion of Christ, of which the Mass is the living picture and the true representation.⁴⁶ The altar represents Mount Calvary, and as Calvary it should be adorned with the cross, to which the priest must often raise his eyes, bow, and give due reverence while celebrating Mass.⁴⁷ The devout and earnest look at

candelabra were generally of a considerable size and frequently of precious metal (gold and silver, also of copper and brass with silver ornaments).

⁴⁴ *Pes crucis aequet altitudinem vicinorum candelabrorum et crux ipsa tota candelabris superemineat cum imagine sanctissimi Crucifixi* (*Cerem. Episc.*, I, xii, 11). Since the fifth century the altar cross has been in use in many places, but it was not universally prescribed; moreover, it was not always placed over the altar, but often affixed in front or at the side of the altar. In the thirteenth century there was always a "cross on the altar between (two) candlesticks." (Cf. Innoc. III, *De alt. myst.*, I, chap. 21; Durand., *Ration.*, I, iii, 31.) In the West since the twelfth century the Crucified was no longer represented as a king, but as the Man of Sorrows (with a crown of thorns and with falling arms). The image of our crucified Redeemer appertains to the necessary altar ornaments, and therefore it should be artistic and beautiful. That it may answer its purpose, the cross on the altar should be of suitable size and occupy an elevated position. It is more important than all the representations of the saints; hence the place of honor is given it in the middle of the mensa between the candlesticks. The blessing of this cross is not prescribed, but it may be done privately by any priest. (S. R. C., July 12, 1704; August 12, 1854.) Because the cross is necessary for the adornment of the altar, it may be affixed to the upper part of the tabernacle or immediately in front of the tabernacle door.

⁴⁵ S. R. C., September 2, 1741.

⁴⁶ *Ab aspectu crucis sacerdoti celebranti passio Christi in memoriam revocatur, cujus passionis viva imago et realis representatio hoc sacrificium est, mortem cruentam Salvatoris nostri incruente exprimens, tanquam idem sacrificium, quod in cruce oblatum est, quamvis diverso modo offeratur* (*Bona, Rev. liturg.*, I, xxv, 8).

⁴⁷ *Denegatur ab aliquibus ecclesiasticis obligatio crucem aspiciendi, dum a rubrica sacerdoti celebranti injungitur in Missa oculorum elevatio: quid di-*

the image of the Crucified, of that grand, holy representation of the passion of the Lord, is at all times, but especially during the time of Mass, exceedingly profitable and advantageous to the soul. What rich treasures of patience and resignation, of meekness and fortitude, of consolation and encouragement have for more than eighteen centuries been imparted to thousands by the simple, silent, contemplative look at the crucifix, at the suffering and crucified Saviour! "This is my highest wisdom," spoke St. Bernard, "to know Jesus and Him crucified." "Give me my book," exclaimed in broken accents St. Philip Benitius; "give me my book," he cried, until those around him, comprehending his meaning, presented to him a crucifix upon which his eye rested. "This is my book," the saint then exclaimed, as he pressed it to his heart and lips with love and reverence, "I have read therein during the whole course of my life, and with this book I shall close my life." In life and at death the cross should be our favorite book. In order that we may ever gratefully remember the love and the sufferings of our Redeemer, the cross is not only placed on the altar, but in Catholic countries it is everywhere erected and brought before the eyes of the faithful; in the valleys and on the mountains, at home and in the field, on the wayside and in the streets. Therefore do not grow weary or despondent, but look on Jesus, "who endured the cross, . . . and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2).

5. Of the three altar cards, only the middle and largest one, which should be placed at the foot of the cross,⁴⁸ is prescribed by the rubrics; the two smaller ones, set up on either side, have been introduced by general usage. All three should have the prayers printed in legible type and have neat frames.⁴⁹

cendum de hujusmodi opinione? Resp.: Juxta rubricas in elevatione oculorum crucem esse aspiciendam (S. R. C., July 22, 1848). Quoniam imago Christi introducta est ad repraesentandum eum, qui pro nobis crucifixus est, nec offert se nobis pro se, sed pro illo; ideo omnis reverentia, quae ei offertur, exhibetur Christo (S. Bonav., III, dist. 9, a. 1, q. 2).

⁴⁸ *Rubr. gen. Miss.*, tit. 20.

⁴⁹ The Canon or Secret cards were gradually introduced only since the sixteenth century. To assist the memory of the celebrant, or to spare him inconvenient search and the reading over of many prayers from the missal, they began to print "the Angelic Hymn, the Nicene Creed, the formula and words of consecration and several other things," especially the secret prayers (hence the name, *chartula vel tabella cum secretis; tabella secretorum*); they were printed at first on a single leaf, and later on several leaves. These were then pasted on wood, framed nicely, and placed opposite the celebrant so that

6. A cushion (*cussinus*) serves as a support for the missal, or, what is more practical, a wooden stand (*pulpitum*) neatly carved may also be used. The missal itself should, as far as possible, be in good condition, beautiful, and handsomely bound.

7. Relics and images of the saints also find a proper place on the altar.⁵⁰ It has never been the habit of the Church to suffer the precious remains of her glorified children to remain in the ground or in a grave, but she takes them up and puts them in a place worthy of them; she places and exposes them on the altar for veneration. This action of the Church admonishes us that the saints in heaven have won the crown of life only because they were nourished and strengthened with the fruit and food of the sacrifice of the altar; for, like so many fresh, blooming branches of the olive tree, the children of the Church surround the sacrificial banquet table of the Lord.⁵¹

It is also fitting to place on the altar images of the saints, especially of those in whose honor the altar is consecrated.⁵² By their images the saints descend, as it were, from heaven and live and move in our midst, speaking to us in mysterious language, entertaining us with

he could easily read them. If the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, the Canon cards should be removed from the altar (except during Mass). (S. R. C., December 20, 1864.)

⁵⁰ *Sacrae Reliquiae et imagines . . . disponi poterunt alternatim inter ipsa candelabra (Cerem. Episc., I, xii, 12)*. It is forbidden to place them in such a manner that the tabernacle containing the Blessed Sacrament should serve them as a base. (S. R. C., April 3, 1821.) On March 12, 1836, this prohibition was also extended to relics of the holy cross or any other instrument of the passion of our Lord. If the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, no images or relics of the saints should be placed on the altar, lest they withdraw the mind from the adoration of the Holy of holies. (S. R. C., September 2, 1741; May 19, 1838; December 7, 1844.) However, the images of adoring angels may be placed on the altar or allowed to remain there during exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, for they are placed there not for our veneration, but to excite our devotion.

⁵¹ *Sicut novellae olivarum, Ecclesiae filii sint in circuitu mensae Domini (Ant. in Vesp. ss. corp. Chr.)*. Cf. Ps. 127:3.

⁵² The picture above the altar, or altarpiece, is intended to make known to the faithful the titular saint of the altar, that is, the saint in whose honor the altar is consecrated. Without an apostolic indult the picture of the titular saint may not be removed from the altar and replaced by the picture of another saint. (S. R. C., August 27, 1836; March 11, 1837.) The pictures and relics of the blessed (those who are only beatified) may be placed or exposed on the altar only in those places in which it is expressly permitted to erect altars or to have the Mass and Office in their honor (Decr. Alex. VII, September 27, 1659; S. R. C., April 17, 1660).

their glorious examples of virtue, exciting in us good thoughts and pious resolutions, animating and encouraging us to follow them, with the assistance of grace, in the toilsome path of virtue, and courageously to persevere until we shall have finished our course and shall have happily attained our blessed destiny in heaven.⁵³

8. To decorate the altars with flowers, especially on great feasts, is an ancient, venerable, devout, and praiseworthy custom, and, therefore, approved of by the Church.⁵⁴ Artificial as well as natural flowers may serve to adorn the altar,⁵⁵ but the latter are preferable.⁵⁶

⁵³ Quoties imagines Sanctorum oculis corporeis intuemur, toties eorum actus et sanctitatem ad imitandum memoriae oculis meditemur (*Pontif. Roman., De bened. imagin.*). Imaginum introductio in Ecclesia non fuit absque rationabili causa. Introductae enim fuerunt propter triplicem causam, videlicet propter simplicium ruditatem, propter affectuum tarditatem et propter memoriae labilitatem. Propter *simplicium ruditatem* inventae sunt, ut simplices, qui non possunt scripturas legere, in hujusmodi sculpturis et picturis tanquam in scripturis apertius possint sacramenta nostrae fidei legere. Propter *affectus tarditatem* similiter introductae sunt, videl. ut homines, qui non excitantur ad devotionem in his quae pro nobis Christus gessit, dum illa aure percipiunt, saltem excitentur, dum eadem in figuris et picturis tanquam praesentia oculis corporeis cernunt. Plus enim excitatur affectus noster per ea quae videt, quam per ea quae audit. Propter *memoriae labilitatem*, quia ea quae audiuntur solum, facilius traduntur oblivioni, quam ea quae videntur. Frequenter enim verificatur in multis illud quod consuevit dici: verbum intrat per unam aurem et exit per aliam. Praeterea, non semper est praesto, qui beneficia nobis praestita ad memoriam reducat per verba. Ideo dispensatione Dei factum est, ut imagines fierent praecipue in ecclesiis, ut videntes eas recordemur de beneficiis nobis impensis et Sanctorum operibus virtuosis (S. Bonav., III, dist. 9, a. 1, q. 2).

⁵⁴ Since flowers as well as relics and pictures of the saints appertain to the festive decoration of altars, they should not be used when Mass is celebrated in black or purple. (Cf. *Cerem. Episc.*, II, ix, 1; xiii, 2.)

⁵⁵ Vascula cum flosculis frondibusque odoriferis (*natural flowers*) seu serico contextis (*flowers made of silk*) studiose ornata adhiberi poterunt (*Cerem. Episc.*, I, xii, 12). These vases containing flowers, as well as other ornaments, should not be placed either on the tabernacle or in front of the tabernacle door. An ante ostiolum tabernaculi ss. Sacr. retineri possit vas florum vel quid simile, quod praedictum occupet ostiolum cum imagine Domini nostri in eodem insculpta? Resp.: Negative, posse tamen in humiliori et decentiori loco (S. R. C., January 22, 1701). The placing of the middle Canon card before the door of the tabernacle is often unavoidable and does not appear to be forbidden by the above decree.

⁵⁶ Etsi vasa cum flosculis serico contextis adornando altari bene inservire queant, flores tamen horti frondesque odoriferae melius convenire videntur (Conc. prov. Prag. [1860], tit. 5, chap. 4). The altar should not be overladen, but decorated with taste. Garden and field flowers, as well as flowers from the woods and meadows, may be employed for its adornment. Artificial flowers should always be manufactured of precious material (silk, gold, silver).

The artificial flowers should be imitations of the natural flowers and should be well made and kept clean; for thus only can they in a measure take the place of fragrant, bright, fresh flowers. Faded and worn out imitations are never to be put on the altar.

Fresh, bright, and fragrant flowers growing in pots add to the decorations of the altar, making it beautiful and pleasing, and consequently they help to enhance the celebration of the feast and to edify the people. A holy religious, the Capuchin, Francis Borgia, used to say: "God has left us from Paradise three things: the stars, the flowers, and the eyes of a child." In fact, flowers have in God's creation a place entirely their own; they are on the globe of the earth what the stars are in the canopy of heaven: uneffaced traces of a former world, the earthly Paradise, the least affected by the curse of sin. In the splendor of their colors, in their fragrance, they are revelations of the beauty and goodness of God, emblems of His benevolence, images of His first, true designs (Isa. 25:1). For all these reasons, flowers, besides lighted candles and incense, have their liturgical meaning and are used to adorn the divine service. By their fine and elegant forms and lovely colors they possess a peculiar charm to please and captivate both the heart and the senses, thus impressing us the more deeply. These beautifully colored creatures are wonderfully formed by the light from the mud of the ground and colorless water. Indeed do flowers, those lilies of the field, which neither spin nor weave and yet are so splendidly arrayed, by the purity and perfection of their attire give us to understand that they are the handiwork of that Creator who created Paradise, from which they come, and that they have been left to us, as it were, as a remembrance thereof.

There is also a symbolical reason for adorning altars with flowers. Flowers possess a language all their own, they have a higher meaning; they are evident emblems of spiritual things. This is expressed by the Church in the liturgy itself. On the fourth Sunday in Lent (*Lætare*) the Holy Father blesses in Rome a golden rose with solemn prayer, anoints it with chrism, sprinkles it with perfumes and holy water, and incenses it.⁵⁷ At the same time he prays that God, who is

⁵⁷ Regarding the blessing of the *rosa aurea mixta cum balsamo et musco* (musk), which is a symbol of celestial happiness, *quia rosa prae ceteris floribus colore delectat et recreat suavi odore*, cf. Quarti, *De benedict.*, tit. II, sect. 2; *Catholic Encyclopedia*, VI, 629 f.

the joy and happiness of all the faithful, may be pleased to bless and sanctify in its beauty and fragrance this rose which we hold in our hands as a sign of spiritual joy; that His people, delivered from the captivity of Babylon through the grace of His only-begotten Son, may even now partake of the happiness of the heavenly Jerusalem. Therefore, since the Church on this day to the honor of His name gives expression to her joy, may He grant her true and perfect joy and devotion, in order that she may by the fruit of good works shed forth a balmy odor like unto the perfume of that flower, who, springing from the root of Jesse, is called the flower of the field and the lily of the vale. If a Catholic princess deserving of such a gift is present, the flower is presented to her, with the words: "Receive from our hands the rose, which signifies the joy of the heavenly and earthly Jerusalem, that is, of the Church triumphant and the Church militant, and which guides all the faithful to that lovely flower, the joy and crown of all the saints. Accept it that you may be more and more enriched with every virtue in Christ our Lord, like unto the rose planted along the streams." Flowers may also, on account of their grace and loveliness, serve as emblems of the festive joy wherewith we should long for the altar of Christ, the Author of all true joy. *Flores sunt signa laetitiae*. Thus the adorning of the altar with flowers appears as a symbolical expression of that joy in which we may exclaim with the Psalmist: "How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! I have loved the place where Thy glory dwelleth" (Ps. 83:2).

Flowers also symbolize those supernatural prerogatives, graces, and virtues with which the soul should be adorned; for the saints bloom as the lily and they are in the presence of God as the odor of balsam. Flowers, by reason of their freshness and beauty which they receive from the sun, are emblems of that innocence and holiness which we derive from Christ, the Sun of Justice, and with which we again glorify Him as the sun of our spiritual life. The flowers on the altar signify, moreover, that the blossoms of grace, prayer, and virtue unfold in the supernatural light and in the heavenly warmth which radiates from the sun of the Eucharistic sacrifice. The flowers of the altar at the same time admonish us to make of our heart a garden for God with the flowers of virtue, so that Christ, who feeds among the lilies, may find His delight therein; for nothing gives Him so much joy as a heart adorned with the blossoms of purity.

The flowers with which we ornament the altars on great feasts, therefore, symbolize the souls of the faithful who adorn their interior with faith and with the grace of the divine victim in order to receive the King of Glory and offer to Him their homage. In this connection the Holy Ghost says to us: "Send forth flowers as the lily, and yield a smell and bring forth leaves in grace and praise with canticles and bless the Lord in His works" (Ecclus. 39:19).

It should, then, be a loving occupation for us to adorn the church, to decorate the altar, and to enhance the beauty of divine worship with fresh and fragrant flowers. God is thereby honored, pious people are rejoiced and edified. On this subject we have a beautiful model in the Blessed Henry Suso.

When delightful summer came round and the delicate flowers appeared for the first time, he refrained from culling or even from touching them until the day had arrived on which he would gather them to greet his spiritual love, the gentle, the all-fair and lovely maiden, the Mother of God. Thus he gathered the flowers with many a tender aspiration, and carried them to his cell to weave them into a wreath; he then went to the choir or to the chapel of our Lady and, kneeling humbly before her statue, he placed the lovely crown upon her head with the request: that since she is the loveliest of flowers and the summer joy of his young heart, she would not despise the first flowers of her servant.⁵⁸

The altar is here on earth the most holy and the most venerable of all places. To do honor to Him who here sacrifices Himself and who so graciously deigns to dwell among us, all the splendor and decoration of the temple lend their service. The altar, therefore, should be the most beautiful of all, and the pastor should have at heart, in a special manner, its adornment, so that he may in truth be able to say: "I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house and the place where Thy glory dwelleth" (Ps. 25:8).

THE USE AND MEANING OF LIGHT

1. Light is strictly (*sub gravi*) prescribed for the celebration of Mass. According to the decree of the Church, wax-candles must burn on the altar during Mass.⁵⁹ The wax should be pure, un-

⁵⁸ Denifle, *Die Schriften des sel. Heinrich Seuse*, I, 162.

⁵⁹ On account of exceptional local circumstances, the missionaries in Oceania were permitted, when it was not possible to procure wax, to celebrate either without light, or to make use of oil, or to use candles manufactured from

adulterated, and, as a general rule, white, even on the *feriae* of Advent and Lent; only in exceptional cases are candles of unbleached or yellow wax becoming.⁶⁰ For centuries the Church has prescribed pure beeswax as the material for the liturgical candles; ⁶¹ this was done and is still done chiefly for mystical reasons.⁶² The burning

refined fish grease (the so-called sperm or star candles). (S. R. C., September 7, 1850.) Stearine candles are forbidden except in case of necessity (S. R. C., September 16, 1843; September 7, 1850). Oil lights are also excluded from the altar. *Nulla lumina nisi cerea vel supra mensam altaris vel eidem quomodocunque imminetia adhibeantur* (S. R. C., March 31, 1821). In private Low Masses neither more nor less than two candles should burn; in such Masses only a bishop may have four candles (S. R. C., July 19, 1659). For Solemn Masses (the High Mass as well as the parochial and conventual Mass on feast days) more (at least four or six) candles should burn (S. R. C., February 6, 1858). The lights should burn from the beginning of Mass until the reading of the last Gospel is completed. They should be lighted beginning at the Gospel side (*nobiliori parte*) (S. R. C., August 12, 1854). Electric lights may be used to illuminate the church, but may not take the place of candles on the altar. To the question: *Utrum lux electrica adhiberi possit in ecclesiis?* the Sacred Congregation of Rites replied, June 4, 1895: *Ad cultum: negative; ad depellendas autem tenebras ecclesiasque splendidius illuminandas: affirmative; cauto tamen, ne modus speciem prae se ferat theatralem.*

⁶⁰ The rubrics distinguish between white wax (*cera alba*) and ordinary wax (*cera communis*), that is, yellow wax (*cera flava*). According to the *Cerem. Episc.*, the latter must be used at the *Tenebrae* of Holy Week (on the altar and for the triangle) and at the *Missa Praesanctificationum* (but not in the procession) on Good Friday, as also at the Office for the Dead (*Cerem. Episc.*, II, xxii, 4; xxv, 30; x, 4). The candles for the altar may be blessed on Candlemas Day or at any other time.

⁶¹ In all countries homemade beeswax may be used for Church purposes. From careful chemical and physical analysis it is evident that beeswax is entirely different from every other waxlike substance (vegetable or earthwax). The candles blessed on Candlemas Day and the paschal candle likewise must also be of wax. *Domine sancte . . . qui omnia ex nihilo creasti et jussu tuo per opera apum hunc liquorum ad perfectionem cerei pervenire fecisti* (*Bened. Candel. in festo Purificat. B. M. V.*). *Suscipe, sancte Pater, incensi hujus sacrificium vespertinum, quod tibi in hac Cerei oblatione solemni . . . de operibus apum sacrosancta reddit Ecclesia* (*Bened. Cerei in Sabbato sancto*). In the rubrics, for the designation of the liturgical candles we meet with the words: *cerei, candelae ex cera, candelae cerae, candelae cereae, funalia cerea, etc.*

⁶² Wax candles are so strictly prescribed that not even for poor churches may an exception be made (S. R. C., December 10, 1857). Several congruent reasons, in addition to symbolism, favor the use of beeswax. Beeswax is (compared with stearine and grease) a noble product of the vegetable kingdom, and is distinguished as such by its value, purity, and pleasant odor (*lumina ceratis adolentur odora papyris* [S. Paulin.]). Hence at all times wax has been employed in the liturgy and donated by the faithful for divine worship. In this respect the Church will not allow any innovation.

candle is intended to represent the God-man, Jesus Christ; it is perfectly fitted for this object only when its light is nourished by excellent, pure wax. The bright flame above represents the divinity of Christ; the candle proper symbolizes His humanity; the wick concealed within the candle is a figure of His soul; the wax itself, which is the product of the virginal bee, is an emblem of Christ's most pure body.⁶³ The working bee, which even in ancient times was regarded as a type of virginity,⁶⁴ gathers and forms the wax from the sweet-smelling blossoms and calyxes of flowers. Being the fruit of virgin bees and fragrant flowers, the noble, pure wax is, therefore, an excellent figure of the most pure and holy flesh which the Son of God assumed from the virginal bosom of Mary, the immaculate spouse of the Holy Ghost, who was replenished with the good odor of every grace and virtue. By its sweet scent the wax candle represents, moreover, the *bonus odor Christi*: the plenitude of grace and virtue, the infinite holiness of Christ. Furthermore, the lighted candle designates very beautifully "the hearts of the faithful, fragrant with virtue, pure, loving the divine Sun and illumined by it; while the unclean and smoky tallow candle, composed of animal matter, is a picture of the sinner" (Wolter).

2. Since the times of the apostles the Church has made use of lights in the ceremonies of her divine worship. The liturgical use of light has its origin neither solely nor chiefly in the accidental necessity of dispelling darkness in order to celebrate the holy mysteries, as, for example, at divine worship in the catacombs, where circumstances rendered light necessary. The candlelight on the altar may indeed suitably remind us of the dreadful days of bloody persecution and combats for the faith, which compelled the Christians to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice at night or in subterranean caves; but it would be erroneous to regard the burning of lights at divine service as a remnant of the illumination necessary to remove material darkness, or merely as a historic reminiscence of that early period. The real reason for the use of lights in the ceremonies of divine worship is far more profound; it lies in the harmony of light with

⁶³ Recte cereus Christum significat propter tria, quae in eo sunt: lychnum namque animam, cera corpus et lumen divinitatem significat (Durand., *Ration.*, IV, lxxx, 6).

⁶⁴ Digna virginitas quae apibus comparetur: sic laboriosa, sic pudica, sic continens (S. Ambr., *De Virgin.*, I, viii, 40).

the nature of the liturgy, or the promotion of the object of the liturgy by means of light. For light contributes in a special manner to the embellishment of divine worship, and contains in itself an abundant store of symbolism; it is an ornament to the worship and, at the same time, the symbol of religious, supernatural mysteries.⁶⁵ This higher signification and purpose of light in divine worship cannot be questioned; for at all times it has been declared by the Church in unequivocal terms.

Already in the books of Holy Scripture we come across the figurative meaning of light in a thousand places. The Fathers often call attention to the mystical sense of light in its liturgical use. Thus St. Jerome (d. 420) says that at the reading of the Gospel when the sun is shining brightly, lights are lit, "not at all to dispel darkness, but to give expression to the joy of the heart."⁶⁶ St. Paulinus, Bishop of Nola (d. about 431), relates that lamps and sweet-scented wax candles were burning in the church that "day itself might be brightened up with a heavenly splendor." The prayers recited at the blessing of candles, of the paschal fire, and of the paschal candle prove, as also many hymns of the breviary make evident, that the Church regards and employs light as a symbol to portray the manifold ideas and truths of our holy religion. Thus on Candlemas Day she implores God graciously "to grant that, as the candles lighted with visible fire dispel the darkness of night, so in like manner our hearts, enlightened by invisible fire, that is, by the resplendent light of the Holy Ghost, may be delivered from all blindness of sin and with the purified eyes of the spirit be enabled to perceive what is pleasing to Him and conducive to our salvation, in order that, after the dark and dangerous combats of this earthly life, we may come to the possession of immortal light" (*ad lucem indeficientem*). At the blessing of the fire on Holy Saturday the Church prays to God, "the Eternal Light and Creator of all light," that He would bless this light, so that we "may be thereby inflamed with love and be enlightened by the fire of the divine brightness." The large paschal

⁶⁵ In blessed candles the sacramental character is also worthy of notice. They are not merely religious symbols, signifying something supernatural; they are also holy objects which, in their way, effect something supernatural in that they obtain for us, by reason and in virtue of the prayers of the Church, divine blessing and protection, chiefly against the spirits of darkness, that we may know and obtain the mysteries signified by light.

⁶⁶ *Lib. contra Vigilant.*, chap. 7.

candle is a symbol of the majesty and glory of the risen Redeemer, who by the brilliancy of His light has banished from the world the darkness that enveloped it.

3. In order to comprehend the varied symbolism of light, we must consider its natural qualities and effects. To us the origin, essence, and effects of physical light are altogether mysterious and enveloped in unfathomable obscurity. Light appears to be rather spiritual than corporeal and, consequently, exercises also a powerful influence over the spirit and mind; its effect is encouraging, cheering, and exhilarating. "Therefore God has imparted it to the sun, moon, and stars, in order to give us light by day and by night; and just as the sun is like the friendly face of our Father in heaven, which He causes to shine on the earth, so also is the moon as the eye of a heavenly mother calmly and benignly looking down upon us; and the stars are as the glances of heavenly brethren encouraging us to praise the great Father of all" (Laurent).

Light from a great number of wax candles is naturally best suited to shed grandeur and beauty on the celebration of divine worship, as well as to excite in those present higher sentiments; for their soft, quiet, mysterious light pours rays of life, of joy, of hope, of comfort, of happiness, throughout the house of God and over the divine service. On the contrary, the grief and affliction of the Church are manifest when, amid the Lamentations of the mournful *Tenebrae* during Holy Week, light after light is extinguished until finally the last one disappears behind the altar and darkness reigns supreme in the temple of God.

Among the things that fall under the senses, light is the purest, the most agreeable, the most delicate, the most ethereal: it is called the smile of heaven, the beauty of earth, the joy of nature, the life of objects, the blossom of colors, and it is the delight of the eye and of the soul. So rich in advantages is the visible earthly light; it is, therefore, the most appropriate symbol of the beauty, glory, purity, and brightness of the invisible world of spirit and grace. Whereas darkness is a symbol of paganism: of ignorance, of unbelief, of sin, of error, of godlessness, of desolation and despair; light is considered an image of Christianity: of truth, of grace, of faith, of wisdom, of virtue, of consolation and benediction, all of which emanate from heaven and lead back to heaven. In this comprehensive sense the words of the Prince of the Apostles are to be understood: God

“hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (I Pet. 2:9).

In the first place, light symbolizes the divine nature and essence; for “God is light and in Him there is no darkness” (I John 1:5), “Thou hast put on praise and beauty, and art clothed with light as with a garment” (Ps. 103:1 f.), He “inhabiteth light inaccessible” (I Tim. 6:16) and is “the Father of lights” (James 1:17). God is the eternal, uncreated light: an unfathomable ocean of truth and wisdom, of love and sanctity, of beauty and felicity, of majesty and glory. God is, moreover, the Creator and the source of all material and spiritual light, of all natural and supernatural light.

What the sun is for the material world, the God-man, Jesus Christ, is for the spiritual world, for the kingdom of grace and glory. He is the “Light of light,” “the brightness of eternal light” (Wis. 7:26), “a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of the people Israel” (Luke 2:32), “the Star . . . of Jacob” (Num. 24:17), “the bright . . . morning star” (Apoc. 22:16), “a light [come] into the world” (John 12:46), the lamp of the heavenly Jerusalem (Apoc. 21:23), “the morning star that knows no setting,” “the true sun that shines with unfading splendor.” Light also represents the glory of the only-begotten Son of the Father and the reflection of this glory in the plenitude of truth and grace (John 1:14), which through Him, the Author and end of salvation, has been imparted to mankind. “As the angels and the stars, the army of the Lord, are nothing else than the visible splendor, the radiant garment of His invisible being, so also Holy Scripture, to designate the manner of His revelation and of His gracious operations, makes use of no image more preferably than that of light and is inexhaustible in presenting this image repeatedly under new aspects” (Grimm).

We speak familiarly of the light of truth and of grace. Light enlightens the eyes and renders the things of this world visible: the truth of faith shows us a new, more beautiful and supernatural world, gives us an insight into the most profound mysteries of God, unveils the beauty and the splendor of the kingdom of grace and glory, which is infinitely more marvelous than all the grandeur of the firmament of stars. By means of revealed truth God Himself enlightens: God, who by His word caused His light to shine out of darkness into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus (II Cor. 4:6). In a man-

ner none the less excellent does the light represent the essence and the efficacy of grace, which is called by the Fathers "the light of God." The flame of light is mysterious, pure, beautiful, lovely, radiant, full of brightness and warmth; divine grace is also a mystery: it removes the stains of sin from the soul and imparts purity, beauty, and brilliance, it fills the understanding with knowledge and wisdom, the will with power and strength, the heart with love and joy.

From Christ's fullness of light we should draw light and receive His truth and grace into our hearts, that we may be "transformed into the same image from glory to glory" (II Cor. 3:18), and be made "light in the Lord" (Eph. 5:8), "children of the light and children of the day" (I Thess. 5:5). Consequently light is also the emblem of the true disciple of Jesus Christ, who walks in the light as Christ is in the light (I John 1:7); it is the symbol of the new life of God's children illumined with the splendor of virtue and purity of life. For "the path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forward and increaseth even to the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18). "Whosoever lives devoutly and chastely in the Church, striving for what is above and not for what is of the earth, is as a light from heaven, and while preserving in himself the brightness of a holy life, shines like unto a star, to lead many into the way of the Lord."⁶⁷

In a more particular manner the three divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity are very beautifully represented by burning candles. The brightness of the flame indicates faith, which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our paths (Ps. 118:105); the constant flaring up of the flame is an image of Christian hope, which keeps its glance fixed immovably above, directing all its aspirations to supernatural goods; the glow of the flame, which gradually consumes the wick and the wax, represents love, a love which sacrifices all that it has, all the powers of soul and body in the service of God. The silently ascending flame of the candle, pure and warm, is also an emblem of adoration and devotion, on the wings of which the heart flies above all that is earthly and peacefully reposes in the bosom of God.

Finally, the glory of heaven is also represented under the figure of light: the eternal unfading light enlightens the saints of heaven. To Him "that shall overcome," saith the Lord, "I will give him the morning star" (Apoc. 2:26, 28), that is, the light of heavenly glory,

⁶⁷ St. Leo, Third Discourse on the Feast of the Lord's Circumcision.

the beatific vision of God. He that casts off the works of darkness and puts on the armor of light, he that is enlightened in heart and mind, aglow with the fire of the Holy Ghost, and inflamed with heavenly desires, producing fruits of light in all goodness, justice, and truth, will, after the dangerous darkness of this life, attain to imperishable light and to the feast of eternal brightness.

4. This comprehensive and profound symbolism confirms and explains the use of light in the liturgy. The Church performs her divine services amid the splendor of lights. In general this indicates that Jesus Christ, the true light, is the object of her divine worship and the Author of the dispensation of her graces. The wax candles which burn during Mass proclaim that Christ appears on the altar as the mystical sun of grace, to diffuse light and life, joy, consolation, and blessing into all hearts. The lighted candles consume themselves as they brightly burn, and thus represent the sacrificing love of Jesus, who offers Himself on the altar in the Eucharistic sacrifice in order to impart to man the interior light of grace and the eternal light of life. The candles on the altar designate the manifold graces flowing from the sacrifice, by which the Lord enlightens the soul with holy knowledge, fills it with salutary strength, and animates it with a heavenly joy. The burning candles, moreover, admonish us to celebrate or to assist at the Holy Sacrifice with lively devotion and ardent love; the sight of these mystical lights should awaken in us quiet, serious, and holy joy and happiness of soul. The light of the candles shows us that on the altar glows the very focus of divine love, into whose ardors we should day by day dip our poor heart that it may be transformed into a flame of love, and that, as bright examples of sincere Christian living, we may without reproach, in the midst of a depraved generation, shine before the world as lights from heaven (Phil. 2:15), and thus by a fervent and virtuous career glorify God and edify our neighbor. So intimate, so instructive and elevating is the liturgical use of light; it helps us to assist at or celebrate the divine worship with proper sentiments of interior enlightenment, with a corresponding heartfelt fervor.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ The multiplication of lights at a Solemn Mass enhances the celebration and denotes the increased joy of the feast (Christmas joy, Easter joy, and so forth), which has its peculiar reason and object in the feast that is being celebrated. The devout visiting of the Blessed Sacrament and the faithful, devout celebration of divine worship during the course of the ecclesiastical year are fresh sources of holy and heartfelt joy.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CHALICE AND ITS APPURTENANCES

AMONG the necessary requisites for the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice is to be enumerated the chalice,¹ together with its appurtenances (the paten, pall, corporal, purificator, burse, veil, and cruets).

1. The chalice and paten occupy the first place of honor² among

¹ *Calix*, a deep cup for drinking, goblet, chalice (also with its contents). Through Christ the chalice received a new, sacred destiny; hence *natalis calicis*, an ancient designation for Holy Thursday. Other names for the chalice are: *calix sanctus*, *vas sacrum*, *vas dominicum*, *vas mysticum*, *vasculum*, *potulum sanctum*. The chalice is necessary for the celebration of sacrifice, and was, therefore, always and everywhere in use. As to the material and form of the chalice which our Lord used at the institution of the Eucharist, we have no reliable information; for the models preserved at Valencia and Genoa are assuredly not authentic. The three parts of the chalice (*cuppa* = goblet; *nodus* = knob or handle; *pes* = foot) were in different periods of art quite different in shape (for example, Roman and Gothic chalices). It is certain that from the earliest times efforts were made to have the sacred vessels manufactured of precious material, mostly of gold and silver, and artistically ornamented. Chalices were frequently enamelled and set with pearls and gems (*calices gemmei*). In order to preserve the gold and silver vessels from pillage, St. Lawrence used them for the support of the poor. The *Liber Pontificalis* mentions that Urban I (220-30) had all the sacred vessels made of silver and that he donated twenty-five silver patens. Chalices of glass were also used in some places, but probably only by exception and chiefly in cases of necessity. *Nihil illo ditius qui sanguinem [Christi] portat in vitro*, writes St. Jerome of Bishop Exuperius of Toulouse, who had distributed all he possessed to the poor. Chalices of wood, bone, clay, stone, brass, copper, and pewter were condemned by many synods already towards the end of the tenth century, although their use did not altogether cease. In the primitive Church there were various kinds of chalices; for example, *calices ministeriales*, *communicales*, or *majores* (for the Communion of the laity); *calices offertorii*, in which the deacons poured the wine presented by the people; *calices pendentiles*, which hung in the Church for ornament; *calices ansati*, *appensorii*, with handles; *calices imaginati*, with images; *calices literati*, with inscriptions.

² *Vasa, quibus praecipue nostra sacramenta imponuntur et consecrantur,*

the sacred vessels; for in the chalice the precious blood of Christ is consecrated,³ and on the paten the glorious body of the Lord is placed.⁴

a) Considering the sublime use to which these vessels are put, the Church has ordained that they be made only of the best, the most noble, and the most precious metals. Brittle, unsafe, and inferior materials are not to be used in their construction—such as, glass, which breaks easily; wood, which is porous and which would absorb the precious blood; brass and copper, which are given to rust and verdigris; lead and iron, which are of little value. The chalice proper (the cup) must be of gold or silver; only in an exceptional case, on account of poverty, are chalices of pewter allowed. If the cup is of silver or pewter, then at least the interior of it must be gilt with gold.⁵ The paten⁶ must be of the same material as the cup (*cuppa*) of the chalice, also gilt with gold. The outer rim of the round paten must be thin and sharp so that fragments of the sacred host may the more easily and surely be gathered up therewith; the inner cavity should be shallow and without border so that the particles of the sacred host may easily be brushed into the chalice. Both chalice and paten should always be kept scrupulously clean and bright; it is proper that when not in use they should be kept enclosed in a case.

b) As mere art or richness of material cannot make the chalice and paten worthy of the service of the altar, they must be consecrated with the divine blessing before they are fit to be used in the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice.⁷ Their consecration must precede their use at Mass and cannot be supplied thereby; the consecration

calices sunt et patenae. Calix dicitur a graeco, quod est κύλιξ; patena a patendo, quod patula sit (Walafr. Strab., *De exord. et increment.*, chap. 25).

³ Optatus of Mileve calls chalices "bearers of the blood of Christ": *Christi sanguinis portatores* (*De schism. Donat.*, VI, n. 2).

⁴ At the consecration of the paten the bishop prays God "to sanctify it for the breaking on it of the body of Christ." For many centuries the host has no longer been broken over the paten, but over the chalice (cf. Durand., *Ration.*, IV, chap. 51).

⁵ The making of chalices and patens of copper (*cuprum*) or brass (*aurichalcum*) was declared an abuse and therefore forbidden (S. R. C., March 16, 1876).

⁶ The *patena* (from *patere* = *vas late patens*, an open vessel broader than deep) was probably used even in apostolic times for the offering of the sacrifice. For preserving the chrism there were formerly the so-called *patenae chrismales*, which evidently were larger and deeper.

⁷ Quod arte vel metalli natura effici non potest altaribus tuis dignum, fiat tua benedictione sanctificatum (*Pontif. Roman.*, *De Pat. et Calic. consecrat.*).

is lost if the chalice or paten has become unfit for its purpose (for example, if broken or cracked), but is not lost by regilding.⁸ Since the ceremony of consecration includes anointing with holy chrism, their consecration belongs exclusively to the prelates. Both the chalice and the paten are anointed with chrism, which is composed of balm mingled with olive oil and is, consequently, a symbol of the sweet-scented, enlightening, healing, comforting, and strengthening grace of the Holy Ghost. In the chalice the sacrificial blood flows, and on the paten rests the body of Christ, who was anointed by God with the oil of gladness above His fellows (Ps. 44:8); from the wounds of the Eucharistic victim gushes forth all the heavenly perfume of grace, all reconciliation and mercy, all peace and joy in the holy Ghost.

To the consecrated vessels a sacred character is imparted; they are withdrawn from profane use, removed from the service of man, and specially dedicated to the service of the Most High. The sacred, venerable vessels (*vasa sacra*) which come into immediate communication with the Most Holy cannot, therefore,—at least not without special permission—be touched by the laity.⁹

⁸ If the foot of the chalice is not broken off, but only loosely screwed (in a *calix tornatilis*), then the cup does not lose its consecration. The sacred vessels, at least those of silver, are not desecrated if by degrees they lose their gilding. *Totus calix deauratus per modum unius consecratur, et ideo, quamvis aurum amittatur, argenteus calix consecratus manet, quia licet inunctio vel consecratio versetur circa superficiem, tamen simpliciter totum consecratur* (Suarez, disp. LXXXI, sect. 7, n. 3). Regilding does not make a new consecration necessary. On this question the Code of Canon Law is clear and explicit: *Calix et patena non amittunt consecrationem ob consumptionem vel renovationem auraturae, salva tamen, priore in casu, gravi obligatione rursum ea inaurandi* (can. 1305 § 2).

⁹ The discipline of the Church with regard to this point was not always and everywhere the same. The *Liber Pontificalis* attributes to Pope Sixtus I (115–25?) the ordinance that only *ministri sacri* should touch the vessels consecrated to God (*ministeria sacrata*). Among these “ministers,” deacons and subdeacons are to be understood. So long as the sacred vessels really contain the Eucharist, they can be touched by the priest only, and at most by the deacon. It is permitted the subdeacon to handle the sacred vessels on certain occasions even before they are purified, and therefore they may still contain some particles of the Eucharist; thus, for example, he may carry the chalice, not yet purified, which was used at the first or second Mass on Christmas Day. The empty and purified altar vessels may now be handled by all clerics. The same right is by privilege or legitimate custom granted to all male and even female religious who act as sacristans. Lay sacristans can also receive this permission.

c) The mystical meaning of the chalice and the paten is to be found chiefly in the formula of their consecration and in the use that is made of them. The chalice accordingly recalls to our mind that sanctified chalice (*calix sacratus*) of Melchisedech which the Lord God once filled with grace. Again it reminds us of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; for that divine heart is the laboratory in which the blood of our redemption was prepared, and also the source whence this blood of all redeeming merit was so abundantly and lavishly poured out. In the sacrificial cup of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is contained the precious blood of our redemption. Into and from this Sacred Heart once flowed and will flow for all eternity that precious blood which ransomed and redeemed us.

The paten reminds us of the gold and silver plates of the Old Testament upon which, according to the Lord's direction, various gifts (of wheaten meal) were brought to the altar. As the immediate and actual bearer of the sacred host (*corporis Christi pretiosum ferculum*), the paten represents the tree of the cross upon which Christ voluntarily underwent death for us and His martyred body hung. By its form it is also emblematic of the heart¹⁰ enlarging and dilating itself in holy love and charity, with which priest and people go to meet and receive the Eucharistic victim. Lastly, the chalice and the paten jointly represent the sepulcher, within whose dark recesses the Lord reposed in death after accomplishing the great and painful work of redemption; for the Church prays, that these vessels, "by the grace of the Holy Ghost, may become a new sepulcher for the body and blood of the Lord."¹¹

2. We will now speak of the corporal, upon which the most holy body of Christ and the chalice of His blood are consecrated,

¹⁰ Patena, quae dicitur a patendo, cor latum et amplum signat: super hanc patenam, i.e. super latitudinem caritatis sacrificium justitiae debet offerri, ut holocaustum animae pingue fiat (Innoc. III, II, chap. 59; cf. *ibid.*, VI, chap. 1).

¹¹ That the sacred vessels be made of gold or at least be gilded, is also recommended for symbolical reasons. Gold, as the most excellent and precious of the metals, is a symbol of what is noblest and of a higher order, that is, heavenly and divine (cf. Cant. 5:11; Apoc. 21:18). On the altar, therefore, gold indicates the supernatural character, the divine grandeur and excellence of the sacrifice. The Magi presented Christ with gold (*aurum regium*), *ut ostendatur Regis potentia*; thus the golden or gilded sacred vessels denote the royal dignity and power of our divine high priest. As the noblest of the metals, gold also symbolizes the heavenly wisdom and love with which Christ offers Himself for us on the altar.

and also of the pall, which serves as a covering for the chalice. Originally the pall was not distinct from the corporal, but formed one and the same piece with it; for a piece of linen much larger than our corporals, was used as a cloth to lay the sacred hosts on and at the same time to cover the chalice.¹² Since the twelfth century it has been customary to make this linen cloth—our present corporal—smaller and to use it only to place the host and chalice on; whereas for the covering of the chalice a separate piece of linen, our pall, has been employed.¹³

a) The corporal must not be interwoven in the center with threads of silk or gold, but must be pure white linen throughout. It must be blessed, as also the pall, by a bishop or by someone else having faculties. The corporal as well as the pall may have in front a small embroidered cross.

At present those palls deserve the preference that are perfectly plain, consisting of a piece of linen folded in two. It is also permissible to have decorations embroidered or woven on the upper surface

¹² *Pallium* (= mantle, overgarment) and *palla* (= long, wide overgarment) were formerly in a more extended sense (= envelop, covering) generally used for the designation of various cloths that cover the altar, especially the objects for the sacrifice. *Pallium* is still the proper liturgical name of that covering which adorns the upper part of the altar. The altar cloths were called *pallae altaris*. As a distinction from these, the other wider linen cloth, which spread over the entire surface of the altar and immediately held and covered the oblations, was called *pallium corporale*, often *palla dominica*, *palla corporalis*, but generally only *corporale*. From this large piece of linen proceeded our present corporal and chalice pall (*parva palla*, in lieu of the more extensive corporal palls). At the close of the thirteenth century (see Durandus) the names corporal and pall were distinguished and used just as at present. The chalice pall is also called *animetta* (little soul), and in the Mozarabic Ritual, *filiola* (little daughter), as it formed the inmost part of the folded corporal and was only a piece of it. Among the Carthusians the old, somewhat inconvenient practice of covering the chalice with the corporal, is maintained to the present day. The Theatines use in addition to the corporal a small linen pall on which the sacred host is held (cf. Quarti, *In Rubr. Miss.*, II, tit. 1, sect. 3, dub. 4; Krazer, sect. III, art. 3, chap. 2 § 103).

¹³ *Duplex est palla, quae dicitur corporale: una quam diaconus super altare totam extendit; altera, quam super calicem plicatam imponit* (Innocent. III, II, chap. 56). With regard to its origin the pall is still considered a portion of the corporal; hence corporal and pall are blessed with one and the same formula, in which they are designated in the singular number as *lintheamen*, which serves *ad tegendum involvendumque Corpus et Sanguinem D. N. I. Chr.* (cf. *Pontif. Roman., De benedict. corporalium*). This formula must always be recited unchanged in the singular, and it is not allowed to bless the pall without the corporal (S. R. C., September 4, 1880).

of the pall, but they must not be in black or have symbols of death.¹⁴

Since the corporal and pall come into such close contact with the sacred body and blood of Christ, and are so intimately connected with the sacred vessels, they should always be kept spotlessly clean and white. Hence they must be frequently and carefully washed and always handled with care and reverence.¹⁵

b) The linen corporal, upon which rests the adorable body of Christ, reminds us of the fine linen shroud in which the martyred body of Christ was wrapped and laid in the tomb.¹⁶ The linen winding sheet, which shrouded our Lord, bears the imprint of the passion of the Saviour, the traces of His painful, bleeding wounds, and is still venerated in the Holy Chapel (as it is called) at Turin as a precious relic of our Lord.¹⁷ The head of Jesus was wrapped in a

¹⁴ An non obstantibus decretis a S. R. C. editis, uti liceat palla a parte superiori panno serico cooperta et auro contexta? Resp. Permitti posse, dummodo palla linea subnexa calicem cooperiat, ac pannus superior non sit nigri coloris aut referat aliqua mortis signa (S. R. C., January 10, 1852).

¹⁵ Linteamina, corporalia, pallae et alia altaris indumenta integra sint et mundissima, et saepe abluantur per personas a canonibus deputatas (scil. quoad corporalia et pallas, per ipsum sacerdotem, ubi subdiaconus non adest), ad reverentiam et praesentiam Salvatoris nostri et totius curiae coelestis, quam huic Sacramento conficiendo et confecto non dubium est interesse (*Collect. Lacens.*, III, 932). Corporals, palls, and purificators, after being used at the Holy Sacrifice and before their first washing, may be handled only by persons to whom the privilege of touching the consecrated vessels is permitted. The first washing of these three linen cloths must always be done by a cleric in higher orders, that is, by a subdeacon, deacon, or priest; afterwards they may be thoroughly washed by lay persons. The water from the first washing is to be poured into the sacarium. Certum est, corporalia, pallas et purificatoria etiam benedicta, antequam fuerint adhibita ad sacrum usum, posse ab omnibus contingi, etiam a laicis et feminis, quia prohibetur contactus vel ratione unctionis sacri chrismatis vel ratione specierum consecratarum; neutra autem ratio ex praedictis militat in casu nostro. Similiter quando post sacrum usum fuerunt lota, antequam iterum adhibeantur ad sacrum usum, possunt licite ab omnibus tangi, quia moraliter censentur ac si essent nova (*Quarti, In rubr. Miss.*, II, tit. 1, sect. 3, dub. 6).

¹⁶ Panni in quibus corpus Christi consecratur, repraesentant sindonem mundam qua corpus Christi involutum est, et ideo sicut illa linea fuit, ita non licet nisi in pannis lineis corpus Christi consecrare. Linum etiam competit huic sacramento et propter puritatem, quia ex eo panni candidissimi et facile mundabiles fiunt, et propter multiplicem tusionem lini qua paratur ad hoc ut ex eo fiat pannus candidus, quae competit ad significandam passionem Christi; unde non deceret de pannis sericis corporale et pallas altaris esse, quamvis sint pretiosiores, neque de panno lineo tincto, quamvis sit pulchrior (S. Thom., IV, dist. 13, q. 1, a. 2, sol. 3 ad 3).

¹⁷ Permansit hactenus integra sindon illa, quae corporis Christi delibuta

separate linen cloth (*sudarium* or napkin: John 20:6 f.). Referring to this covering, the Church prays at the blessing of the corporal and pall: "May they be made, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, a new napkin (*novum sudarium*) for the body and blood of our Redeemer." The fine white linen, of which the corporals and palls are made, symbolizes, moreover, the most pure body of Christ in the Incarnation, in His passion, and in His transfiguration. Linen is a product of the earth, prepared with much care, and made shining and white after much labor. The Son of God, as the new Adam, has also taken His body from the immaculate, untainted earth of the virginal bosom of Mary; and by His painful passion and death was His body fitted for the blessed glory of the Resurrection and heavenly bliss. The sight of the linen corporal and pall is, therefore, calculated to awaken in us the remembrance of the pure, sacrificed body of Christ, once mortal and capable of suffering, but now immortal and transfigured in glory, and to excite us to the consideration of the Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection. The white, glossy linen is, finally, a figure of the purity of heart or the spiritual ornaments¹⁸ with which the faithful should be attired, that they may present themselves worthy guests at the sacrificial banquet of the Lamb and in all due disposition receive the holy body of Jesus Christ.¹⁹

The symbolical meaning of these four requisites for the celebra-

unguento, in sepulchro posita fuit, veluti operimentum et stratum, cui etiam imago Christi in sepulchro jacentis impressa est asservaturque summo honore in ecclesia Taurinensi (Gretser, *De Sancta Cruce*, I, chap. 97).

¹⁸ In tribus, quae perducunt corporale *lineum* ad candorem, intelliguntur tria, quae faciunt ad nostram mundificationem. Primo enim lavatur, secundo torquetur, tertio exsiccat. Sic qui ad suscipiendum Dominum nostrum mundus vult fieri, primo debet per aquam lacrymarum lavari, secundo per opera poenitentiae torqueri, tertio per fervorem amoris Dei a carnalium desideriorum humore siccati (S. Albert., *Serm. de ss. Euch. sacram.*, XV).

¹⁹ To the objection: Sicut aurum pretiosius est inter materias vasorum, ita panni serici pretiosiores sunt inter alios pannos. Ergo sicut calix fit de auro, ita pallae altaris debent de serico fieri, et non solum de panno lineo, St. Thomas answers: Dicendum, quod ubi potuit sine periculo fieri, Ecclesia statuit circa hoc sacramentum id quod expressius repraesentat passionem Christi. Non erat autem tantum periculum circa corpus, quod ponitur in corporali, sicut circa sanguinem, qui continetur in calice. Et ideo licet calix non fit de petra, corporale tamen fit de panno lineo, quo corpus Christi fuit involutum. . . . Competit etiam pannus lineus propter sui munditiam ad significandam conscientiae puritatem, et propter multiplicem laborem, quo talis pannus praeparatur, ad significandam Christi passionem (IIIa, q. 83, a. 3 ad 7).

tion of the Holy Sacrifice can also be construed in a different manner: the chalice may be considered as the sepulchre; the paten as the stone wherewith it was closed; the corporal, the winding sheet in which the holy body was wrapped; and the pall, the napkin which bound up the blood-stained head of Jesus.²⁰

3. The purificator²¹ is a small linen cloth which is used at the Holy Sacrifice for cleaning and wiping the chalice as well as the lips and fingers of the celebrant after Communion, and for wiping off the paten before the consecrated host is placed upon it.²² That it may the more easily be distinguished from the other cloths, a small cross should be embroidered in its center. The purificator may be blessed, but need not be blessed. (S.R.C., September 7, 1816.)

4. The corporal must not be allowed to remain lying on the altar, nor be carried in the bare hands, but it must be placed in a special case, which is usually called the burse.²³ The burse should be open only at one end and be conveniently large enough to enclose the corporal within it. The exterior covering of the burse, on which sacred emblems may be wrought, must correspond in material and color with the vestments of the Mass;²⁴ the interior may be lined with silk or fine white linen. It is proper to use precious material for the making of the burse, because it serves as an ornament to the

²⁰ Duplex est palla, quae dicitur corporale, una scilicet, quam diaconus super altare extendit; altera, quam super calicem plicatam imponit, significantes duo linteamina, quibus Joseph corpus Christi involvit. Extensa repraesentat sindonem, qua corpus fuit in sepulchro involutum, et inde corporale vocatur; plicata super calicem posita sudarium, quo caput ejus fuit separatim involutum (Durand., *Ration.*, IV, xxix, 4).

²¹ Writers of the Middle Ages and the *Ordines Romani* do not allude to the purificator; yet the *Ordo Rom. XIV* mentions a *pannus tersorius*, which served for purification. The Greeks use for cleansing the chalice and paten the holy sponge.

²² Since the purificator is intended for the cleansing of holy things, the rubrics expressly require that it should be kept clean (*purificatorium mundum*).

²³ S. R. C., Feb. 27, 1847. It is called also *pera* (πῆρα, wallet), *theca*, (θήκη, envelop, cover, case), but usually *bursa* (moneybag, from the Greek βύρσα, drawn-off skin or hide). The burse was introduced toward the close of the Middle Ages "that the corporal might be more carefully and becomingly carried" (Krazer).

²⁴ Super velo ponit [sacerdos] bursam coloris paramentorum, intus habentem corporale plicatum (*Miss. Rom., Rit. celebr. Miss.*, tit. I, n. 1).

chalice and as a receptacle for the blessed and sacred linen within, the corporal.²⁵

5. The chalice veil,²⁶ with which the chalice and paten are covered up to the time of the Offertory and after the Communion, should be of silk²⁷ and correspond in color to the office of the day. Although a cross upon it is not prescribed, the veil is almost universally decorated with this sacred emblem.²⁸ It should not be thick and stiff, but soft, that it may the more easily be spread over the chalice and folded again. The object of covering the chalice with a veil is to express due reverence for this sacred vessel.

6. To the above-mentioned articles may be added some others, such as the cruets, finger bowl, the small spoon for taking water, and the bell.

The cruets,²⁹ which the Church uses for presenting the wine and water for the Eucharistic sacrifice of the blood of Christ,³⁰ may be

²⁵ The burse, therefore, should not be a simple covering, that is, one merely laid on the corporal, or a lid with a pocket sewed to the upper portion, but rather a double cover of strong cardboard forming a square, the three sides of which are sewed together in such a way that into the open side the folded corporal may easily be inserted.

²⁶ *Velum* = cover, cloth, veil. The *velum calicis* and the *velum humerale* of the subdeacon at High Mass must be of the liturgical color of the Mass. *Velum autem celebrantis in expositione ss. Sacramenti nunquam alius nisi coloris albi sit; prout vela ciborii (the ciborium cover) quoque, necnon bursae et baldachini deferendo Venerabili Sacramento inservientes ex albi coloris panno confecta sint oportet* (Conc. Prag. [1860], tit. 5, chap. 7, n. 2). The subdeacon uses the humeral veil to carry the chalice (the veil of which has previously been removed) from the credence table to the altar, and to hold the paten in his hands from the Offertory to the end of the Pater Noster.

²⁷ *Miss. Rom., Rit. celebr.*, tit. 1, n. 1. The word *sericus* (= silken) originated from the circumstance that the inhabitants of Serer (a people in Eastern Asia) chiefly manufactured this material. If the veil is rather small, it should be arranged so that at least the front of the chalice, exposed to view, may be entirely covered (S. R. C., January 12, 1669).

²⁸ The blessing of the chalice veil and burse is not prescribed, but is proper.

²⁹ The name now in use is *ampulla* (diminutive of *amphora*; properly *amp[h]orula*, also *amporla*, *ampurla*, *ampulla*; from *αμφί*, *utrinque*, and *φέρω*, *porto*, because this vessel had two handles to carry it by) = a vessel with a small neck and two handles, a small flask. More ancient designations are: *annula*; *scyphus* (*σκύφος*) = bowl, goblet; *urceolus* (from *urceus*) = a little pitcher; *lagoena* = flask; *phiale* (*φιάλη*) = cup, beaker; in the *Ord. Rom.* it is also called *fons*.

³⁰ As long as the faithful brought wine for the sacrifice, it was collected in two larger vessels (*amae*, from *ἀμη*, bucket). From this a smaller vessel was filled (*annula offertoria vel oblatoria*), and from this the deacon then poured

made of metal (gold, silver, pewter);³¹ but it is more appropriate to make them of crystal or of glass,³² as these are more easily kept clean and the wine is more readily distinguished. If they are made of metal, they should be distinctly marked on the covers to prevent any mistake of taking the water for the wine. They should be brought to the altar on a plate or small basin (*pelvicula*).³³ Both cruets and basin should be always kept clean and bright.³⁴ The small spoon which is used in many places to take the water from the cruet to pour into the wine, is neither prescribed nor forbidden by the Church.³⁵ If the water cruet is provided with a tube for pouring, then the danger of mingling too much water with the wine is as much obviated as by the use of a small spoon.

For a considerable time the Church has been using a little altar bell,³⁶ to call the attention of those present to the most sacred parts of the Mass, such as the Sanctus, Elevation,³⁷ and Communion,

out the wine through a strainer (*colum vinarium, colatorium*) into the chalice for Mass. Archidiaconus sumit amulam pontificis de subdiacono oblationario et refundit in calicem super colatorium (*Ordo Rom. III, n. 13*). After the offerings of wine ceased, the present cruets replaced these larger vessels.

³¹ An uti liceat in Missae sacrificio ampullis aureis vel argenteis? Resp.: Tolerandum esse consuetudinem (S. R. C., April 28, 1866).

³² Ampullae vitreae vini et aquae cum pelvicula (*Miss. Rom., Rubr. gener., tit. 20*).

³³ These vessels were formerly—and even in the sixteenth century—carried with bare hands by the acolytes to the altar; but the *Cerem. Episc.* has the rubric: Acolythus . . . curam habebit portandi ampullas sive urceolos vini et aquae super aliquo parvo bacili (*basin*) pariter dispositos (I, xi, 10).

³⁴ For the washing of the hands, already at an early period (about the fifth century) special water vessels and a basin (*aquamamile, vas manuale, aquamanus, aquamanualis, agmanilis*) to receive the water were employed, and a cloth was used for wiping the hands (*manutergium, manutergiolum*). For the washing of the hands at four different times during Solemn Pontifical Mass (before vesting, after the reading of the Offertorium, after the incensing of the offerings, and after Communion) a larger cruet (*buccale*) and a larger basin (*lanx*) of a precious metal are required (cf. *Cerem. Episc.*, I, xi, 11 f.).

³⁵ S. R. C., September 9, 1850, ad 15; February 6, 1858. The *Cerem. Roman.* prescribes (II, tit. 2, c. 15) that in the Solemn Pontifical Mass of the pope, at the Offertory the water be mixed in the chalice with a small golden spoon. Already in the Middle Ages a spoon was occasionally used by the priests for the same purpose. In the Greek liturgy a gold or silver spoon has been used from ancient times to remove the particles placed in the chalice and to distribute them to the communicants.

³⁶ These bells have had different names, for example, *campanula* = a small bell; *cymbalum* = a cymbal, gong; *tintinnabulum* = a small bell, tinkling bell.

³⁷ The rubrics prescribe that the signal be given with the bell only at the Sanctus and at the Elevation (*Miss. Rom., Rubr. celebr., tit. 7, n. 8; tit. 8, n. 6*).

and to animate their devotion. The bell may be either a hand or a wall bell; the form and the ornamentation of the altar bell should differ from that of bells intended for profane use. Already in the Middle Ages a signal from a "small bell" was given at the moment of the elevation in order that "the attention of the people might be aroused, and they might be admonished to adore, in spirit and in truth, Christ in the Sacrament which would now be shown to them."³⁸

All these articles which serve for the ornamentation and service of the most sacred of all Church vessels, the consecrated chalice, are to be handled with religious care and devotion, and should be kept clean and in good condition. *Sancta sancte tractanda.*³⁹

³⁸ Berthold, *Tewtsch Rational über das Ambt hl. Mess* (1535), chap. 14, n. 4.

³⁹ Religionis christianae excellentia postulat, in cultu divino nihil adhiberi, nisi divina majestate dignum, sacramentorum sanctitati atque fidelium pietati congruum. . . . Post animarum salutem nihil sacerdotali sollicitudine dignius, quam rerum et aedium sacrarum cura, in quibus Deus ipse absconditus habitat et christiana plebs verbo Dei et sacramentis pascitur. In ecclesiis omnia munda sint et nitida: curent igitur rectores, ne pulvere aut alio squalore obsordescant non solum altaria et sacra supellex, sed insuper pavimenta, parietes et tecta fornicata (*the arches*). (*Collect. Lacens.*, III, 1181-93.)

CHAPTER XIV

THE SACERDOTAL VESTMENTS

He [the high priest Simon] shone in his days as the morning star in the midst of a cloud and as the moon at the full. And as the sun when it shineth, so did he shine in the Temple of God—and as the rainbow giving light in the bright clouds, and as the flower of roses in the days of the spring, and as the lilies that are on the brink of the water, and as the sweet-smelling frankincense in the time of summer; as a bright fire, and frankincense burning in the fire; as a massy vessel of gold adorned with every precious stone; as an olive tree budding forth, and a cypress tree rearing itself on high—when he put on the robe of glory and was clothed with the perfection of power. When he went up to the holy altar, he honored the vesture of holiness. (Ecclus. 50: 6–12.)

1. With these inspired words Jesus, the son of Sirach, depicts the appearance which the high priest of the Old Law presented to the eyes of the people when he entered the sanctuary in his festal attire. Now, if God even in the Old Law, which was but a weak figure of the wonderful mysteries of the New Covenant, prescribed such beautiful rich garments for the liturgical functions, that “Aaron and his sons shall use them when they shall go into the tabernacle of the testimony, or when they approach to the altar to minister in the sanctuary, lest being guilty of iniquity they die” (Exod. 28:43); how much more is it the Lord’s will that His beloved spouse, the Church, should appear at the altar robed in magnificence and splendor whenever she celebrates that adorable sacrifice and spreads the table of the Lord, at which even here below, in this country of her exile, is had a foretaste of those joys which she is to enjoy forever in her heavenly country with the Lamb!

To the believing eye and mind it would appear as a desecration of what is most holy, an outrage against the divine mysteries, for one to attempt to offer the Holy Sacrifice at the altar in the ordinary,

everyday dress. The holiness of the house of God and the altar, the sublimity of the sacrificial action,¹ and the dignity of the Christian priesthood demand for the celebration of the Mass special and venerable vestments altogether distinct from the ordinary dress. Since a distinction in garment at the sacred functions, especially at the Holy Sacrifice, is so necessary and founded in the nature of things and is, moreover, most appropriate, both the Old Law and the New Law prescribe a special clothing in their liturgy.

The Council of Trent declares that the use of vestments in the Catholic Church rests on "apostolic discipline and tradition."² This is, indeed, to be understood as follows. In the primitive ages of Christianity, the apparel for divine worship did not differ in form from the clothing of ordinary life;³ but it was distinguished from the ordinary clothing in being as rich and as beautiful as possible, and in being allowed to be worn only at the celebration of the divine mysteries.⁴ Gradually in the course of time the most complete and striking difference arose between the liturgical and the civilian

¹ Pertinet ad splendorem et decorem cujusvis sacri ministerii, et praesertim tanti sacrificii, ut non fiat tantum veste vulgari et communi, sed ut ipso exteriori apparatu et sacris indumentis indicetur, actionem illam non esse communem et vulgarem, sed sacram. Etenim si absque sacris indumentis communi modo et vulgari fieret, vilesceret quodammodo, praesertim apud homines rudes et sensibiles, qui non facile distinguunt pretiosum a vili; igitur ad decorem et debitum honorem hujus sacrificii conveniens fuit institutio sacrarum vestium (Suarez, disp. LXXXIII, sect. 2, n. 2).

² Sess. XXII, cap. 5.

³ Patres nostri in illis quoad formam vestibus sacram celebrarunt Liturgiam, quibus per quinque saecula et reliqui laici in imperio Romano et longiori tempore clerici in foro erant induti. Unice dabant operam Antistites, ut vestes liturgicae candidiores, nitidiores ac tandem pretiosiores essent vestibus communibus et usitatis; ut venustiores tantum Romanorum, Graecorum et Orientalium habitus, iique maxima ex parte talares adhiberentur ad sacrificium, prout illius dignitas omnino exigebat (Krazer, sect. III, art. 5, cap. 2, § 139).

⁴ The prohibition of Pope Stephen I (d. 257) to wear church apparel in civil life is only a renewed inculcation of an ancient custom then overlooked by some ecclesiastics. "Neither in the East nor in the West did the liturgical vestments differ altogether from those used at that time in ordinary life, still less were they different from the patriarchal clothing as to form, as is indicated by the similarity of names. On the other hand, from all investigations we are to draw a twofold conclusion. First, that not every garment, nor every change of form consequent upon the decay of discipline, was employed in the liturgy; but certain definite garments appropriate to the holy functions and of a most befitting form were selected. Secondly, that these garments served for divine service alone, and were therefore richly adorned" (Jakob, *Die Kunst im Dienste der Kirche*, p. 321).

dress. The more ancient forms were preserved up to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. From this epoch regard for tradition greatly decreased, and the clear understanding of the object and symbolism of ecclesiastical vestments was lost. The Church authorities left the manufacture of these articles to the prevailing industrialism and to individual tastes, and the repeated decrees of the Church were inadequate to counteract the decadence. Hence it came to pass that in many places the vestments destined for divine worship answered as little to the requirements of the liturgy as to those of art. Above all, the liturgical vestments should be restored to their flowing, ample form. A general return to more worthy forms cannot be effected by an imitation (according to fancy) of ancient patterns prevalent at various periods, but only by once more following the ordinances of the Church.

The form of the church vestments should be those that have been traditional and in general use; therefore those of the West should be Roman in form. Only with permission of the pope is a change permissible.⁵ If, for instance, we would wish to introduce again chasubles of the gothic form, strictly so called, the Sacred Congregation of Rites should be informed of this intention and be given the reasons for it. In the making of vestments excellent and appropriate patterns should be insisted on, that is, smallness, stiffness, and deformity should be avoided.

With regard to the material of the vestments, the amice and alb must be of linen. Silk and woolen cinctures corresponding to the color of the day are permitted; but the Church justly prefers them to be of white linen.⁶ Transparent lace showing a colored foundation is not permitted on the lower hem or on the sleeves of the alb.⁷ For the vestments themselves, that is, for the chasuble, stole,

⁵ S. R. C., August 21, 1863; December 9, 1925.

⁶ An sacerdotēs in sacrificio Missae uti possint cingulo serico? Resp.: Congruentius uti cingulo lineo (S. R. C., January 22, 1701). Posse uti cingulo coloris paramentorum (June 8, 1709). Nihil obstare, quominus cingula lanae adhiberi possint (December 23, 1862). White cinctures are always liturgical, and for practical reasons we are always recommended to use them, although it is necessary to have them more frequently washed than colored cinctures; for the changing of cinctures is thereby avoided, if, for example, after a Requiem Mass another function is to be performed at which the use of a black cincture would be inappropriate.

⁷ S. R. C., August 17, 1833. Yet it appears (as may be seen even in Rome) that, in consequence of a contrary custom, at least on the sleeves a colored or-

maniple, and the others that must correspond to the liturgical colors, no particular material is prescribed.⁸ But all common material is forbidden, such as is worn in everyday life; for example, linen, cotton, cotton cambric (a material that is half linen and half cotton),⁹ and wool. Also forbidden is a sort of material in which fine threads of glass (*vitrum in filamenta subtilissima redactum*) are substituted for threads of gold or silver (as glass brocade).¹⁰ However, that material is not prohibited in which the long threads are of cotton (or even of linen or wool) and the cross threads are of silk.¹¹ The fabrics (especially those of gold, silver, and silk) of which the chasuble, stole, and maniple should be made, are therefore more precious than the materials found in garments worn in daily life.

All that is precious belongs to the Lord and should serve to promote His glory; therefore the Church desires not only rich vessels, but also handsome vestments, for the service of the altar. The richness and the value of the sacred vestments awaken due reverence for divine service and set forth before the faithful the incomprehensible grandeur and holiness of the mysteries of the Eucharistic sacrifice. Vestments for divine worship become sacred in a special manner by reason of the blessing of the Church imparted to them, and by reason of their religious, symbolical meaning.

2. All the vestments for Mass (cincture included) must be blessed before being used.¹² This blessing of the vestments has, in all

namement may be allowed under a transparent lace. Such a violet ornament is conceded to bishops, and a red one to cardinals. Cf. Stella, *Instit. liturg.*, p. 52.

⁸ To the sacred vestments, which in the rubrics are usually called *sacra indumenta*, *sacra paramenta*, or simply *paramenta* (that is, vestments), in a stricter sense belong the chasuble, cope, stole, maniple, dalmatic, tunicella, and humeral veil. Whoever is robed in one or more of these vestments is called in the rubrics simply *paratus*. In a more comprehensive sense, however, the amice, alb, and cincture are also included in the *sacra paramenta*.

⁹ S. R. C., September 22, 1837.

¹⁰ S. R. C., September 11, 1847. The reason for this prohibition lies not only in the danger of glass (as glass threads easily break into small splinters and might fall into the chalice), but also and principally in consideration of the little value of glass (*vilitas materiae*). Cf. S. R. C., July 14, 1141. Therefore trimmings made of glass beads are forbidden, as well as those made of fine glass thread.

¹¹ S. R. C., March 23, 1835; March 23, 1882.

¹² *Vestimenta ecclesiastica, quibus Domino ministratur, et sacrata debet esse et honesta* (chap. 42, *de consecr.*, dist. 1). Although the blessing of the vestments for divine worship is mentioned for the first time in the fourth century, it does not follow that it was not previously practised; whether at

probability, been in practice since the first ages; nowadays it is strictly enjoined and is to be done by a bishop or priest with special faculties. By this blessing (*benedictio constitutiva*) the altar vestments are in a special manner consecrated to God and His service, that is, they become sacred things (*res sacrae*), and should be regarded and treated with reverence. This blessing is retained as long as the vestments preserve their original shape and are suitable for use.¹³ Worn-out vestments and those no longer fit for divine service should not be put to profane uses, but should be burned, and the ashes are to be thrown into the sacrarium.¹⁴ The blessing is imparted to the vestments by means of prayer, the sign of the cross, and sprinkling with holy water, and at the same time special graces are invoked for the wearers of the blessed garments; for the Church petitions, not only that the Lord may, "with the dew of His grace and abundant blessing, . . . cleanse, sanctify, and consecrate these sacerdotal vestments, that they may become fit for the service of God and the holy mysteries," but also that the priests "robed in them may be protected against all the assaults or temptations of the evil spirits, may serve and attend to Thy mysteries fittingly and worthily, persevere in them devoutly, . . . remain subject to God in peace and devotion, and appear before the face of God holy, immaculate, and without reproach."

3. The Church ascribes to the sacred vestments a symbolical, mystical meaning.¹⁵ In the divine worship there is nothing merely exterior: everything has a figurative significance and is expressive

that time it was already obligatory or merely optional, is immaterial. This blessing is reserved to the bishop. Bishops may delegate priests (whether they hold an ecclesiastical dignity or not) to bless the vestments and the other necessary articles for the Holy Sacrifice (canon 1304). But the delegated priest may not use the formula of blessing specially reserved to the bishop in the Roman Pontifical, but he must take the ordinary formula to be found in the ritual. Religious superiors, as a rule, also have the privilege of blessing vestments, but only for their own churches and convents (S. R. C., March 13, 1632). It is disputed whether vestments and other objects used for divine service can validly be blessed when made of material forbidden by the Church.

¹³ The sacred vestments lose their blessing when they are so torn or so worn out as to be unsuitable for divine service, and when another vestment is made out of them, for example, an amice out of an alb. When a vestment is mended, the blessing is lost only when a part of it is separated from it as to render it unfit for use.

¹⁴ *Vasa sacra et vestimenta sacerdotalia nolite negotiari aut tabernario (pawnbroker) in pignus dare (Pontif. Roman., Ordo ad Synodum).*

¹⁵ *Quis ignorat, necesse esse, ut in publicum prodiens munerique et ministerio venerando vacans non solum vestiatur, verum et modeste et decore vestia-*

of the interior; there all is "spirit and life." The Church endeavors to spiritualize and transform, so to speak, corporeal things by means of higher, supernatural relations, in order to direct the observing, reflecting mind of the faithful to what is invisible, divine, and eternal. This is also the case with the liturgical vestments, which thus acquire the significance and virtue of a picture; for they indicate not only in general the majesty of the Eucharistic sacrifice, but they express, in a special way, various mysteries that excite and nourish devotion. The sacred vestments are full of salutary instruction and admonition for all that will comprehend their meaning and attend to their language. Even if they were not originally introduced on account of this symbolism, the Church afterward justly ascribed to them a higher and mystical meaning, inasmuch as she made use of the name and origin, the color and destination, the usage and form, as well as the manner of putting on and wearing the vestments, in order to express mysteries of faith and of the life of Christ.¹⁶ The symbolical conception and meaning of the liturgical vestments is, therefore, fully justified and established.¹⁷ This symbolism, in general, is twofold: allegorical and moral.¹⁸

tur. En itaque causam naturalem et physicam vestium, quibus presbyteri in obeundis sacris muneribus induuntur. Verum postquam sanctae matri Ecclesiae placuit, singularem illis usum assignare, formamque praescribere easque alio quam ministerii tempore adhibere vetuit, ac denique easdem certarum ceremoniarum pompa tradere, particularibusque precibus benedicere incepit, profecto tanquam res sacrae ac symbolicae considerandae sunt. At ridiculus sane mihi foret ille, qui rejectis omnibus symbolicis et mysticis significationibus hic solum causas naturales physicas et necessitatis reperiri contenderet, universosque mysticos conceptus debiles ac inanes judicaret (Languet, *De vero Ecclesiae sensu circa sacrarum caerimoniarum usum*, § 33).

¹⁶ De indumentis sacerdotalibus . . . diligenter considerandum est, quid in moribus sacerdotum significet illa varietas vestium, quid fulgor auri, quid nitor gemmarum, cum nihil ibi debeat esse ratione carens, sed forma sanctitatis et omnium imago virtutum. Sicut enim bona domus in ipso vestibulo agnoscitur, sic Christi sacerdos cultu sacrarum vestium ostendit exterius, qualis apud se esse debeat interius. . . . In ornamentis . . . et sublimitas sacerdotii commendatur et sacerdotum casta dignitas significatur, quatenus per exteriorum habitum discant quales intra se debeant esse, qui vices illius veri summique Pontificis gerant, in quo fuit omnis plenitudo virtutum, quam profitentur exteriora ornamenta membrorum (Ivon. Carnot., *Serm.*, III).

¹⁷ Ex vestibus omnibus recte compositis resultat gravis quidam et decens ornatus sacerdotis ad sacrificandum accedentis, quod in hujusmodi vestimentis primum omnium considerari debuit; nam hoc est veluti primum fundamentum et litteralis ratio horum indumentorum. Sed ultra hoc habent haec omnia optimas et sacras significationes, tum in ordine ad mores, tum in ordine ad Christi passionem (Suarez, disp. LXXXII, sect. 2, n. 3).

¹⁸ Singulis vestibus liturgicis significatio mystica inest; quatenus his Christi

The Eucharistic sacrifice is the living representation and mystical renewal of the sacrifice of the cross; accordingly the vestments have reference to the different garments with which Christ was clothed in His passion, or to the instruments of torture wherewith He was tormented and reviled. The vestments for the Mass recall to mind different scenes in the passion of our Lord. This difference, of course, exists: the vestment which serves to adorn the celebrant as a garment of honor and joy, was once the cause of keenest suffering to our crucified Saviour.¹⁹ This allegorical interpretation of the sacred vestments is not expressed in the prayers of the Church; therefore in considering this subject we must have recourse to the opinion of liturgical and ascetical authors, who differ more or less in their views. The most generally accepted allegorical explanation of the sacerdotal vestments for Mass is the following.

The amice may remind us of the shameful veiling of the eyes and face of Jesus by the Jews, who at the same time struck Him on the head and in the face, saying derisively: "Prophecy unto us, O Christ, who is he that struck Thee?" and uttered many other blasphemies against Him. The alb reminds us that Jesus Christ, the eternal wisdom, in mockery was clothed as a fool in a white garment by Herod and his court. The cincture recalls the cords with which our Lord was bound when He was taken captive by the soldiers in the garden of olives; thus bound they dragged Him to the slaughter as a lamb not opening His mouth. The cincture also reminds us of the ropes which tied His innocent, all-powerful hands to the pillar at the scourging, and of the thongs with which His immaculate flesh was scourged and torn amid frightful torture. The maniple refers to the fetters with which the hands of our Lord, as

repraesentatur passio et ejusdem designantur virtutes, quibus exornari sacerdotem par est, ut dum munere Christi personam gerit, moribus etiam similitudinem Christi referat, pleneque Christum indutus, in Christum veluti transformatus videatur. Ideo duplicem significationem vestes sacrae exhibent, quae quidem praepriis ministris, sed etiam populo bene perspecta esse deberet, nempe allegoricam, quae respicit Christi passionem, et moralem, quae spectat virtutes sacerdotales (Müller, *Theol. mor.*, III, tit. I, § 31).

¹⁹ Here also the words of Cardinal Toledo find their application. Among the reasons for the institution of the Sacrifice of the Mass he gives in the fourth place the following: ut Christus ostenderet unionem amoris indissolubilem, quam habet cum sua Ecclesia. Una enim caro fit sponsi et sponsae; unde Christus voluit idem poculum, quod in cruce gustaverat, Ecclesiae dare; sed sub specie altera et incruentum ac suave, tota amaritudine sibi reservata (*In Summ. theol. s. Thom. enarrat., De sacrif. Miss., controv. 1, art. 3*).

those of a malefactor, were bound. The stole indicates the heavy burden of the cross, which the exhausted victim voluntarily and patiently carried on the way to His crucifixion. The chasuble brings to our mind the purple robe of mockery with which the soldiers, after they had crowned Him with thorns, covered the mangled body of Jesus, reviling His regal dignity by kneeling in mockery before Him. Viewed in this light, the sacerdotal vestments recall to us in what manner the Saviour on His way to glory drank from "the torrent," that is, from the bitter flood of sufferings, labors, and humiliations (Ps. 109:7). While putting on these vestments or when beholding them, we should awaken most ardent sentiments of love, compassion, sorrow, gratitude, hope, amazement, resignation, and compunction.²⁰

In a moral sense the vestments designate the different virtues with which the celebrant should be clothed and adorned after the example of the invisible high priest, Jesus Christ, whom he represents at the altar. This meaning of the vestments is expressed in the liturgy in various ways, and it can, therefore, be surely ascertained from the prayers the celebrant has to recite when he puts them on before Mass, and from the words which are spoken when they are bestowed at the time of ordination or when they are taken off at the degradation of a priest. According to the spirit of the Church, the following moral lessons and admonitions are inculcated by the six vestments used by the priest at Mass (the amice, alb, cincture, maniple, stole, and chasuble).

a) The amice²¹ is put on first. It is a linen cloth which covers

²⁰ Cum haec indumenta signa sint eorum, quae Christus pro nobis peressus est, varii actus a sacerdote, dum illis induitur, eliciendi sunt, amoris, doloris, gratitudinis et intensissimi desiderii ejus patientiam et humilitatem imitandi in doloribus, afflictionibus, opprobriis aliisque adversitatibus sustinendis (Bona, *Tract. ascet. de Missa*, chap. 5, § 2).

²¹ *Amictus* from *amicio* (*amb* and *jacio*) = to throw around, to envelop. *Se amicare* and *amiciri* were the very words for throwing about or putting on the outer garment, while *induere* was employed for the putting on of a garment and *vestire* for clothing the body. Hence *amictus* = the throwing around of a garment; metonym: the cloak, the garment serving as a cloak, the outer robe; transferred to head wrap. Rarer designations: *humeral*, *superhumeral* = shoulder covering. In the *Ord. Rom.* the name *anaboladium* (*ἀναβολάδιον*, to throw about the shoulders) in corrupt forms (*anabolajum*, *anogolajuni*, *ambolagium*, *anogolai*, *anogolagi*) is often used. According to the most ancient *Ord. Rom.*, the amice was put on after the alb and cincture until about the twelfth century. Amalarius, however, mentions the present practice

first the head, then the neck and shoulders; in the middle of it is a cross, which is to be kissed when the amice is put on and taken off.²² The amice has been in use since about the eighth century; it appears that up to that time Mass was celebrated without a covering for the neck.²³ At any rate, already in the twelfth century the amice covered, not only the neck and shoulders, but also the head, as it still does in some orders of monks; however, at the beginning of Mass it was allowed to fall back upon the shoulders.²⁴ We are reminded of this earlier practice by the rite at the ordination of subdeacons, when the bishop covers the head of the newly ordained subdeacon with the amice, and by the manner of putting on the amice, when, according to the directions of the rubrics, the amice is first placed on the head and thence drawn down to the neck and put over the shoulders.

One meaning of the amice rests on the ancient custom of covering the head with it, and on the circumstance that in remembrance of that practice the amice must still be placed on the head before it is put on the neck and shoulders. The meaning of this rite is explained by the Church herself in the prayer which is to be recited by the celebrant when he puts on the amice: "Place, O Lord, on my head the helmet of salvation, that I may overcome the assaults of Satan."²⁵ The question arises: What is to be understood by this helmet of salvation (*galea salutis*), with which the priest at the altar should be armed against the attacks of Satan? The expression is taken from Holy Scripture, which also contains its meaning. When

in the ninth century: *Amictus est primum vestimentum nostrum, quo collum undique cingimus (De eccles. offic., II, chap. 17).*

²² *Missal. Rom., Rit. celebr. Miss., tit. 1, n. 3.* This kiss is prescribed both for the putting on and the taking off of the maniple and stole, and is to be regarded as a mark of reverence toward these vestments blessed for divine service, to which a cross is affixed.

²³ *Si vetusta documenta, si priscas picturas, si antiqua vitra consulamus, sacerdotes usque ad saeculum VII et VIII nonnisi nudo in collo conspicimus (Krazer, sect. III, art. 6, chap. 1, § 162).*

²⁴ Honorius of Autun (d. 1120) writes (*Gemma animae*, I, chap. 201), that the priest covers with the amice *caput et collum et humeros.*

²⁵ *Impone, Domine, capiti meo galeam salutis* (= impart to me the victorious hope of securing salvation, that is, heaven), *ad expugnandos diabolicos incursus.* The bishop prays: *Pone, Domine, galeam salutis in capite meo ad expugnandas omnes diabolicas fraudes: inimicorum omnium versutias superando (Missal. Rom.).* Already in Tertullian (*De veland. virgin., chap. 15*) we meet a passage relative to these prayers: *Pura virginitas . . . confugit ad velamen capitis, quasi ad galeam contra tentationes.*

the apostle St. Paul exhorts Christians to put on the armor of God, to resist the attacks of Satan, he urges them to take up "the helmet of salvation" (Eph. 6:17).²⁶ In another place he says that Christians should "be sober, having on the breastplate of faith and charity, and for a helmet the hope of salvation" (I Thess. 5:8). The protecting helmet and the amice, which covers the head in a similar manner, are accordingly symbolical of Christian hope. Therefore lively hope, firm confidence in God, is that helmet of protection which the priest prays for in putting on the amice, that he may be protected against all the attacks and temptations of the Evil One, especially during Mass.

Such a petition is most appropriate before beginning the Sacrifice of the Mass. Although the devil is ever lying in wait for man to destroy or at least to weaken in him the life of faith and hope, yet more particularly at the time of the Holy Sacrifice he seeks to confuse the soul by all manner of suggestions and distractions, in order to rob her of devotion and of the fruits of the sacrifice. The amice now admonishes the priest to arm and to prepare himself to encounter this danger. Therefore this great and firm confidence with which he should approach the altar, is a means of attracting to himself an abundance of graces and blessings from the inexhaustible ocean of the divine goodness. Finally, unwavering confidence is necessary for the priest to enable him, a poor sinner, to venture to ascend the altar and to hold in his hands and receive into his heart the Most Holy, in whose presence the angels and archangels are filled with awe.

Originally the amice was intended to cover the bareness of the

²⁶ Quenam est haec galea? Dico "galeam salutis," i.e. galeam, quae est ipsa salus. Galea ergo militis Christiani est salus allata a Christo et sperata a Christianis, i.e. spes salutis: ita enim se explicat Apostolus I Thessal. 5:8. Ecce spem salutis vocat galeam. Sicut enim galea principem corporis partem, puta caput ipsum, a quo cetera membra totusque homo pendet, tuetur et communit, ita spes salutis et gloriae coelestis ac immortalis servat et communit caput, i.e. hominis cogitationes, fines et intentiones. Spes ergo quasi galea caput nostrum symbolicum, puta finem et intentionem, armat et communit: primo, quia facit, ut ultimus noster finis et intentio sit Deus, fruitio Dei, salus et beatitudo aeterna, eoque refert omnes alios nostros fines et intentiones ac consequenter reliqua omnia cogitata, dicta et facta nostra; secundo, quia facit, ut homo cogitans bona illa immensa, quae consecuturum se sperat, alias omnes cogitationes a diabolo suggestas repellat, hacque cogitatione et spe ardua quaevis aggrediatur et animose cum hoste confligat, proponens sibi gloriam illam speratam, quae victorem manet (Corn. a Lap., *In Ephes.*, 6:17).

neck and to keep the voice clear so as to enable it properly to sing the praises of God.²⁷ With regard to this circumstance the Church also considers the amice as a symbol of self-control over one's speech, in which is comprised, in a certain sense, the sum of mortification. At the ordination of the subdeacon the bishop says to him: "Receive the amice, by which the restraint of the tongue is signified."²⁸ The putting on of the amice contains, therefore, the symbolical warning to the priest to take this resolution: "I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue" (Ps. 38:2). And indeed, in order not to sin with the tongue, one must attend to all his ways, that is, order and regulate by mortification his whole conduct, both his interior and exterior life, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12:34). Words are the expression of the hidden life of the soul; he only can control his tongue who perfectly controls his interior. Therefore, the apostle St. James sees in the guarding and bridling of the tongue, not only something very difficult, but also a sign of great perfection; for he writes: "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man" (Jas. 3:2).²⁹ And yet "Who is there that has not offended with his tongue?" (Ecclus. 19:17.) To master our tongue, we must at the proper time practice a silence holy and pleasing to God, we must be intent on recollection of mind and live in God's presence. "It is good to wait with silence for the salvation of God" (Lam. 3:26). He who would lead an interior life, a life hidden with Christ in God, and would become a spiritual man, a man of prayer, must, above all, bridle his tongue, avoid talkativeness, speak more with God than with men.

The interior life, which is secluded and silent, quiet and mortified, disposes man to forget the outside world, to look up to God with the pure eyes of faith, to elevate his heart and mind, by the virtue of hope, to heavenly things and desires. As soon, therefore, as the priest has put the amice, he should close up all entrance to every alien thought, preserve a profound recollection, carefully guard his eyes,

²⁷ *Adverterunt Antistites, non raro ex denudato collo raucedinem contrahere sacerdotem, ita ut libera voce Dei laudes personare non valeret, unde collum cooperire sive amicire coeperunt (Krazer, loc. cit.).*

²⁸ *Pontif. Roman., De ordinat. Subdiac. Quia vocem tuam non castigasti, ideo amictum a te auferimus (Ibid., Degradat. ab ordine Subdiac.).*

²⁹ *Non excessisse in verbo signum est magnae custodiae cordis, magnae sapientiae mentis, magnae perfectionis interioris (Dion. Carthus., loc. cit.).*

with a reverent deportment approach the altar, and perform his sacred functions, as the mystical language of the amice admonishes him to do.³⁰

b) After the amice comes the alb.³¹ In the first ages of Christianity the alb, then a garment worn in ordinary life, was adopted into the divine service; mention of it is made for the first time in the fourth century (in the forty-first canon of the alleged Fourth Synod of Carthage, A.D. 398) as a particular liturgical garment. From the beginning down to the present time it has been a wide, white linen robe full of folds, reaching down to the feet and covering the whole body.³² The principal symbolical meaning of the alb, based on its

³⁰ Obiter etiam monentur sacerdotes, a momento, quo amictum sibi imponunt, debere maximam, quam possint, modestiam oculorum servare, cum e sacristia exeunt et redeunt ad eam, et multo adhuc majorem, quamdiu sunt apud ipsum altare, ut eos semper demissos habeant neque huc illucve convertant nisi quantum necesse est ut videant quod faciunt, nec aliud quidquam aspiciant, ne eis eveniat, quod Jeremias conqueritur, dicens: "Oculus meus deprædatus est animam meam" et "mors ascendit per fenestras," quae subtrahit attentionem ac devotionem cordis (De Ponte, *loc. cit.*). Amictus significat, oportere mentem in aeternae dumtaxat salutis rerumque coelestium consideratione fixam habere, ab omnibus curis rerum caducarum amotam, et contra quoscunque hostium incursus spe et fiducia in Deum tamquam galea salutari communitam (Bona, *Tract. ascet. de Missa*, chap 5, § 2).

³¹ The ordinary names for this vestment refer chiefly to its color, material, or size: *alba* (*sc. vestis*) = a white garment; *linea* (*sc. tunica*) = a tunic of linen or flax; *talaris* (*sc. tunica*) = a long garment, reaching to the ankles; *camisia* = a linen covering, worn next to the body, a shirt. *Linea dalmatica*, quam dicimus *Albam* (*Ordo Rom. III*, n. 6). Sequitur *poderis*, quae vulgo *Alba* dicitur (Pseudo-Alcuin., *De divin. offic.*, chap. 39). Postea [*sc. post amictum*] *camisiam* induimus, quam *Albam* vocamus (*Amal.*, *De eccl. offic.*, II, chap. 18). *Poderis* est sacerdotalis *linea*, corpori adstricta usque ad pedes descendens, unde et nuncupatu. Haec vulgo *camisia* vocatur (*Œ. Isid.*, *Ety-molog.*, XIX, chap. 21). *Albas gerere*, esse in *albis*, esse *albatum*—these expressions were often applied to the clerics and imply that they performed the liturgical functions.

³² In the Middle Ages the amice, alb, and cincture were frequently made of silk and richly ornamented with gold and silver. Already from the ninth century it became customary to put precious decorations on the edge of the alb. As a rule, on the different hems of the alb were sewed one or several stripes (*clavus* or *lorum*; hence *Albae monolores*, *dilores*, etc.) of purple or gold material or of colored silk embroidery. In place of these decorations on the edge of the alb, different kinds of lace have been substituted since the sixteenth century, principally the beautiful, strong, and durable Belgian laces, and many imitations of them, down to the objectionable tulle and cotton lace. Another ornamentation of the alb was for a long time (from the eleventh until the seventeenth century) the so-called *parura* or *paratura* (from *parare* = to adorn). The *parura* were colored adornments, about

color and material, is easily recognized and clearly expressed in the prayer which the priest recites when putting it on: "Purify me, O Lord, from all stain and cleanse my heart, that washed in the blood of the Lamb, I may enjoy eternal delights." Accordingly, the alb is a symbol of that spotless innocence and perfect purity with which the priest should appear at the altar, that he may be accounted worthy to partake with the blessed, who are clothed in snow-white garments, in the never-ending joy and felicity of the heavenly nuptial feast. For they only who have washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb, stand "before the throne of God and . . . serve Him day and night in His temple" (Apoc. 7:15). And the Saviour says: "He that shall overcome shall thus be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels" (Apoc. 3:5). Holy Scripture itself looks upon white linen as emblematic of sanctity; for of the transfigured spouse of Christ (the glorious Church), who is called to the eternal nuptials of the Lamb, it is said: "And it is granted to her that she should clothe herself with fine linen glittering and white. For the fine linen are the justifications of the saints" (Apoc. 19:8).³³

With regard to this symbolism the following points of resemblance deserve special notice. Linen does not naturally possess its brilliant whiteness, but acquires it chiefly by being washed and bleached in the rain and sun. Is not this the case with the whiteness and brilliancy of purity of life? ³⁴ Brilliantly white, that is, per-

one foot in length, sewed on four points of the alb (in front, at the back, and on both sides) and on the amice. These five decorations, being generally red, answered as symbols of the five wounds of our Lord (hence they were also called *plagae* or *plagulae*). Both the stripes on the hem and the *parura* were merely sewed on, so that in washing they could easily be removed. If lace is used on the hem, care should be taken that it be handsome, rich, durable, and not too wide, as it should always be regarded only as a mere accessory.

³³ *Byssus repraesentat purissimam et innocentissimam conversationem Sanctorum, quae in tribulatione et persecutione magis enitescit et resplendet, perinde ac byssus, h. e. linum praestantissimum injuria, i.e. maceratione, tunctione, carminatione semper melius, puta purius, candidius et splendidius evadit* (Corn. a Lap., *In Apoc.*, 19:8).

³⁴ *Hunc candorem et pulchritudinem sacerdotes non ex seipsis habent, sed ex gratia et misericordia Dei propter Christi merita, sicut illi Sancti, de quibus in Apocalypsi (7:14) dicitur, "quod lavissent stolas suas et dealbassent illas in sanguine Agni." Qui sanguis applicatur per sacramenta et exercitia bonorum operum, lavando animas a culpis ac dealbando eas splendore praestantium*

fectly pure, chaste, and holy does the soul become only by many austerities, much self-denial and mortification, also only with the aid of the heavenly dew and bright rays of grace.⁸⁵ In the form of a servant, amid untold hardships, and by a bloody sweat the Son of God acquired for us the jewel of holiness; He shed all His blood to cleanse us from sin; therefore it is but just that we should endeavor by prayer and tears, by works of penance and self-denial, to preserve unspotted or to regain the perfect purity, innocence, and beauty of the soul. No labor should be deemed too difficult, no struggle too painful, no sacrifice too great, to cleanse ourselves more and more "in the blood of the Lamb," until our soul becomes "whiter than the snow, purer than milk, fairer than the sapphire" (Lam. 4:7). For "blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb, that they may have a right to the tree of life [that is, to the beatific vision], and may enter in by the gates into the [heavenly] city" (Apoc. 22:14).

The spotless white alb, therefore, daily admonishes the priest so to live, to watch, and to pray, that he may each time approach the holy altar with a pure mind, with an unblemished heart, with an untrammelled spirit, with holy joy, and a secret longing. To ascend the mountain of the Lord and to stand in the holy place, where even the heavenly spirits tremble, the priest must be "innocent in hands and clean of heart" (Ps. 23:3 f.), "holy both in body and in spirit" (I Cor. 7:34); then will he receive at the altar most abundant blessings from the Lord and mercy from God his Saviour (Ps.

virtutum. Et cum Agnus ipse sanguinem suum effuderit ingentibus cruciatibus, ut eo lavemur ac dealbaremur, aequum est, nos quoque aliquem sustinere laborem et mortificationem, sine qua candor ille et pulchritudo non obtinetur. Ac propterea Alba est linea et alba, quae multis lotionibus et percussionibus ad suum pervenit candorem, ut intelligatur, etiam animae candorem obtinendum esse laboriosis et poenam aliquam afferentibus operibus, lacrymis, orationibus et mortificationibus. Horum omnium merito meminerit sacerdos, cum ipsam Albam induit (De Ponte, *loc. cit.*, § 2).

⁸⁵ Tunica byssina est quae graece *ποδήρης*, i.e. talaris appellatur, quia a collo usque ad talos extenditur. . . . Haec ob speciem candoris nomen Albae sortitur, quo munditiam significat ministrorum Dei. . . . Caro hominis munditiam quam ex natura non habet, studio bono adnitente acquirit per gratiam, ut secundum Apostolum minister Christi corpus suum castiget et in servitutem redigat (I Cor., chap. 9), quemadmodum byssus vel linum candorem, quem ex natura non habet, per studium et industriam multis tusionibus et quasi quadam vexatione attritum acquirit (Hugo de S. Vict., *De Sacram.*, Bk.II, Part IV, chap. 2).

23:5). Therefore he should earnestly and indefatigably strive by exercises of piety and works of charity, by self-denial and a penitential spirit, by watchfulness and humility, to persevere and advance in the grace of God, to make progress in virtue and holiness, and to purify his heart more and more, not only from sin, but also from worldly, faulty, and dangerous inclinations and attachments.³⁶

c) The cincture,³⁷ or girdle, is necessary to gather up the long, and broad alb, that it may be fitted closely to the body.³⁸ The cincture should be tied around the loins,³⁹ for by this act is expressed its higher and symbolical meaning, which is evident from the prayer recited by the priest while tying the cincture about the body: "Gird me, O Lord, with the cincture of purity,⁴⁰ and extinguish in

³⁶ Non sufficit Omnipotenti laus et honor oris, nisi ex sinceritate et devotione prodeat mentis virtuosisque actibus decoretur. Si igitur, o sacerdos, sapienter attendas, quanta sit hujus excellentia, sanctitas ac dignitas sacramenti, confestim fateberis, te non posse cor tuum sufficienter ad ejus susceptionem disponere neque pro suscepta communione satis posse regratiari; etiamsi mille vixeris annis et die ac nocte sine interruptione ac cessatione totis viribus te praeprares ad celebrandum et gratias ageres pro susceptione ac collatione muneris tanti. Quid itaque restat, nisi ut omne quod tibi in his possibile est facias et tamen nihil condignum te fecisse recognoscas per respectum ad incomparabilem excellentiam sacramenti. . . . Cum ergo quotidie ut frequenter sis celebrans, oportet te indesinenter omni hora die ac nocte esse sollicitum, providum ac ferventem, ne quid culpae inveniatur in te, per quam indignus aut minus dignus ad celebrandum existas, aut ingratus seu minus gratus de beneficiis tantis. Erubescere mente non pura, corde frigidus, sine reverentia, sanctitate et fervore ad Sancta Sanctorum accedere, fonti infinitae munditiae te unire, Unigenitum Dei suscipere, Deum ac judicem tuum sine debite veneratione tractare; imo quo frequentius celebras, eo devotius magisque timorate, reverenter et amore te habere satage. Jugiter ergo dic tibi ipsi in corde tuo: Ecce hodie aut in brevi Deo celebrabis propitio, aut celebrasti: ubi est praeparatio et gratiarum actio tua? ubi profectus et fructus tanti mysterii? (Dion. Carthus., *De sacram. altar.*, a. 15.)

³⁷ In Holy Scripture and in ecclesiastical language the words *cingulum*, *balteus*, *zona* (ζώνη), are employed without distinction to designate a girdle fastened around the waist in order to hold together flowing garments, thereby facilitating movement and activity.

³⁸ Alba sine zona vel cingulo commode et decenter gestari nequit, unde rituales scriptores etiam vestustissimi zonam cum alba et amictu inseparabili recensione conjunxerunt (De Saussay, Part I, Bk. III, chap. 6).

³⁹ Exhinc cingulo cingitur, quod in Lege balteus, apud Graecos zona dicitur. Per cingulum, quod circa lumbos praecingitur et, alba ne diffluat et gressum impediatur, adstringitur, mentis custodia accipitur, qua luxuria restringitur (Honor. Augustod., *Gemma animae*, I, chap. 203).

⁴⁰ *Cingulo puritatis* = grant me the grace and virtue of crushing all carnal emotions, that is, by girding the loins may I maintain purity of heart and preserve it inviolate.

my loins the fires of concupiscence, that the virtue of continence and chastity may abide within me.”

To gird one's self or the loins is a figurative expression often repeated in Holy Scripture (John 13:4; Eph. 6:14), and the saying has great signification.

Laborers, warriors, pilgrims, were wont to gird themselves in order to gather up their loose, wide garments and hold them securely. They were then freer in their movements, more at ease, and, consequently, the better prepared for labor,⁴¹ battle, or travel. Now, the Christian life is justly represented as a time of labor, of combat, of pilgrimage. “The life of man upon earth is a warfare, and his days are like the days of a hireling. As a servant longeth for the shade, and as the hireling looketh for the end of his work” (Job 7:1 f.). The Christian is a laborer in the vineyard of the Lord, where he must bear the heat and burden of the day in order to gain an eternal reward (Matt., chap. 20). He must, therefore, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus, please Him to whom he hath engaged himself, and must strive for the mastery (II Tim. 2:4 f.) that he may be victorious over Satan, the world, and the flesh. Finally, he is upon earth as a stranger and pilgrim (I Peter 2:11), having here no permanent abode, but traveling onward to his true, eternal home in the next world. A frivolous, distracted, and worldly mind is as great an encumbrance to the Christian laborer, combatant, and pilgrim, as a loose and wide garment would be to the earthly laborer, combatant, and pilgrim. Therefore, as St. Peter says, the Christian must have the loins of his mind girt up (I Pet. 1:13),⁴² that is, he must recollect himself and keep safeguarded all the faculties of his mind for the business and combat of salvation, to enable him also to persevere in his painful and dangerous pilgrimage through this vale of tears to his true country in heaven. To gird one's self means,

⁴¹ Cinctio opera significat: tunc enim se quisque cingit, cum operaturus est (S. August., *Enarr. in Ps.*, 92:3).

⁴² Lumbi mentis sunt voluntas seu affectus et intellectus, ex quibus procedunt cogitationes malae et desideria prava. Lumbi vero *carnis* sunt, ex quibus prodeunt carnales concupiscentiae et opera impudica: et utriusque lumbi sunt praecingendi, i.e. coarctandi ab illicitis cogitationibus et operibus. Cinctorium primorum est divinae legis meditatio assidua, quae fit per studium sacrae Scripturae; cinctorium secundorum est justitia, quae fit per rigorem disciplinae: et ita per primum fluxus cogitationum et desideriorum inutilium reprimuntur in mente; per secundum fluxus concupiscentiarum carnalium et operum restringuntur in carne (Ludolph. de Saxon., *Vita I Chr.*, II, xlvi, 1).

therefore, to arm one's self; the girding of the loins is a sign of preparation and readiness for combat, and also of manly strength.

Inasmuch as the loins are considered as the principal seat of sexual desires, the girding of them symbolizes especially the subjugation of the flesh by mortification and self-denial. For precisely in the crucifixion of the rebellious flesh, in the bridling of the sensual appetites, the spiritual vigor and manliness of the Christian laborer, combatant, and pilgrim are proved in the most striking manner. As a stranger and pilgrim whose true home is with his Father in heaven, the Christian must lead a heavenly life on earth; he must not suffer himself to be immersed in the base things of an earthly life, nor be taken up with worldly gratification and enjoyments, but he must with all his energy resist the seductive allurements of earthly desires and passions in order to preserve the robe of innocence undefiled. The fervent Christian unceasingly mortifies his sensual inclinations, ever walks on with loins girded and with his lamp burning, sober and watchful, in dread of the reckoning to come and in expectation of the blessed hope at the coming of the Lord (Titus 2:12 f.).

The cincture, therefore, enjoins upon the priest the same virtue for which the Church prays in a Lenten hymn: "Let us tame our body by abstemiousness, that our heart may turn aside from the things that foment evil desires, and may remain undefiled by sin." Clothed in a white garment and girt about the loins, the priest stands at the altar; for he is to "serve the Lord with a chaste body and please Him with a clean heart." Virginal chastity is the most precious pearl, the brightest jewel in the crown of sacerdotal virtues.⁴³ Nothing equals in value and dignity a pure soul resplendent with the brilliancy of chastity.⁴⁴ Such a soul is an object of delight to heaven and on earth; God and His holy angels look down on it with joy. The chaste, pure heart is resplendent in the brightness of the Son of

⁴³ *Cingulum jam a primis temporibus in Ecclesiam induxit necessitas, aurum dein et gemmas addidit religio. Ita enim sacras zonas antiquitus fuisse exornatas deprehendimus* (Krazer, sect. III, art. 6, chap. 2, § 167). As formerly the girdle was frequently handsomely made and decorated, it served as an ornament. Herein is found a symbolical allusion to the beauty of virginal purity.

⁴⁴ "And no price is worthy of a continent soul" (Ecclus. 26:20). "O how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory" (Wis. 4:1).

God, rivaling the azure of heaven and the light of the stars; it is fertile in holy thoughts, sentiments, and affections; it dwells "in the beauty of peace, in the tabernacles of confidence, and in wealthy rest" (Isa. 32:18). Holy purity is not only the brilliant, spotless virtue of the soul, but, moreover, the ornament of the body; for it ennobles and transforms this earthly covering of flesh with supernatural and heavenly perfume. It is, therefore, the most beautiful adornment of the priestly heart, which should be aglow with the fire of divine love. It is proper that a virginally pure priesthood offer the all-pure sacrifice of the virginal body of Jesus Christ; "the host exhaling the perfume of virginal holiness" (*Secr. in fest. s. Cathar. Semen.*) should also be consecrated and offered, handled and distributed, by pure virginal hands.

The delicate and heavenly blossom of purity of heart can be preserved untarnished only amid the thorns of mortification and the renunciation of the world.⁴⁵ The priest who would walk unsullied through the dusty path of this life, must ever have his loins girt, that is, he must live in holy austerity and sobriety, in humble watchfulness and caution, and in constant recollection and devotion. For this he gathers the requisite supernatural strength at the altar; for the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice not merely obliges him to a pure, mortified life, but, at the same time, gives birth to and nourishes within him a life dead to this world. The sacrifice of the altar is holy and sanctifying; therefore, it is the consolation, the joy, and the strength of the devout priest. Daily is granted him the inestimable grace of being refreshed with the wheat of the elect and of drinking the wine that springeth forth virgins (Zach. 9:17).⁴⁶

⁴⁵ The purity of the body, this precious fruit of baptism and of the sacrament of the altar, is the object of many ardent petitions which the Church, especially in the hymns of the office, puts into the mouth of the priest.

⁴⁶ *Ulterius pergit cinguli hujus significatio, quod etiam colligat et contineat partes Albae superfluas, ne per terram trahatur aut ministerium impediatur. Et hoc nomine significat prudentem et cautam mortificationem non solum in illicitis, sed etiam in licitis, cum non sunt ei, quod tunc fit, accommodata. Sanctitas enim est sicut Alba adeo longa et lata, ut complectatur varia genera cogitationum, affectuum et curarum, et quidem bonarum et sanctarum. At cogitationes et curae, quae in alio tempore et loco bonae sunt, non semper sunt aptae in altari et tempore Missae. Quare opus est, illas praecingere et colligere, ne impediatur. Tempus enim illud destinatum est ad orandum et sacrificandum, non autem ad studendum, concionandum aut negotium aliud agendum, quod extra illum locum et tempus esset licitum (De Ponte, loc. cit.).*

d) Gradually since the tenth century the maniple⁴⁷ became an ecclesiastical vestment, which, corresponding in material and color to the stole and chasuble, is worn on the left arm.⁴⁸ In the middle part of the maniple there must be a cross, which is to be kissed when the priest vests and unvests; it also usually has a cross at each end. The maniple is at present the distinctive garment worn in divine service by the subdeacon,⁴⁹ who has to cleanse the consecrated vessels, wash the sacred linens, and minister at the Holy Sacrifice.

⁴⁷ The name *manipulus* (from *manus* and *pleo*; therefore, properly a handful, a bundle) came into general use only since the eleventh century; previously other designations were more common, for example: *mantile* = a linen cloth, which was actually used for wiping the hands after meals, or often served also as a napkin placed before the breast at table; *mappula* = a small apron; *sudarium* = a towel or handkerchief; *fanon* (*fanulus*) = cloth, little cloth. These names express the original form and use of the maniple. In the beginning it was not an ornament for wear, but a small linen cloth for wiping and cleansing the face and hands. *Quartum mappula s. mantile sacerdotis indumentum est, quod vulgo phanonem vocant, quod ab hoc eorum tunc manibus tenetur, quando missae officium agitur, ut paratos ad ministerium mensae Domini populus conspiciat* (Raban, Maur., *De cleric. instit.*, chap. 18). *Mappulae in sinistra manu ferendae* (*Ordo Rom. VI*, n. 1).

⁴⁸ According to the liturgists of the Middle Ages, the maniple symbolizes the penance and sweat of the present life, represented by the left side (the left arm). The real and natural reason for the constant practice of wearing the maniple on the left arm, is that the right arm and the right hand may remain free and unencumbered in the performance of the priestly functions. So long as the broad chasuble covered the entire body and also the arms of the celebrant, the maniple was put on last of all the vestments, after the chasuble had been rolled up above the arms. (Cf. *Ord. Rom. I, II, III.*) *Ad extremum sacerdos fanonem in sinistrum brachium ponit, qui et mappula et sudarium vocatur, per quod olim sudor et narium sordes extergebantur. Per hoc poenitentia intelligitur, qua quotidiani excessus labes extergitur. Hoc in sinistro brachio gestatur, quia in praesenti tempore tantum vita nostra poenitentia emundatur* (Honor. August., *Gemma anim.*, I, chap. 208). Of this ancient practice we are reminded by the present rubric of the missal which accords to the bishop (except at Requiem Masses) the distinction of putting the maniple on with greater solemnity at the altar, after the *absolutio* of the preparatory prayers.

⁴⁹ As the alb, so likewise the maniple was formerly worn by all clerics and even by unordained monks (in choir). *Quandiu manipulus sudarii vel mappulae loco fuit, tribui necessario debuit omnibus, qui alba induti suam Ecclesiae operam exhibebant. Ast ubi singulare ornamentum evasit manipulus, tunc Subdiaconis ut specialis nota in eorum ordinatione quibusdam in Ecclesiis fuit data, aliis antiquo mori insistentibus* (Krazer, sect. III, disquis. 3, chap. 1, § 211). Now, however, as a rule the maniple is not worn outside of Mass; but there are some exceptions; for example, at functions on Good Friday (but not at the uncovering and adoration of the Cross) and on Holy Saturday. According

The mystical meaning of the maniple may be taken from some liturgical texts. In putting it on before Mass, the priest says: "May I be worthy to bear the maniple of weeping and sorrow, that with exultation I may receive the reward of labor."⁵⁰ The bishop presents the maniple to the newly ordained subdeacon with the words: "Receive the maniple, by which the fruit of good works is designated."⁵¹ The symbolical meaning of the maniple here alluded to is probably based on the circumstance that originally it served the celebrant to wipe off the perspiration during the celebration of the Mass, but sprang principally from a passage in the Psalms in which the word *manipulus* is mentioned in the sense of a sheaf of wheat. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Going they went and wept, casting their seed; but coming they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves (*manipulos suos*)."⁵² Consequently, the maniple symbolizes, on the one hand, penitential tears

to a general rule, the *ministri sacri* wear the maniple whenever they sing the Epistle or Gospel, for instance, at the blessing of the palms; the deacon wears it at the blessing of bells. To the priest applies the rubric: Dum Celebrans utitur pluviali, semper deponit manipulum (*Rubr. gener. Miss., tit. 19, 4*). This rule, however, suffers an exception, when the blessing of the palms takes place without *ministri sacri*; in this case the celebrant wears the maniple with the cope, but only until after the reading of the Gospel at this blessing. (Cf. *Memoriale Rituum.*)

⁵⁰ The bishop prays: Merrear, precor Domine, manipulum portare mente flebili, ut cum exultatione portionem accipiam cum justis.

⁵¹ Depone manipulum, quia per fructus bonorum operum, quos designat, non expugnasti spirituales insidias inimici (*Pontif. Roman., Degrad. ab ordin. Subd.*).

⁵² *Qui seminant in lacrimis*, i.e. qui modo in luctu poenitentiae seu lacrimis devotionis se ipsos exercent, qui temporales delectationes contemnunt et corde contrito et humiliato Deo ministrant, isti *in exultatione metent* bona gratiae in praesenti et fructum gloriae in futuro: "bonorum enim laborum gloriosus est fructus" (Sap. 3:15). Porro quinque sunt genera lacrimarum: primae lacrimae sunt pro indulgentia propriae culpa et hae mundant a sorde peccati; secundae sunt pro timore futuri iudicii et gehennae et istae refrigerant ab ardore concupiscentiae retrahuntque ab omni iniquitate; tertiae sunt pro incolatu praesentis exsilii, quae potant animam sitientem; quartae pro defectibus proximorum et istae impingunt plangentem; quintae sunt pro desiderio patriae, quae animam omni bono fecundant. *Euntes* electi Dei per viam vitae praesentis *ibant* per viam mandatorum Altissimi et *flebant mittentes semina sua*, h. e. opera meritoria facientes: quae opera dicta sunt semina, quoniam sicut ex semine nascitur fructus, sic ex operibus bonis oritur fructus vitae aeternae, infusio consolationis divinae. Mittunt igitur semina sua, i.e. opera bona ante se mittunt, cumulum meritorum colligunt quem in Christo ab-

and grief, the toil and hardships of sowing, the suffering and combating and laboring of this perishable life; on the other, the fruit of good works and sheaves full of merit, as well as the abundant harvest of happiness and joy, of peace and rest, reaped in eternity.

Here below in exile "upon the rivers of Babylon" (Ps. 136:1), the thoroughly Christian life, and still more the thoroughly priestly life, is spent in "labor and sorrow" (Ps. 89:10); and though sorrow will accompany us to the evening of life, yet on the morning of eternity joy and gladness will break forth. "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into joy, thou hast cut my sackcloth, and hast compassed me with gladness" (Ps. 29:12); "for that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory" (II Cor. 4:17). The wail of sorrow in sowing will give place to the sounds of the harvest-songs of joy. "He who soweth in blessings, shall also reap of blessings" (II Cor. 9:6). Therefore be indefatigable in sowing the good seed, scatter abroad the seed of good works: works of love, of penance, of piety, of spiritual and corporal mercy. Sow this seed amid sweat and tears, in storm and showers, in rain and cold, for the day will soon come when the ears will be ripe, the sheaves be full and garnered in the granaries of the heavenly Father; the day that knows no evening, the day of the most gladsome, blessed harvest jubilation, the unspeakably bright day of eternity, that shines on the saints in imperishable splendor. Then the Lord will wipe away all tears; and mourning and crying and sorrow shall be no more (Apoc. 21:4). Thus the maniple is a symbolical expression of that exalted truth which the Lord expressed in the words: "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5:5).

At the altar the priest should be filled with sorrow and compunction, with regret for his own sins and those of others, with grief for the tribulations of the Church, for the loss of so many souls, and with sympathy for the passion of Christ. From the altar he should daily draw strength to persevere in the labors and trials of life, to bear with cheerfulness all the hardships of his vocation, to overcome all difficulties and obstacles in the practice of good works, that he

scondunt (Matt. 6:20; Gal. 6:9). *Venientes autem ad Christi tribunal venient cum exultatione*, h. e. cum secura et laeta conscientia, *portantes manipulos suos*, i.e. opera virtuosa quae collegerunt: "Opera enim illorum sequuntur illos" (Apoc. 14:13). Dion. Carthus., *In Ps.*, 125:5 f.

may once attain the reward of eternal joy.⁵³ Of this the maniple reminds and admonishes him.⁵⁴

e) In Holy Scripture and universally in ancient times, *stola* signified in general every kind of dress, every garment for the adornment of the body; often, too, in a limited sense, a magnificent, costly dress, a festal robe, splendid raiment. Since the ninth century the name *stola* has been gradually restricted to a liturgical vestment which had been a long time in use previous to that date and had until then borne the name *orarium*.⁵⁵ The ecclesiastical *orarium* was originally a narrow, long linen strip which was loosely suspended from the left shoulder; it was the distinctive badge of the deacon and was used to wipe the mouth and face.⁵⁶ Already in the seventh century the *orarium*, which was worn by deacons, priests, and bishops, but in different ways, had only a symbolical character; hence it began to be made of precious material and to be richly adorned.

At the present time the stole is a long strip of silk as wide as the hand, adorned at each end and in the middle with a cross. The stole

⁵³ Post vitam istam brevissimam boni sacerdotes a Deo gloriosissimam sortientur coronam, ineffabilem jucunditatem, superplenam mensuram, mercedem aeternam, tam de propriis meritis, quam pro meritis gregis sui et omnium, quibus bene agendi causa fuerunt, quorum omnium beatitudo et gloria redundabit copiose et gloriose in eos, si jam debitum sui impleverint officii. Quemadmodum enim hi, qui aliis causa perditionis sunt, Christo odibilissimi exstant, et durissime ac terribilissime recipentur, judicabuntur ac damnabuntur ab eo, ita et qui aliis sunt causa conversionis ac salutis, amabilissimi Christo consistunt, et jucundissime ac benevolentissime suscipiuntur ac remunerabuntur ab ipso, tanquam veri sui vicarii, cordiales amici atque cooperatores idonei (Dion. Carthus., *De vita Curatorum*, a. 68).

⁵⁴ Dicere possumus, manipulum significare virtutem zeli, h. e. tristitiam et dolorem de peccatis propriis et alienis, in quantum honori Dei et animarum saluti adversantur, cum sancta quadam contra ea indignatione et ferventi ea disturbandi et expellendi desiderio. Peccata propria dissolvuntur lacrimis, gemitibus et contritionis actibus et poenitudinis, qui disponunt hominem ad hoc sacrificium digne offerendum. Aliena peccata sunt etiam removenda, orando cum lacrimis et sacrificium pro eorum remissione offerendo (De Ponte, *loc. cit.*, § 3).

⁵⁵ Quintum [vestmentum] est, quod Orarium dicitur, licet hoc quidam Stolum vocent (Raban. Maur. [d. 853], *De cleric. institut.*, I, chap. 19).

⁵⁶ *Orarium* is more correctly derived from *os* (= face, mouth) than from *orare* (= to pray) or from *ora* (= a border). The first mention of the *orarium* as a church vestment is made about the middle of the fourth century in the Synod of Laodicea. Yet it remained for several centuries more a profane garment. (Cf. Prudent., *Peristephan.*, I, v. 86.)

should be worn only by those who are strictly members of the hierarchy, that is, by deacons, priests, and bishops,⁵⁷ and then only when the rubrics prescribe its use or a lawful custom sanctions or at least tolerates it. Of itself the stole is not a mark of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, but a sacred decoration to be worn during certain functions.⁵⁸ It is principally intended to be worn when blessings and graces are dispensed; therefore it is used, for example, at Mass, as well as at all functions which appertain directly to the Eucharist, the source of every grace and blessing, in administering the sacraments, and in performing the sacramentals. The deacon, priest, and bishop wear the stole each in a different way. The deacon places it over the left shoulder and fastens its ends together under the right arm. When the priest is robed in the alb, he places the stole around his neck and ties it with the cincture in the form of a cross⁵⁹ on his breast; but if he wears the surplice, the stole is allowed to hang straight down on both sides.⁶⁰ The bishop, who already wears a cross on his breast (the pectoral) to distinguish him from the priest, always wears the stole hanging straight down on both sides.⁶¹

⁵⁷ After the example of the Council of Laodicea (in the fourth century), the use of the stole was always prohibited to clerics in minor orders (among whom subdeacons were originally also included).

⁵⁸ *Orarium, quod necessitas induxit, brevi singulare Episcoporum, Presbyterorum et Diaconorum evasit ornamentum, dignitatis et jurisdictionis symbolum, coepitque primo coloribus et auro ornari, dein non amplius ex lino, sed ex serico aliaque pretiosa confici materia* (Krazer, sect. III, art. 6, chap. 4, § 173). In consequence of this view, the stole was in former times more frequently worn as a mark of spiritual dignity and authority than is now permitted. According to the present discipline of the Church, the stole may not be worn at any time to indicate the wearer's habitual possession of the *potestas ordinis vel jurisdictionis*, but as a rule it is intended merely to signify the actual use of this power, that is, to accompany the performance of certain liturgical functions.

⁵⁹ S. R. C., September 30, 1679. According to this decree the right end of the stole must be placed over the left end. A Spanish synod held at Braga (675) says: *Signum in suo pectore praearet crucis.*

⁶⁰ *Diaconus habet stolam in sinistro humero in signum, quod applicatur in ministerium in ipsis sacramentis; sed sacerdoti in utroque humero ponitur stola, ut ostendatur quod ei plena potestas dispensandi sacramenta datur, non ut ministro alterius et ideo stola descendit usque ad inferiora* (S. Thom., *Supplem.*, q. 40, a. 7).

⁶¹ As the *praecipuum insigne sacerdotii*, the stole ever adorned the recipients of the sacrament of holy orders (deacons, priests, bishops); but at the same time in order to indicate the various degrees of sacramental power and grace, it was and is placed on them in different ways at ordination. Until about the twelfth century, the stole was worn by the deacon over the dalmatic

The symbolical meaning of the stole may be determined from some of the ecclesiastical prayers. The bishop gives to the newly ordained deacon the stole in these words: "Receive this shining white stole from the hand of God; fulfill your ministry; for God is powerful to increase His grace in you."⁶² While the bishop arranges the two parts of the stole in the form of a cross on the breast of the newly ordained priest, he says: "Take upon you the yoke of the Lord; for His yoke is sweet and His burden light."⁶³ When vesting for Mass, the priest says while putting on the stole, "Give me anew, O Lord, the robe of immortality, which I have lost by the prevarication of our first parent, and although I am unworthy to approach Thy holy mysteries, may I yet merit eternal joy."⁶⁴

In comparing the above texts, we find that the stole has a three-fold meaning. Inasmuch as it is placed around the neck and rests on the nape of the neck, it symbolizes the yoke and the burden of the service of the sanctuary;⁶⁵ inasmuch as with the ancients it was a special garment of honor, and inasmuch as it is now with us a sacred ornament, the stole represents also the robe of innocence⁶⁶ required for the worthy administration of the spiritual

and across the left shoulder, hanging free in front and back, as the deacon in the Greek Church still wears the *ωράριον*. In the twelfth century it became the custom to lay on the deacon at his ordination first the stole and then the dalmatic. Priests and bishops have always worn the stole in the manner now followed.

⁶² From God proceeds the office as well as the fullness of grace for the office.

⁶³ Signum Domini per hanc stolam turpiter abjecisti, ideoque ipsam a te amovemus, quem inhabilem reddimus ad omne sacerdotale officium exercendum (*Degrad. ab ordin. Presbyt.*).

⁶⁴ Redde mihi, Domine, stolam immortalitatis, quam perdidisti in praevaricatione primi parentis: et quamvis indignus accedo ad tuum sacrum mysterium, merear tamen gaudium sempiternum (*Miss. Rom.*).

⁶⁵ Deinde [sacerdos] circumdat collum suum *stola*, quae et *orarium* dicitur, per quam obedientia Evangelii intellegitur. Evangelium quippe est suave Domini jugum, obedientia vero lorum; quasi ergo sacerdos ad jugum Christi loris ligatur, dum collum ejus *stola* circumdatur (Honor. Augustod., *Gemma anim.*, I, chap. 204). *Orarium*, i.e. *stola*, dicitur eo quod oratoribus, i.e. praedicatoribus concedatur. Admonet illum, qui illo induitur, ut memor sit, sub jugo Christi, quod leve et suave est, se esse constitutum (Pseudo-Alcuin., *De divin. offic.*, chap. 39). The Fourth Synod of Toledo (633) remarks that the deacon must wear the orarium on the left shoulder, *propterea quod orat, i.e. praedicat*.

⁶⁶ Per stolam quoque innocentia exprimitur, quae in primo homine amissa, per vitulum saginatum occisum recipitur. Beati qui hanc stolam a criminum labe custodiunt vel maculatam lacrimis lavant, quia illorum potestas est in

office, as well as that garment of glory with which the good and faithful servant will be clothed by the Lord as an eternal reward.⁶⁷

In the first place, the stole is a symbol of the arduous, but at the same time blessed and honorable, ministry exercised in the sanctuary of the Lord. The ecclesiastical administration is a duty to which the ordained members of the hierarchy should perseveringly devote themselves in order to promote the honor of God and the welfare of the faithful. This service of the Lord, this busy life spent in the care of souls, is a yoke and a burden: a burden which would be terrible even for the shoulders of angels, a burden from which the very saints fled in dread and terror. The faithful performance of the pastoral office, the preaching of the word of God, the celebration and dispensation of the mysteries of salvation, the preservation of discipline and good morals in congregations, the training and direction of the faithful, especially of youth, in the way of salvation, the care of the poor and sick, the preventing or suppression of scandals and dangers in the flock entrusted to one's care, all this costs much labor and hardship, many sufferings and combats, many exertions and sacrifices. The yoke (the office) of bishop and of priest is heavier than the ministry of the deacon, therefore the bishops and priests wear the stole on both shoulders.

But the sacerdotal vocation, with all the labors and responsibilities attached to it, is lightened and sweetened by the mighty grace of the Lord (*jugum ejus est suave et onus ejus leve*). Whom the Lord chooses as His servant, him He helps to carry the burden; for He has in reserve for the priest a precious, an overflowing measure of heavenly grace and consolation, the great and countless graces of his calling. He who has a vocation delights in and loves the duties of his ministry; therefore, it is not an oppressive weight for him, but a light and sweet burden which he joyfully carries, though it may require on his part much bodily exertion and many spiritual combats. From the bottom of his heart he prays with the Psalmist: "Bet-

ligno vitae, sc. in Christo amissam gloriam possidebunt (Honor. Augustod., *loc. cit.*, chap. 205). The stole is also considered as a symbol of innocence at the degradation of deacons: *Stolam candidam, quam acceperas immaculatam in conspectu Domini perferendam, qui non sic cognito mysterio exemplum conversationis tuae fidelibus praeuisti, ut plebs dicata Christi nomine posset exinde imitationem acquirere, juste a te amovemus, omne diaconatus officium tibi prohibentes.*

⁶⁷ *Stola, praesertim candida et splendida, in Scriptura symbolum est gloriae, immortalitatis ac felicitatis* (Corn. a Lap., *In Apoc.*, 6:11).

ter is one day in Thy courts above thousands" in the world; "I have chosen to be an abject [a castaway forgotten by the world] in the house of my God, rather that to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners" (Ps. 83:11). The sufferings of the priest are great, but equally great, indeed far greater, are his joys. "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also by Christ doth our comfort abound" (II Cor. 1:5). "I am filled with comfort; I exceedingly abound with joy in all my tribulation," he says with the Apostle of the Gentiles (II Cor. 7:4).

The service of Christ and of His Church is not only the greatest joy, but also the highest honor and distinction for the priest. The service of the altar is the most sublime office, it is the summit and crown of all dignities upon earth. "To serve God is to reign," in the noblest sense of the word; therefore the glorious martyr St. Agatha said to the heathen tyrant: "The service of Christ is the highest nobility and consummate freedom." In the *Imitation of Christ* we read:

It is a great honor, a great glory to serve Thee, O Lord, and to despise all things for Thee. For they who willingly subject themselves to Thy most holy service shall have a great grace. They who for love of Thee have cast away all carnal delight, shall find the sweetest consolation of the Holy Ghost. They shall gain great freedom of mind who for Thy name enter upon the narrow way and neglect all worldly care. O pleasant and delightful service of God, which makes a man truly free and holy! O sacred state of religious bondage, which makes men equal to angels, pleasing to God, terrible to the devils, and commendable to all the faithful! O service worthy to be embraced and always to be wished for, which leads to the supreme good and procures a joy that will never end!

The stole reminds us also of the garment of sanctity⁶⁸ in which the priest should serve God and be a shining light to men. Though the priest be frail and wretched, the grace of God renders him capable and worthy of meriting the reward of eternal happiness in the service of the altar and in dispensing the mysteries of Christ. How pure and enlarged must be the heart, how blameless and unselfish the life of the priest, who is placed so high on the candlestick that he may serve as a model of all that is good, forcibly combat vice, and eloquently proclaim the praises of virtue! To feed by good

⁶⁸ The *stola prima* (Luke 15:22), that is, the best and most distinguished garment, which the father put on his prodigal son, is a figure of sanctifying grace.

example the flock entrusted to him and to draw them to Christ is for him a duty of his state and office.⁶⁹ To him the admonition of the Apostle applies: "Be thou an example of the faithful, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity," and "in all things show thyself an example of good works" (I Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7). The priest will exercise his sublime office with so much the greater success and blessings, the more virtuous he is, the more perfectly he walks before the faithful and leads them in the way of holiness.

Finally, the stole reminds him of the garment of glory which will eventually be his as a reward for his fidelity in the service of God.⁷⁰ If he carefully preserves until death the robe of grace and holiness, which he lost through Adam but triumphantly regained through the blood and merits of Christ, it will be to him a pledge of a blessed and glorious immortality. Thus the robe of immortality (*stola immortalitatis*) which Adam forfeited will be restored to him. Greater than words can tell, is the reward laid up in heaven for the zealous shepherd of souls. When Christ, the Prince of pastors, shall appear in glory, the good priest "shall receive a never-fading crown of glory (I Pet. 5:4). For "then they that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that instruct many to justice, as stars for all eternity." From the highest heavens our glorified Saviour addresses to the zealous priest in the midst of his sufferings and labors these consoling words:

I know thy works and thy labor and thy patience and how thou canst not bear them that are evil. . . . And thou hast patience and has endured for my name and hast not fainted. . . . Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation. . . . Behold, I come quickly, hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. He that shall overcome, I will make him a pillar in the temple

⁶⁹ Abundet in eo totius forma virtutis, auctoritas modesta, pudor constans, innocentiae puritas et spiritualis observantia disciplinae. In moribus ejus praecepta tua fulgeant, ut suae castitatis exemplo imitationem sanctam plebs acquirat (*Pontif. Roman., De ordin. Diacon.*). Sit odor vitae tuae delectamentum Ecclesiae Christi, ut praedicatione atque exemplo aedifices domum, id est, familiam Dei (*Pontif. Roman., De ordin. Presbyt.*).

⁷⁰ Sacerdos stolam induens, detersa vitiorum labe, innocentiae decorem sibi adesse debere praedicat, quo idoneus efficiatur tam sublimes mysterio rite perficiendo, ut deinde inveniatur dignus aeternae gloriae stola indui cum Sanctis illis, qui visi sunt ante thronum Dei stare amicti stolis albis, cujus stolae gloriosae demum obtinendae haec stola sacerdotalis symbolum est atque nota (Clichtoveus, *Elucidator. ecclesiastic.*, III, n. 13).

of my God, and he shall go out no more, and I will write upon him the name of my God. . . . I know thy tribulation and thy poverty, but thou art rich. . . . Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. . . . Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. (Apoc. 2:2 f.; 3:10-12; 2:9 f.)

f) The principal vestment of the priest is the chasuble (*casula*, *planeta*).⁷¹ Originally the chasuble was an outer garment which fell about the priest and completely enveloped him. The chasuble had an opening in the middle for the head. As these bell-shaped⁷² chasubles were rather inconvenient, in the eleventh century they began to be shortened or opened at both sides to allow a freer use of the arms, and this alteration gave the form of the so-called Gothic chasubles, which were still common in the sixteenth century. Although from this period more and more was cut away from the chasuble, it yet remained up to the eighteenth century sufficiently long and full of folds, but since that time, unfortunately, the vestment has been replaced by a chasuble of still shorter and less graceful pattern.

The symbolical meaning of the chasuble may be determined from the formula of ordination and from the missal. When the bishop places the folded chasuble on the back of the newly ordained priest, he says: "Receive the priestly garment, by which love is understood; for God is powerful to increase in you charity and a perfect work."⁷³ Afterward, when fully unfolding the chasuble, he says: "With the garment of innocence may the Lord clothe thee." When

⁷¹ This vestment had its origin in the Roman *paenula* (Greek, *φαινόλης*, *φελόνης*). It was a circular, closed overgarment worn especially when traveling, and also in the city during cold and inclement weather. In the first ten centuries after Christ it is frequently mentioned by the name of *casula* and *planeta* as a garment of ordinary life. These two names designate the original use of the chasuble: *casula* (= a small hut, from *casa*, a little house) refers to its size and width, *planeta* (*πλανήτης* = *sidus errans*, *stella erratic*a, wandering star), to its movableness. From the wide, flowing appearance of this garment is explained the custom of slightly raising the edge of the chasuble at the Elevation (*Cerem. Episc.*, I, ix, 5; II, viii, 69).

⁷² Septimum sacerdotale indumentum est, quod casulam vocant; dicta est autem per diminutionem a casa, eo quod totum hominem tegat quasi minor casa, hanc Graeci planetam, *πλανήτην*, vocant (*because the border, so to speak, trails about*). Haec supremum omnium indumentorum est, et cetera omnia interius per suum munimem tegit et servat (Raban. Maur., *De cleric. instit.*, I, chap. 21).

⁷³ Veste sacerdotali caritatem signante te merito exspoliamus, quia ipsam et omnem innocentiam exuisti (*Pontif. Roman., Degrad. ab ordin. Presbyt.*),

putting on the vestment, the priest says: "O Lord, Thou who hast said: 'My yoke is sweet and My burden light,' grant that I may carry this yoke and burden in such a manner as to obtain Thy grace."

As the chasuble is the principal vestment of the priest,⁷⁴ it should be sufficiently wide and long to cover and protect all his other apparel; it should, moreover, be made of precious material and be suitably ornamented, for thereby it is fitted symbolically to express holy love.⁷⁵ Divine love, or charity, is the most excellent and the most precious of all the virtues. As a queen she reigns supreme over all the other virtues by her sublimity, dignity, and majesty. She is the mother, the soul, and the life of the remaining virtues, to which she imparts true value and higher consecration; for without it no virtue and no virtuous deed is meritorious for heaven and eternity. All other gifts and privileges are of no avail to man if this one, charity, be wanting (I Cor. 13:1-4). Charity ennobles, beautifies, transforms, and renders fruitful the entire religious and moral life of man. "Charity never falleth away" (I Cor. 13:8). Faith gives place to vision, hope is absorbed in possession and enjoyment, love alone remains, but in its highest perfection and transformation. Charity is the bond of perfection: it includes all the virtues, it is full of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience (Col. 3:12-14), it is kind, it beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things (I Cor. 13:4-7).

The two parts of the vestment may more particularly signify the love of God and of neighbor, which are one and the same virtue. The priest is the representative of the love of Christ. Magnanimous, self-sacrificing, self-forgetting charity belongs to the good shep-

⁷⁴ Although the chasuble was formerly a common robe (*generale indumentum* [Amal.]; *communis vestis* [Ivo Carnot.]) of the clerics, still for many centuries it has been regarded in a special sense as *vestis sacerdotalis* (*Pontif. Roman.*), and as a vestment intended exclusively for the Holy Sacrifice, since the priest at his ordination is solemnly invested with it; and it is to be worn only at the altar.

⁷⁵ Casula, quae ultima est vestium magisque splendida ac pretiosa et reliquas tegit, significat virtutem caritatis, quae reliquis virtutibus est excelsior, quibus et honorem affert, eas defendit ac protegit, comitando eas in earum actionibus, ut perfectae sint. "Caritas enim, ut ait Apostolus (I Cor. 13:7), omnia credit, omnia sperat, omnia sustinet," et ad omnia valet, ita ut sine ea res omnes sint imperfectae, cum ea autem suam omnes habeant perfectionem (De Ponte, *loc. cit.*, § 4).

herd. Tender and strong love is the very soul of apostolic labors, the very nerve center of all priestly activity. Ardent love of Christ and of our neighbor is the source of zeal for souls.⁷⁶ The zealous priest lives entirely for his neighbor, because he belongs entirely to the Crucified. To serve God and to sacrifice one's self for God, to do good to one's neighbor and to devote one's self to him, such is the vocation of the priest. To become a holocaust of love in the service of God and for the salvation of men is assuredly difficult and painful to nature; therefore the genuine life of a priest is and ever will be a yoke and a burden.⁷⁷ But divine grace and love help to make this yoke easy and this burden light.⁷⁸ Love is something great; it is, in fact, the only great good, for love alone can make every burden light and accepts with equanimity all the vicissitudes of life. It alone carries every burden without being burdened; it alone makes all that is bitter, sweet and pleasant to the taste.⁷⁹ *Amor leve facit omne onerosum, et omne amarum dulce efficit.* He who loves God flies to his end, hastens forward with a joyful heart, for he is free and does not allow himself to be kept back by anything at all. Love feels no burden, it regards no difficulty. By the unction of grace, crosses lose their severity and thorns their points.

To the priest great and efficacious graces are abundantly imparted by God, who increases His love in His servant and (through love) the perfect work (*potens est enim Deus, ut augeat tibi caritatem et opus perfectum*). Now, in order to make his ministry pleasing to

⁷⁶ Dicendum, quod zelus ex intensione amoris provenit (S. Thom., Ia IIae, q. 28, a. 4).

⁷⁷ Because the vestment also covered the shoulders, it answered (like the stole) as a symbol of the *jugum Domini*, and as such was often ornamented with the cross, either on the back or in front, or (like the so-called Borromeo chasuble) both in front and on the back.

⁷⁸ *Ultimum indumentum est casula seu planeta, quae ex omnium sententia caritatem significat, quae cunctis virtutibus supereminet, easque protegit et illustrat. . . . Tamen ut constat ex oratione quae dicitur, cum casula induitur, etiam jugum Domini significat, sed diversa fortasse ratione; nam stola significat jugum Christi, planeta jugum amoris: illa patientiam et fortitudinem, quae ad jugum illud ferendum necessaria est, haec vero suavitatem et dulcedinem jugi hujus, quae ex caritate provenit, significat (Suarez, loc. cit., n. 4).*

⁷⁹ *Omnia fiunt facilia caritati, cui uni Christi sarcina levis est (Matt. 11:30) aut ea una est sarcina ipsa quae levis est. Secundum hoc dictum est: "Et praecepta ejus gravia non sunt" (I Joann. 5:3), ut cui gravia sunt, consideret, non potuisse divinitus dici "gravia non sunt," nisi quia potest esse cordis affectus cui gravia non sunt, et petat quo destituitur, ut impleat quod jubetur (S. August., De natura et gratia, chap. 69, n. 83).*

God and to obtain fullness of grace, he must bear the yoke and burden of the Lord with love, that is, if not with sweet facility, at least with patience and perseverance. He implores the divine assistance to this effect when putting on the chasuble before Mass: *Fac, ut istud (jugum et onus) portare sic valeam, quod consequar tuam gratiam.* The love of neighbor, represented by the back of the chasuble, the priest must exercise chiefly in administering the sacrament of penance; but in order to purify others from sin and reconcile them with God, he should be pure himself, confirmed in virtue, and by his holiness of life be pleasing to God. Therefore at the ordination the bishop, after imparting to him the power of forgiving sins and when unfolding the chasuble until then folded on his back, prays that the Lord may clothe him with the garment of innocence and purity: *Stola innocentiae induat te Dominus.*

The chasuble is worn during the Sacrifice of the Mass: on the altar the Lord enkindles the divine fire upon earth, that at least some sparks of divine love may penetrate our cold hearts and inflame them with its ardor. Here it was that the heart of a St. Philip Neri glowed so strongly that he frequently broke out into the words: "If Thou, O God, who art so loving and so amiable, wouldst be loved by us, why then didst Thou give us but one heart, and that one so small?"

The color of the vestment varies according to the times; for love impels to the performance of manifold acts of virtue.⁸⁰ It is full of invention and, as far as possible, it endeavors to have one become all to all, to save all and gain them to Christ (I Cor. 9:22); it rejoices with them that rejoice and weeps with them that weep (Rom. 12:15).

4. The priest ascends the altar to perform, by offering the Eucha-

⁸⁰ Quemadmodum casula inter reliqua ornamenta singularem exigit colorem, unum ex quinque juxta diversitatem temporis . . . ita caritas varios induit affectus, nunc laetitiae et gaudii ob Dei magnalia, et gratitudinis propter ejus beneficia; nunc patientiae et fortitudinis, ut se ad martyria magnosque labores offerat; nunc heroicis exercet actus spei, tum cum orat, tum cum egregium aliquod facinus aggreditur aut se in aliqua videt pressura constitutam; nunc exercet actus fidei, ex se quidem obscuros, sed illustratos amore supplente cognitionis defectum; ac denique affectus exercet tristitiae et fletus propter sua peccata et miseras aut etiam aliena, aut propter adversa, quae ejus dilectus est in passione perpressus, aut propter exsilium, quo detinetur, optans illum in sua gloria videre. Hac affectuum varietate potest ac merito debet exornare se sacerdos diversis temporibus, ut suum digne offerat sacrificium (De Ponte, *loc. cit.*).

ristic sacrifice, the most divine and sublime function, to accomplish the grandest and most awful mystery, to exercise in the most perfect manner the office of mediator between God and man, to give to God, as a representative of Christ and a servant of the Church, the greatest glory, as well as to procure for man the most abundant blessings. The sacred vestments with which he is then attired cause him to appear exteriorly before the eyes of all in all his dignity, in his sublime and divine calling. At the same time the precious and mystical vestments remind him with what great virtues his soul should be adorned, with what heavenly thoughts, sentiments, and affections his heart should be possessed, how far he should soar by his holiness above the faithful, that he may as worthily as possible offer the divine victim to the Most High.⁸¹ This spiritual adornment should never be wanting to the priest at the altar, that his interior and exterior may harmonize, please God, and edify men.⁸²

Take heed to thyself and see what kind of ministry has been delivered to thee by the imposition of the bishop's hands. Lo! thou art made a priest and art consecrated to say Mass; see now that in due time thou faithfully and devoutly offer up sacrifice to God, and that thou behave thyself in such manner as to be without reproof. Thou hast not lightened thy burden, but art now bound with a stricter band of discipline and art obliged to a greater perfection of sanctity. The priest ought to be adorned with all virtues and to give to others an example of a good life. His conversation should not be with the vulgar and common ways of men, but with the angels in heaven, or with perfect men upon earth. The priest clad in his sacred vestments is Christ's vicegerent to pray to God for himself and for all the people in a suppliant and humble manner. He

⁸¹ Omnis ornatus exterior sacerdotum significat, qualis debeat interior esse ejus ornatus, quamque prae populo eminere et effulgere eum oporteat (Corn. a Lap., *In Exod.*, 28:43). Vestes, quibus corpus exterius decoratur, sunt virtutes, quibus interius homo perornatur (Honor. Augustod., *Gemma anim.*, I, chap. 198).

⁸² En quantarum virtutum vestis ipsa sacerdotalis indicium est! Quam dives igitur erit, quam pulcher, quam splendidus, quam gratus et acceptus oculis divinae majestatis, si hac adornatus panoplia sacerdos rem divinam acturus ad altare accedit! Dum antistes mysticas vestes benedicit, eas inter orandum appellat "insignia sacerdotalis gloriae." . . . Licet ad reverentiam divinis mysteriis sacrificioque simul et sacerdotio conciliandam voluerit Deus, ut tanto cum externi etiam ornatus decore procedat sacerdos ad coelestis muneris dispensationem, tamen sacer hic apparatus, ornatus monumentum est, panopliae scil. virtutum, quibus altari se sistens sacerdos praeditus esse debet: hoc ejus verum decus est, honor singularis, perfecta gloria et perennis corona (Du Saussay, Part I, Bk. VI, chap. 15).

has before him and behind him the sign of the cross of the Lord, that he may always remember the passion of Christ. He bears the cross before him in his vestment that he may diligently behold the footsteps of Christ and fervently endeavor to follow them. He is marked with a cross behind that he mildly suffer, for God's sake, whatsoever adversities may befall him from others. He wears the cross before him that he may bewail his own sins; and behind him, that through compassion he may lament the sins of others and know that he is placed, as it were, a mediator between God and the sinner. Neither ought he to cease from prayer and the holy oblation till he be favored with the grace and mercy which he implores. When the priest celebrates, he honors God, he rejoices the angels, he edifies the Church, he helps the living, he obtains rest for the dead, and makes himself partaker of all that is good.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ *Imitation of Christ*, IV, chap. 5.

CHAPTER XV

THE LITURGICAL COLORS

1. As in the Old Law, so also in the New Law there are different liturgical colors which impart to the vestments, not only splendor, beauty, and variety, but also a religious symbolical meaning. The deep symbolism of the colors was the determining reason why the Church selected and prescribed various colors for the different feasts and seasons of the Church year.¹ Until the Middle Ages white was used generally, if not exclusively, for religious feasts and as a symbol of joy. In the twelfth century the practice of using different colors was already developed;² but not until the time of the new revision of the missal in the sixteenth century was the selection of the liturgical colors finally determined. The five colors prescribed by the Church in her liturgy, to the exclusion of all other colors,³

¹ *Paramenta Altaris, Celebrantis et Ministrorum debent esse coloris convenientis Officio et Missae diei, secundum usum Romanae Ecclesiae (Missal. Rom., Rubr. gener., tit. 18, n. 1). Non licet in Missae celebratione aliisque ecclesiasticis functionibus adhibere paramenta etiam pretiosa, quae non correspondeant coloribus a rubrica praescriptis (S. R. C., December 19, 1829). Servetur strictim rubrica quoad colorem paramentorum (S. R. C., November 12, 1831).*

² Innocent III (1198-1216) counts, according to the variety of feasts and seasons, four principal colors (white, red, green, black); the later fifth color, violet, is regarded by him as secondary to black. Quattuor sunt principales colores, quibus secundum proprietates dierum sacras vestes Ecclesia Romana distinguit: albus, rubeus, niger et viridis. Ad hos quattuor ceteri referuntur: ad rubeum colorem coccineus (*scarlet*), ad nigrum violaceus, ad viridem croceus (*saffron*). (*De sacr. alt. myst.*, I, chap. 65.) In Durandus (*Ration.*, III, chap. 18) violet appears already in general use. The *Fourteenth Roman Ordo*, which is of the fourteenth century, contains also these words: Sancta Romana Ecclesia quinque coloribus utitur in sacris vestibus, videlicet, albo, rubeo, viridi, violaceo et nigro. Quidam autem duos hos ultimos pro uno reputant (chap. 49).

³ On Gaudete Sunday (in Advent) and Laetare Sunday (in Lent) the vestments used in the *Missae sollemnis* should be rose-colored (*coloris rosacei*),

are the following: white, red, green, purple, and black.⁴ Yellow (*color flavus*) and blue (*color caeruleus*) are positively forbidden.⁵ Gold colored vestments (*paramenta coloris aurei*) are also forbidden; but vestments composed entirely or for the most part of real gold cloth (*paramenta revera ex auro maxima ex parte contexta*) may be tolerated or permitted to take the place of white, red, and green vestments. The Church has, moreover, expressed her disapproval of so combining colors in one and the same vestment that one principal or fundamental color (*color primarius et praedominans*) is scarcely or not at all recognizable.⁶ Likewise forbidden is the indiscriminate use of a two-colored vestment for the two colors; for example, a white chasuble with a red cross cannot be used as both a red and a white vestment; such vestments are tolerated for one color only, to be so determined that the middle part of the vestment is to be regarded merely as ornamental. Finally, the use of purple instead of black is forbidden in Requiem Masses.⁷ Consequently, in order to preserve the sacred symbolism of color, the Church has always declared against confusing and combining the liturgical colors.

2. "Simple light unfolds its beams in an extraordinary variety of hue, inasmuch as it admits of the most varied degrees of intensity and attenuation and is refracted into an incalculable number of colors." ⁸ Colors are produced by the varied refraction of the rays of light and, like light itself, stand in an intimate and mysterious relation to the spiritual life of man. Light and color, among all

in order to enhance the solemnity and express joy by means of this lighter violet, which is so close to the red. Cf. Cerem. Episc., II, chap. 13, 20.

⁴ Ecclesia quinque coloribus uti consuevit: albo, rubeo, viridi, violaceo et nigro (*Missal. Rom., Rubr. gen., tit. 18, n. 1*). White and red are the only genuine festal colors, and are intended for the different feasts; green and violet, as a rule, are used only on Sundays and weekdays; and black is intended for the Good Friday services and is used also in the liturgy for the departed.

⁵ In some dioceses in Spain it is permitted, or rather obligatory, in virtue of a special papal privilege, to use sky-blue vestments at all the Masses of the Immaculate Conception, whether of the feast itself, or votive Masses (S. R. C., February 12, 1884).

⁶ S. R. C., September 23, 1837, ad dub. 8, n. 2.

⁷ Missae defunctorum celebrandae sunt omnino in paramentis *nigris* adeo ut violacea adhiberi nequeant, nisi in casu, quo die 2 Novembris SS. Euchar. sacramentum publicae fidelium adorationi sit expositum pro solemnibus Orationibus 40 Horarum, prout cautum est in Decreto sacrae hujus Congregationis diei 16 Septembris anni 1801 (Decret. Urbis et Orbis, S. R. C., June 27, 1868).

⁸ Berthold, *Das Naturschöne*, p. 28.

material things, are the most closely related to the spiritual. The sentiments awakened in us by the particular colors are similar to the contrasts between light and darkness. Bright colors make us rejoice; somber colors suggest grief. Besides exerting an influence on the mind and also on the heart, colors also symbolize different mysteries and feelings. Hence the Church makes use of the symbolism of colors in her liturgy to produce and nourish in the hearts of the faithful heavenly thoughts and resolutions.

3. In the following pages we shall briefly state the symbolical meaning of each of the colors the Church uses at the altar.

a) White is the color of light and, therefore, symbolical of the luster and glory of radiant purity, innocence, and holiness; heavenly joy, bliss, and transfiguration. White is the robe of the baptized, who in the laver of regeneration are washed from the blemish of every sin; this robe they should wear untarnished and unspotted to the judgment seat of Jesus Christ, that they may be adorned with the radiant garment of glory. To those who in the combat against sin persevere victoriously to the end of life, the promise is made in the Apocalypse (3:5), that they shall be clothed in white garments, that is, rewarded with the possession of the eternal happiness and the glory of heaven,⁹ which is made bright with the splendor of God and the light of the Lamb (Apoc. 21:23). At the transfiguration on Mount Thabor, the face of Jesus shone out bright as the sun, and His garments became white and shining as the sunlit snow (Matt., chap. 17; Luke, chap. 9). Whenever God's angels have appeared to mortals here below, they invariably have manifested themselves clothed in bright and radiant vesture (Matt. 28:3; Luke 2:9); the multitude of the elect stand before the throne of God and the Lamb clothed in white garments (Apoc. 7:9).¹⁰ Many of the saints during life and after death were often seen surrounded with a heavenly splendor. Thus, for example, it is related of the holy father, St. Benedict, that his mien was so amiable, his deportment so angelic, and the splendor which surrounded him so great,

⁹ Vestis alba sive splendida notat candorem et splendorem gloriae coelestis, ad quam anhelamus, quamque ambimus velut ejus candidati, ut illa semper nostris oculis et menti obversetur, itaque ineamus vitam sanctam et coelestem (Corn. a Lap., *In Eccles.*, 9:8).

¹⁰ Stola alba Sanctorum significat (1) conscientiae puritatem, castitatem et candorem; (2) inde consequentem serenitatem, hilaritatem et laetitiam; (3) felicitatem et gloriam (Corn. a Lap., *loc. cit.*).

that one would have supposed that he was not a being living upon earth, but in heaven. The pale, emaciated face of St. Lidwina shone after her death with a supermundane brightness; her whole appearance was that of an angel.

Now, at the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice the Lord inclines the heavens and comes down (Ps. 17:10) upon the altar with His hosts, with all His love and bounty, with all His treasures and graces, in order to make a heaven of our poor earth; the celebration of this celestial sacrifice the priest should always perform with angelic purity and joyfulness. And in order to signify this, the white color is never entirely wanting at the altar; some parts at least of the priestly vestments (the amice and alb) must always be white.¹¹ *Omni tempore sint vestimenta tua candida* (Ecclus. 9:8). At certain times, for particular reasons, the entire vesture of the priest and the covering of chalice must be white. This is generally prescribed on those feasts and days when the characteristics of heavenly purity, joy, and glory are to be prominently represented and expressed.

Thus all the joyful and glorious mysteries of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ are celebrated in white festive colors; for what other color would be more appropriate for Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, the Ascension, Corpus Christi? The Church celebrates the birth of our divine Redeemer on Christmas night. This blessed night is brighter than the brightest day, for it knows no obscurity, no darkness, no sorrow, no tribulation. It floods the world with a stream of light and joy; it is replete with joy above all other feasts, since, in addition to its heavenly gift, it brings heartfelt joy to every household, a joy which, like a pleasant odor, refreshes the heart. On the feast of the Epiphany we are reminded of that wonderful star which "in beauty and brilliancy surpassed the sun" and which shone brightly into the hearts of the wise men, filling them with extraordinary joy. For us also this beautiful feast is a day of rejoicing. Since here below we know God "in a dark manner" (I Cor. 13:12), we pray in the celebration of this feast for the grace to be led in the next life to the clear and blessed vision of His eternal

¹¹ Ideo ministri Christi vel Ecclesiae in albis vestibis ministrant, quia Angeli, aeterni Regis ministri, in albis apparebant. Per albas itaque vestes admonentur, ut Angelos Dei ministros per castitatis munditiam in Christi servitio imitentur (Honor. Augustod., *Gemma animi*, I, chap. 198).

glory. Easter is radiant with the glory of the risen Saviour. At no other time of the ecclesiastical year do the church bells ring out so solemnly, does the singing sound more joyous; the house of God is resplendent with the most beautiful decorations, and the priests ascend the altar, clad in the most festal vestments. Upon all who were permitted to see the risen Lord, there was poured forth a stream of cheerfulness and happiness, of peace and consolation. Therefore we also rejoice over this great honor of our Lord. The Ascension is likewise a day of rejoicing and triumph.¹² *Ascendit Deus in júbilo* (Ps. 46:6). On this day the priest celebrates our Lord's triumphant ascension into heaven clothed in white garments.

White is also used on all feasts commemorating the mysteries of the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God. For Mary is the miraculous flower, a heavenly lily of dazzling whiteness, beautiful and without blemish; the beautiful month of May, with its blossoms and wealth of flowers, is a symbol of that abundance of graces and virtues with which she is adorned. In her dazzling light all the saints pale. Except the majesty of God, no splendor equals hers; clothed in the light of the sun (Apoc. 12:1), she has all the blessed spirits as a glittering crown of stars around her head. She shines in the beauty of the daughter of God, in the dignity of Mother of God, in the charms of spouse of God. She is "the bright morning star," "the bearer of light of the Eternal Day," "the gentle Queen of Heaven," "the pure, tender, and loving mother," "the most lovely heavenly lady." "To her gentle care and maternal sweetness" we recommend ourselves on her feasts, that she may be "a companion and protectress to us against the evil one, until through the heavenly portals we reach eternal felicity."¹³ We cry to Mary, "the Star of the Sea": *Mites fac et castos. Vitam praesta puram.* ("Make us meek and chaste. Grant that our life be pure.")

White, moreover, harmonizes admirably with the character of the feasts of the angels. The holy angels, those blessed heavenly spirits, are unspeakably pure: pure in the perfection of their beautiful being, pure in the treasures of divine grace. They bask in the rays of divine glory; and they reflect as clear, bright mirrors the

¹² Solemnitas ista gloriosa est et, ut ita dicam, gaudiosa, in qua et singularis Christo gloria et nobis specialis laetitia exhibetur. Consummatio enim et adimpletio est reliquarum solemnitatum et felix clausula totius itinerarii Filii Dei (S. Bernard., *In Ascens. Dom. serm.*, II, n. 1).

¹³ Denifle, *Die Schriften des seligen Heinrich Seuse*, I.

image of God Himself. Even down into our earthly darkness does this angelic light dart its rays: the angels are heavenly messengers, showing us the way of life to eternal light. They are "our brethren in praise and joy in eternal bliss, and accompany and protect us at all times" (H. Suso).

White is, finally, the color of all those saints who are not martyrs: the confessors, virgins, and holy women. All these "walk with Me [Christ] in white, because they are worthy" (Apoc. 3:4). Either they remained pure, inasmuch as they walked the dusty paths of earth unsullied and never lost the precious and resplendent robe of baptismal innocence; or, after having fallen into sin, they again became pure, because as penitents they washed the stains of their soul in the blood of the Lamb and in the tears of repentance. But all now flower as lilies before the Lord and bloom eternally (Osee 14:6).

The white color of the vestments admonishes the faithful to appear in the house of God clad with the bright garment of grace and purity, to assist at divine worship with heartfelt joy and gratitude; for it is meet to praise God with holy joy and to render Him thanks for the wonderful light of truth and grace unto which He has called us, and for the greatness and glory of the redemption which has fallen to our share.

b) Red is the strongest, most sprightly, and most gorgeous of all the colors.¹⁴ "When the white ray of light is refracted on material objects, it becomes colored and assumes one of the seven colors of the rainbow, of which red, the original color of the rose, is the fullest and most conspicuous" (Laurent).

White is the color of light; red is the color of the most glaring light: of fire. White beamed forth from the Lord on Thabor, when He showed

¹⁴ Red is also the color of the purple, in which kings and princes clothed themselves; therefore red purple answers as a symbol of royal majesty, of princely power and dignity. Formerly Christ on the Cross was often represented as a triumphant conqueror, adorned with the regal crown and the purple mantle, the emblem of royal power (*regnavit a ligno Deus*). The Pope frequently wears red-purple garments as a peculiar distinction, notably on Good Friday (*Papa luget in purpura*). But for many centuries red-purple has been the distinctive color of the highest dignitaries in the Church, that is, of the cardinals, who, consequently, are called *Patres purpurati*. *Merito purpura Cardinalibus quasi regibus data, cujus color in galero eximiae caritatis est symbolum, cujus igne ita ardere debent, ut semper pro defensione et bono Ecclesiae sanguinem fundere sint parati* (S. Antonin., *Sum.*, III, tit. 1).

Himself as King of eternal light; He stands in red at the praetorium of the governor, when, aflame with love and in the scarlet of wounds, He enters the combat. St. John beheld Him in flowing white garments in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (Apoc. 1:13), as the King of eternal glory; the same St. John sees Him robed in red when He appears in triumph as conqueror. "He was clothed," says the holy Seer of Patmos, "with a garment sprinkled with blood. . . . The armies that are in heaven followed Him on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. He shall rule them with a rod of iron and He treadeth the wine press of the fierceness of the wrath of God the Almighty" (Apoc. 19:13-15).¹⁵

As the color of flame and blood, red represents the ardent, consuming fire of love which the Holy Ghost enkindles in the heart (Rom. 5:5); it is emblematic of that generous, conquering love which yields up in martyrdom the greatest and dearest of all earthly blessings, life itself, and triumphs in death. As the sun sets in the bright red glow of the evening, so also love flames up powerfully in the bloody martyrdom. For "love is as strong as death, . . . as hard as hell; the lamps thereof are fire and flames, many waters cannot quench it" (Cant. 8:6 f.). Without suffering there is no love. Love is shown and proved to be most heroic by the cheerful endurance of the torments of death, and by the shedding of one's blood.¹⁶ For "greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends," and "in this we have known the charity of God, because He hath laid down His life for us" (John 15:13; I John 3:16). In the order of nature, man has nothing more precious than life; for "all that a man hath he will give for his life" (Job 2:4). Therefore the sacrifice of life, martyrdom, is the most perfect proof of love.

Red is the liturgical color for the feasts of the Finding and Exaltation of the Holy Cross, as well as for the feasts of the passion of our Lord; for on all these feasts Christ's saving blood and the excessive love of His Sacred Heart are offered to the soul's consideration. The cross is the place of sacrifice, the altar (*ara crucis*) on which the propitiatory sacrifice was offered up for the sins of the world; it was entirely covered with blood. The remaining in-

¹⁵ Breiteneicher, *Die Passion des Gottmenschen*, II, 69.

¹⁶ Caritas tunc maxima est in hac vita, quando pro illa ipsa contemnitur vita (S. August., *De natura et gratia*, chap. 70, n. 84).

struments of the passion (the thorns, nails, and lance) were sprinkled and crimsoned with blood. In the mystery of His passion the Lord appears with dyed garments (*tinctis vestibus*) as a hero who has gloriously finished His combat for our freedom and gained the victory by His blood (Isa. 63:1). In the imperishable adornment of His bleeding wounds, our Lord reveals the inextinguishable flames of love that burn for us in His merciful heart. "Behold and consider the rose of the bloody passion, how it glows as a mark of the most ardent love. Love and suffering contend with each other: love, to burn more; suffering, to bleed more. The rose of love would be crimsoned in suffering, and the rose of suffering would glow in the fires of love. . . . By the flames of love suffering is purpled; for if there were no love, there would not be this suffering. And again, from this blood-red of torment love radiates in its fullness and glory."¹⁷

Red is also used on the feasts of the saints who gloriously shed their blood for the Lord and manifested a love that surrenders up body and life itself, a love stronger than death and the torments of death.¹⁸ To this class belong the apostles, who "planted the Church in their blood;" then the martyrs, countless multitudes of whom trod in the bloodstained footprints of the Saviour and are now glorified in their own blood and in the blood of the Lamb;¹⁹ finally, the martyred virgins, who preserved victorious fidelity to their divine spouse by their constancy in faith as well as by their chaste life, inasmuch as they offered and consecrated to Him together with the lily of their virginity the rose of martyrdom, so that it cannot be decided whether their wedding garment shines more brightly on account of their snow-white purity or on account of their rose-

¹⁷ Cf. S. Bonav., *Vitis mystica*, chaps. 17-22. Christus candidus et splendidus est ob puritatem innocentiae et splendorem sanctitatis, qua ex purissima Virgine natus sanctissimus exstitit; rubicundus propter passionem, qua sanguine suo fuit purpuratus (Corn. a Lap., *In Cant. Cantic.*, 5:10).

¹⁸ Quod martyribus datur color rubeus, fit propter eorum corpora, ut repraesentet sanguinem ab eis effusum mereri purpuram et regnum coeleste. Quocirca verisimile est, etiam in coelo dotem claritatis, quae erit in corporibus Martyrum, ita candidam fore, ut simul sit rubea, sive vermiculata ex candido et purpureo (Corn. a Lap., *In Apoc.*, 7:9).

¹⁹ In the liturgy there are also some saints honored as martyrs who did not die a violent death. To these the red, the color similar to fire, applies, inasmuch as they were penetrated with the fire of the Holy Spirit and of love, and therefore courageously persevered in the furnace of tribulation and persecution until death.

colored martyrdom.²⁰ Therefore the red rose, because of its blood-like color, is considered the flower of the martyrs. Thus the Church sings on the feast of the Holy Innocents: "Hail, blossoms of martyrdom; the persecutors of Christ robbed you of the morning light of life, as the fury of the raging storm destroys the opening rosebuds."

Red is also the color of Pentecost "On this great feast the Church displays in her service the utmost splendor; priest and altar are clothed in crimson red, as emblematic of the ardent flames of the Spirit of God, who descended visibly upon the apostles, and since then upon millions and millions of souls. They are effulgent rays proceeding from 'the face of God,' brilliant in faith and ardent in love" (Wolter). In the form of tongues of fire the Holy Ghost descended upon the disciples that they might be fluent in words and glowing with love. And the Holy Ghost still continues ever to strew the fiery sparks of heavenly love upon the earth and into the hearts of men, to create them anew and to fill them with the courage of self-sacrifice. Pentecost is also the birthday of the Catholic Church, which, as the holy city of God upon the summit of the mountain, rises high from the ocean of blood shed by the Lord and His martyrs. The Church has always been gloriously honored by the testimony of martyrs and has been made fruitful in their blood.

c) Green is a medium between the strong and the weak colors; therefore it is the most refreshing and the most soothing color to the eye. Everywhere, when spring awakens, country and meadow, hill and dale, grow green and blossom and exhale sweet odors; all nature develops new life and growth, decks herself out in fresh and lovely verdure, and gives promise of plenteous harvest. According to the general opinion and the spirit of the liturgy, green is a symbol of hope.²¹

²⁰ Martyrdom, as proof and evidence of the most perfect love, is more excellent than virginity and is, therefore, preferred to it in the liturgy. *Ecclesia praeferat Martyres Virginibus tum in ordine, quem servat in Communi Sanctorum, tum in Martyrologio, tum in Litanis et commemorationibus, tum in hoc ritu, quo in festis Virginum et Martyrum non albo, sed rubeo colore utitur* (Quarti, *Comment. in Rubr. Miss.*, I, tit. 18, dub. 5).

²¹ This symbolical conception of green may be established in various ways. In winter the pleasant green of springtime is the subject of our confidence, and when it appears, it becomes for us an earnest of an abundant harvest. Just as green refreshes and revives the eye in a high degree, so it is especially the virtue of hope that cheers, encourages, and consoles us (*spe gaudentes, in tribulationibus patientes*: Rom. 12:12). In nature green is a sign of life, and

Green harmonizes with the nature of the Church. She is a mighty tree, which rears its head majestically heavenward and spreads its shady branches and leaves, covering the earth with blessings, displaying its richest blossoms in all their beauty, and producing an abundant harvest of precious fruits of grace and virtue. She is the well-watered garden of the Lord; Christ, the Good Shepherd, leads His flock to pasture on its ever-green meadows, waters and refreshes them at the fountains of the ever-fresh and living waters of grace. Thus the Church here below grows green and blooms, increases and ripens while progressing to her eternal consummation.

The Church is robed in green garments to express her joyous hope of coming to the ever-green pastures of the heavenly paradise,²² of possessing the never-fading crown of glory in heaven (I Pet. 1:4; 5:4). In the heavenly Jerusalem the blessed eat of the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations (Apoc. 22:2); there shall the Lamb lead them to the fountains of the waters of life (Apoc. 7:17).

Since green holds an intermediate place between the bright and the dark colors, it is used in the Church service on days which have no special festal character, but which, on the other hand, are not days appointed for penance and mourning. To this class belong the Sundays and weekdays after the octave of the Epiphany until Septuagesima, and from the octave of Pentecost until Advent.²³ When after the feast of the Epiphany we see green used at the altar, we should reawaken and reanimate the virtue of Christian hope in our heart; for the green vestments are a consoling pledge of the hope of eternal salvation that has been regained for us by Christ.

therefore it becomes in the higher order the symbol of the life of grace and glory, which constitutes the principal object of Christian hope (gloriamur in spe gloriæ filiorum Dei: Rom. 5:2; in spem vitæ æternæ, quam repromisit Deus: Tit. 1:2). Hence the Church prays:

Mentis perustæ vulnera
Munda virore gratiæ.

And of Easter Sunday she sings:

Dies venit, dies tua,
In qua reflorent omnia.

²² Constituat te Christus Filius Dei vivi intra paradisi sui semper amoena virentia (*Ordo commendat. animæ*).

²³ These Sundays are, therefore, called *Dominicæ virides*. Cf. Angel. Rocca, *Thesaurus pontif. sacrarumque antiquit.*, I, 75: An summo Pontifici sacrum facienti conveniat uti sacris vestibus colore viridi affectis.

Our earthly pilgrimage is, indeed, beset with difficulties and temptations; yet abounding in consolation and joy by reason of the unfailing expectation of eternal rest in our heavenly country. And this hope is our salvation and our joy (Rom. 8:24; 12:12); it mitigates the sorrow of the present time and brings along with it the consolation of a happier future. Deprived of this hope we should be the most miserable of men (I Cor. 15:19). During the period after Pentecost the Church wears green vestments, in order to fill us with all joy and peace, that we may abound in hope and the power of the Holy Ghost (Rom. 15:13); for to us in our pilgrimage, hope for the goods of the Lord in the land of the living is a guiding star, a pilgrim's staff, and a support.

d) Purple belongs to the subdued colors, but it is somewhat enlivened by red. Inasmuch as the violet color resembles the dark grey of ashes, it inculcates a penitential disposition; but inasmuch as it is like the dark coloring of the violet (*violaceus* from *viola*), which modestly conceals itself from human eye amid the grass of the field, it may be considered an emblem of humility, of retirement, of a longing and sighing after heaven.²⁴ The dark, serious violet, therefore, indicates sadness; though not a universal sadness, but one that is moderated and tempered with rays of joy.²⁵ Consequently violet is a fitting emblem of that holy sadness pleasing to God which produces a spirit of penance steadfast unto salvation (II Cor. 7:10), and also of that laudable sorrow felt by the soul in being obliged to remain far from the Lord in a world foreign to her, which daily, even hourly, endangers her salvation. The soul penetrated with this sorrow does indeed frequently exclaim: "Who shall deliver me from

²⁴ The symbolism of violet may also be rendered in a somewhat different way. Inasmuch as violet is dark blue, it symbolizes in general sorrow and grief (for it produces a dark blue shadow upon the face); and inasmuch as it is violet blue, it indicates at the same time that this penitential sadness and sorrow proceeds from a humble and humbled heart (for violet is symbolical of humility).

²⁵ In former times violet was rarely used, for example, on the feast of Holy Innocents and on Laetare Sunday, because black was regarded as a penitential color; since the end of the thirteenth century, the present more strict distinction between violet and black has been gradually developed. The *Ordo Rom. XIV*, chap. 53, has the following rubric in reference to the use of black in the fourteenth century: *Colore nigro utitur [s. Romana Ecclesia] feria sexta in Parasceve, in Missis defunctorum et in processionibus, quas Romanus Pontifex nudis pedibus facit. Sciendum tamen est quod diebus, quibus est usus nigri coloris, uti violaceo non est inconveniens.*

the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24); or: "Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged" (Ps. 119:5); but her sorrow, her sadness is not without its consolation and sweetness.

From what has been said, the liturgical use of violet vestments on certain days of the ecclesiastical year can easily be explained. In general the color is worn on those days that bear the serious character of penance. The penitential color used is intended to proclaim to the eye the penitential sentiments of the Church. The days for violet are, in the first place, the Ember days (except those of Pentecost week) and the vigils, as well as the days appointed for the greater penitential procession (*Litaniae majores*) on St. Mark's Day and on the three days called Rogation days, which precede the Ascension. On these days violet reminds the faithful that they should be intent upon appeasing the justice of God by penance and by cleansing their hearts from sin; that they should implore God to free them from famine and tribulation and turn away from them calamities and divine judgments.

The dark, somber violet color is intended principally for the seasons of Advent and Lent. The observance of Advent is, indeed, enlivened with tones of ever increasing joyousness, since we have the comforting certainty that our Lord Himself will come and redeem us and that we shall soon behold His glory full of grace and truth. Nevertheless, Advent prominently bears the stamp of a holy, penitential grief, and of a longing desire for redemption from sin. Our chief duty during the season of Advent is to employ its days in cleansing the heart and in preparing a worthy dwelling place for the coming Saviour. From on high Jesus already sends the first rays of His splendor to greet us; He cries out to the soul: "Be zealous, therefore, and do penance. Behold, I stand at the gate and knock. If any man shall hear My voice and open to Me the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with Me" (Apoc. 3:19 f.).

The violet color in which the Church robes herself from Septuagesima Sunday until Easter, forcibly admonishes us to consecrate this penitential season to the spirit of mortification and to works of penance. We should then reverence and embrace the mystery of the cross; we should sincerely acknowledge, contritely detest, and atone for our sins, correct our frivolous, sensual, slothful life; and to this end:

Now, let's engage more sparingly
 In words, in food and drink, in sleep
 And merrymaking, and more carefully
 In vigilance let's keep.

By means of prayer, meditation, fasting, we should be converted with our whole heart from the vanity and the turmoil of the world, to God, who is so good and merciful (Joel 2: 12 f.). The penitential color shows us that we must still abide far removed from the heavenly Zion on the rivers of Babylon, meditating, praying, weeping, and longing for the eternal home. (Ps. 136.)

e) Black, the opposite of white, is the color of extinct life, of the absence of lightsome joy, of death and the tomb, consequently it is symbolical of that most profound, sorrowful mourning such as death produces.²⁶ Clothed in black garments the Church bewails the death of her divine spouse on Good Friday; she stands at the grave and at the altar arrayed in black when she prays and offers sacrifice for her departed children.²⁷

Good Friday is the day commemorative of the sufferings and death of the Lord, and, therefore, the day of most profound grief in the entire ecclesiastical year. On that day the house of God is a house of mourning, and the divine worship a worship of mourning. The altars are bare and unadorned; lamentations and sorrowful psalms alone are heard. Her Good Friday liturgy is marked by the note of affliction and grief. For on this day the divine victim shed His blood on the cross for the sins of the world; the heavens were then overshadowed with a pall of mourning, the earth also mourned, shaken to its very foundations. At the Last Supper our Lord clothed Himself in white when He girt Himself with the white linen cloth and washed the feet of His disciples; this was a sign of peace. In the judgment hall of Pilate, He was clad in red when the soldiers placed the scarlet cloak about Him; and this was a sign of blood and of reconciliation by blood. But on Calvary, He is shrouded in black by the darkness of the sun; and this is the sign of grief and of ap-

²⁶ Hence *nigrae* (*sc. vestes*) = mourning robes, as *albae* (*sc. vestes*) = solemn and festal robes.

²⁷ The wearing of black garments is prescribed for the clergy. This color continually reminds them of their obligation to lead a life dead to the world and retired from it, a life that is mortified and hidden with Christ in God. "Black garments should be a sign of a pure, white soul," writes St. Jerome to the monk Rusticus.

proaching death. For now is come the all-important hour, the hour of which God Himself had spoken ages before by the prophet Ezechiel: "I will cover the heavens when Thou shalt be put out, and I will make the stars thereof dark. . . . I will make all the lights of heaven to mourn over Thee, and I will cause darkness over the land, saith the Lord God" (Ezech. 32:7 f.). The annual commemoration of the bloody death of Jesus is a day of pain, a day of sorrow, a day of silent grief for us, because our salvation proceeded only from His wounds, our life sprung only from His death, and because our sins inflicted these wounds, caused His death. Justly, therefore, does the Church on Good Friday robe herself in the color of death and mourning, and prostrate herself in profound adoration, in meditation full of bitter grief before the cross on which was suspended the salvation of the world.²⁸

Black is also the color used in the liturgy for the dead. The Church is a loving mother; she does not abandon or forget her children even after death, but she even accompanies them with her mourning service (*Exsequiae*) to the grave and follows them beyond the grave to the other world, to eternity. She knows not whether the faithful departed may immediately be admitted to the eternal light to enjoy the beatific vision (Ps. 35:10), or whether they have yet to abide for a while in darkness and in the shadow of death (Isa. 9:2). The latter is generally the case; for the majority of people at their departure from this life are not perfectly cleansed from every defilement contracted by reason of human frailty. Therefore the passage to eternity and to the severe judgment seat of an irritated and just God is marked with such grave fear. By the black color at the funeral service the Church would admonish the living to have compassion on the suffering souls, who can no longer merit for themselves; by good deeds, prayer, penance, and suffrages, to mitigate their pains and assist them to gain speedy admission to the vision of eternal light.²⁹

²⁸ *Justum est ut hi, pro quibus passus est [Dominus] impassibilis, cum omni hujus saeculi tempore, tum praecipue in die suae passionis ei compatiantur, pro se dolenti condoleant, pro se tristanti tristitiae vicem rependant, amore pro se morientis in hac potissimum die ab omni carnis delectatione semetipsos commortificent (Pseudo-Alcuin., chap. 18).*

²⁹ The case is quite different with regard to children, the little ones whom God takes to Himself. They die wearing the unsullied garment of baptismal innocence and enter immediately into heavenly glory. Therefore they are not interred with expressions of mourning, but of joy: the priest wears a white stole.

CHAPTER XVI

THE LANGUAGE USED IN THE CELEBRATION OF MASS

1. All the requisites for the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice have been selected with especial care, and nothing has been adopted but what has been found best suited for the celebration of Mass. This applies also to the language in which the Holy Sacrifice is celebrated; for the liturgical language should correspond to its liturgical object. The Mass could indeed be celebrated in any language, but by the providence of God the Latin language has in fact become the most widely diffused for Catholic worship.¹ The Church's very ancient practice of celebrating Mass, not in the living language of a country, but in a dead language, one for the most part not understood by the people, has since the twelfth century been frequently

¹ Whether the apostles celebrated the Holy Sacrifice in the language of each individual nation or only in the Aramean (Syro-Chaldaic), Greek, and Latin languages cannot be determined with certainty. In any case, no liturgy from the first four centuries is known to have been composed in any other language than the three languages of the inscription of the Cross. In the West—for example, in Italy, Germany, Spain, France, England—Latin was at all times the liturgical language. Toward the end of the ninth century Pope John VIII (872–82) permitted the Moravian Slavs, converted by SS. Cyril and Methodius, to celebrate the liturgy in their native language (Slavonic or Glagolitic), probably to prevent their apostasy to the Greek Schism. In the East also the Church later on permitted some schismatics and heretics who had returned to the unity of the Church (for instance, the Copts, Armenians, Ethiopians), to retain their native language in the liturgy. At present there are twelve languages used in the Catholic liturgy; Latin, Greek, Syriac, Chaldaic, Arabian, Ethiopian, Old Slavonic, Ruthenian, Bulgarian, Armenian, Coptic, Rumanian. With the exception of Rumanian, all these languages used in the liturgy have for a considerable time no longer been the living languages of the people, but dead languages. The united Rumanians alone make use of the living mother-tongue in the liturgy; this is not expressly permitted by Rome, but is merely tolerated. Cf. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, XIII, 68 ff.

made the subject of attack.² Such attacks originated principally in a heretical, schismatical, proudly national spirit hostile to the Church, or in a superficial and false enlightenment, in a shallow and arid rationalism entirely destitute of the perception and understanding of the essence and object of the Catholic liturgy, especially of the profoundly mystical sacrifice.

In the attempt to suppress the Latin language of the liturgy and to replace it by the vernacular, there was a more or less premeditated scheme to undermine Catholic unity, to loosen the bond of union with Rome, to weaken the Catholic spirit, to destroy the humility and simplicity of faith. Therefore the Apostolic See has resisted such innovations. The Church, when introducing the Roman liturgy among newly converted nations, for many centuries has permitted only the Latin language.³ She excommunicates all those who presume to declare the vernacular to be the necessary or the only permissible language for the liturgy.⁴ For, as St. Augustine remarks, to question what the universal Church practices is insolent.⁵ In all such general usages appertaining to divine worship, the Church is directed and preserved from injurious blunders by the Holy Ghost.⁶ Instead of censuring the Church on account of this practice that has endured more than a thousand years (of conducting her liturgical worship in a dead language), we should rather acknowl-

² Opponents of the Latin language of worship were, as a rule, heretics, schismatics, and rationalistic Catholics; for example, the Albigensians, the so-called Reformers, the Jansenists, Gallicans, Josephites, and the so-called Old Catholics.

³ *Concludendum, constantem firmamque disciplinam esse, ne Missae idioma mutetur, etsi mutet lingua vernacula: sed eo sermone Missa celebretur, quo celebrata est ab initio, etiamsi ea lingua exoleverit apud vulgus, ejusque peritiam viri docti dumtaxat habeant. Est autem Apostolicae Sedis in recenti populorum conversione ad fidem pro variis circumstantiis vel permittere vernaculae linguae usum in divinis officiis celebrandis, sed vere affirmari potest, S. Sedem propensiorum esse in illam partem, ut ex recens conversis ad fidem, habiliore qui sint ingenio, seligantur et latinis potius literis erudiantur, quam ut facultas concedatur, adhibendi in Missae celebratione vulgarem linguam (Benedict. XIV, *De Missa sacrific.*, II, ii, 14).*

⁴ Trid., Sess. XXII, can. 9.

⁵ St. August., *Epist.*, 54, *ad Januar.*

⁶ In things relating to divine worship, St. Thomas makes use of the prescription and custom of the Church as a conclusive argument to refute various objections. *Contra est, quod ea quae per Ecclesiam statuuntur, ab ipso Christo ordinantur. In contrarium est Ecclesiae consuetudo, quae errare non potest, utpote a Spiritu sancto instructa. (IIIa, q. 83, a. 3 et 5.)*

edge and admire her supernatural wisdom; she counts her experiences by centuries: ours we can enumerate only by days.

The Church is moved by interests most sacred to maintain the Latin as the common language of her liturgy wherever she is spread in the world and to introduce it whenever she receives new nations into her pale. This conduct on her part does not rest on a discipline of secrecy. The Church does not wish to conceal her mysteries from the faithful. It is rather her very ardent desire that her children should understand all the wealth and beauty of her divine worship; hence she obliges and admonishes her priests to unfold⁷ to the people the meaning of the celebration of the mystical sacrifice by clearly and devoutly explaining from time to time the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with all its ceremonies and prayers in the school-room and in the church, in catechetical instructions and in sermons.⁸ After the fathers of the Council of Trent had subjected to thorough examination the objection raised to the use of Latin in Church services, they unanimously declared that, although the Mass embodied a vast amount of religious instruction, they still deemed it inexpedient that the Holy Sacrifice should be everywhere (*passim*) celebrated in the vernacular; that, on the contrary, everywhere the rite authorized by the Holy Roman Church should be maintained. But in order that the sheep of Christ may not hunger and the children may not ask for bread without there being someone to break it unto them, the Council commands pastors of souls to frequently explain during the celebration of Mass some part of what has been read in the Mass, and especially on Sundays and holydays to give instruction on some mystery of this most Holy Sacrifice.⁹

The Church acts thus because she is persuaded that an unchangeable and universal language for divine worship prevents, on the one hand, much harm and danger, and, on the other hand, offers numerous advantages for her liturgical object, as well as for her ac-

⁷ Quisque vestrum expositionem Symboli et Orationis dominicæ juxta orthodoxorum Patrum traditionis penes se habeat easque atque Orationes Missarum et Epistolas, Evangelia et Canonem bene intelligat, ex quibus prædicando populum sibi commissum sedulo instruat et maxime non bene credentem. (*Pontif. Roman., Ordo ad Synodum.*)

⁸ Vehementer cupimus, ut animarum moderatores commissos sibi greges sæpe ac diligenter doceant divini hujus sacrificii dignitatem ac præstantiam uberrimosque fructus, qui in pie ac devote sacris adstantes deriventur. (*Collect. Lacens., III, 496.*)

⁹ Trid., Sess. XXII, cap. 8.

tivity and efficiency in general. These advantages are so great that the profit the people might in a certain respect and in some cases derive from understanding the language used in the divine service, bears no comparison to the advantages of a single, universal language.

2. Latin is the language almost universally employed in Catholic worship. Only the most weighty reasons will be given here for the use of Latin in the liturgy of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

a) The Latin language is consecrated by the mystic inscription attached to the cross, as well as by the usage of nearly two thousand years; hence it is most closely interwoven with the primitive Roman Catholic liturgy of the Holy Sacrifice. The inscription on the cross: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin (John 19:19 f.). These were the three principal languages of that age, and by divine dispensation they were, so to say, destined and consecrated on the cross for the liturgical use of the Church. Through the inscription on the cross they proclaimed to the whole world the dignity, power, and glory of the Redeemer, the royalty and dominion of grace which He acquired by His bloody death; at the altar these languages continue to live throughout all ages, and serve to announce and to celebrate until the end of time the death of Christ for our redemption, whereby the reign of grace is ever more widely extended and firmly established, and the kingdom of peace progresses ever more towards its happy consummation. In the first few centuries these three languages were employed predominantly, if not exclusively, in the liturgical service.

Of these three languages the Latin at an early date gained the precedence; for, being the language of the Roman world, it became, with the spread of Christianity throughout the West, also the language of the liturgy. Divine providence selected Rome as the center of the Catholic Church; from Rome the messengers of the faith were sent forth in all directions to spread the light of the Gospel. Along with the grace of Christianity and the Catholic faith with its divine worship, the western nations also received Latin as the Church language; for in that tongue the holy mysteries were always celebrated, even though the nations recently converted spoke a different language and did not understand Latin. Thus the Roman language of the mother Church became the common language of worship of all her daughters established from Rome.

In the beginning Latin was understood and spoken by the people

in many localities, but it continued to be the liturgical language even after it had been superseded by other tongues in civil life and had ceased to be the language of the people and of the country. For centuries the Latin language has ceased to be spoken in the daily life and intercourse of the world, but it will continue to live, immortalized by ecclesiastical usage, in the sanctuary of divine worship until the end of time. The most sacred reminiscences, the history and the life of the Catholic Church are intimately connected with it. In this language, from the beginning of Christianity, the sublime mystery of the Mass was celebrated, the sacramental means of grace were administered, God was glorified, men were sanctified and led to salvation. It is without doubt elevating and inspiring to offer sacrifice and pray in the very language and in the very words whose forcible yet sweet tones once resounded in the mouths of the early Christians and our forefathers in the dark depths of the catacombs, amid the splendor of the ancient basilicas, and in the sumptuous cathedrals of the Middle Ages. In the Latin language of divine worship innumerable saints, bishops and priests of all times have offered sacrifice, prayed, and sung; in it the most magnificent liturgical formulas have been composed: prayers of incomparable beauty and "marvelous hymns, which echo throughout the vaults of Catholic churches, now resounding in great exaltation or sung in soft strains of sweet joy, now weeping in sorrow, at another time lamenting in sympathetic grief for Christ." Should not this ancient Latin language of divine service, so venerable and hallowed in its origin and use, be extremely dear and precious to us, so that we would not for any price give it up or be deprived of it at the celebration of Mass?

b) The Latin language is better suited than the languages of countries for the celebration of divine worship, not only because it is very perfect, but also because, as a so-called dead language, it has the incomparable merit of being at the same time unchangeable and mysterious. The genius of the Latin language possesses great perfection: it is distinguished for its dignity and gravity, clearness and precision, for its richness and euphony. It is, therefore, often difficult to render the complete sense, and still more difficult, and sometimes utterly impossible, to bring out in a translation the beauty, the strength, the dignity, the unction, the depth, and the wealth of thought of the original Latin. To convince one's self of this, one should compare, for example, the various translations of

the Mass prayers and Sequences with the Latin text. In addition to all this, Latin is the language *Urbis et Orbis* (the language of the world), the official Church language, the language of communication between the pope and the bishops, the language of the councils and of theological science. Because of such advantages it is eminently fitted to be used the world over as the language of the Catholic Church in the celebration of her divine worship.

Latin survives no longer in the language of the common people, but in the sanctuary of the Church. As a so-called dead ¹⁰ language, it is unchangeable, whereas the living languages of people undergo continual improvement and remodeling, and are ever subject to further development. If the liturgical books were written in a living, changing language, in their necessarily frequent revision the original text of the liturgical formulas would not only lose much of its incomparable force and beauty, but often, notwithstanding strict surveillance on the part of the Church, would be disfigured and spoiled by circumlocutions, interpolations, omissions, errors, and misrepresentations. Hence it would be impossible to preserve uniformity of divine worship at different times among even one and the same people, much less throughout the world. All these inconveniences are obviated by the use of a fixed language for divine wor-

¹⁰ The Oriental churches also reject the principle that the vernacular language of a country or people should be used in the celebration of Mass. This is proved by the most decisive facts. The united and the schismatical Greeks celebrate the Holy Sacrifice in the ancient Greek, which the people do not understand. The Abyssinians and Armenians celebrate Mass respectively in the ancient Ethiopian and the ancient Armenian, understood only by the learned. The same holds good with regard to the Syrians and Egyptians, who celebrate Mass in the ancient Syriac, and also with regard to the Melchites and Georgians (Caucasian province) who at Mass make use of the ancient Greek. The Russians also use Greek, although Greek is not the language of the people, who speak only a Slavic dialect. Here we may also refer to the practice of the Church in the Old Law. Up to the time of Christ and the apostles, the ancient Hebrew was the language of the priests, the cult language, although it was no longer understood by the Jewish nation, who after the Babylonian Captivity made use of the Syro-Chaldaic idiom. It was this divine worship in the ancient Hebrew that our Lord and His disciples attended, thus actually approving a language for divine worship that was not the language of the people. Neither the Lord nor His apostles designated or censured this as an abuse. The use of a particular cult language differing from the ordinary spoken language, was, therefore, practiced for a long time in the Church of the Old Testament, and was unequivocally approved of by the conduct of our Saviour and of His apostles.

ship. The use of such an unchanging language gives to the Roman Missal inviolable character deserving of admiration and respect.

Since the Latin language is no longer used in the daily life of mankind, since it is not heard on the street or in the market place, it possesses in the eyes of the faithful a holy, venerable, mystic character. Under this aspect also it is eminently suited for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which in itself comprises many mysteries. The celebration of this mystic sacrifice fittingly calls for a language elevated, dignified, and consecrated; religious sentiment demands this, and the Latin tongue answers this requirement. Just as the silent saying of the Canon points to the unfathomable depth of the mystery of the altar and protects it against contempt and desecration, so also does the use of a sanctified cult language different from that used in daily life. The majesty of the divine worship depends, indeed, chiefly on the dignified and devout demeanor of the celebrant; but the liturgical language also contributes to the dignity of divine services. Thus the Latin language, elevated above everyday life, is a mystic veil for the adorable mysteries of the Holy Sacrifice, which here below we acknowledge only in the clear obscurity of faith, but whose clear vision shall be our portion in heaven as a recompense for our humble faith.

The use of Latin in nowise prevents the faithful from participating in the fruits of the sacrifice, notwithstanding assertions to the contrary. The demand that the Mass should everywhere be celebrated in the vernacular, is based for the most part on ignorance, or on an entire misconception of the real nature and object of the Eucharistic sacrifice. The liturgy of the Holy Sacrifice contains "much that is instructive" (*magnam eruditionem*: Council of Trent), but instruction is by no means its principal object. The altar is not a pulpit, the Mass is not primarily a doctrinal lecture or an instruction to the people. The sacrifice is essentially a liturgical action performed by the priest for propitiating and glorifying God, as well as for the salvation of the faithful. In this sacrifice the Christian people should take part, and they should in spiritual union with the celebrating priest, more with the heart than with the lips, join in prayer and sacrifice. They cannot thus participate without some understanding of the liturgical celebration; for, although devotion consists principally in an abundance of devout sentiments and therefore belongs more to the heart than to the understanding, there

is, however, no perfect devotion without the enlightenment of the understanding. But in order to acquire the requisite knowledge to join in devout union with the priest celebrating the Mass, various means are at the disposal of Catholics; the celebration of the Church service in the vernacular is not at all requisite, therefore, and would often prove of little or no avail. By means of oral teaching, with the aid of books of instruction, every Christian may obtain a sufficient knowledge of the liturgy of the Holy Sacrifice and of the prayers which the priest recites at the altar. For this purpose the mere recital of formulas of prayer in the vernacular by the celebrant would not suffice, for in many cases—for example, in large churches, at High Mass, or when several priests celebrate at the same time—it would be impossible, or at least disedifying, to pray so loud at the altar that all present could distinctly hear and understand the words of the officiating priest. Even if they did understand the words which the priest sings or recites at the altar, little would be attained for the real understanding of the sense; for the formulas of the Mass, taken principally from Holy Scripture, are often mystical and difficult to comprehend; the mere rendering of them into the vernacular would not always disclose the hidden meaning, and the best translation might often be the occasion of misunderstandings or might arouse the desire for disputation and dangerous criticism.

When man subjects knowledge or any other perfection totally to God, his devotion is thereby increased; ¹¹ therefore, a clear, comprehensive knowledge of the Holy Sacrifice and of its prayers is undoubtedly very useful. The prayers of the Church are to be preferred to all private prayers; they are the sweetest manna, the most solid nourishment of the soul. Therefore it is very desirable that the faithful should assiduously strive to increase more and more their knowledge of the precious treasure of the liturgical prayers, to the end that they may join their voices in prayer the more intimately and perfectly with the voice of the Church at the altar. The mere understanding of the prayers which the priest utters or sings does not assuredly suffice to enable us to share abundantly in the advantages and the fruits of the Sacrifice of the Mass. The perfect disposition for this sharing is a lively faith, fervent love, sincere compunction, profound reverence and deep devotion, humility of heart, a longing for mercy and help. Such devout sentiments may

¹¹ S. Thom., *Ila Ilae*, q. 82, a. 3 ad 3.

exist independently of the knowledge of the particular Mass prayers, and are produced by the holy and mysterious sacrifice, which, having a varied and symbolical character, possesses a significant and eloquent language of its own. This language can be well understood only by him who, by previous instruction, has learned the purpose and meaning of the ceremonies of the Church. Latin is, therefore, no hindrance to the Catholic Christian, preventing him from deriving from the liturgy of the Holy Sacrifice life, light, and warmth, in order to nourish his piety and devotion. It serves rather to awaken a holy awe and reverence in his heart in the presence of the obscure mysteries of the divine sacrifice.

c) As a universal language of worship, Latin is an admirable means, not only of presenting, but also of preserving and promoting, the unity and harmony of the Church in divine worship, in faith, and in conduct.

a) The unity of the liturgy in all times and places can be perfectly maintained only if it is always and everywhere celebrated in the same language. By the introduction of the various national languages, the uniformity and harmony of Catholic worship would be imperiled and, in a measure, rendered impossible. How beautiful and sublime is that uniform celebration of the Holy Sacrifice in the Catholic Church from the rising to the setting of the sun! Thus every priest is enabled to celebrate Mass anywhere in the whole world, no matter what country he visits. And "how consoling it is for a devout Catholic, while dwelling in a foreign land in the midst of strangers, hearing no sounds but those of an unknown tongue, to be able at least, when assisting at the celebration of divine service, to hear again the words of a language which, as the accents of a second mother tongue, he has listened to from childhood in his native country? He feels then as though he were in a spiritual home, in a universal fatherland of the faith, and for the moment he forgets that he is dwelling in a strange place."¹² Thus on our altars are said "the same prayers in the same language all around the globe. When the sun rises and the morning flush shows itself on the mountain tops, we awaken, and the celebration of Mass begins with these same prayers and continues until noon. Then other countries have their morning and take up the same sacrifice with the same prayers. And when in the evening the sun sinks beneath the horizon, it rises in

¹² Martin, *Das christliche Leben*, p. 286.

another part of the globe, and the same sacrifice is there repeated with its identical prayers.”¹³

b) The unity of the liturgical language and of the divine worship in the Church is, therefore, a very efficient means for preserving the integrity of our faith.¹⁴ The liturgy is, indeed, the main channel through which dogmatic tradition is transmitted; dogma is the root of all ecclesiastical life: of discipline and of worship. Worship is developed from the doctrines of faith; in the liturgical prayers, in the rites and ceremonies of the Church, the truths of Catholic faith find their expression, and can be established and proved therefrom.¹⁵ But the more fixed and inviolable the liturgical formula of prayer is, the better it is adapted to preserve intact and transmit unimpaired the original deposit of faith. Therefore all the primitive liturgies proclaim and prove that our faith is in perfect harmony with that of the first ages of the Church.

c) Uniformity of liturgical language and the consequent uniformity of divine worship form, finally, a strong bond for uniting indissolubly the churches dispersed all over the world, among themselves and with their common center, the Roman Church, the mother church of them all. The bond of a universal language of worship which embraces the head and the members of the Church, supports and promotes everywhere the unity and the common life and operation of the Church. History confirms this; for it shows that the introduction of national languages into the liturgy fre-

¹³ Eberhard, *Kanzelvorträge*, I, 372.

¹⁴ *Cum legem credendi statuat lex supplicandi*, proindeque libri liturgici non minus doctrinae fontes sint quam pietatis, summopere optandum est, ut, quemadmodum per fidei unitatem miro splendore lucet Ecclesia, ita per ritus et precum uniformitatem omnium oculis effulgeat. Ideoque eandem ac Ecclesia Romana, omnium Ecclesiarum magistra materque, fidem habentes, eandem disciplinam et eundem officii divini modum habeamus. (Concil. prov. Aquens. [1850], tit. XI, chap. 2; *Collect. Lacens.*, IV, 1004.)

¹⁵ Hence the theological axiom: *Legem credendi lex statuit supplicandi*, regarding which De la Hogue (*Tract. de Eccles.*, chap. 5, q. 1) writes: Merito quidem urgetur ad permulta dogmata confirmanda. Sic ex exorcismis supra baptizandos, confirmatur peccati originalis dogma; ex doxologia, qua terminantur omnes psalmi, doctrina mysterii Trinitatis; ex ritu externo adorationis Eucharistiae exhibito realis Christi praesentia; ex omnibus orationibus necessitas gratiae ad bonum operandum; ex precibus, quae ab antiquioribus saeculis pro defunctis funduntur, dogma purgatorii. In his et similibus causis, ubi ex mente Ecclesiae et publico omnium fidelium sensu, tam notoria est arctissima, quae inter universalem praxim Ecclesiae et dogma reperitur connexio, non minus vere quam energice dicitur: *Lex orandi, lex credendi*.

quently gave rise to heresy and schism. An outstanding example is the eastern nations, which, for the most part, have a ritual of their own and in the liturgy make use of a language different from the Latin.

While, therefore, the use of the various national languages for divine service is peculiar to sects and national churches, the use of the Latin as the common language for divine worship harmonizes perfectly with the essence, the object, and the workings of the Catholic Church. In her bosom we behold how the Holy Ghost has "gathered all the nations from out of the babel of tongues into the unity of faith." Being formed "of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues" (Apoc. 7:9), she constitutes but one family of God, one kingdom of Christ, a kingdom not of this world but exalted above every nation of the earth. Therefore it is proper that the Church, when celebrating divine worship, when offering the divine sacrifice, should make use, not of the language of some one country or nation, but of a language that is universal, consecrated, and sanctified. Thus at the altar it is a figure of the heavenly Jerusalem, where all the angels and saints in unison (*una voce*) sing their "Holy, holy, holy" and alleluja.

CHAPTER XVII

THE ROMAN RITE

JESUS CHRIST Himself offered the first Eucharistic sacrifice in the supper room of Jerusalem. At the same time He ordered the celebration of this sacrifice in His church for all times, when He gave to the apostles and their successors in the priestly office the command and the power to do the same as He had done. After the example and by the order of Christ, the apostles celebrated everywhere on their missionary journeys the Eucharistic sacrifice. In all probability they did not celebrate it before Pentecost, but they most likely did so on that important day, when the Holy Ghost descended on the infant Church; this view is supported by the fact that the Holy Ghost forever performs the mystery of the consecration as He once did the mystery of the Incarnation. Christ's example was the guide for the apostles; at the celebration of the sacrifice they at first did only what Christ had done. But according to His directions and under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they added to the essential act of sacrifice various prayers and observances, according to circumstances of time and place, in order to celebrate the holy mysteries as worthily and as edifyingly as possible.

Those constituent portions of the sacrificial rite which are found in all the ancient liturgies, certainly have their origin from apostolic times and tradition; such as the preparatory prayers, the readings from Holy Scripture, the psalms, the offering of bread and of wine mixed with water, the supplications for the living and the dead, the Offertory prayers and the words added to those of the consecration, the reference to the death and resurrection of Christ, the Lord's Prayer, the sign of the cross, the kiss of peace, the fraction and distribution of the host, the thanksgiving after Communion. The apostles, who had been instructed by the Lord Himself in the mysteries of the kingdom of God and were filled with the Holy Ghost,

assuredly observed a fixed order in the daily celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, although they did not establish and bequeath a written liturgy.¹

The first offering of the Holy Sacrifice by our Lord was the rule and the model for the apostles; and the essential features of the sacrificial rite, introduced and enlarged upon by the apostles, were preserved with fidelity and reverence in the churches founded by them and their successors. But in the course of time, as it was deemed necessary or expedient, the rite was gradually developed, enriched, and perfected, each in a different manner, in the various churches of the East and the West. "The Lord never ceases to be present to His beloved spouse, the Church, never fails to be at her side in her office of teaching and to accompany her in her operation with His blessing," consequently He had the power to bequeath to the shepherds of the Church the right to give to the sacrifice instituted by Himself the wisest and most natural development and the most perfect form, that is, to give it due liturgical form and solemnity.

1. Thus there originated in different places, at different times, and among different nations also different liturgies, or ecclesiastical formulas for the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice. In the essential points of the sacrifice, all these various rites of the Mass agree; but in the rest they all differ, more or less, both in substance and in arrangement.² With regard to their origin and their interrelation-

¹ Probst, Bickell, Funke, and others state that the so-called Clementine Liturgy (the eighth book of the *Apostolic Constitutions*) with some slight peculiarities was used in the entire Church, from the days of the Apostles until the fourth century: not until this century did the various liturgies of the eastern and western Churches proceed by reform from this one primitive liturgy. Historic as well as intrinsic reasons rather oppose than support this view. Cf. Krazer, sect. 1, chaps. 1-4; Thalhofer, *Liturgik*, I, 334 ff.

² In celebrando sacrosancto Missae sacrificio omnes Orientis et Occidentis Ecclesiae modum quemdam in summa communem ab initio habuere; singulae tamen ritus aliquos singulares ac diversos. Haec omnibus semper communia: nempe lectiones sacrarum Scripturarum initio Liturgiae; psalmorum aliorumque canticorum recitatio; oblatio panis et vini aqua mixti; consecratio utriusque verbis Christi Domini cum benedictione ac signo crucis a sacerdote facta; oratio Dominica et sacra communio cum gratiarum actione. At designatio certarum ex Scriptura lectionum; psalmorum aliarumque precum numerus et definitio; ministrorum ritus praeter eos, qui sunt ex institutione divina, haec omnia pro locis ac temporibus varia exstiterunt (Mabillon, *De Liturg. Gallic.*, I, chap. 2). Non errare illos reputamus, qui rituum et ceremoniarum varietatem inter ipsa rerum christianarum primordia jam esse natam suspicantur. Fieri enim potuit, ut Apostoli gravissimis de causis in diversis partibus

ship, they may be divided into different classes; in general they are divided into two main groups, the liturgies of the East and the liturgies of the West. This division is well grounded, for the Eastern liturgies are characteristically distinguished from those of the West, not only by reason of their country and language, but also because of their spirit, contents, and form. The liturgies of the East have a more stable, unchangeable character, since the same divine praises, the same petitions and thanksgivings are nearly always repeated; they present very little variety in the daily celebrations of the ecclesiastical year. The liturgies of the West, on the contrary, exhibit a greater variety, fresh life, and constant progress, for the celebration of the ecclesiastical feasts and seasons is most intimately connected and interwoven with the Holy Sacrifice. Whereas the Oriental liturgies, for the most part, contain more lengthy prayers, a greater abundance of symbolical customs and acts, the Western, and especially the Roman, rites are marked by a significant brevity, as well as by a dignified simplicity and a marvelous sublimity in word and action.

While the liturgies of the East are very numerous, there are but few in the West. The principal ones are the Mozarabic, the ancient Gallican, the Ambrosian,³ and Roman liturgies. The latter

et provinciis pro captu et ingenio populorum diversas rogarent leges, diversas ordinarent ceremonias (Krazer, sect. I, chap. 1, § 2).

³ The Mozarabic liturgy is also called the Hispano-Gallican, Isidorian, and Toledan. The expression Mozarabic probably denotes that this was the liturgy of the Christians living in Spain under Arab power and mingling with the Arabs. It bears much resemblance to the ancient Gallican liturgy, and appears to have originated from it. Probably it was in use from the beginning among the Christians in Spain and gradually gave place to the Roman liturgy, so that at the close of the fifteenth century at Toledo alone, and that only in six churches of the city, was the Mozarabic rite celebrated on great feasts. Cardinal Ximenes (d. 1517) founded a college of thirteen priests at Toledo, who were obliged daily to celebrate according to the Mozarabic rite. In the beautiful Corpus Christi chapel, which Ximenes built in the Cathedral of Toledo, the Divine Office is still daily recited and Mass celebrated according to the Mozarabic rite. Besides this, in two parish churches in Toledo, that of St. Mark and that of SS. Justa and Rufina, the Holy Sacrifice is celebrated according to the Mozarabic liturgy, but only on Sundays and feast days. Also at Salamanca there is in the cathedral a chapel, St. Salvador's, in which the priest on sixteen stated days of the year has to celebrate Mass in the Mozarabic rite. The ancient Gallican rite was observed in Gaul until the end of the eighth century, when it was replaced by the Roman. The ancient Gallican liturgy, now nowhere in use, is similar to the Mozarabic. Both have the same Introit, called in the Mozarabic liturgy *officium*, in the ancient Gal-

has at all times had the precedence and is now found in all parts of the world. Already Pope Innocent I (402-17), in writing about matters of ritual to Decentius, bishop of Gubbio, traces the origin of the Roman liturgy to the Prince of the Apostles: "Who does not know," he writes, "that what has been handed down by Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, to the Roman Church is still observed unto this day and must be observed by all?" St. Peter, consequently, must be regarded (in a more general sense) as the founder of the Roman liturgy, for the method of celebration followed and introduced by him⁴ was undoubtedly the essential and permanent foundation for its later development and form. "This liturgy, as yet a tender plant, was brought by St. Peter, the Prince of the Church,

lican antiphona ad praelegendum. Then follows the Gloria, which in the Gallican liturgy is often replaced by the Benedictus, for this reason the oration that follows it is called *collectio post prophetiam*, whereas in the Mozarabic it is *collectio post Gloria*. Both have the salutation: *Dominus sit semper vobiscum*. After the three lessons and the Offertory there follow in both liturgies seven prayers: (a) The *Oratio missa*, so called because it is the first in the actual Mass, that is, in the Mass of the faithful (Gall. *praefatio ad missam*); (b) the *alia oratio* (Gall. *collectio*); (c) the *Oratio post nomina*, that is, after the reading of the diptychs; (d) the *Oratio ad pacem*, that is, before the kiss of peace; (e) the *Inlatio* (Gall. *contestatio vel immolatio* = Preface); (f) the prayer *post pridie* (Gall. *post mysterium*), that is, after the Elevation; (g) the prayer *post orationem dominicam*. Both have the blessing before the Communion. The Mozarabic rite has an *elevatio hostiae* at the Creed, the Pater noster with responsories after each petition, the fraction of the host in nine specially named parts.

The Ambrosian rite (so called because St. Ambrose enriched and completed it) is still used in Milan and harmonizes with the Roman in the essential parts, and is to be regarded as its daughter or sister. The connection between the changeable and unchangeable constituent parts are the same in both; the same structure of prayers, the same brevity, vigor, and precision, the same wealth of thought are found in both. The variations are insignificant; thus, for example, the succession of the parts is somewhat changed in the Ambrosian rite, in that the Credo comes after the Offertory, the Pater noster is recited after the fraction of the host, and the washing of the hands immediately precedes the Consecration; the regulation of the liturgical colors is also somewhat different. Cf. *Liturgia Mozarabica* (Migne, vol. LXXXV); Mabillon, *De Liturgia Gallic.* (Migne, vol. LXXII).

⁴ *Istum ordinem ab apostolis et ab apostolicis viris traditum Romana tenet ecclesia et per totum paene Occidentem omnes ecclesiae eandem traditionem servant* (Raban. Maur., *De clericor. institut.*, I, chap. 33). *Inter Occidentis Liturgias potissimum sibi locum vindicat Romana, quam saltem quoad praecipuas partes a Petro Apostolorum principe processisse constans et perpetua Ecclesiae Romanae est traditio. Id Decentio Eugubino Innocentius I, id Pro futuro Braccarense episcopo Vigilius in suis contestantur epistolis* (Krazer, sect. II, chap. 2, § 25).

into the garden of the Roman Church, where by his nursing care and that of his successors, assisted by the Holy Ghost, it has grown to a large tree, and although the trunk has long ago attained its full growth, it nevertheless shoots forth in every century new branches and new blossoms" (Kössing).

The most ancient written inventories of the Roman liturgy we possess are in three Sacramentaries, which bear the names of Pope Leo I (440–61), Gelasius I (492–96), and Gregory I (590–604).⁵ These Sacramentaries contain a precious treasure of liturgical traditions which date from the most ancient period of the Roman Church. The above-named popes faithfully preserved the ancient formulas and at the same time enriched and perfected them with additions suitable to the times. Our missal is principally derived from the Sacramentary of St. Gregory the Great. Under him the Canon of the Mass received its last addition. The rest of the constituent parts of the Roman liturgy of the Mass (Introit, Kyrie, Gloria, Collect, Epistle, Gradual, Gospel, Secreta, Preface, Pater Noster, Communion, and Postcommunion) date back at least to the fifth, or even the fourth, century. Toward the close of the Middle Ages the missals were much disfigured by changes and unsuitable additions, so that there was urgent need of a reform. This was accomplished under the popes Pius V (1566–72), Clement VIII (1592–1605), and Ur-

⁵ *Sacramentarium* (= *liber sacramentorum vel mysteriorum*, the book for the celebration of the mysteries) was in the West until far into the Middle Ages the name of the liturgical book containing the prayers to be recited only by the priest in the celebration of Mass and in the administration of the sacraments and sacramentals, for example, the orations and Prefaces with the Canon, the rite of administering baptism and holy orders, and the blessing of the holy oils. The parts to be sung by the choir (at the Introit, after the Epistle, at the Offertory, and at the Communion) were in another book, which was called in early times *Antiphonarium*, and later *Graduale*. The complete list of the readings from the Bible was called *Comes* (companion), that is, guide for the liturgical Scripture lessons for the whole ecclesiastical year. The books containing the whole text according to the order of the *Comes*, not merely their first words, were called Lectionaries or Plenaries; these were used until the seventh century. These Lectionaries were often divided into two books, the *Epistolarium* and the *Evangelarium*. Since the tenth century the parts for reading and singing were combined with the contents of the Sacramentaries, to form the complete missal (*Missale plenum vel plenarium*), which did not come into exclusive and general use until the thirteenth century. The rubrics were given in the so-called *Ordines Romani*, from which they afterward were taken up into the liturgical books. Cf. Zaccaria, *Biblioth. ritual.*, I, 26 ff.; Thalhofer, *Liturgik*, I, 33 ff.

ban VIII (1623-44), who carefully revised and corrected the missal.⁶ Thus the Gregorian rite was, as far as possible, restored to its original purity, simplicity, and dignity, while at the same time the desired unity of divine worship was brought about.

2. Thus with heavenly wisdom the Church has in the course of time set the jewel of the Holy Sacrifice in the most magnificent manner for the praise of God and the edification of the faithful, by surrounding it with the precious decorations of holy prayers, hymns, lessons, and ceremonies.⁷ She has enveloped the celebration of the adorable sacrifice in a mystic veil, in order to fill the hearts and minds of the faithful with religious awe and profound reverence, and to urge them to earnest, pious meditation. The beauty, worth, and perfection of the Roman liturgy of the Mass are universally acknowledged and admired. Father Faber styles the Church's rite of the Holy Sacrifice "the most beautiful thing this side of heaven." The Church's prayers of the liturgy are superior to all others.

Nor, in fact, can any human genius hope to attain their beauty and sublimity. In these two qualities, the Mass differs from all other offices in a remarkable manner. It has not merely flights of eloquence and poetry strikingly displayed in particular prayers, but it is sustained throughout in the higher sphere, to which its divine purpose naturally raises it. If we

⁶ St. Pope Pius V., whom the Church honors as an instrument chosen by God *ad conterendos Ecclesiae hostes et ad divinum cultum reparandum*, in the bull of July 14, 1570, forbade anyone to add or omit or change anything in the missal that had recently been published by him. At the same time he suppressed all other Missals; those only might be retained which had been in use for more than two hundred years. Thus, for example, the Carmelites, Carthusians, and Dominicans retained their ancient rite, and also the Mozarabic and Milan liturgies have remained in use in some churches until this day.

⁷ *Olim non tanto exterioris apparatu decoris Missarum solemnia celebrabantur, nec ab uno quolibet haec omnis religiosi obsequii gloria consummata et perpolita est. Pontifices quippe sacri, splendida Romanae sedis luminaria, sicut diversis temporibus affulserunt, ita paulatim studii sui claritate, venustatem hujus salutaris officii perfecerunt. Et sicut traditum a Domino per Moysen sacrificii veteris ordinem praecipue David et Salomon (III Kings, chap. 7) sacerdotum et levitarum ministerio (I Par., chap. 23), cantorum multiplici numero, psalmorem divinorum tripudio, templi vel altaris illustri gloria, sacrorumque multitudine vasorum splendidius amplificaverunt, sic traditum a Domino mirabilem novi sacrificii ritum per primos Apostolos sancta Romana Ecclesia suscipiens, religiosa fide amplexata est, fideli cura conservavit, diligenti apparatu exornavit. . . . Studiosa divinae legis Ecclesia Romana paulatim protulit de thesauro suo nova pietatis monumenta, et quoddam velut ex auro lapidibusque pretiosis religiosi officii sancto sacrificio fabrefecit diadema (Rupert. Tuitiens., *De divin. offic.*, II, chap. 21).*

examine each prayer separately, it is perfect; perfect in construction, perfect in thought, and perfect in expression. If we consider the manner in which they are brought together, we are struck with the brevity of each, with the sudden but beautiful transitions, and the almost stanza-like effect with which they succeed one another, forming a lyrical composition of surpassing beauty. If we take the entire service, as a whole, it is constructed with the most admirable symmetry, proportioned in its parts with perfect judgment, and so exquisitely arranged, as to excite and preserve an unbroken interest in the sacred action. No doubt, to give full force and value to this sacred rite, its entire ceremonial is to be considered. The assistants, with their noble vestments, the chant, the incense, the more varied ceremonies which belong to a Solemn Mass, are all calculated to increase veneration and admiration. But still, the essential beauties remain, whether the holy rite be performed under the golden vault of St. Peter's, with all the pomp and circumstance befitting its celebration by the sovereign pontiff, or in a wretched wigwam, erected in haste by some poor savages for their missionary.⁸

That overruling influence of the Spirit of God, which directs even in secondary matters the affairs of the visible Church, nowhere else appears so marked and evident as in the arrangement of the rite of the Mass, which, although only monumental, in its present state forms such a beautiful, perfect whole, indeed a splendid work, that it excites the admiration of every reflecting mind. Even the bitterest adversaries of the Church do not deny it; unprejudiced, aesthetic judges of good taste admit that even from their own standpoint the Mass is to be classed as one of the greatest masterpieces ever composed. Thus the momentous sacrifice is encompassed with magnificent ceremonies. It is our duty to study, to penetrate more and more into their meaning, and to expound what we have learned to the people according to their capacity (Oswald).

For centuries the Roman liturgy has been a complete masterpiece of art, wonderful in the harmony and union of its parts. The most sacred and venerable prayers and chants, breathing religious fervor and tenderness, follow most ingeniously upon one another, and together with the most appropriate and significant ceremonies, form a beautiful whole, serving as a protecting garment and a worthy ornament for the divine mystery of the Holy Sacrifice. Their language cannot be surpassed,⁹ for it is biblical, simple, dignified, full of

⁸ Wiseman, "On Prayer and Prayer-Books," *Essays*, II, 197 f.

⁹ What Bossuet says of the Christian language in general applies in the highest degree to the liturgical language: "It is not addressed to the senses, but to

the spirit of faith, humility, and devotion, and penetrated with the perfume of piety and holiness.

3. This glorious rite of the Sacrifice of the Mass is an unfailing mine of religious instruction and edification; it is like an immensely rich mine, where always new veins of gold are disclosed to the searching look. Even if we were to devote our entire life to considering in our meditations and prayers the mystical liturgy of the Mass, there would still remain for our heart and mind new treasures; still new riches would reveal themselves and new beauties would be disclosed. And yet, though it is so deep as to prove inexhaustible to even the greatest contemplative saint, it is, at the same time, so clear and easy of comprehension that the most artless child as well as the most simple of the faithful finds therein light, strength, and nourishment for his religious life. But is this precious liturgical treasure valued and turned to good account, as it deserves to be, by the ministers of the Church? In other words, do they study it for their own sanctification and make it available to the faithful in the school, in catechetical instructions, and in sermons? ¹⁰ "The liturgy is a continual mysterious sermon, but it is by the mouth of the priest that the laity must learn to understand its language. Without instruction in the liturgy the participation of the faithful in the functions of divine worship will in many instances be only external and mechanical. The mighty stream of the ecclesiastical year flows by; the faithful stand on its bank and look on, and of its waters they receive but a few drops which the waves of themselves cast upon the shore" (Amberger).

the soul, whose food it is" (Origen., *In Matt.*, n. 85). "Like the body of Jesus Christ, who made Himself the bread of our souls, it must not be dazzling, for His word must participate in the humility of His flesh, and as in His flesh lowliness is mingled with greatness, so in it everything is grand and everything is lowly, everything is rich and everything is poor" (Bossuet, *Panégyrique de Saint Paul*).

¹⁰ *Sacrorum rituum leges, quae rubricarum nomine censentur, presbyteri accurate addiscant, apprimeque calleant ac attentissime servent; nec illos commentarios, qui de istis sacris ritibus a piis et eruditis viris conscripti sunt, legere omittant, dictasque ceremonias frequenter inter Missarum celebrationem exponere, ut earum sanctitas et significatio ab omnibus agnoscantur* (*Collect. Lacens.*, III, 644). There are few priests, even among those who exercise the sacred ministry, who have nothing to reproach themselves with in this matter. This is the cause of the ignorance among the people of one of the most interesting parts of the Catholic worship, and of the disgust or indifference of many for the mysteries or sacraments of our holy religion (Gousset, *Théol. mor.*, II, 28).

In order to discover the true and full meaning of the rite of the Mass, we must view it from the proper standpoint and be guided by those correct maxims which give the sense of the liturgical words and actions. Certainly that unecclesiastical view is to be rejected which, while discarding the higher and mystical sense, seeks to explain the liturgy in a mere natural or historic manner by trying to ascribe all ceremonies exclusively to reasons of necessity, expediency, and propriety. Yet, on the other hand, in the mystical explanation of the liturgy the opposite mistake is to be avoided, which consists in giving arbitrary explanations without regard to the intentions of the Church, and in indulging in silly trifles and affected subtleties.¹¹ The Church herself applies symbolical meanings in her liturgy; therefore in explaining the liturgy we must, above all things, attend to what the Church would express by her ceremonies.¹²

Since the nature of man is such that he cannot without external means be raised easily to meditation on divine things, holy mother Church has instituted certain rites, namely, that some things in the Mass be pronounced in a low tone and others in a louder tone. She has likewise, in accordance with apostolic discipline and tradition, made use of ceremonies, such as mystical blessings, lights, incense, vestments, and many other things of this kind, whereby both the majesty of so great a sacrifice might be emphasized and the minds of the faithful excited by those visible signs of religion and piety to the contemplation of those most sublime things which are hidden in this sacrifice.¹³

The ceremonies of the liturgy of the Mass, accordingly, have in general for their purpose a twofold object: in the first place they are intended to enhance and adorn the celebration of Mass, to serve

¹¹ Blessed J. M. Thomasius of the Order of the Theatines (d. January 1, 1713), writes on this subject (*Op.*, VII, 185): "Concerning the mystical or moral senses of the Mass we should be somewhat sparing, because many things are intended to signify something, . . . whereas many others, rather the most part, are instituted, not to signify anything in particular, but from decorum, for good order and religious propriety, . . . and to look for a mystical and spiritual sense in every little thing would not be in accordance with the intentions of those who instituted it."

¹² *Sunt quidem quam plurimae caeremoniae et usu et origine mysticae. Concedo tamen, et alias esse, quae exordium et institutionem suam necessitati, commodo et decoro debent. Imo nec diffiteor, quamplures auctores nimio indoctae pietatis zelo adductos extra justis tramites vagatos fuisse, dum sibi mysteria, parabolas, symbola iis in caeremoniis fabricarunt, quibus certe talia adjungere Ecclesia numquam in mente habuit (Languet, *loc. cit.*, § 2).*

¹³ *Trid.*, Sess. XXII, cap. 5.

for the honor and the worship of God; they are also designed as a means to place before the eyes of the faithful in a lively manner the sublimity, holiness, and efficacy of the sacrifice, that the faithful, being thereby moved to sentiments of devotion, may be better disposed in heart to glorify God and to obtain grace. Since the honor of God and the sanctification of man invariably constitute the principal object of all liturgical acts, this fact must be always kept in the foreground in explaining them.¹⁴ The different ceremonies may, according to their object and signification, be more succinctly grouped into three classes.¹⁵

a) All the ceremonies of Mass conduce to the order, beauty, and adornment of divine worship. Whereas many ceremonies have a higher mystical meaning, others are prescribed merely to invest the celebration of divine worship with dignity and reverence. The latter ceremonies are based merely on a just regard for propriety and decorum. To this class belong, for example, the prescriptions that the priest approach the altar with downcast eyes and measured step; that he place the left hand on his breast when making the sign of the cross; that he turn toward the faithful when greeting or blessing them.¹⁶

b) Most of the ceremonies are outward forms of worship, outward expression of interior emotions and religious thoughts and sentiments.¹⁷ Among these are the different positions and movements of the body, for example, the bending of the knee, the striking of the breast, the bowing of the body and the head, the raising

¹⁴ *Finis omnium caeremoniarum et verborum, quae ab Ecclesia (Apostolis eorumque successoribus) instituta sunt in administratione sacramentorum et nominatim sacrificii eucharistici, potissimum duplex est; proxime ut res ipsa essentialis quae agitur, distinctius declarata velut ob oculos ponatur atque convenienti majestate et externo cultu condecoretur, consequentur deinde ut excitetur et foveatur congruentior dispositio ac devotio in animis fidelium ad cultum Deo exhibendum et majorem fructum percipiendum (Cardin. Franzelin, *De Sacramento Eucharistiae*, thes. VII).*

¹⁵ Cf. Suarez, disp. LXXXIV, sect. 1.

¹⁶ *Primo quaedam ex caeremoniis Missae inductae sunt solum, ut hoc sacrum mysterium debita honestate, modestia et reverentia peragatur; unde constat, hujusmodi caeremonias non solum convenientes, sed moraliter etiam esse necessarias et ideo summa prudentia esse ab Ecclesia institutas (Suarez, *loc. cit.*, n. 2).*

¹⁷ *Secundo sunt aliae caeremoniae institutae per se primo propter exteriores actus laetiae exercendos, quae etiam convenientissime institutae sunt (Suarez, *loc. cit.*, n. 3).*

up and joining of the hands. Such acts are outward signs which express, accompany, and awaken devout sentiments of the heart; for instance, sentiments of adoration, humility, desire, sorrow, and confidence.

They who pray, bend the knee, raise the hands, or prostrate themselves to the ground, thereby expressing outwardly what they feel inwardly. Their invisible will and the intention of their heart is indeed known to God, and their interior sentiments need not be made known to Him by such signs; but by their means we are to pray and sigh more humbly and more ardently. And although these bodily motions are made through a previous impulse of the heart, nevertheless, the emotion of the heart is, I know not how, again increased by these exterior signs which it had produced, and the interior devotion, which preceded them, grows more intense through the exterior devotion which it had brought forth.¹⁸

c) A third group of ceremonies is prescribed especially because of their symbolical signification; these are destined primarily to indicate the mysteries of Christian faith and life.¹⁹ To this class, for example, belong the mixing of wine and water, the washing of the hands at the Offertory, the placing of the hands over the oblation before the Consecration, the breaking of the host and the dropping of a small particle of it into the chalice, the frequent making of the sign of the cross, the use of lights and incense.

Accordingly, in the intention of the Church the ceremonies of the liturgy serve not merely for the proper celebration of the sacrifice, but also for the exterior honor of God, of the Eucharistic Saviour, of the saints, of relics and pictures, as well as for the symbolical expression of the different mysteries. These different objects do not exclude one another, but are often united together in one

¹⁸ S. August., *De cura pro mortuis gerenda*, chap. 5, n. 7. Exercentur ab hominibus quaedam sensibilia opera, non quibus Deum excitent, sed quibus seipsos provocent in divina, sicut prostrationes, genuflexiones, vocales clamores et cantus, quae non fiunt, quasi Deus his indigeat, quia omnia novit et cuius voluntas est immutabilis et qui affectum mentis et etiam motum corporis non propter se acceptat, sed propter nos facimus, ut per haec sensibilia opera intentio nostra dirigatur in Deum et affectio ascendatur; simul etiam per hoc Deum profiteamur animae et corporis auctorem, cui et spiritualia et corporalia obsequia exhibemus (S. Thom., *Contra gent.*, III, chap. 119).

¹⁹ Tertio sunt aliae caeremoniae, quae specialiter sunt propter significationem (moralem vel mysticam) institutae, non quod non pertineat etiam ad ornatum, neque quod cultum etiam aliquem non contineant, sed quod principaliter propter significationem ordinatae sint (Suarez, *loc. cit.*, n. 4).

and the same liturgical act. Along with the natural reason and object of a ceremony, the Church not unfrequently combines a higher, mystical sense.²⁰ Finally, we must not overlook the sacramental character of the ceremonies, which consists in this, that they in their own way produce spiritual effects and obtain divine grace.

4. Catholic ceremonies, therefore, are not the relics of heathen or Jewish customs, but apostolic and ecclesiastical ordinances, forms of worship created and pervaded by a higher spirit. Consequently the priest should highly esteem them and perform them with punctuality and dignity. St. Theresa was ready to sacrifice her life for even the least ceremony of the Church. In the service of the Almighty, in the most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, even the smallest thing has its meaning and importance; therefore the Church has so exactly and minutely regulated by her rubrics the entire deportment of the priest at the altar. Whoever conscientiously complies with these ecclesiastical regulations has the special merit of practicing the virtue of obedience in all his actions and movements when celebrating. To all applies the admonition of the Apostle: "Glorify and bear God in your body" (I Cor. 6:20).

A modest demeanor and becoming exterior, regulated according to the requirements of reason and faith, honors God, edifies our neighbor, and promotes our own spiritual life. Therefore the priest at the altar should, above all, not neglect his exterior appearance and actions. In his whole deportment should be reflected his faith, his reverence, his recollection of mind, his heartfelt devotion.²¹ The Council of Trent gives us this admonition:

What great care is to be taken that the holy sacrifice of the Mass be celebrated with all religious devotion and reverence, each one may easily

²⁰ In the ceremonies, even in those which seem the least important, there is nothing that has not its reason, and often a very deep meaning. Christian symbolism is something admirable for those who are able to understand it. It is God with His infinite perfections and His grandeurs, it is the Church with her doctrines and her history made evident to the eyes of our infirmity (Mgr. Guibert, *Lettre à son clergé sur les études ecclésiastiques*, October 2, 1851).

²¹ Tanta gravitate, tanto religionis cultu [sacerdotes] Missae sacrificium celebrent, ut per visibilem ministri pietatem invisibilia aeterni sacerdotis mysteria conspiciantur. Nihil igitur obiter in hac divina actione, nihil perfunctorie, nihil praecipitanter, nihil inconditis gestibus, omnia vero graviter, omnia secundum ordinem fiant, juxta receptos et approbatos Ecclesiae ritus, qui vel in minimis sine peccato negligi, omitti vel mutari haud possunt (Concil. prov. Quebec. II [1854]).

conceive who considers that in the sacred writings he is called accursed who does the work of God negligently.²² And since we must confess that no other work can be performed by the faithful that is so holy and divine as this awe-inspiring mystery, wherein that life-giving victim by which we are reconciled to the Father is daily immolated on the altar by priests, it is also sufficiently clear that all effort and attention must be directed to the end that it be performed with the greatest possible interior cleanness and purity of heart and exterior evidence of devotion and piety.²³

The priest at the altar should render to God in the name of the Church a homage of the highest veneration: in the first place, interiorly by acts of faith, hope, love, humility, contrition, praise, thanksgiving, and petition; then also exteriorly by bows and genuflections, by striking his breast, raising his hands and eyes, kissing the altar, and many other ceremonies.²⁴ All these acts should be performed with reverence and dignity in the presence of God and His holy angels, otherwise they become occasions of distraction, of scandal, and of all manner of irreverence.²⁵

From historical and, at the same time, from objective reasons, the

²² *Ex consideratione infinitae bonitatis, majestatis et excellentiae Dei, ex intuitione quoque totius miseriae, vilitatis, culpae ac indigentiae nostrae exhibeamus nos Deo in omni suo obsequio, in oratione praesertim et psalmodia, maxime vero in celebratione cum omni ac profundissima humilitate, compunctione, reverentia, attentione, custodia ac fervore, et ante horarum, orationum et psalmodiae inceptionem recolligamus cor nostrum et simplicemus ac stabiliamus illud in Deo, ejus incircumscripibilem dignitatem, praesentiam, misericordiam justitiamque pensando, proprias quoque misérias et offensas efficaciter ponderando et aggravando, et ita singula verba sacra quasi ex proprio affectu cum attentione et gustu interno distincte pronuntiemus (Dion. Carthus., *De laude vitae solitariae*, a. 21).*

²³ *Sess. XXII, Decret. de observandis et evitandis in celebr. Miss.*

²⁴ *Cogitemus nos sub conspectu Dei stare. Placendum est divinis oculis et habitu corporis et modo vocis (S. Cyprian., *De Orat. domin.*, chap. 3). Quia ex duplici natura compositi sumus, intellectuali sc. et sensibili, duplicem adorationem Deo offerimus: sc. spiritualem, quae consistit in interiori mentis devotione, et corporalem, quae consistit in exteriori corporis humiliatione. Et quia in omnibus actibus latriae id quod est exterius, refertur ad id quod est interius, sicut ad principalius, ideo ipsa exterior adoratio fit propter interioriorem, ut videlicet per signa humilitatis, quae corporaliter exhibemus, excitetur noster affectus ad subjiciendum se Deo, quia connaturale est nobis, ut per sensibilia ad intelligibilia procedamus (S. Thom., *IIa IIae*, q. 84, a. 2).*

²⁵ *Presbyter = senior, non propter senectutem, sed propter dignitatem, honorem et sapientiam, quia quicumque presbyter est, sapiens esse debet, ut intelligat ea quae legit: intelligat orationes, quas dicit et diurnis temporibus et nocturnis; intelligat ea quae cantat in Missa (Pseudo-Alcuin., chap. 36).*

liturgical celebration of the Mass may be divided into two parts: (1) the general, preparatory divine service (*Missa catechumenorum*) and (2) the particular, real sacrificial worship (*Missa fidelium*), which admits of a threefold subdivision: the Offertory, the Consecration, and the Communion.²⁶

²⁶ In hoc sacramento totum mysterium nostrae salutis comprehenditur, ideo prae ceteris sacramentis cum majori solemnitate agitur. Ante celebrationem hujus mysterii primo quidem praemittitur praeparatio quaedam ad digne agenda ea, quae sequuntur. . . . Consequenter acceditur ad celebrationem mysterii, quod quidem et offertur ut sacrificium et consecratur et sumitur ut sacramentum. Unde primo peragitur oblatio; secundo consecratio oblatae materiae; tertio ejusdem perceptio (S. Thom., IIIa, q.83, a.4).

PART TWO

The Rite of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

SECTION I

The Preparatory Divine Service

CHAPTER XVIII

THE INTRODUCTORY PRAYERS

WHAT is most holy must be treated in a holy manner; therefore a careful preparation for the mystery of the divine sacrifice is required. The entire life and conduct of a priest should be a remote, uninterrupted preparation for Mass; ¹ but when the hour for Mass is near, he has an immediate and special preparation to make; he should by religious acts, by the exercise of mental and vocal prayer, ² dispose his soul and excite his heart to devotion. ³ In a touch-

¹ Generalis dispositio ad celebrandum est ea diligentia, qua incumbere sacerdotes debemus, ut vita nostra et conversatio respondeat sanctitati atque amplitudini mysteriorum, quae celebramus. Et haec est principalis magisque necessaria praeparatio: adeo ut omnino requiratur, ut tota sacerdotis vita praeparatio sit ad digne celebrandum, et in omni re tam circumspecte agat, ut paratus esse ad offerendum semper dici possit, utque in omnibus, quae dixerit ac fecerit, recordetur sese hodie celebrasse, et cras celebraturum (Anton. de Molina, *Instructio sacerdotum*, IV, chap. 6).

² Optimum consilium est, ut sacerdos omnino rejectis curis et cogitationibus saeculi immediate ante Missam orationi vacet, i.e. mentali, quae maxime fervorem et devotionem excitate (Quarti, *In rubr. Miss.*, II, i, 1).

³ Tota vita sacerdotis timorati cupientis celebrare devote, debet esse continua praeparatio incessabilisque dispositio ad celebrandum condigne, ita ut diligentissime vitet, quicquid impedimentum est celebrationis devotae ac fervidae, et quicquid ad eam disponit ac confert viriliter apprehendat et exsequatur, ita tamen, ut hora celebrationis instante, per specialia et peculiariora quaedam exercitia devotionalia orationum, meditationum, psalmodiarum, contritionis, confessionis et satisfactionis ad instantem celebrationem se praeparet (Dion. Carthus., *De particul. iudicio dialog.*, a. 34). Ad celebrandum meritorie sufficit et item requiritur, quod celebrans existat in caritate et ex caritate ad celebrandum moveatur ac procedat, quae interior motio sit promptitudo

ing manner the venerable John of Avila exhorts us to this preparation for the Holy Sacrifice. He thus writes:

Indeed the most powerful means to arouse a man is to make this serious reflection: I am going to perform the holy consecration, to hold God in my hands, to converse with Him, and to receive Him into my heart. Who will not be inflamed with love by making the reflection to himself: I am on the point of receiving the infinite Goodness? Who does not tremble and shudder out of loving awe toward Him, before whom the heavenly powers themselves shudder and tremble? Who does not tremble with the fear of offending Him, and does not tremble with the desire to praise and serve Him? Who does not experience sorrow, confusion, and remorse for having offended the divine Master, whom he beholds before him? Who is not filled with confidence by such a pledge? Who does not endeavor, having such a viaticum with him in the desert of this world, to do penance? In short, such a mediation, dictated by the spirit of God, entirely transforms man, and carries him away and beside himself, at one time by a sense of reverence, now by love, again by other powerful emotions. How cautious should we not be to keep ourselves wholly and unreservedly for Christ, who so greatly honors us as to descend unto us and place Himself in our hands, when the words of consecration are pronounced! ⁴

After this private preparation ⁵ the priest proceeds to the altar to offer the Holy Sacrifice. The first principal division of the Mass,

*aliqua voluntatis ad opus illud cultus divini. Celebratio namque est actus tam privilegiatus, divinus ac eminens, quod ad eam exigitur actualis devotio, quae caritatem ejusque actum et quandam Dei contemplationem aut saltem considerationem includit. Christus quippe sacramenti hujus frequentationem, h. e. celebrationem instituendo praecepit Apostolis et in eorum persona cunctis presbyteris: "Haec quotiescunque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis," h. e. in commemorationem amorosam ac devotam eximiae caritatis meae ad vos et acerbissimae meae passionis pro vobis. . . . Tenetur ergo sacerdos in celebratione bonam et specialem timoratumque diligentiam adhibere, ut attente, devote ac reverenter se habeat et se a distractione compescat (*Idem, De sacram. altar.*, a. 17).*

⁴ Cf. Schermer, *Geistliche Briefe des ehrw. Juan de Avila*, I, 47-55.

⁵ The preparatory prayers recommended by the Church deserve the preference over others and should not, therefore, be omitted. The five psalms contained in the *Missale Romanum* awaken every affection (faith, hope, confidence, love, desire, devotion, humility, sorrow, compunction, gratitude, resignation, self-offering) that disposes the priest for the worthy and fruitful celebration of Mass. The antiphon: "Take not revenge of my sins, neither remember my offenses nor those of my parents" (Tob. 3:3), is a prayer of atonement that imparts corresponding expression to the sentiment of sinfulness and unworthiness, with which the soul of the priest should be ani-

which extends from the Prayers at the Foot of the Altar to the Offertory, bears also a preparatory character; it may be considered as the public and common preparation of the priest and the people for the actual celebration of the holy mysteries.

The prayers, hymns, and readings which compose this introductory and preparatory divine service, aim principally at purifying the heart and enlightening the mind, at animating the faith and

mated at this moment. Psalm 83 has a privileged position in the liturgy among the hymns which glorify the Eucharistic mysteries; fervently it expresses the sentiments of the priestly heart, which longs for the altar, to place there in Jesus's heart and wounds all his labors, sufferings, and joys, thence also to draw strength for the earthly pilgrimage which conducts us through this valley of tears to our heavenly home and to glory. Psalm 84 has by preference become an Advent and Christmas hymn in the Church; it expresses gratitude for redemption about to begin and contains petitions for the completion of redemption and for perfect sanctification (for mercy, favor, and peace, for freedom from the assaults of sensuality and self-love, and for the diminution of daily faults), and concludes with the joyful confidence of obtaining the fruits of salvation at the altar in all their fullness. Psalm 85 is a humble and ardent prayer of petition; feeling his indigence and dependence on God, the priest, in consideration of the goodness and power of his Master, implores strength against his perverse inclinations and protection against external enemies, as well as assistance for the worthy performance of his most holy and sublime office at the altar. Psalm 115 is an earnest and enthusiastic expression of the celebrant's gratitude, his grateful sacrificial joy and joyful self-sacrifice in the service of God. Psalm 129 is a heart-rending penitential hymn, full of humility and contrition, of hope and confidence in the mercy of God and in superabundant redemption, the source of which is daily disclosed anew on the altar. The following versicles and responsories continue the supplication for favor and mercy and for the perfect application of the *copiosa redemptio* prepared at the altar, and the orations contain petitions for light, for purifying and inflaming the heart by the light and fire of the Holy Spirit, *ut veniens Dominus noster Jesus Christus paratam sibi in nobis inveniat mansionem*.

This *praeparatio ad Missam* was in use as to its essential parts already in the eleventh century. Presbyter, cum se parat ad Missam, juxta Romanam consuetudinem decantat (*recites*) hos Psalmos: Quam dilecta (83), Benedixisti (84), Inclina Domine (85), Credidi (115); deinde Kyrie eleison, Pater noster, cum precibus et oratione pro peccatis, videlicet ut intus et exterius summo sacerdoti placere valeat, quem cum sacratissima oblatione sibi omnibusque christianis placare desiderat (Microlog., chap. 1). Decanta cum devotione illos quinque psalmos (83, 84, 85, 115, 129) cum suis versiculis et orationibus. Dicas etiam, si tempus suppetit, orationem illam "Summe Sacerdos," quae valde efficax est et devota. Postea procedens ad altare recole Christum euntem ad crucem et fige cor ad ea, quae in passione gesta sunt; legas clare et distincte ea, quae legenda sunt, non multiplicando collectas nimias nec alia legendo ex devotione vel proprio arbitrio, quam quod a sanctis Patribus institutum est (S. Bonav., *De praepar. ad Miss.*, chap. 2, n. 2).

exciting devotion, in order that all present may be placed in the proper dispositions and thus be able to offer worthily the Holy Sacrifice to the Most High.

THE PRAYERS AT THE FOOT OF THE ALTAR

The Prayers at the Foot of the Altar ⁶ include Psalm 42, the Confiteor, and two prayers for the perfect cleansing of the heart. This part of the rite as far as the Introit may be called the general introduction to the celebration of Mass; for in this part the priest and people seek mainly, by humble petition and supplication for mercy and pardon, to duly prepare themselves, so as to approach the altar with perfect purity of heart and worthily to celebrate or assist at the Holy Sacrifice.

1. After the priest ⁷ reaches the altar, he unfolds the corporal, places upon it the covered chalice,⁸ opens the missal,⁹ bows at the middle of the altar to the altar cross,¹⁰ descends and remains standing

⁶ Of the various portions of the preparatory part of the Mass, these prayers were the last to develop, for they are first mentioned only since the eleventh century. Preparatory prayers were indeed recited at a much earlier period; but they were not so rigorously prescribed and did not belong so strictly to the liturgy of the Mass, as they were generally said in the sacristy or on the way to the altar, while the choir sang the Introit psalm. All known liturgies begin with a kind of confession of guilt. In former times the formulas differed greatly: the present Confiteor appears to have been in general use only since the thirteenth century. The assertion that Pope Celestine I (422-32) gave the psalm *Judica* its present position, is entirely untenable. Cf. Bona, *Rev. liturg.*, II, chap. 2, §§ 1-8.

⁷ Clothed in sacred vestments, the priest when advancing to the altar must also have his head covered, as a mark of his dignity and authority; for the rubric directing the priest to go to the altar *capite cooperto* is of precept (S. R. C., June 14, 1845). From the time that the amice no longer served this purpose, the biretta gradually became the prescribed liturgical covering for the head.

⁸ Sacerdos extendit corporale super medium altaris, ubi est ara consecrata, et super corporale collocat calicem velo coopertum: totus autem calix saltem quoad partem anteriorum debet esse coopertus, dum recitatur ea pars Missae, quae dicitur catechumenorum, ut postea in Missa fidelium discooperiatur, quia revelari debent fidelibus magis expresse arcana passionis Christi mysteria (Quarti, *In rubr. Miss.*, II, ii, 2).

⁹ Sacerdos Missale aperiens et ex eo divina mysteria populo annuntians denotat Christum, qui solus dignus est inventus aperire librum et solvere signacula ejus (Apoc. 5:9). (*Ibid.*, 5.) An in Missis privatis permitti possit ministro aperire Missale et invenire missam? Resp.: Negative et serventur rubricae (S. R. C., September 7, 1816).

¹⁰ According to the S. R. C., November 12, 1831, the celebrant must adhere

at the foot of the altar, at the threshold of the Most Holy. "How terrible is this place! This is no other but the house of God and the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28:17). In his interior the priest hears, as it were, a voice saying to him: "Come not nigh hither, put off the shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exod. 3:5). He remembers these words of St. Chrysostom:

When the priest calls upon the Holy Ghost and offers the tremendous sacrifice: tell me in what rank should we place him? What purity shall we require of him, what reverence? Then reflect how those hands should be constituted which perform such services! What should that tongue be which pronounces such words? . . . At this moment the very angels encompass the priest, and the whole choir of the heavenly powers lend their presence and take up the entire space around the altar, to honor Him who lies thereon in sacrifice. . . . Therefore the priest should be as pure and as holy as though he were himself in heaven among those sublime beings.¹¹

At the foot of the altar the priest considers the due honor that God expects from the sacrifice, the blessings that the Church militant claims, and the refreshment that the suffering souls in purgatory are thirsting for; thus the priest is drawn to the altar by love, vocation, and duty.¹² On the other hand he is reminded of the infinite sanctity of the sacrifice, of his fearful responsibility, of his sinfulness and unworthiness, of his faults and infidelities; and thus he is kept back from the altar by the consciousness of guilt, by a holy and salutary fear.¹³ In this interior struggle of contrary feelings

exactly and strictly to the rubrics, which prescribe only in two cases a bow to the cross on the altar: on reaching the middle, that is, when leaving the middle of the altar before descending for the Prayers at the Foot of the Altar (*facta primum cruci reverentia*), and when he himself carries the missal before the Gospel to the other side (*caput cruci inclinat*).

¹¹ *De sacerdotio*, VI, chap. 4; III, chap. 4.

¹² Cum celebrare sit tam privilegiatum ac dignissimum opus, Dei Patris omnipotentis, imo totius superexcellētissimæ Trinitatis præcipue honorativum, passionisque Christi et ceterorum ipsius mysteriorum ac beneficiorum eximie recordativum, totius quoque Ecclesiae, imo vivorum ac mortuorum potissime subventivum, admonendi sunt sacerdotes, ut quotidie celebrare non cessent, nisi speciale occurrat obstaculum; imo sic conversari, taliter proficere satagant, quod ad celebrandum quotidie, quantum humana sinit fragilitas, suo modo sint digni (Dion. Carthus., *De sacram. altar, serm.*, a. 5).

¹³ Cum sacerdos est absque peccato mortali et in proposito bono, non habens legitimum impedimentum, et non ex reverentia, sed ex negligentia celebrare omittit, tunc, quantum in ipso est, privat sanctam Trinitatem laude et gloria, angelos lætitiâ, peccatores veniâ, justos subsidio et gratiâ, in purgâ-

he signs himself with the holy sign of the cross and recites alternately with the acolyte, who represents the congregation,¹⁴ the forty-second psalm, wherein the sentiments of his soul find their full expression.

a) The priest makes what is known as the large or Latin cross¹⁵ upon himself, bringing his open hand from the forehead to the breast and from the left to the right shoulder,¹⁶ saying at the same

torio existentes refrigerio, Ecclesiam Christi spirituali beneficio—et se ipsum medicina et remedio contra infirmitates et quotidiana peccata, quia, sicut ait Ambrosius (*De sacr.*, IV, vi, 28), si “quotiescunque effunditur sanguis Christi, toties in remissionem peccatorum effunditur, debeo illum semper accipere, ut semper mihi peccata dimittantur; qui semper pecco, semper debeo habere medicinam.” Item, privat se omnibus talibus provenientibus ex sacra communione, quae sunt peccatorum remissio, fomitis mitigatio, mentis illuminatio, interior refectio, Christi et corporis ejus mysticis incorporatio; virtutum roboratio, contra diabolum armatio, fidei certitudo, elevatio spei, excitatio caritatis, augmentatio devotionis et conversatio angelorum. Item, non complet sibi injunctum magnae dignitatis obsequium nec officium exercet debitae servitutis Dei (Jer. 48:10). Item, contemnit Christi praeceptum de observantia hujus sacramenti (John 6:54). Item, abicit viaticum suae peregrinationis, exponens se periculo mortis, quia, nisi recipiat alimentum corporis Christi et vitae vegetationem, efficitur sicut aridum membrum, ad quod non transmittitur corporalis cibi nutrimentum. Ultimo, quantum in se est, evacuat divinum cultum et latrariam Creatori debitam sicut ingratus de beneficiis Dei. Ergo, quantum potes, toto conatu per exercitium boni operis, lacrimarum contritionem et devotionis flammam expelle a te omnem torporem et negligentiam, ne inveniaris respuere tantorum charismatum dona (S. Bonav., *De praepar. ad Miss.*, chap. 1, § 3, n. 9).

¹⁴ Our acolytes (Mass or altar servers) actually attend to the important duties of the minor clerics; they act and speak (respond) in the name of the faithful. The pastor should see that they behave with modesty, recollection, and reverence, that they perform their task with devotion and with hands joined, pronounce the words correctly and distinctly, and that they be cleanly attired. In Missis privatis sufficit unum habere ministrum, qui gerit personam totius populi catholici, ex cujus persona sacerdoti pluraliter respondet (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 5 ad 12).

¹⁵ For the various signs of the cross and their use and significance, see Thurston in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, XIII, 785 ff.

¹⁶ In former times it was also made with three or two fingers (in allusion to the Trinity or to the two natures in Christ). The Greeks move the hand from the right to the left shoulder, as appears to have been practised at the time of Innocent III (d. 1216) and generally also in the Roman Church, *quia Christus a Judaeis transivit ad Gentes* (*De sacro alt. myst.*, II, chap. 45). It is made with the right hand, because the right hand has precedence over the left. Hoc rudis illa liberorum aetas docetur, qui si porrigant sinistram (quippe qui nesciunt quid sit inter dextram et sinistram suam), illico parentes dextram poscunt (Gretser, *De sancta cruce*, III, chap. 2). The so-called Latin cross appears to have come into vogue only since the eighth century; pre-

time the words: *In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti. Amen.*

The venerable custom of making the sign of the cross over persons and things has, without doubt, its origin from apostolic times; some even trace it to Christ Himself, who, according to a devout opinion, at His Ascension into heaven blessed the disciples with His hands in the form of a cross.¹⁷ The very ancient use of the sign of the cross is proved from the universal testimony of the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers. Tertullian writes at the beginning of the third century: "At every step, in coming in and going out, when putting on our garments and shoes, when washing, when at table, when lighting a candle, on going to bed, when sitting down, at every work we perform, we Christians mark the forehead with the sign of the cross."¹⁸ The sign of the cross forms one of the most important features of the liturgy; for it is employed in the celebration of the sacrifice, in the administration of the sacraments, in all exorcisms, consecrations, and blessings.

The making of the sign of the cross or the signing of one's self with the cross is a profoundly significant and, at the same time, efficacious act. It is full of holy mystery, of wholesome instructions and admonitions. The sign of the cross is a symbolical expression of the principal mysteries of Christianity, a confession of the Catholic faith. It reminds us of the Crucified, of the price of our redemption, and of the value of our soul; it enkindles love of God, strengthens hope, animates us to follow Christ on the way of the Cross. It indicates that in the cross we are to find our honor, our salvation, and our life; that we should prefer the folly and weakness of the cross to all the wisdom and power of the world, that, as disciples of the Crucified, we should combat under the banner of the cross and by this sign triumph over all our enemies.

As to the different meanings inherent in the sign of the cross, often the one or the other is more clearly pronounced and more

viously the sign of the cross was usually impressed on the forehead with the thumb, more rarely also on the breast or on the mouth.

¹⁷ "Elevatis manibus suis benedixit eis" (Luke 24:50) sc. forsitan signum crucis super eos formando et verba benedictionis aliqua proferendo, ut et ipsi sic facerent aliis (Dion. Carth.). Potest pie et probabiliter credi Christum non utcunque manus elevarit, sed in signum crucis vel certe in aëre crucem describendo, sicut nunc est in usu Ecclesiae, quem ex apostolica traditione manasse testatur s. Basilius, *Liber de Spiritu Sancto*, chap. 37 (Suarez, disp. LI, sect. 2, n. 5).

¹⁸ *De corona militis*, chap. 3.

emphasized by the accompanying words; for the words and actions of the liturgy harmonize with each other, mutually supply and explain each other. This is also the case in the universally known formula: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen," which plainly sets forth the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity symbolized in the sign of the cross. St. Francis de Sales writes on this subject:

We raise the hand first to the forehead, saying, "In the name of the Father," to signify that the Father is the First Person of the Most Holy Trinity, of whom the Son is begotten and from whom the Holy Ghost proceeds. Then saying, "and the Son," the hand is lowered to the breast, to express that the Son proceeds from the Father, who sent Him down to the womb of the Virgin. Then the hand is moved from the left shoulder or side to the right, while saying, "and of the Holy Ghost," thereby signifying that the Holy Ghost, as the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, proceeds from the Father and the Son, that He is the love that unites both, and that we, through His grace, partake of the fruits of the passion. Accordingly the sign of the cross is a brief declaration of our faith in the three great mysteries: of our faith in the Blessed Trinity, in the passion of Christ, and in the forgiveness of sin, by which we pass from the left side of curse to the right of blessing.¹⁹

Exceedingly great, therefore, is the efficacy of the sign of the cross, which, likened by the Fathers to the true cross of Christ, is not unfrequently termed by them the cause of our salvation. The cross is the source of all graces and blessings; it is likewise the weapon and the armor of our defense against the evil spirit; for it is the glorious sign of the victory of Christ over sin, death, and hell.²⁰ Wherefore the Church prays: *Per signum crucis de inimicis nostris libera nos, Deus noster*; and she cries out to the evil spirits: *Ecce crucem Domini, fugite partes adversae*. ("Behold the cross of the Lord, begone ye adverse powers; for the Lion of the tribe of Juda

¹⁹ *L'étendard de la s. croix*, III, chap. 1. In signo crucis sanctissimae Trinitatis mysterium, admiranda Verbi divini incarnatio, Christi Domini passio, remissio peccatorum et vita aeterna repraesentantur . . . ; sive enim formando crucem proferantur illa verba: "In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen," sive non proferantur, semper animo mysterium sacrosanctae Trinitatis et incarnationis objicitur (Gretser, *loc. cit.*, chap. 4).

²⁰ Signum crucis diabolo valde formidolosum est (Robert. Paulul., *De offic. eccles.*, II, chap. 20). Diabolus super omnia abhorret memoriam passionis et figuram crucis, per quam sumus a potestate ejus liberati (S. Bonav., III, dist. 19, a. 1, q. 3).

hath overthrown you.”) This superior power which has ever been ascribed to the sign of the cross, depends for its efficacy, neither solely nor mainly on the faith and confidence wherewith it is made, but principally on the ordinance of God, who, on account of the honor and merits of the Crucified, has imparted to the sign of the cross such salutary efficacy. This efficacy is, of course, the greater and more meritorious in its results if it be made with a believing, devout disposition, with recollection of mind and devotion of heart, with love toward the Crucified, and with confidence in Christ’s death on the cross.²¹

Certainly it is highly proper that the most sacred act of sacrifice should begin with the equally significant sign of the cross. As he invokes the triune God, the priest signs himself with the sign of the cross to express by word and action that “in the name,” that is, by the commission, with the power and the assisting grace of the three divine persons, as well as to promote the honor and glory “of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost,” he intends to celebrate Mass, this mystical representation and renewal of the sacrifice of the cross. At the same time he wishes to implore for himself protection and security against the snares of Satan, as well as help and assistance from on high for the devout celebration of the sacrifice. The concluding word *Amen* has here a twofold meaning: on the one hand it expresses his desire that the petitions included in signing himself with the sign of the cross may be fulfilled; on the other hand it confirms and seals the good intention excited within him by the accompanying words in honor of the Most Holy Trinity.

b) The antiphon²² of the forty-second psalm, *Introibo ad altare*

²¹ Confert ad effectus crucis pietas et probitas operantis: cum enim signum crucis sit tacita quaedam Christi crucifixi invocatio, sequitur, eo fore efficacius, quo ex majori caritatis fervore processit, sicut et ipsa invocatio, quae corde vel ore perficitur, tanto aptior est ad impetrandum, quanto melior et Deo carior est is, qui invocavit (Gretser, *loc. cit.*, chap. 62).

²² Ἀντίφωνος = resounding against, answering, replying; hence Ἀντίφωνα = responsive sound, singing opposite, alternate chant. “Antiphona” (= *cantus antiphonus*) signifies, according to its etymology and original meaning, a singing, in which two choirs deliver separate verses alternately (*antiphonatum*) and, as it were, respond to each other. Quaedam in Ecclesia canebantur olim alternis vicibus, ut etiam modo fit; alia verbo simul et adunatis choris. Primum canendi modum veteres appellarunt ἀντίφωνον ὑμνωδιαν, alterum σόμφωνον (*Praefat. in Antiphon. S. Gregorii M.*). At present the name Antiphona is usually employed in another sense: to designate a verse, a sentence, or a phrase, by which the psalms and canticles are begun and ended.

Dei: ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam ("I will go in to the altar of God: to God who giveth joy to my youth"), introduces and concludes the psalm. This antiphon contains the fundamental thought of this psalm, which should here have the prominent place, and hereby indicates the special point of view in which the psalm is to be recited: it gives the key to the liturgical and mystical understanding of the psalm with regard to its application to the celebration of Mass. It expresses the sentiment which animates the priest: He longs to ascend to the altar of God, there to perform his holy office, to draw near to the Lord God and be united to Him, and, by this union with the Eucharistic Saviour, to be joyfully strengthened in the interior life. This longing and desire for the holy place and for the celebration of the sacrifice is expressed three times.²³ By the words, "to God who giveth joy to my youth," the priest may, indeed, also acknowledge that from his early days God has been his delight and bestowed on him a thousand joys; but the term youth (*juventus*) is here to be understood first and chiefly of the new supernatural life which is obtained by regeneration in the grace of the Holy Ghost. By grace the old man of sin (Rom. 6:6) is destroyed in us and the newness of life in the Holy Ghost (Col. 3:9) is created. This life of grace and of spirit, ever young and imperishable, is nourished and refreshed at the altar by the Holy Sacrifice and its banquet. The young (tender, weak) life of grace of him who approaches the altar as a spiritually new-born child, full of holy simplicity, innocence, and purity of mind, daily increases and grows stronger under the blessed influence of the divine sacrifice and sacrament.²⁴

²³ *Introibo ad altare Dei*, quod est in ecclesia materiali et manufacta, quatenus sacramenta Christi recipiam oblationemve faciam, nec subsistam in ipso altari, sed *introibo*, mentis affectu et debito cultu, *ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam*, non corporalem et exteriorem, sed spiritualem ac interiorem, qui non veterascit cum corpore, sed indesinenter virescit per gratiam, donec ad patriam anima sancta transferatur. Haec ergo *juventus* est spiritualis profectus in gratia Dei; hanc Deus *laetificat*, dum anima corde jucundo et fervido Domino servit (Dion. Carthus., *In Ps.*, 42:4).

²⁴ Cf. the antiphon: *Introibo ad altare Dei: sumam Christum qui renovat juventutem meam* (*In festo corp. Chr.*). By means of the sanctifying and blessed effects of the Eucharist, "youth" (the soul's supernatural life) is renewed and refreshed. While the Lord on the altar satisfies your desires with supernatural goods, your youth, your life is renewed in fresh strength, so that, like the eagle, you may take flight heavenward. (Ps. 102:5.)

c) The forty-second psalm:

1. *Judica me, Deus, et discerne causam meam de gente non sancta, ab homine iniquo et doloso erue me.*

2. *Quia tu es, Deus, fortitudo mea: quare me repulisti et quare tristis incedo, dum affligit me inimicus?*

3. *Emitte lucem tuam et veritatem tuam: ipsa me deduxerunt et adduxerunt in montem sanctum tuum, et in tabernacula tua.*

4. *Et introibo ad altare Dei: ad Deum, qui laetificat juventutem meam.*

5. *Confitebor tibi in cithara, Deus, Deus meus: quare tristis es, anima mea, et quare conturbas me?*

Spera in Deo, quoniam adhuc confitebor illi: salutare vultus mei et Deus meus.

1. Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause from the nation that is not holy, deliver me from the unjust and deceitful man.

2. For Thou, O God, art my strength: why hast Thou cast me off? and why do I go sorrowful whilst the enemy afflicteth me?

3. Send forth Thy light and Thy truth: they have conducted me and brought me unto Thy holy hill, and into Thy tabernacles.

4. And I will go in to the altar of God: unto God, who giveth joy to my youth.

5. To thee, O God, my God, I will give praise upon the harp: why art thou sad, O my soul? and why dost thou disquiet me?

Hope in God, for I will still give praise to Him: the salvation of my countenance, and my God.

This little hymn of David is a prayer petitioning God (verses 1-3), followed by a holy resolution (verse 4), and concluded with an act of resignation and confidence in God (verse 5). It depicts the situation and sentiments of David, who had been driven from Jerusalem by the revolt of Absalom and was grievously harassed by his enemies. The separation from the holy tabernacle distresses him most of all and appears to him as a punishment from God; hence he sorrowfully longs for a return to the sanctuary of the Lord, where he will glorify God by sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. In conclusion he encourages himself to a cheerful confidence in God, to a reliance on prompt assistance.

The principal reason for incorporating this psalm into the prayers recited at the foot of the altar at the beginning of Mass is, without doubt, contained in the fourth verse, *Et introibo ad altare Dei . . .*,²⁵ which serves at the same time as an antiphon, pointing to the mystical and ascetical meaning of the holy hymn in its liturgical position and application. The sorrowful longing, humble fear, touching plaint, joyful hope, find an affecting expression in this psalm. Its prominent tone is one of joy and happiness in God; for the expectation of salvation, the fervor of faith and hope, triumph at last over every sorrow and sadness and exult joyously in the *Gloria Patri* and in the repetition of the antiphon, *Introibo*.²⁶

1. The priest is on the point of ascending the altar; the solemnity of the moment affects him deeply. The world around him is immersed in wickedness, is full of deceit and violence; in his own interior even there is strife, a combat of the spirit against the flesh. Hence he implores God to protect his good and holy cause against a godless and deceitful world; to assist him to come off victorious over the "old man": over the concupiscence of the flesh, over all perverse inclinations and attachments.

2. The priest is aware of his own weakness; he knows that God alone is his "strength" and girds him with power (Ps. 17:33), that only God's nearness and assistance can avert defeat in this his warfare against enemies within and without. Besides the combats to be sustained against temptations, the passions, and daily faults, there is frequently added, either as a punishment for sin or as a trial for the purification of the soul, the painful apprehension of being abandoned by God: the distressing state of spiritual disgust, dryness, and darkness. In such a condition, presenting the strongest and most justifiable reasons for sorrow, all adversaries appear to gather re-

²⁵ This verse is also recited with propriety in those Masses in which the psalm itself is omitted. The Mozarabic rite has this psalm with the antiphon *Introibo* in the prayers at the foot of the altar and the antiphon again before the *Illatio* (that is, the Preface). The Milan liturgy has in the prayer at the foot of the altar merely the antiphon *Introibo* without the psalm *Judica*.

²⁶ Antiphona (Introibo) repetitur, ut intellegatur, quanta firmitate et constantia incohandum et prosequendum sit hoc opus intendentibus intrare ad altare Dei ejusque praesentiae assistere, qua renovetur, quod fuerat inveteratum, et restituatur nobis juventus spiritualis, quae est fervor spiritus et laetitia ex eo oriens, repetitur etiam, ut intellegamus, Missam nec dicendam nec audiendam esse solum ex consuetudine, cum quadam tepiditate, animo abjecto, taedioso ac tristi, quasi grave sit et molestum, tempus in ea re consumere, sed potius audiendam et legendam esse recenti quadam, delectatione et spirituali

newed strength; hence the touching plaint: "Why do I go sorrowful whilst the enemy afflicteth me?"

3. Still the ray of a bright hope lights up even the darkest night of desolation and anxiety: the priest supplicates the Lord, who imparts to him the blissful light of truth, for grace and devotion. The Lord is his comfort and his guide, who conducts him to the sanctuary, to the mystical Calvary, and to the Eucharistic tabernacle.

4. Lovely, indeed, are the tabernacles of the Lord of hosts. Confiding in the mercy of God, the celebrant, cheered and encouraged, will ascend the steps of the altar, where "the bread of life" imparts to him an unalterable youth of mind and blissful immortality, fills his whole life with fresh vigor and joy in the Lord, so that "though outward man is corrupted" (worn out) by the labors, difficulties and combats of the priestly vocation, "the inward man is renewed day by day" (II Cor. 4:16).

5. Again a feeling of sadness and anxiety is felt, but the strength of hope overcomes it all. This hope is not confounding; it shows God as the source of light, salvation, and peace. For all these graces the priest will gratefully praise and glorify the Lord during this day and all the days of his life.

d) The little doxology,²⁷ as a rule, according to ecclesiastical

impulsu, quasi illa esset prima, resistendo taedio spiritus quod tunc aggredi nos audet (De Ponte).

²⁷ *Doxologia minor vel parva* (from δόξα and λόγος = speech of praise, formula of glorification), the *Gloria Patri* is called to distinguish it from the *Gloria in excelsis*, which is called *doxologia major vel magna*. Already in Holy Scripture we find sometimes shorter, sometimes longer doxologies (Rom. 11:36; 16:27; Apoc. 5:13). In the Fathers we come across a great variety of doxological formulas, with which, as a rule, they close their homilies. The conclusion of the liturgical prayers and the concluding stanza of the Church hymns are usually a glorification of the triune God. The *Gloria Patri* occurs in the responsories of the Divine Office and at the end of the psalms and canticles; we wish thereby to confess the eternal equality of essence of the three divine persons, and to glorify and adore the Most Blessed Trinity. The simple Old Testament formula, "God be praised," is accordingly enlarged and transformed in the *Gloria Patri* to a specifically Christian doxology. The first half of the little doxology is copied from the baptismal formula, and it dates in all probability from apostolic times, but previous to the Arian heresy it had a manifold form or composition (*Gloria Patri et Filio cum Spiritu sancto*, or *per Filium in Spiritu sancto*). In its present form, with the addition *sicut erat . . .*, the *Gloria Patri* was quoted for the first time at the Second Council of Vaison (529), with the remark that it was thus generally everywhere recited. The addition, *sicut erat in principio*, expressing the eternal equality and unity of essence of the Son with the Father, is

ordinance, forms the conclusion of the psalms. It runs thus: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen." By these sublime words we acknowledge, in union with the angels and saints of heaven, the truth of the adorable mystery of the Trinity, expressing at the same time our profound homage, the highest praise, the most joyful thanks, the most faithful and efficacious love for the Most Holy Trinity. Many other praises ascend daily and hourly from earth to heaven: the sublime *Gloria in excelsis* in the Mass, the soul-stirring *Te Deum*, the incomparable *Magnificat*, the thrice repeated *Sanctus*, the joyful *Benedictus*, the many beautiful psalms of the breviary, the numerous hymns and canticles—what sublime, heaven-penetrating praises of God! But they all are but the development of the brief, yet comprehensive, *Gloria Patri*. The greatest Christian thinker and theologian can discover nothing greater or higher than what the most simple Christian stammers daily in the few words of the *Gloria Patri*. What lofty sentiments and devotion should these sublime words not awaken in the priest! Not alone does he repeat this *Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui sancto*; but millions of brethren are at this moment offering the homage of their hearts to the infinitely great God in the self-same words.

When we say *Gloria Patri* we bow the head as a sign of that reverence due the infinite majesty and greatness of God, as well as in acknowledgment of our own lowliness and unworthiness. As this manner of praise expresses and calls to mind the final object of all sacrifices and prayers, the glorification of the triune God, it is advisable when reciting it to recollect one's self anew, to renew our good intention, our attention and fervor. This chant of praise

a protest against the heresy of Arius, and thus, in consequence of the combat against this heresy in the West, it has there found universal acceptance; the Greeks, however, do not make use of it. In the fifth and sixth centuries the custom of concluding each separate psalm with the little doxology was introduced everywhere in the West.

Quoniam psalmodium usus antiquior est quam lex gratiae, ut propriam ejus perfectionem participaret, et ita fieret (ut ita dicam) psalmus consummatus, non sine speciali Dei providentia factum est, ut ex institutione Ecclesiae in fine uniuscujusque psalmi adderetur Trinitatis confessio et glorificatio per illa verba: Gloria Patri . . . (Suarez, *De religione*, Tract IV, Book IV, chap. 2, n. 4). According to an ordinance of the Fourth Council of Toledo (633), the little doxology in the Mozarabic liturgy is as follows: Gloria et honor (cf. Ps. 28:2) Patri et Filio et Spiritui sancto in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

should not only ascend heavenward from our heart and lips, but it ought, moreover, to form the motto of our whole life: all our thoughts, intentions, and actions, our life, our death, should be a joyful and grateful *Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui sancto*, so that "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the charity of God [the Father] and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with you all" (II Cor. 13:13). "Our hope, our salvation, our honor art Thou, O most blessed Trinity!" St. Alphonsus writes:

When you repeat the *Gloria Patri*, you may make various mental aspirations; for example, acts of faith and thanksgiving, of joy at the felicity of God, and of desire to honor Him and to suffer for His honor and glory. As often as St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi recited the "*Gloria Patri*," she made the intention, at every inclination of the head, to offer it to our Lord as a sacrifice of herself for the holy faith; and this practice she followed with so much fervor that at times she would grow pale, because it so impressed her, as though she were really about to be beheaded.²⁸

The psalm *Judica* with the *Gloria Patri* is omitted in all Requiem Masses and in all the Masses of Passiontide, from Passion Sunday to Holy Saturday. On Holy Saturday, "the great and holy Sabbath," the sacrifice formerly was not celebrated; now the Mass of Easter night is anticipated on that day, and the forty-second psalm is resumed, as the celebration no longer properly belongs to Passiontide. The reason for its omission is justly founded on the contents of the psalm and on the character of the Masses. For this psalm seeks to banish sorrow and sadness from the soul (*quare tristis es, anima mea, et quare conturbas me?*), to awaken a joyful mood in him who prays; therefore it is proper to omit the psalm at a time when the heart should be penetrated with profound sorrow, as in Requiem Masses and the Masses of Passiontide.²⁹

THE CONFITEOR

The central and chief part of the prayers said at the foot of the altar is the Confiteor, which is introduced by a passage from psalm 123 and is concluded by what is known as the Absolution.

²⁸ *The True Spouse of Christ*, chap. 24, § 3.

²⁹ The Carthusians, Dominicans, and Carmelites never use the psalm *Judica* in the prayers at the foot of the altar (cf. Romsée, *Oper. liturg.*, IV, 353 ff.).

1. The verse, *Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini: qui fecit coelum et terram* ("Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth"), at which the priest signs himself with the sign of the cross, may be regarded as a transition from what precedes to what follows and referring to both. In connection with the desire and purpose previously expressed of drawing nigh to the Lord at the altar and of applying the mind to the Holy Sacrifice, it signifies that in carrying out this purpose we depend on the unlimited power and goodness of God. For since we are deeply conscious of our nothingness, our weakness, and unworthiness, our unwavering hope in the Holy Sacrifice and our longing for it are founded solely on the power and love of God, who has created us, as well as on the mercies and merits of Christ, who died on the cross for us and acquired for us all the helps of grace, as we intimate in signing ourselves with the cross. Our misery is so great that of our own strength we cannot even think anything conducive to our salvation, and without the grace of the Holy Ghost we cannot even pronounce worthily the holy name of Jesus (II Cor. 3:5; 12:3); how much more will we have need of help from on high in order that we may worthily and meritoriously discharge the most sublime and holy function, the Sacrifice of the Mass!

However, if the verse of the psalm be considered as an introduction or transition to the Confiteor, which immediately follows, then it means that the Almighty alone can relieve our misery and remit our sins and the punishment due to them, and that we may with confidence expect favor and pardon, "because with the Lord there is mercy and with Him plentiful redemption" (Ps. 129:7), which issues forth on the cross of Christ and which flows to us from the cross the sign of which we make upon our bodies.³⁰

2. At the foot of the altar the priest is incited to humble, contrite self-accusation and to earnest supplication for the forgiveness of all sins. Only he who is "innocent in hands and clean of heart" may approach the altar, "ascend into the mountain of the Lord" and

³⁰ In like manner the *Adjutorium nostrum* . . . is placed before the Confiteor of Prime and Compline. With this petition the Church begins all her blessings; for she would thereby humbly and gratefully confess that the almighty Creator is the fountain and source of all blessing and salvation, while the sign of the cross then made refers to the merits of the death of Christ, for the sake of which all gifts are imparted to us. In the psalms and at Prime after the *lectio brevis* the sign of the cross is not made at this verse.

“stand in His holy place” (Ps. 23:3 f.). In order to worthily represent here the “high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Heb. 7:26), the priest should be adorned with all purity and sanctity of life. But despite his careful preparation, he feels himself to be still far removed from such purity. The dignity and fullness of grace bestowed upon him aggravates in him slight sins and infidelities of which he may be guilty in the service of God; light faults and negligences become grave evils in his eyes when he weighs them in the scales of the sanctuary, and even for sins forgiven he is not without fear.³¹ *Quo magis pius in me Dominus, tanto magis ego impius!* Hence he has every reason, before beginning the great act of sacrifice, an act filling even the angels with admiration, reverence, and awe, to make a public confession of guilt, to approach the altar only in the spirit of the deepest sorrow and compunction, and to implore heavenly and earthly intercession.

Confiteor Deo omnipotenti, beatae Mariae semper Virgini, beato Michaeli Archangelo, beato Joanni Baptistae, sanctis Apostolis Petro et Paulo, omnibus Sanctis, et vobis fratres: quia peccavi nimis cogitatione, verbo et opere: (*percutit sibi pectus ter, dicens*) mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa. Ideo precor beatam Mariam semper Virginem, beatum Michaelem Archangelum, beatum Joannem Baptistam, sanctos Apostolos Petrum et Paulum, omnes Sanctos, et vos fratres, orare pro me ad Dominum Deum nostrum.

I confess to almighty God, to blessed Mary ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy apostles Peter and Paul, to all the saints, and to you, brethren, that I have sinned exceedingly, in thought, word, and deed, (*here he strikes his breast three times, saying*) through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore I beseech the blessed Mary, ever Virgin, blessed Michael the archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy apostles Peter and Paul, all the saints, and you, brethren, to pray to the Lord our God for me.

The Confiteor is an open avowal of compunction of heart, a contrite and penitential prayer which should cleanse the soul from even

³¹ “Be not without fear for sin forgiven” (Ecclus. 5:5).

the slightest stains of guilt and from all sinful defects. But in order that its recital, together with the threefold striking of the breast, may prove cleansing and salutary to the soul, it must in truth be the outpouring of a contrite spirit, proceeding from the depths of a heart touched with love and sorrow.³²

The Confiteor is divided into two clearly distinct parts, for it contains an acknowledgment of sin as well as a petition to the blessed and the faithful to intercede in our behalf with the Lord our God. The confession of guilt is made, not only before almighty God, but also in the presence of the blessed in heaven and the faithful upon earth. Before them we humble and debase ourselves that they may be the better disposed to become, by their powerful intercession and mediation, which we afterward implore, our support before God and our help to obtain from Him more perfect pardon.³³ In every Mass the intercession of the saints is repeatedly invoked, and God is besought for grace with confidence in their prayers and merits.

He [God] also wished us to petition through the saints, and the saints in behalf of us to give confidence to the timid so that those who do not dare or are not able to pray by themselves may succeed through suitable petitioners. In this way humility will be preserved in those praying, dignity manifested in the intercessions of the saints, and love and unity shown in all the members of Christ, by which all things which are inferior may confidently seek the superior, and the superior may freely put themselves at the disposal of the inferior.³⁴

It is in the divine economy that the saints be our helpers, protectors, and intercessors;³⁵ and they are to be regarded as such especially

³² Summa sollicitudine providendum est, ne tale officium sine actuali et fervida devotione inchoetur. Nam virtus principii in his, quae sequuntur, relucet ac permanet, et modicus defectus in principio, magnus efficitur in processu. Debet ergo confessionem ante altare cum magna attentione facere sacerdos, non ex consuetudine arida, ut exterior humiliatio corporis et tunsio pectoris vera sint signa interioris humiliationis atque mentalis redargutionis sui ipsius. Debet etiam cordialiter affectare, ut alii orent pro se, et per preces aliorum auxilium sibi affuturum sperare, pie atque humiliter credens alios meliores et apud Deum magis auditos quam se (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 7).

³³ Debet unusquisque orationes aliorum humiliter ac ferventer appetere et eos ut pro se orent rogare. Quo enim alios humiliter atque ferventius ut pro nobis orent rogamus, eo capaciores efficimur fructus orationis illorum (*Idem.*, *In ep. Jac.*, 5:16).

³⁴ S. Bonav., *Breviloq.*, V, chap. 10.

³⁵ Deus decrevit et voluit, quod Sanctos rogaemus, triplici ex causa, sc.

when we poor sinners, conscious of our unworthiness and weakness, desire to approach the throne of the Almighty to be delivered from the misery of sin. Therefore it is highly proper that we humble ourselves by self-accusation before the saints in heaven, as well as in presence of the faithful on earth, and implore their mediation with God. Besides the saints whose names are mentioned in the Confiteor, no others are to be expressly named without the sanction of the Holy See.³⁶

a) *The Blessed Mary ever Virgin*, Mother of God, is always named in the liturgy in the first place, before all the angels and saints; and her name, which, after the name of Jesus, is the sweetest, the most powerful, and the most holy, is invariably distinguished by some honorable title which celebrates and expresses her ineffable privileges of grace and glory, chiefly her incomparable virginity and her dignity of divine motherhood. For us Mary is the "Mother of divine grace," "the Mother of mercy," "the Refuge of Sinners," "our dear Lady, our Mediatrix, our Intercessor," "our life, our sweetness, and our hope"; "she obtains for us the clemency of the Father at Christ's throne of grace," and "as the Mother of divine clemency she imparts salvation to her servants," for "God has taken her out of this world that she may stand before His throne in heaven, an unfailing intercessor in behalf of us poor sinners."

b) *Blessed Michael the archangel*³⁷ is next mentioned in the

propter nostram inopiam, Sanctorum gloriam et Dei reverentiam. Propter inopiam in merendo, ut ubi nostra non suppetent merita, patrocinentur aliena; propter inopiam in contemplando, ut qui non possumus summam lucem aspicere in re, aspiciamus in Sanctis; propter inopiam in amando, quia miser homo se magis sentit affici circa unum Sanctum quam etiam circa Deum. Ideo compassus nostrae inopiae voluit, nos rogare Sanctos. Secunda causa est Sanctorum gloria: quia Deus vult Sanctos suos glorificare, vult per eos miracula facere in corporibus et salutem in animabus, ut ipsos laudemus, et hoc non tantum per supremos Sanctos, sed etiam infimos; unde sicut aliquis sanatur corporaliter invocando Linum et non Petrum, alius e converso; sic et spiritualiter. Tertia causa est Dei reverentia, ut peccator, qui Deum offendit, quasi non audeat Deum in propria persona adire, sed amicorum patrocinium implorare (S. Bonav., IV, dist. 45, a. 3, q. 3).

³⁶ Some religious orders have the privilege of mentioning the name of their founder after the Princes of the Apostles. (Cf. S. R. C., February 13, 1666.)

³⁷ The name *Archangelus* (archangel) does not denote that Michael belongs to the second last order of the Angels, who are thus called, but that he (as Gabriel and Raphael) in the rank of the angels in general occupies a higher place, that is, he is placed above the lowest orders of angels. (Cf. de la Cerda, S. J., *De excellentia coelestium spirituum*, chap. 49.)

Confiteor. The angels have their position in the liturgy immediately after their queen, Mary, the Mother of God, and hence before all the saints. They constitute in God's creation a marvelously glorious kingdom; they are sublime spirits, full of wisdom and power, full of splendor and beauty. As children of the same heavenly Father, they are also our brethren, and they form along with us one family of God. They take an active part in the work of redemption, in the preservation and extension of the Church of God, as well as in her combats and victories. They are not in need of redemption, but are ministering spirits sent to minister to them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation (Heb. 1:14); consequently they rejoice over the conversion of sinners and over the perseverance of the just (Luke 15:7).

St. Michael is one of the three angels whose name and deeds Holy Scripture records, and he is, indeed, the chief of all the heavenly spirits, the prince of the angelic hosts, the leader of all the choirs of angels.⁸⁸ He is the angelic warrior who handles the sword of the power and of the justice of God; he hurls the rebellious spirits into the abyss, and he still continues to battle victoriously with the old dragon of hell and his adherents in behalf of the Church and of individual souls. In the Old Law he was the protector of the Synagogue, and now he is the defender of the Church and of the reigning pontiff. In the Middle Ages he was highly honored by noble and peasant as the guardian and patron of the German nation. Many churches bear his name, and his two feasts are celebrated on May 8 and September 29.

c) *Blessed John the Baptist*⁸⁹ is the glorious precursor of our Lord, the mighty preacher of penance in the desert, the greatest prophet, indeed more than a prophet (Matt. 11:9), since "with his finger he pointed Him out, who taketh away the sins of the world, while the other seers, with prophetic spirit, merely predicted the Light of the World that was to appear" (*Hymn. Eccles.*). The

⁸⁸ In the Office of the Church, St. Michael is called *princeps gloriosissimus, princeps militiae Angelorum, praepositus paradisi*. Michael dicitur Archangelus, non quod sit de ordine Archangelorum, sed quia omnium Angelorum caput et dux est (Molanus, *De histor. ss. Imag.*, III, chap. 39). Multi jam valde probabiliter censent, Michaellem tum naturae, tum gratiae et gloriae dignitate esse absolute primum et principem omnium omnino Angelorum (Corn. 2 Lap., *In Daniel.*, chap. 10).

⁸⁹ Cf. Medini, *De s. Joannis Bapt. relativa dignitate et sanctitate*.

Church celebrates the day of his birth (June 24) and the day of his saintly and glorious martyrdom (August 29).⁴⁰

d) *The holy apostles Peter and Paul* are also called upon to intercede for us. St. Peter was the representative of Christ upon earth, endowed with the highest dignity and power to open to the sheep and lambs of the Lord the pastures and holy fountains of life (*Vitae recludit pascua et fontes sacros*). St. Paul was Christ's chosen instrument for the propagation of the Gospel, the teacher of the nations, the apostle of the world, surpassing the other apostles in labors and sufferings. In the liturgy the names of the two princes of the apostles are inseparably connected. "Glorious princes of the earth," sings

⁴⁰ Since St. John the Baptist stands in the middle, between the Old and the New Law, *terminus Legis et initium Evangelii* (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 38, a. 1 ad 2), he is considered at one time to belong to the Old, at another to the New Testament. It would in all probability be more correct to place him (as do St. Thomas, Suarez, Guyet, Benedict XIV, and others) in the New Dispensation; *Joannes pertinet ad novum Testamentum* (S. Thom., IIa IIae, q. 174, a. 4 ad 3). "Since the peculiarity of the Old Dispensation consists in the expectation of the promised Messiah, then he who not merely expects the Redeemer but beholds Him present, must be considered to appertain, not to the Old, but to the New Testament," writes Suarez (cf. disp. 24, sect. 6, n. 3 f.). St. Joseph is not named in the Confiteor and in some other formulas in which the names of several saints are given. A reason for this may be found in the fact that the liturgical veneration of the holy patriarch was not developed until later on, while the formulas of prayer in question originated at an earlier age. This later and gradual growth of the Church's devotion to St. Joseph harmonizes wonderfully with his mysteriously hidden and retired life. At present he is honored as the Patron of the Universal Church, and shines as a resplendent constellation in the firmament of the saints. Suarez affirms, as a devout and established opinion, that the foster father of Christ and the spouse of the Blessed Virgin excelled all the other saints, therefore, even St. John the Baptist and the apostles, in grace and glory (disp. VIII, sect. 2, n. 5 f.). In the Litany of the Saints "St. Joseph consequently is named after John the Baptist, because the latter is a martyr; while he is mentioned before the apostles, because he is a patriarch" (Benedict XIV, *De beatif.*, IV, ii, 20 [§ 48]). By the established order of names in the Litany, as well as by the distinction of feasts and their celebration, the Church does not intend to decide and pronounce judgment with regard to the greatness of the individual saints, that is, their difference in grace, merit, and glory. To the question: *Quis erat melior, utrum Petrus an Joannes?* the seraphic doctor replies: *Quis eorum apud Deum finaliter fuerit carior, hoc melius sciemus in gloria et melius est expectare, quam hic temere definire. Hoc tantum dixisse sufficiat, quia ille altior est in coelis, qui finaliter majorem caritatem habuit in terris et hoc dico quantum ad magnitudinem praemii substantialis. Nam quantum ad decorem aureolae, quae respondet continentiae virginali, non est inconveniens, Joannem (Evangelistam) Petro praeponi* (S. Bonav., III, dist. 32, q. 6).

the Church, "as their mutual love joined them together in life, so in death they were not separated from each other."

The position of the body during the recitation of the Confiteor corresponds to the meaning of the words and serves to express in a more perfect manner the interior penitential disposition and at the same time to intensify it and stimulate it the more. The profound inclination of the body, the joining of the hands, and the striking of the breast,⁴¹ all betoken that humble disposition of a poor sinner who, laden with sin and full of compunction, stands before his Judge to implore grace and mercy. The priest does not presume to raise his eyes to heaven, but in a profound inclination he casts them to the earth, debasing himself before the offended majesty of God. The joining of the hands indicates recollection of mind and a spirit of devotion, the surrendering of one's self up to God and a repose in God, the mistrust of one's own strength and a confident supplication for grace and mercy. The striking of the breast (of the sinful heart) is a natural symbolical sign of a penitential spirit: it includes a sincere acknowledgment of guilt, sorrow, and displeasure for the sins committed, and the will to make satisfaction and to undergo punishment for sins heartily repented of.⁴² The striking of the breast means that the heart concealed within is the cause of sin and deserving, therefore, to be punished, bruised, and humbled;⁴³ that the insolent pride of the sinful heart is to be broken and destroyed in order that God may create a new, clean heart within the penitent breast. The striking of the breast three times signifies, in general, the intensity and sincerity of our contrition; in a stricter sense it may be understood as the suitable accompaniment and confirmation of

⁴¹ This threefold gesture is beautifully expressed in the *Dies irae*: *Oro supplex* (= joining of the hands) *et acclinis* (= profound inclination of the body), *cor contritum quasi cinis* (= striking of the breast).

⁴² *Tunsio pectoris*: 1. symbolum est confessionis peccati, quod scilicet confitens fateatur peccati sui causam non esse aliam quam cor, appetitum et voluntatem suam in pectore latentem; 2. eadem est symbolum contritionis, indicat enim, cor esse contusum et contritum; 3. eadem symbolum est satisfactionis et vindictae, percutit enim pectus, ut illud reum affligat et puniat (Corn. a Lap., *In Luc.*, 18:13).

⁴³ *Pectus percutimus, signantes videlicet, quod nequiter egimus, displicere nobis, ac ideo antequam Deus feriat, id nos in nobis ipsis ferire, et antequam ultio extrema veniat, commissum poenitentia digna punire* (Nicholas I, *Ad consulta Bulgar.*, n. 54). *Tunsio pectoris obtritio (a crushing) cordis* (S. August., *Enarr. in Ps.*, (II) 31:11; cf. *ibid.*, 141:19; 137:2; *Serm.*, LXVII, chap. 1).

guilt thrice acknowledged, each time with increased fervor (*mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*); and it may, moreover, be referred to the three kinds of sin (in thought, word, and deed) of which we accuse ourselves.⁴⁴

3. The forgiveness of guilt is dependent upon the acknowledgment of the sin: "I have acknowledged my sin to Thee [O God], and my injustice I have not concealed. I said: 'I will confess against myself my injustice to the Lord,' and Thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin" (Ps. 31:5). In a most humble posture the priest has publicly acknowledged his guilt, not merely before God, but also before the angels, the saints, and the faithful, to move them to intercede with God for him, and thus by means of joint supplication the more readily to obtain His forgiveness.⁴⁵ Those present accede to his desires and beg for him by the mouth of the server mercy and favor (*Misereatur*). Then the server also in the name of the faithful recites the Confiteor that they, too, by the intercession of the saints and of the priest may obtain favor, that is, be cleansed from the guilt of sin in order to have a share in the fruits of the Holy Sacrifice. After the Confiteor of the server, the priest likewise intercedes for the faithful, pronouncing the formula known as the Absolution,⁴⁶ which is as follows:

⁴⁴ Cum vice quadam [S. Mechtildis] ad Missam iret, vidit Dominum de coelo in candidissima veste descendentem et dicentem: Cum homines ad ecclesiam properant, poenitentia, pectoris tusione et confessione se deberent praeparare; sic meae divinae claritati possent obviare, et eam in se recipere, quae per hujus vestis candorem declaratur (S. Mechtild., *Lib. special. grat.*, III, chap. 19).

⁴⁵ "Confess, therefore, your sins one to another; and pray one for another, that you may be saved; for the continual prayer of a just man availeth much" (Jas. 5:16).

⁴⁶ *Absolutio*: The principal signification of this word is, on the one hand, a freeing and acquittal; on the other, a conclusion and completion. It often occurs in the liturgy, and is not always easy of explanation. Thus in Matins certain formulas of prayer after the psalms and before the lessons are called *absolutiones*, either *ab absoluta prece*, that is, as conclusion of the psalmody, or because the name was transferred from the third formula (*A vinculis peccatorum nostrorum absolvat nos. . .*), which contains a petition for the cleansing of the heart. The intercessions made at the catafalque (or tomb) for the departed are also called *absolutio*, as they seek to obtain the deliverance of the suffering souls from the pains of purgatory and usually conclude with the prayer *Absolve*. The expression *ad absolutionem capituli*, which is still found in Prime before the *lectio brevis*, probably signifies that in ancient times, "at the close of the assembly for chapter," after the foregoing prayers, a passage from a spiritual book was read in religious communities, and that

Misereatur vestri omnipotens Deus, et dimissis peccatis vestris, perducatur vos ad vitam aeternam. Amen.

(*Signat se signo crucis, dicens:*)

Indulgentiam, absolutionem et remissionem peccatorum nostrorum, tribuat nobis omnipotens et misericors Dominus. Amen.

May almighty God be merciful to you and, forgiving you your sins, bring you to life everlasting. Amen.

(*Making the sign of the cross, he says:*)

May the almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon, absolution, and remission of our sins. Amen.

The priest accordingly prays⁴⁷ that God would deign by virtue of His almighty power (*omnipotens*) to impart to the faithful the fullness of His mercy (*misereatur*), forgive all their sins (*dimissis peccatis*), and thus raise them up from spiritual death to the life of grace and conduct them to the eternal life hereafter (*perducatur vos ad vitam aeternam*).

Then the "almighty" Lord, who "reveals His power most gloriously by sparing the sinner and by exercising mercy," and the "merciful" Lord, "whose property it is always to show mercy and to spare," is again implored to grant us all (*nobis*) His gracious favor and kind forgiveness, the full remission of sin (*indulgentiam*), that is, absolution of guilt (*absolutionem*) and remission of due punishment (*remissionem*).⁴⁸ The accompanying sign of the cross indicates Christ's atoning sacrificial death, from which flows unto us all forgiveness of sin.

Profoundly significant is the connection, apparent in many prayers the supplement or second part of Prime, the so-called *officium capituli*, held not in the choir but in the chapter room, was concluded by a short lecture.

⁴⁷ The prayers *Misereatur* and *Indulgentiam* are designated in the *Ordo Missae* by the name *Absolutio*. But in this place it does not mean a judicial absolution, but only an intercessory prayer, a petition, a desire for God to remit sins; hence this *Absolutio* must be carefully distinguished from the *absolutio sacramentalis*, which in those who are properly disposed *infallibiliter et ex opere operato* effaces and removes sin. But the above formula is said before the sacramental absolution, in order to dispose the penitent for the reception of the sacramental grace.

⁴⁸ The words *indulgentia* and *remissio* are often used synonymously; combined they undoubtedly denote more forcibly the full remission of sin. An attempt has been made to distinguish more minutely their respective meanings; but a well founded basis for this distinction is wanting.

of the Church, between the power and the mercy of God (*omnipotens et misericors Dominus*); for upon God's absolute fullness of power are based His unbounded mercy, clemency, compassion, mildness, and longanimity toward His sinful creatures. "Thou hast mercy upon all, because Thou canst do all things. . . . Because Thou art Lord of all, Thou makest Thyself gracious to all. . . . But thou being master of power, judgest with tranquility and with great power disposest of us. . . . Thou sparest all, because They are Thine" (Wisd. 11:24; 12:16, 18; 11:27). God's mercy is proved in relieving our wants, frailties, and shortcomings, in delivering or preserving us from the misery and the evil of sin. All this God can do, because He is almighty, because His power is without end or limit. Yes, God's power is principally manifested in the exercise of His mercy, whereby He comes to the assistance of His weak and needy creature. The conversion and justification of the sinner, the infusion of sanctifying grace in the soul, is, in a certain sense, a greater work than the creation of heaven and earth, hence a glorious work of divine power.⁴⁹ God is rich in pardoning and "He is bountiful to forgive" (Isa. 55:7), "for His mercy is almighty and His omnipotence is merciful. So great is the goodness of His omnipotence and the omnipotence of His goodness, that there is no guilt that He will not or cannot pardon to one who is converted to Him."⁵⁰

THE CONCLUDING PRAYERS

The conclusion of the Prayers at the Foot of the Altar consists of two orations, which are introduced by some verses of the psalms. The priest recites these concluding prayers in silence, the one while ascending the steps of the altar, the other after reaching the altar. He says them specially for himself,⁵¹ to obtain of God the grace of perfect cleanliness and purity of heart for the worthy celebration of the Holy Sacrifice.

1. Sin disturbs all peace in life and vitiates all the sources of joy; therefore, there is no greater happiness nor sweeter consolation than

⁴⁹ S. Thom., Ia IIae, q. 113, a. 9.

⁵⁰ S. Fulgent., *Epist.*, 7 (*ad Venantium*), n. 6.

⁵¹ That both of these prayers refer to the celebrant is apparent from their wording or contents, for the first treats of the entrance into the "holy of holies" of the New Testament, which is the privilege of priests only, and the second implores the forgiveness of all sins for the celebrant (*indulgere digneris omnia peccata mea*).

to be delivered from the evil and burden of sin. By mutual intercessory prayer, hope of pardon gains new strength and is predominant, but the consciousness of sinfulness has not yet entirely left the celebrant; therefore he recites the verses of the psalms⁵² which follow the Absolution, not as he did the Confiteor, with a profound inclination of the body, but with a medium bow, which at the same time expresses both confidence and reverence.

V. Deus tu conversus vivificabis nos.

R. Et plebs tua laetabitur in te.

V. Ostende nobis, Domine, misericordiam tuam.

R. Et salutare tuum da nobis.

V. Domine, exaudi orationem meam.

R. Et clamor meus ad te veniat.

V. Thou, O God, being turned toward us, wilt enliven us.

R. And Thy people will rejoice in Thee.

V. Show us, O Lord, Thy mercy.

R. And grant us Thy salvation.

V. O Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come unto Thee.

God is irritated and turns away from us when we sin; but if we repent and acknowledge our guilt, He again favorably turns toward us, giving back to us His grace and mercy (*Deus tu conversus*), as the Giver of life, from whom we draw anew joyful courage and fresh life (*vivificabis nos*). After receiving fuller reconciliation with God and a more abundant life of grace from Him, the heart finds its peace and joy in God; it rejoices and exults in God, its Saviour (*et plebs tua laetabitur in te*). This joy, which we experience in the possession of present happiness as well as in the prospect of future glory, is still imperfect and incomplete, for we shall be filled with a glorified and unspeakable joy only in the next life; there our happiness shall be perfect, and no one shall take it away from us (John 17:13).

In order that we may attain this happy end, we beg our Lord to extend to us His mercy and to let it rule over us (*ostende nobis, Domine, misericordiam tuam*); to send us our salvation, that is, Jesus, our Light and our Life (*salutare tuum da nobis*). For this salvation from God, for the Saviour, the saints of the Old Law yearned, for

⁵² Ps. 84:7 f.; 101:2.

they saw and saluted the promises only from a distance (Heb. 11:13). More privileged and far happier are the children of the Church, for they can daily hasten to the altars of the Lord and there drink to their hearts' content from the perennial, living fountains of the Saviour.

Before the priest ascends the steps of the altar, he expresses the desire that all his petitions and cries for help may find their way to the ears of God and be answered by Him. A devout impetuosity and an ardent fervor of heart is a powerful voice (*clamor*), penetrating to the throne of God and drawing down the fullness of heavenly blessings.⁵³

2. To the above verses from the psalms is added the salutation: *Dominus vobiscum* ("The Lord be with you"): *Et cum spiritu tuo* ("And with thy spirit"). This salutation immediately introduces the two concluding orations of the prayers said at the foot of the altar. This mutual salutation between the priest and people is frequently repeated during the celebration of Mass.⁵⁴ Its meaning and its wording are taken from Holy Scripture; and because of its beautiful, profound signification, it was not only received at an early date into the liturgy of the West, but is also frequently used. When the priest says, "The Lord be with you," he desires and prays, in virtue of his mediatorial office, that God would especially bless and favor

⁵³ *Frigus caritatis, silentium cordis est; flagrantia caritatis, clamor cordis. Si semper manet caritas, semper clamas* (S. Aug., *Enarr. in Ps.*, 37:14). *Deus non vocis, sed cordis auditor est; nec admonendus est clamoribus, qui cogitationes hominum videt* (S. Cyprian., *De Orat. domin.*, chap. 4). *Clamor meus, sc. mentalis, i.e. ardens affectio desideriumque coeleste; seu clamor vocalis, qui est magni ac sancti desiderii nuntius—ad te veniat—tibi acceptus sit, tibi complaceat, et attendatur ac impleatur a te; venit enim clamor noster ad Dominum non loco, sed acceptatione* (Dion. Carthus., *In Ps.*, 101).

⁵⁴ This formula of salutation in the present rite of the Mass does not occur seven times, as is often erroneously asserted, but eight times. The priest in saying it turns toward the people four times (before the Collect, before the Offertory, before and after the Postcommunion), unless the people are before him as a consequence of the position of the altar; the remaining four times (during the Prayers at the Foot of the Altar, before the Gospel, before the Preface, and before the Last Gospel), he does not turn toward the people because it is neither proper nor necessary. In the primitive ages the altar generally was so placed that the celebrant had his face toward the people; therefore he had no occasion to turn around. From this circumstance it may have arisen that in the Ambrosian and Mozarabic rites the celebrant never turns to the congregation when pronouncing this salutation. The Mozarabic formula is always as follows; *Dominus sit semper vobiscum; Et cum spiritu tuo.*

those whom he addresses with this salutation, that He would graciously dwell, act, and reign in them and impart to them His powerful help and assistance. This explains why the priest so often repeats these words in the Mass; for the grace of the Lord is the first requisite for the worthy celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. For the continual outpouring of this grace, the priest, during the course of the Mass, repeatedly petitions God to be with those who assist at the Holy Sacrifice, and, on the other hand, those present wish that the Lord may also be with his spirit.

This salutation includes all the good that the Church can desire for her children. Where the Lord is, there He is present with His truth and grace, with His favor and help, with His love and His mercy, with His blessing and peace. To have with us Him who is our God, our Creator, our Redeemer, our Comforter, our felicity and supreme good and last end, our one and all—what can be better, greater, more full of bliss? If we bear this in mind, then will it become clear to us why the Church during the Holy Sacrifice so often puts in our mouth the words, *Dominus vobiscum*. If we truly and sincerely wish that the Lord may be present in the hearts of the faithful, will not our own heart, then, necessarily ardently yearn also for the Lord and be fit to receive Him, whom the faithful in turn wish to be in our heart? Where there is an ardent longing for the Lord, the Lord enters there with His grace; and such a desire should be excited, maintained, and augmented in us by the frequent repetition of the salutation and petition: “The Lord be with you: And with thy spirit.”

3. By this formula of salutation, both priest and people implore the assistance of divine grace to enter on devout prayer, to which all are now invited by the *Oremus* (“Let us pray”) pronounced in the hearing of all.⁵⁵ Not until after saying *Oremus* does the priest stand erect in order to ascend the altar, this mystical Mount Calvary, on which He, as Moses on Sinai, stands nearer to the Lord God than do the people who are present.⁵⁶ Therefore, while ascend-

⁵⁵ In the Mozarabic liturgy of the Mass, the formula *Oremus* is said or sung only twice (before the threefold cry *agios*, which differs from the Trisagium proper [Sanctus], and before the prayer which introduces the Pater Noster). Among the Greeks the deacon always cries out: “Let us pray to the Lord.”

⁵⁶ Quanto sacerdotes et clerici ampliori, singulariori ac diviniore a Christo ornati et exaltati sunt potestate, auctoritate, gradu, ordine et honore, tanto omnino decet et opus est, ut Christo sint gratiores, subjectiores et puriores (Dion. Carthus., *De vita curatorum*, a. 68).

ing to the altar, the priest continues his supplication for greater purity: ⁵⁷

Aufer a nobis, quaesumus
Domine, iniquitates nostras: ut
ad sancta sanctorum, puris mereamur
mentibus introire. Per
Christum Dominum nostrum.
Amen.

Take away from us our in-
iquities, we beseech Thee, O
Lord, that we may be worthy to
enter with pure minds into the
holy of holies. Through Christ
our Lord. Amen.

The Lord has promised: "I have blotted out (*delevi*) thy iniquities as a cloud, and thy sins as a mist" (Isa. 44:22). Therefore the priest invokes Him to cleanse his soul more and more from all iniquity, from all defilement and the remains of sin, from all evil inclinations and attachments, that, being made whiter than snow (Ps. 50:9), he may be worthy to go into the true holy of holies ⁵⁸ of the New Covenant of grace, that is, to enter the place of sacrifice, there to offer the Eucharistic oblation. The holy of holies of the Old Law, which the high priest alone was permitted to enter only once a year, was an imperfect figure of the holy of holies of the New Testament, into which even to the humble priest is permitted to enter daily; for day after day Jesus Christ, the holy of holies (*Sanctus sanctorum*), offers Himself there by His own hands, to gain for us admission into the "holy of holies" of heaven. ⁵⁹

4. The desire of being entirely free from sin and from all the misery of sin, again finds expression in the following prayer, which the priest says while bowing down moderately before the altar and resting his joined hands thereon.

⁵⁷ The *Sacrament. Gelasian.* contains this prayer among the *Orat. et preces a Quinquagesima usque Quadrag.*, with a slight change: Aufer a nobis, Domine, quaesumus, iniquitates nostras, ut ad sancta sanctorum puris mereamur *sensibus* introire.

⁵⁸ Eusebius in his *History of the Church* (X, chap. 4) uses the same expression to designate the altar: τὸ τῶν ἁγίων ἅγιον = *sanctum sanctorum*.

⁵⁹ Inter alias legis gratiae excellentias ea est valde admirabilis, quod in sacrificio summam praestantiam cum summa frequentia conjungat. Nam in mundo omne pretiosum, ut dicitur, est rarum. . . . Olim *summus sacerdos semel tantum in anno* ingrediebatur in Sancta sanctorum, ubi erat propitiatorium, ad orandum pro se, pro familia sua et pro omni populo, offerens sacrificium thymiamatis, quod ponebat super prunas, et nullus hominum poterat cum eo ingredi, aut assistere ei, quod ille faciebat. Nunc autem *quilibet sacerdos* etiam ex minoribus potest *quotidie* ingredi in Sancta sanctorum Ecclesiae et orare coram propitiatorio, Christo Jesu, pro se et pro toto populo, licetque aliis ipsum comitari et omnibus fidelium ei assistere (De Ponte, *De christ. homin. perfectione*, IV, ii, 15).

Oramus te, Domine, per
merita Sanctorum tuorum, quo-
rum reliquiae hic sunt, et om-
nium Sanctorum ut indulgere
digneris omnia peccata mea.
Amen.

We beseech Thee, O Lord,
by the merits of Thy saints,
whose relics are here, and of all
the saints, that Thou wouldst
vouchsafe to forgive me all my
sins. Amen.

The petition for perfect purification from all sin is here further supported and strengthened by the invoking of the merits of the saints. Aware of his own unworthiness, the priest bases his petition for the remission of all sins and all punishment due to them on the merits and satisfactions of all the saints, especially of those martyrs whose relics are deposited within the altar. This confidence and reliance are expressed by word (*per merita Sanctorum*) and by act; for the priest places his joined hands on the altar, which is the figure of Christ and the saints, thereby to show that he does not rely on his own strength, but on Christ and the saints, and that, relying on their merits, he hopes for and implores of God the remission of all his sins.

In order to share more abundantly in the heavenly treasures of grace merited by Christ and by the saints with Christ's assistance, the celebrant devoutly kisses the altar in the middle when saying the words: *quorum reliquiae hic sunt* ("whose relics are here"). As the accompanying words show, this kissing refers to the relics concealed in the altar: to the martyrs and other saints whose earthly remains were placed there at the consecration of the altar.⁶⁰ It also refers generally to all the saints, who are mentioned at the same time (*et omnium Sanctorum*), and above all to Christ, the King of all the saints, who is symbolized by the altar. By kissing the altar enriched with relics, the priest would manifest his love and veneration for the Church triumphant, for Christ and all the saints, and he

⁶⁰ The ordinance of Pope Felix I (about 270), to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass "over the tombs of the martyrs," merely confirmed a long existing custom. Later the remains of the saints were transferred from their place of burial and placed inside of newly erected altars. The place in which the martyrs were interred, that is, the altar built over their tomb as well as the church which enclosed it, was usually called the *confessio* (place of confession) or *memoria* (memorial). The remains of the saints on earth may also be regarded under various aspects, and therefore they received from the Fathers different names, for example: *reliquiae*, *pignora*, *patrocinia*, *sanc-tuaria*, *beneficia*, *cineres*, *xenia*, *insignia*, *exuviae Sanctorum*.

would thereby animate anew and confirm his communion with them. How exceedingly consoling this supernatural communication between earth and heaven, between the glorified children of the Church who are reigning in heaven and the wretched children of Eve still in their earthly pilgrimage, struggling amid want and hardship! And how could we, without overflowing with gratitude and joy, be mindful of the glorious treasures that the blood of Jesus Christ, the tears and sorrows of the Blessed Mother, and the works of charity and penance of all the saints, have acquired for our benefit? This reflection should take possession of the priest on his first arriving at the altar, which he kisses to testify his love, esteem, and reverence for His heavenly benefactors.

CHAPTER XIX

THE INTROIT

THE INCENSING OF THE ALTAR

AT the Solemn Mass (*Missa solemnis*)¹ the incensing of the altar takes place immediately after the Prayers at the Foot of the Altar.² The explanation of this rite may be prefaced by a few remarks concerning the use and symbolism of incense in general.

1. By the express command of God,³ already in the Old Law

¹ By *Missa solemnis* is to be understood here only that High Mass in which the *ministri sacri* (deacon and subdeacon) participate; for the incensing, according to a later decree, is a rite pertaining exclusively to the High Mass celebrated with deacon and subdeacon, and may never be omitted therein, not even in *Missis ferialibus Quadragesimae* (S. R. C., August 19, 1651; June 14, 1845; November 29, 1856). But since in many churches no *ministri sacri* are available, several dioceses have obtained an Apostolic Indult which at least *occurrentibus solemnioribus festis* permits the use of incense also in the *Missa cantata*. (Cf. Bourbon, *Introduct. aux cérém. rom.*, pp. 330 ff.)

² In the East the incensing of the altar at the beginning of Mass was introduced already in the fourth century; for Pseudo-Denis the Areopagite writes: "After the bishop has recited at the altar of God the holy prayer, he commences the incensing of the altar and walks around the entire circumference of the sacred place" (*The Hierarchy of the Church*, III, 2). In the West, on the contrary, mention is first made of the incensing of the altar before the Introit about the middle of the twelfth century. The *Ordo Rom.* XI, n. 18, directs: *Ascendens Pontifex . . . ad altare, facit confessionem, osculatur Evangelium . . . et intrat ad altare, et inclinato capite dicit orationem, qua peracta osculatur altare . . . accipit capsam et ponit incensum in thuribulum et incensat altare et archidiaconus retinet planetam, ne impediatur.*

³ *Voluit Deus hos odores sibi adoleri, non quod odoratu thymiamatis delectetur, cum nullum habeat odoratum . . . sed quia magnus inter homines censetur honor, suaves cuiquam apponere vel suffumigare odores: hinc Deus, qui cum hominibus humano more agit, voluit eosdem ad sui cultum coram se adoleri. Sic omnium gentium consuetudine et ritu thuris et odorum incensio attributa est Deo; hinc poëtae "thuris honores" vocant honores divinos, et tres Magi haec tria munera dederunt Christo, scilicet: "aurum regi, thura Deo, myrrhamque sepulto." Unde et nos christiani thurificamus Deo (Corn. a Lap., *In Exod.*, 30:1).*

incense was frequently used for liturgical purposes. It could be offered only to the Lord, burned only in honor of Jehovah. Incense was "holy to the Lord"; the Lord Himself minutely directed how it was to be prepared and mixed, where and how often it was to be burned (Exod., chap. 30). In the sanctuary, which was separated by a veil from the holy of holies, stood the altar for the offering of incense; on this altar every day, morning and night, a special incense offering had to be made to the Lord. Also at the great propitiatory sacrifice on the feast of reconciliation and at the offering of the showbread, incense (*thus lucidissimum*) was accepted and burned as an additional gift. The Fathers unanimously teach that the wise men from the East by the offering of incense intended symbolically to adore the Child Jesus, "the King of the Jews," as the God revealed under the garb of earthly lowliness.⁴ Incense found a place in Christian worship already at an early date,⁵ and was more universally used especially from the time of the fourth century,⁶ when divine worship began to be more freely and more splendidly developed. The present liturgical practice in the use of incense was developed in the West only during the Middle Ages. In the Greek liturgies there is far more frequent mention of incense than in the Latin rite.

The burning of this precious and fragrant incense ⁷ during divine

⁴ Per ista tria munerum genera in uno eodemque Christo et divina majestas et regia potestas et humana mortalitas intimatur. Thus enim ad sacrificium, aurum pertinet ad tributum, myrrha ad sepulturam pertinet mortuorum (S. Fulgent., *Serm.*, IV).

⁵ Among the heathens also incense was prominently destined for sacrifice; the devil wished to have the same marks of honor shown to him by the idolaters as God required of His people. To offer incense to the pagan gods was always reckoned among Christians as apostasy from the faith.

⁶ The first positive proof with respect to the liturgical use of incense in the West is found in St. Ambrose. When this holy Doctor of the Church speaks of the apparition of the angel to Zachary (Luke 1:5-25), he adds: "May we also, when incensing the altar (*nobis adolentibus altaria*) and when offering the Holy Sacrifice, have an angel at our side."

⁷ At divine service only incense of good quality is to be used; the best comes from the *Boswellia* (incense tree) of Africa. To the incense, which is a resinous gum that oozes from the bark of a tree and is collected by scraping it from the bark after it hardens, other sweet-smelling substances (rosins and herbs) may be added, but only in considerably smaller quantities. *Materies quae adhibetur, vel solum et purum thus esse debet suavis odoris; vel si aliqua addantur, advertatur, ut quantitas thuris longe superet* (*Ceremon. Episcop.*, I, chap. 23, n. 3).

services is a splendid rite, which not only contributes much solemnity to the celebration of divine worship, but also symbolically represents the mysteries of faith and the virtues of the Christian life.⁸ The symbolism of incense consists essentially in this, that the grains of incense are dissolved by the heat of the coals, thereby diffusing a sweet odor which ascends heavenward in fragrant clouds, filling the sanctuary and the whole church. Consequently the liturgical incensation has a symbolical meaning only if lighted, burning incense is used, and this meaning is lost if there is no odor arising from the incense, if the glow of fire is wanting, or if burning coals are not used.

The fragrant incense burning in the fire has, as it were, been created as a symbol, as a solemn expression of the interior sentiments of sacrifice⁹ and of prayer acceptable to God. The perfume of a plant is its most delicate and most noble part and, so to speak, "its hidden, sleeping vitality." Hence incense breathes forth its inmost soul when it is consumed in the fire and dissolved in fragrant clouds of smoke that rise heavenward. It thereby symbolizes, first, man's spirit of sacrifice, for he consumes himself with all his faculties in the fire of love for the honor and service of God. Then the odor of incense which arises from the burning grains and ascends in fragrant clouds of smoke also symbolizes prayer. Prayer is the surrender of the soul to God, the elevation of the mind and spirit to heaven, the aspiration of the heart toward goods invisible and eternal. If the grains of incense be cast on burning coals, a pleasant odor will arise; if the heart, like a glowing coal, is set on fire with the flames of divine love and ardent devotion, then our prayer will free itself

⁸ The Council of Trent places the incensing at divine worship (*thymiama*) expressly among the *visibilia religionis et pietatis signa*, which incite and elevate the mind to the devout contemplation of heavenly things (Sess. XXII, cap. 5).

⁹ The Latin and Greek name of incense (*thus*, *θυμιαμα*, from *θύειν* = to offer, but originally to dissolve into smoke) indicates its intimate connection with the sacrifice. Since incense is destroyed and consumed in the fire, there are found in it all the requisite elements for a sacrifice (material and form), and if the legitimate institution is added, then it is a real sacrifice. This was the case in the Old Law. In the New Law, on the contrary, the burning of incense is only a ceremony prescribed by the Church, which serves for the liturgical adornment and symbolism of the Eucharistic sacrifice. Sometimes *thymiama* (from *θυμιάω*, I light) is taken as perfumes in a wider sense, and mentioned separately from genuine incense (*thus*). (Cf. *Pontif. Roman., De benedict. signi.*)

from all that is earthly and will ascend to the Lord as a sweet and precious perfume; our prayer will be received with favor and pleasure and will be answered by Him.¹⁰ Hence the Psalmist exclaims: *Dirigatur, Domine, oratio mea sicut incensum in conspectu tuo!* "Let my prayer be directed as incense in Thy sight" (Ps. 140: 2). Scripture represents the prayers of the saints under the figure of golden vials full of sweet odors,¹¹ which the ancients bear in their hands, standing before the throne of the Lamb (Apoc. 5:8). Adoration, praises, thanksgivings, and petitions, like sweet-smelling incense, penetrate to the heavenly holy of holies, to the throne of the Almighty. The fragrant clouds of incense are for the priest and people also an admonition so to live as to become, by sacrifice and the spirit of prayer, a spiritual "good odor of Christ" (II Cor. 2: 15).¹²

The burning of the grains of incense is chiefly a symbol of adoration, or rather, of sacrifice as the most perfect act and expression of adoration; but it must be observed that in the intention of the Church incense is not exclusively employed to render the highest honor due to God alone, that is, to manifest interior adoration in a solemn manner, but is also used to denote religious veneration towards that which

¹⁰ Thuribulum est cor humanum, ignis caritas, thus oratio: sicut thus cum igne in thuribulo redolet et sursum ascendit, sic oratio cum caritate in corde ultra omnia pigmenta (*aromatics, perfumes*) fragrescit (Sicard, *loc. cit.*, chap. 13).

¹¹ Orationes Sanctorum comparantur hic suffitui, non cuivis, sed odoramentorum (1) quia oratio instar thuris sursum ascendit; (2) quia sicut thus odoratum ita orationes Sanctorum Deum oblectant; (3) uti thus foetorem, ita oratio peccatum abigit Deique iram mitigat; (4) thymiama fiebat ex aromatibus contusis: sic oratio ex animo mortificato et humili procedere debet; (5) thymiama in igne adolebatur; ita oratio in igne tribulationum exardescit (Corn. a Lap., *In Exod.*, 30:34).

¹² Per thuribulum cor humanum competenter notatur . . . habens ignem caritatis et thus devotionis sive suavissimae orationis seu bonorum exemplorum sursum tendentium, quod per fumum inde resultantem notatur. Sicut enim thus in igne thuribuli suaviter redolet et sursum ascendit, ita opus bonum vel oratio ex caritate ultra omnia thymiamata fragrat (Durand., IV, vi, 6).

Res sacras, ut Dei et Sanctorum basilicas, variis suavissimorum odorum replere generibus, optimum ac Deo honorificum est; sic enim internam erga eum reverentiam testamur, quod Ecclesia, festis praesertim solemnioribus, eo fine faciendum instituit; cumque templa sic suave olentia ingredimur, puos ac sanctos odores illos percipiendo, debemus ex his perceptis mentem ad coelestia meditanda sursum erigere, orationem nostram sicut incensum ad Deum dirigere et ad virtutis exercitium nos excitare, ut sic bonus odor Christi simus in omni loco (Philipp. a. SS. Trinit., *Theol. myst.*, I, Part I, tr. 2, a. 5).

is holy. Therefore, besides the Most Blessed Sacrament, the relics and images of the saints, the book of the Gospels, the celebrant, the clergy, and the people are incensed.

2. At a Solemn Mass the incense is blessed;¹³ it thus becomes a sacramental, an object consecrated to God, and as such it has supernatural efficacy by reason of the prayer of the Church. As a sacramental incense is a means to secure divine protection and blessing. By virtue of the sign of the cross and the blessing of the Church, incense is made efficacious especially for expelling Satan from the soul and for affording us a powerful protection against the deceit, malice, and attacks of evil spirits, a protection we greatly need during the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Before the incense is burned on the altar that is about to be consecrated, the bishop implores almighty God "to look down upon this incense, to bless and sanctify it, that all sicknesses and infirmities, as well as every snare of the evil one may flee from its sweet odor, and that the creature (man) redeemed by the precious blood of Christ may never be wounded by the bite of the infernal serpent."¹⁴ Blessed incense produces yet another effect: it is used for the blessing of persons and of things. For with the clouds of incense is diffused the power of the blessing which the Church pronounces and desires to impart; they draw all who are incensed into a sanctified atmosphere. From this explanation of the symbolism and efficacy of incense, the meaning of the different incensings is easily inferred.

3. The ascending clouds of the fragrant incense clothe the celebration of divine worship with additional majesty and solemnity; therefore has the Church honored by the use of incense many of her liturgical functions; among them the highest and most important

¹³ Incense, as a rule (even *coram exposito*), must be blessed when put into the thurible. The blessing must be omitted when the Most Holy Sacrament alone is to be incensed, for example, at exposition or processions of the Blessed Sacrament, because in this instance incense is regarded merely as a symbol and not as a sacramental. In the Mass of the Presanctified on Good Friday, the blessing of the incense is likewise omitted as a sign of mourning, although in addition to the consecrated host the altar also is incensed. The petition for blessing the incense is addressed (by the deacon) to the celebrant in reverential words; if he is a priest, the formula is as follows: *Benedicite, Pater reverende*; if a bishop: *Benedicite, Pater reverendissime*; if a cardinal: *Benedicite, Pater eminentissime*. The priest must always stand when putting the incense into the thurible. Cf. *Cerem. Episc.*, I, xxiii, 18; II, xxii, 11; *Quarti, loc. cit.*, dub. 2.

¹⁴ *Pontif. Roman., De ecclesiae dedicatione.*

of all is the solemn celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The light clouds of incense soaring heavenward envelop the altar and fill the sanctuary with their agreeable fragrance, and thus most befittingly express the majesty of so great a sacrifice and make the earthly altar appear more like the heavenly altar (Apoc. 8:3). The incensation takes place at the beginning of the general divine service (between the Prayers at the Foot of the Altar and the Introit) and at the beginning of the special sacrificial service (during the Offertory), as well as at the culminating point of each of these principal parts of the Mass: at the Gospel and at the Consecration. Here the cloud of incense is also symbolical of the appearance, or presence, of the Lord in His word and in the Blessed Sacrament.

The first incensing at High Mass may be regarded as a solemn conclusion of the preparatory prayers at the foot of the altar. The rite is simple and is performed without any accompanying prayer. The celebrant places incense three times on the glowing coals, saying: *Ab illo benedicaris in cujus honore cremaberis. Amen.*¹⁵ ("Be thou blessed by Him in whose honor thou wilt be consumed. Amen.") Only after these words does he make the sign of the cross over the burning grains of incense. This formula of blessing declares the principal object of the incensing, the glorification of the divine name. Incense is used at divine worship because of its exquisite odor, not to afford man a sensuous gratification, but to evince profound reverence for the divine mysteries. First the crucifix on the altar, or the Blessed Sacrament,¹⁶ is honored by incense: due adoration is offered to the Lord in His image or in His Sacrament. If the Blessed

¹⁵ In former editions of the *Cerem. Episc.* we read *in honorem* (I, xxiii, 1); but the *editio typica* of 1886 (Ratisbonae) has *in honore*. The original and correct mode of spelling is undoubtedly *in cujus honore*. The Vulgate, the ancient liturgies, and the entire vulgar-Latin literature frequently construe the proposition (to the question: where? or why?) in the ablative instead of in the accusative. Clichtoveus gives the fourth stanza of the hymn *Iste confessor* thus:

Unde nunc noster chorus in honore
Ipsius hymnum canit hunc libenter.

In the liturgy for Good Friday the Church sings: *Ecce enim propter lignum venit gaudium in universo mundo.* The *Ordo Rom. XIV*, chap. 71, has the formula: *Ab ipso sanctificeris, in cujus honore cremaberis.*

¹⁶ *Sacerdos dum incensum ponit in thuribulo stare debet; ab eodem vero Ss. Eucharistiae Sacramentum thurificandum est triplici ductu, sed genibus flexis et tam ante quam post incensationem profunda facta capitis inclinatione* (S. R. C., March 26, 1859). But every *ductus thuribuli* is performed *duplici ictu* (S. R. C., March 22, 1862).

Sacrament is not exposed, then the relics or images of the saints on the altar are incensed. This incensing is an eminent sign of veneration paid to the blessed in heaven, who diffuse an agreeable odor like unto cinnamon and sweet-smelling balm and like precious myrrh (Ecclus. 24:20); as a mark of honor it ought to move them to obtain, by their powerful intercession, mercy for us at the throne of God and a favorable answer to our petitions. The priest, having just ascended the altar and relying upon the intercession of the saints, has just prayed to God for perfect purity of heart. The fragrant clouds of incense which envelop the altar are now emblematic of these prayers and the merits of the saints whose intercession has been sought, and consequently they express in a symbolical manner the same petition that had immediately before been presented in words, that is, the petition for the assistance of the saints.

The altar solemnly consecrated by the bishop and enriched with relics is the most sacred place of sacrifice, *Sancta sanctorum*, and is to be regarded and revered with religious awe. The incensing of the altar symbolizes and calls to mind the sublime holiness of the consecrated altar. The blessed clouds of incense, therefore, not merely admonish us, but also obtain for us from above the necessary assistance to enter with a pure intention into the holy of holies, to stand at the altar and to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice with a devout heart. At the same time the fragrant clouds of smoking incense signify that this sacrifice, by the power of the Holy Ghost, will ascend to heaven as a "sweet odor" and be for us the source of all spiritual graces.¹⁷ Finally, the celebrant himself, and he alone as the visible representative of the invisible high priest, Jesus Christ, receives by the threefold incensing the veneration due to his sacred character.

The incensing at the beginning of Mass is intended mainly for the altar,¹⁸ which, by the clouds of mystic incense pervading its sur-

¹⁷ Domine sancte . . . respice ad hujus altaris tui holocaustum, quod non igne visibili probetur, sed infusum sancti Spiritus tui gratia in odorem suavitatis ascendat et legitime se sumentibus Eucharistia medicabilis fiat ad vitamque proficiat sempiternam (*Pontif. Roman., De ecclesiae dedicat. seu consecrat.*).

¹⁸ The altar, as far as is convenient, is incensed all around, and the rear of the altar also toward the six symmetrically arranged candlesticks: incensat altare, ter ducens thuribulum aequali distantia, prout distribuuntur candelabra (*Missal. Rom.*). The candlesticks, therefore, are not incensed. Cf. Lebrun, I, a. 9.

rounding atmosphere, is distinguished and honored as the holy and venerated place of sacrifice and adoration. The ceremony of incensing, so solemn, so significant, and so edifying, should also move those present to devout and holy sentiments, and, as incense is consumed by the heat of the coals, should inspire them at the same time with the thought that their life should, amid the flames of love, be dedicated to the honor and service of God.

THE STATION

At the beginning of many of the old Mass formulas we find a strange notation which requires a brief explanation; there is written, for example, *Statio ad S. Petrum* (Station at the Church of St. Peter), *Statio ad S. Caeciliam* (Station at St. Cecilia's). These words indicate the church in which, before the exile of the popes at Avignon, the divine sacrifice was offered up after the clergy and laity had come in solemn procession from another church, the *ecclesia collecta*. These stations were, therefore, a particular kind of religious assembly, arranged on fixed days for certain churches in the city of Rome, wherein the divine service was to be celebrated in a solemn manner.¹⁹ The clergy and the laity would assemble in a certain church (the *ecclesia collecta*), then go in solemn procession to the station church (the *statio*), where the Eucharistic celebration took place.²⁰ In the church of assembly the religious celebration was opened by the singing of psalms and by a prayer of the

¹⁹ *Statio* hoc loco sumitur pro concursu populi ad locum indictum, i.e. ad ecclesiam, in qua processio clericorum consistit statis diebus ad statas preces faciendas. Antiquus quippe in Urbe ritus est, ut certis diebus clerus Romanus in unam aliquam ecclesiam conveniat supplicationis causa, ubi sacra fiunt aliaque divina officia. Cleri Romani processio in illas stationes duplex est, *solemnis* aut *privata*. Haec fit, cum unusquisque privatim in locum indictum se recipit; *solemnis* vero, cum solemniter, decantando litanias aliasque preces, Pontifex alique omnes eo sese recipiunt. Processiones *solemnis* praecedunt *Collecta*, i.e. coadunatio clericorum in una ecclesia, ut ex ea, quasi agmine facto, in locum stationis procedatur; sic dicta, quod in eo loco clerus cum populo colligatur ad faciendam processionem *solemnem*. Et quia in loco, ubi fit *Collecta*, oratio super populum funditur ante processionem, inde fit, quod ejusmodi orationes etiam *Collectae* appellantur, quoniam super *Collectam* populi fiunt, dum colligitur, ut procedat de una ecclesia in aliam ad *Stationem* faciendam, ut loquitur Micrologus in cap. 3 (Mabillon, *In Ordinem Romanum commentarius praevius*, V).

²⁰ Thus, for example, on Ember Wednesday: Feria IV. *Statio ad Sanctam Mariam Majorem*. Fit *collecta* ad Sanctum Petrum ad Vincula in Eudoxia (*Ordo Roman.* XI, n. 10).

celebrant, the Collect. Thence in procession they proceeded to the station church: the banner of the cross was carried at the head of the procession, on the way psalms were chanted, and on nearing the church the Litany of the Saints was chanted, whence the processions received the name *Litaniae*.²¹ In the church of the station a homily was usually delivered (by the pope) and the Holy Sacrifice was celebrated.

The stations were often accompanied by the observance of fasting²² and of penitential practices; such penitential stations took place during Advent and Lent, on the Ember days and vigils, occasionally also at special times when there was question of averting the chastisements and visitations of God, for instance, pestilence, famine, and war. There were also joyful stations, such as those held on Sundays and feast days, or those instituted for the annual commemoration of the more famous saints.

Stations in the seven principal churches of Rome were particularly frequent;²³ for in them were deposited the bodies of celebrated martyrs, and they were large enough to hold a large number of the faithful. Originally the station churches were not definitely assigned for particular days; each time the archdeacon would announce where the next station would take place. St. Gregory the Great enhanced the solemnity of the stations, limited them to specified days, attached them permanently to certain churches, and had them inscribed in the *Sacramentarium*, from which they were afterward copied into the Roman Missal.²⁴ The present ar-

²¹ The expression *Litaniae* (*λιτάνεια* = *rogatio, supplicatio*) originally designated every prayer of supplication, but later on especially public prayers, in which the saints were invoked and which were recited at processions: *preces, quibus invocatione Dei et Sanctorum desideratam nobis divinae propitiationis abundantiam efficacius impetramus* (Quarti). The simple invocation, *Kyrie eleison*, joined to the invocations, is also called *Litania* or *Letania*, for example, in the *Rule* of St. Benedict and in the *Ordines Romani*.

²² Therefore *statio* is also a designation for fasting; *dies stationum* also = fast days.

²³ They were called: S. Giovanni in Laterano, S. Pietro in Vaticano, S. Maria Maggiore, S. Paolo fuori le mura, S. Lorenzo fuori le mura, S. Croce in Gerusalemme, S. Sebastiano fuori le mura. The Basilica of St. Sebastian was also originally a station church, but it has not been used as such for several centuries, perhaps on account of its great distance from the city.

²⁴ *Litaniae, stationes et ecclesiasticum officium auxit* (*Brev. Rom.*, March 12). *Stationes per Basilicas et Martyrium Coemeteria ordinavit: et sequebatur exercitus Domini Gregorium praeuntem. Ductor coelestis militiae arma spiritualia proferebat.*

rangement of the stations, in its main points, comes from him; only a few station churches have been designated by later popes.²⁵ After their removal to Avignon (1309) the popes no longer took part in the stations. Except during the absence of the pope, divine worship is still held in the station churches with greater solemnity; on the specified days, especially in Lent, large assemblies gather in the station churches, to venerate the relics there exposed and to gain the indulgence of the stations. The greater penitential processions (*Litaniae majores*) on St. Mark's Day (April 25) and the minor penitential processions (*Litaniae minores*) made through the fields on the three days before the Ascension, evidently resemble the ancient station solemnities.

As Tertullian supposes it to be universally known, the word *statio*²⁶ passed from military language into that of the Church. The Christian assemblies and processions to the place of the sacrifice were called *Stationes* because they bore a certain resemblance to the service of the sentinels. As "good soldiers of Jesus Christ" the faithful of those ancient times wished to keep guard, so to speak, in the house of God, in order to protect themselves against the snares and assaults of the infernal adversary; and to this end they persevered in fasting, prayer, reading, the recitation of the psalms, holy recollection, and the celebration of the Eucharist until None (three o'clock in the afternoon). In this manner did they confirm and strengthen themselves in order not to hesitate and waver in life's struggles and sufferings, but to put on the armor of God: to take "the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God; by all prayer and supplication, praying at all times in the spirit, and in the same watching with all instance and supplication for all the saints" (Eph. 6:17 f.).

²⁵ At present there are still 111 station devotions held, which are distributed among 87 days and 44 churches; frequently in one day several are kept, and the stations recur often in the same church during the course of the year.

²⁶ Si statio de militari exemplo nomen accipit (nam et militia Dei sumus), utique nulla laetitia sive tristitia obveniens castris, stationes militum rescindit. Nam laetitia libentius, tristitia sollicitius administrabit disciplinam (Tertull., *De Orat.*, chap. 19). *Statio* = the standing, the quiet and firm standing; especially = the guard, the watch. *Statio* primo et per se significat actum standi seu permanendi ad certum tempus in locis sacris orandi causa et publicos conventus fidelium ad orationem. Secundo minus proprie significat loca seu templa, in quibus statio habetur. Tertio significat orationem ipsam, quae fit in eisdem locis. Tandem significat indulgentiam ibi orantibus concessam (Quarti, *De Procession.*, sect. II, punct. 14).

THE INTROIT ²⁷

The unchangeable Prayers at the Foot of the Altar form the general introduction to the whole celebration of the Mass; the variable Introit, on the other hand, begins in a special manner the first part of its liturgy, the Mass of the Catechumens. This part does not directly touch upon the sacrifice, but serves merely to prepare the way for the actual sacrifice by infusing into the minds of those present such holy thoughts and devout affections as dispose them for the worthy celebration of the divine mysteries. Accordingly, it consists, on the one hand, of reading and instruction calculated to enliven and strengthen the faith; and, on the other, of prayer and chant to awaken and nourish devotion; ²⁸ for faith and devotion are, above all, required to derive fruit from the celebration of the holy mysteries. These prayers, psalms, and readings vary during the course of the ecclesiastical year; for they are intended to give suitable expression to the spirit of the season or feast.

1. In its present form the Introit is a psalm abbreviated as much as possible; for it consists of psalm verses with a *Gloria Patri*, which (like entire psalms usually are) is introduced and concluded with an antiphon.²⁹ The antiphon is generally taken from the Psalter, often too from other books of the Old or New Testament; only in

²⁷ *Introitus* = entrance, entering, introduction; then = beginning, prelude. Interim (*during the Prayers at the Foot of the Altar*) cantatur Antiphona ad Introitum, quae ab introitu sacerdotis ad altare hoc nomen meruit habere (Microlog., chap. 1). The Introit in the Ambrosian rite is called *ingressa*, in the Mozarabic rite, *officium*, and in the old Gallican, *praelegere* or *antiphona ad praelegendum*. Amalarius writes: *Officium quod dicitur introitus Missae, habet initium a prima antiphona, quae dicitur Introitus, et finitur in oratione, quae a sacerdote dicitur ante lectionem (De eccles. offic., III, chap. 5).*

²⁸ *Introitus* laudem Dei continet et ad honorem Altissimi cum modulatione cantatur, quatenus universorum adstantium corda in Dei amorem sanctamque devotionem excitentur et accendantur, ac per hoc toti sequenti officio cum fervore alacri jucunditate intersint (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Missae*, a. 8). Cf. in the Canon the words: *quorum tibi fides cognita est et nota devotio.*

²⁹ The word *Introitus* has, in addition to the above, a still more varied signification in the liturgy. (a) In the first place and originally, it signifies the solemn entrance of the celebrant into the church; (b) derivatively, the whole alternate chant of the choir, which comprises a greater number of psalm verses in addition to an antiphon which was chanted at the entrance of the celebrant, or (c) the antiphon alone appertaining to this choir-chant; and (d) in a more comprehensive sense, the antiphon and psalm verse together with the Kyrie, Gloria, and Collect.

a few instances is it composed by the Church herself.³⁰ The antiphon is, as a rule, though not in every case, followed by the first verse of a psalm.³¹ During the joyful Eastertide generally two, occasionally three, allelujas are added to the antiphon. In those Masses which do not have the psalm *Judica*, the *Gloria Patri* is omitted after the verse of the psalm. In the *Gloria Patri*, this solemn praise of the Blessed Trinity, there resounds an air of joy; hence it is omitted in the Masses of Passiontide and of Holy Week, as well as in the Masses for the dead, in order to indicate the profound sorrow and affliction of the Church.³²

The Mass of Holy Saturday and the principal Mass of the vigil of Pentecost (the one which is preceded by the Prophecies, with or without the blessing of baptismal water) have no Introit.³³ The reason for this may be that the foregoing chants, prayers, and lessons were regarded as taking the place of the usual introductory psalm, and consequently a further introductory chant could well be omitted.³⁴ On these days the preliminary solemnities constituted a

³⁰ The antiphons taken from the psalms are called *Introitus regulares*; the others, *Introitus irregulares*. Cf. Durand., IV, chap. 5.

³¹ In many Mass formulas, especially the newer ones, not the first, but another appropriate psalm verse has been selected. If the first verse of a psalm forms the antiphon, then the next verse is added, for instance, *Dominica XII et XV post Pent.*, *Missa votiva pro infirmis*. One and the same antiphon is in different Masses often accompanied with different psalm verses, for example, the antiphon *Gaudeamus omnes in Domino* on the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and on the feast of All Saints. Only seldom, for instance, in the Requiem Mass and on the feast of St. Francis Xavier, two verses of the psalm follow the antiphon. Cf. Guyet, *Heortologia*, III, chap. 25, q. 2.

³² The *hymnus glorificationis* essentially bears the impress of joy, and therefore as *vox laetitiae et laudis* (Rupert v. Deutz) must be partly or wholly silent in the liturgy of the sorrowful season. De responsoriis "Gloria Patri" subtrahimus et apud quosdam ad Missas quoque cum Introitu officii non dicitur (Rup. Tuit., V, 2).

³³ The other Masses of the vigil of Pentecost have an Introit; on the vigil of Easter however, the Low Mass also is without an Introit, but such a Low Mass may be celebrated only *ex privilegio* (S. R. C., July 22, 1848).

³⁴ *Totus Introitus fuit omissus, ubi vel processio Missam antecessit vel officium quodpiam ante Missam fuit celebratum, quem morem hodie adhuc in Vigiliis Paschae et Pentecostes observari conspicimus. Introitus enim ad id solum institutus erat, ut populum occuparet, dum Celebrans veniebat ad altare; cum autem his diebus populus jam esset congregatus, et Pontifex de fontibus sive de baptisterio ad altare transiret, dum Litaniae vel Kyrie eleison canerentur, hinc illis finitis statim, "Gloria in excelsis" intonabat (Krazer, sect. IV, art. 1, cap. 1, § 217).*

single service with the Mass; hence the ordinance of the Church that one and the same celebrant should discharge the entire function: the Mass together with the blessings.³⁵

While saying the first words of the Introit, the priest makes the sign of the cross, because the Introit forms the beginning of the variable Mass formula.³⁶ In Requiem Masses the celebrant does not make the sign of the cross on himself, but over the missal (*super librum quasi aliquem benedicens*), at the same time imploring from the Lord eternal rest and perpetual light for the departed souls. This sign of the cross undoubtedly is not intended for the book, but for the suffering souls. The Introit is read on the left side of the altar,³⁷ the Epistle side, with the hands joined before the breast, thus to signify the priest's prayerful disposition.

2. As the Introit is the introduction to the Mass of the Catechumens, it belongs to the variable parts of the Mass rite and is to be considered under the same aspect as the Gradual, Offertory, and Communion verse.

These four parts³⁸ belong to the chants, with which the choir, in the name of the people, accompany the sublime Eucharistic sacrifice. In their present form they are but remnants of longer chants which consisted of whole psalms or of an indefinite number of psalm verses, and which were sung while the priest was going to the altar (*Introitus*), or after the reading of the Epistle (*Graduale*), or while the faithful were presenting their offerings (*Offertorium*), or while they received Holy Communion (*Communio*). At the beginning of the fifth century these chants were already introduced

³⁵ S. R. C., September 1, 1838.

³⁶ Therefore, some Masses and Sundays also were named after the initial words of their respective Introits. Thus the Masses for the dead are called Requiem, and the votive Mass in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Advent, *Rorate*; the first five Sundays of Lent are called *Invocavit*, *Reminiscere*, *Oculi*, *Laetare*, *Judica*, and the first four Sundays after Easter, *Quasimodo*, *Misericordias Domini*, *Jubilate*, *Cantate*, and the sixth, *Exaudi*.

³⁷ Since the fifteenth century the right and left sides of the altar have been named and considered with regard to the Crucifix placed in the centre, while previously, from the position of the celebrant, precisely the opposite denomination was in practice. Cf. Benedict. XIV, *De Missae sacrific.*, II, iv, 1.

³⁸ For those parts of the missal that are to be sung, as well as for the antiphons and responsories of the breviary, the text of the Itala (version of Scripture), somewhat differing from our Vulgate, is used, because the original and unalterable mode of chanting had always been intimately connected with it.

into the Roman Church, but they did not all come in at the same time: the Communion chant is probably the most ancient, while the Introit psalm was the latest to be introduced.³⁹ St. Gregory the Great had already abridged these choral chants, as may be seen from his *Antiphonarium*; they were later simplified still more, such as they are at present to be found in the missal.

Evidently these psalms, or passages from the Psalms, did not find their way into each of the Mass formulas by chance or by mere fancy, but were inserted after careful selection. The ecclesiastical year with its feasts and holy seasons, or the special, extraordinary occasion or intention of the Mass, suggested and determined their adoption. The celebration of Mass is most intimately connected and interwoven with the marvelously arranged cycle of the holy year: *Sacrificium* and *Officium*, missal and breviary, perfectly harmonize and complete each other, and both together make up the complete liturgical celebration of the holydays and seasons. Like the breviary of the priest, the formula of the Mass is also intended to impress the idea of the feast or the fundamental thoughts of the Sundays and weekdays.⁴⁰ Hence it follows that the changeable chants of the Mass formulas were selected with a view to the appropriate celebration of the feast or day.

This careful selection is especially applicable to the Introit; it is

³⁹ The introduction of the singing of psalms at the beginning of Mass is ascribed to Pope Celestine I (422-32). He ordained that for the beginning of Mass an entire psalm, or at least the greater part of a psalm, should be sung *antiphonatum*, that is, alternately by two choirs. *Hic multa constituta fecit et constituit, ut psalmi David 150 ante sacrificium psallerentur antiphonatum (in two choirs) ab omnibus, quod ante non fiebat, nisi tantum epistola b. Pauli recitabatur et sanctum evangelium (Lib. pontif. [ed. Duch.], I, 230). Coelestinus Papa psalmos ad introitum Missae cantari instituit. De quibus Gregorius Papa postea Antiphonas (sung alternately) ad introitum Missae modulando composuit. Unde adhuc primus versus ejusdem psalmi ad introitum cantatur, qui olim totus ad introitum cantabatur (Honor. Augustod., Gemma animae, I, chap. 87). Probst seeks to prove that Gelasius I (492-96) was the first to order the antiphonal psalm chants as an introduction to the celebration of the Mass. The Ordo Rom. VII, n. 2, makes the first mention of the Antiphona ad Introitum.*

⁴⁰ In addition to the Mass formulas found in the *Proprium Missarum de tempore*, in the *Proprium Missarum de Sanctis*, and in the *Commune Sanctorum*, that is, besides the Masses celebrated *secundum ordinem Officii*, there is still a number of Masses celebrated *extra ordinem Officii*; namely, Requiem and votive Masses. In these the contents of the changeable formula are not regulated by the course of the ecclesiastical year, but according to the special intention for which the sacrifice is principally offered.

as full and varied as the liturgical year itself. Joy, sadness, lamentation, hope, longing of the soul, fear, praise, thanksgiving, petition: in short, every religious sentiment with which the soul should be filled in the course of the ecclesiastical year finds in the Introit brief and forcible expression.

The Introit . . . seems intended to be the keynote to the whole service; which, being one in its essence, yet adapts itself to all our wants, whether of propitiation or of thanksgiving, whether of evils to be averted or of blessings to be gained. Sometimes this introductory verse is loud and joyous,—*Gaudeamus omnes in Domino*; sometimes low and plaintive,—*Miserere mihi, Domine, quoniam tribulor*; in the paschal solemnity the *Alleluia* rings through it all, like a peal of cheerful bells; in Passion-tide, even the *Gloria Patri* is silent, and it falls melancholy and dull; when a saint is commemorated, the nature of his virtues and triumphs is at once proclaimed; if it be a festival of Our Lord, the mystery which it celebrates is solemnly announced.⁴¹

The Introit strikes the tone proper for the Mass of the day.⁴² The chord thus struck sounds again, after shorter or longer intervals, in the Gradual as well as in the Offertory and Communion. As the variable prayers and didactical readings also harmonize with these pieces of chant, there pervades throughout the whole Mass a uniform fundamental tone: the idea of the feast or the thought of the day.

⁴¹ Wiseman, "On Prayer and Prayer-Books," *Essays on Various Subjects*, II, 199.

⁴² *Introitus Missae cum magna devotione cantandus est sive legendus, et ipsa cordis affectio ad Deum sollicite dirigenda. Et quia dispersio cordis ad alia devotionem hanc tollit, propterea sacerdos, antequam Missam inchoat, debet Introitum legendum praescire, et dicenda atque agenda in promptu praenoscerere, ne talia quaerendo distractionem et indevotionem incurrat (Dion. Carthus., loc. cit.).*

CHAPTER XX

THE KYRIE AND THE GLORIA

1. After the Introit the priest returns to the middle of the altar and recites the Kyrie eleison ¹ (= *Domine miserere*: "Lord, have mercy"); alternately with the acolyte he nine times addresses to the triune God fervent petitions for mercy. The Kyrie is a cry for help of touching humility and simplicity, one proceeding naturally and directly from the heart that is in distress and want; hence we come across it in many parts of the Old and the New Testament, and formerly it resounded thousands of times from the lips of the people supplicating God in penitential procession. In Rome the Kyrie was originally sung by the clergy and people; later by two choirs that repeated it alternately until the celebrant gave the sign to cease.² The custom of invoking the divine mercy nine consecu-

¹ This cry is derived from the Greek *Κύριε ἐλέησον*. The latter word is the aorist imperative of *ἐλεέω* = *miserere*, and in the Latin Church language it is read *eleison*; for the Church favors Itacism, that is, she pronounces η as *i*. Besides, as it is read according to the Greek accent, the *i* is short and the word *e-lé-i-son* has four, not three syllables. (Cf. Stadler, *Ordo divini officii*, II, i, 2, § 105.) The Kyrie must be recited by the priest at all Masses without exception; hence also on Holy Saturday. Very appropriately this prayer of supplication is said before the image of the Crucified, whereas in former times it was recited on the Epistle side (as it is still done in the Solemn Mass).

² The Kyrie chant is, of course, differently arranged in all the liturgies of the East and West. As the Second Council of Vaison (529) says, it was at that time the universal custom to recite the Kyrie at Mass *frequentius cum grandi affectu et compunctione*. St. Gregory the Great writes to Bishop John of Syracuse concerning the divergence existing in his time in regard to the Kyrie chant in the Roman and Greek Churches: "The Greeks recite *Kyrie eleison* all together, but with us the clerics say it, while the people answer; we also recite *Christe eleison* as often, which the Greeks do not." (Cf. Bona, *Rer. liturg.*, II, iv, 1.) In the Ambrosian liturgy the priest alone recites *Kyrie eleison* three times, and that at three different times: after the Gloria, after the Gospel, and after the Communion. Formerly the Kyrie was omitted at Rome in the Mass itself if it had immediately before been said in the Litany. Thus it was still practised in the twelfth century. *Kyrie non dicitur propter Litaniam processionis, ubi dictum est Kyrie (Ordo Rom. XI, n. 63).*

tive times in the Roman liturgy has been prescribed and practiced since the eleventh century.

2. The frequent repetition of the Kyrie denotes in general the ardor, perseverance, and importunity with which we, conscious of our sinfulness and unworthiness, implore mercy and assistance. There is also a still higher, mystical meaning in the threefold repetition of the three invocations. The three divine persons are separately and consecutively invoked: first the Father by the *Kyrie eleison*; then the Son by the *Christe eleison*; and finally the Holy Ghost by the *Kyrie eleison*. The invocation of each of the divine persons is repeated exactly three times to signify that with each of the divine persons the two others are at least virtually invoked,³ since by the fact of their mystical indwelling in one another (*circuminsessio*) all three of the divine persons are eternally in one another.⁴ Other meanings founded for the most part in devotion have also been given to this ninefold cry for mercy; thus, for instance, the ninefold signification of the Kyrie is devoutly thought to refer to the nine kinds of sins and wants, or it has been said that thereby we express our desire of union with the nine choirs of angels.⁵

3. The Kyrie is the only prayer in Greek still retained in the Mass rite. The principal reason for this may be that the common supplication of the people for help passed already in the earliest times from the Eastern into the Western Church, and on account of its frequent use the Kyrie became universally known and loved; hence this venerable form of supplication was not translated into

³ Quoniam unus est Patris et Filii Spiritus, necesse est ut dum invocatur Pater aut Filius, in Patre et Filio etiam ille qui unus est utriusque Spiritus invocetur (S. Fulgent., *Contra Fabian.*, fragm. 31).

⁴ Secunda pars praeparationis continet commemorationem praesentis miseriae, dum misericordia petitur, dicendo: *Kyrie eleison*, ter quidem pro persona Patris; ter autem pro persona Filii, cum dicitur: *Christe eleison*, et ter pro persona Spiritus sancti, cum subditur: *Kyrie eleison*, contra triplicem miseriam ignorantiae, culpa et poenae, vel ad significandum, quod omnes personae sunt in se invicem (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 4).

⁵ Singulis in Trinitate personis ternam miseriam, nimirum culpa, poenae et defectus bonorum spiritualium exponimus, ut oculis misericordiae suae nos respicientes auferre dignentur a nobis miseriam culpa indulgendo, miseriam poenae auferendo afflictiones, miseriam defectus donando spiritualia, quibus maxime indigemus; atque ita ss. Trinitatis misericordia novem choris Angelorum aliquando consociemur. Ut autem attentius et devotius haec verba proferamus, expedit speciatim meminisse culparum nostrarum in prima harum vocum recitatione, poenarum et afflictionum in secunda, ac defectum in tertia (Van der Burg, *Brevis elucidatio totius Missae*, chap. 2, § 4).

Latin. In addition to the Greek *Kyrie*, the Hebrew expressions, *amen*, *alleluja*, *sabaoth*, and *hosanna*, appear in the Latin Mass prayers, and thus in the celebration of the unbloody sacrifice those three languages are still united which proclaimed to the world, in the glorious title on the cross, Christ's sovereignty (John 19:19).⁶

The *Kyrie*, as an expression of our wants, is never omitted in the celebration of Mass, and has a very appropriate place in its rite; while it follows the Introit quite naturally, at the same time it forms a suitable preparation for the Collect or for the Gloria. The Introit expresses, sometimes in a vein of joy and praise, again in a strain of tender pity or humble supplication, such thoughts and sentiments as should principally occupy the soul at the daily celebration of Mass, and thus serves as an introduction to the special feast. At the remembrance of this celebration we are so overpowered by the conviction of our own unworthiness, weakness, and indigence, that our heart is involuntarily compelled to break out into the oft-repeated supplications of the *Kyrie* since God's mercy alone can make us worthy of celebrating the holy mysteries in a proper manner.

The special celebration of the day, begun with the Introit, gives us, then, an opportunity at once to present our particular intentions and petitions to the Lord: here the *Kyrie* is best adapted to place the soul in suitable dispositions for prayer and to prepare it for the reception of gifts.⁷ Humility, confidence, and desire constitute the key to the riches of divine mercy. Now, precisely in the repeated cry of the *Kyrie* is expressed the humble acknowledgment of one's own misery, as well as one's firm confidence in divine mercy and ardent desire for divine help. It therefore disposes us for the recitation of the Collects that follow it. "By considering our own wretchedness, we are taught to pray for what we need; by meditating on the divine mercy we are admonished with what fervent desires we

⁶ *Ecclesia latina merito et satis convenienter retinet voces aliquas, tum graecas, tum hebraicas, eisque utitur in Missa, in Officio, in Litaniis etc., praesertim Kyrie eleison, i.e. Domine miserere. Primo quia habent peculiarem quandam emphasim, et ob frequentem usum aequae intelliguntur ac voces latinae. Secundo retinentur ob venerationem antiquitatis. Tertio ad indicandam Ecclesiae catholicae unitatem, praesertim ex populis hebraeis, latinis et graecis, quorum omnium litteris conscriptus fuit titulus crucis Christi (Quarti, *De Litaniis Sanctorum*, sect. I, punct. 6).*

⁷ *Ideo et Kyrie eleison cantatur, ut subsequens oratio sacerdotis exaudiatur (Honor. Augustod., Gemma animae, I, chap. 92). Cf. Amalar., De eccles. offic., III, chap. 6.*

should present our petitions. On these two wings, the misery of man and the mercy of our divine Redeemer, prayer ascends heavenwards." With humility and confidence, therefore, we should repeat the Kyrie, and in this disposition "go with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid" (Heb. 4:16).⁸

The Kyrie is, moreover, a fitting preface to the Gloria; filled with joy and gratitude at the very thought of the graces and favors of our merciful God, we are impelled to bless His holy name. "The *Kyrie eleison*,—that cry for mercy which is to be found in every liturgy of East and West,—seems introduced as if to give grander effect to the outburst of joy and praise which succeeds it in the *Gloria in excelsis*; it is a deepening of our humiliation, that our triumph may be the better felt."⁹

4. As long as we children of Eve are constrained to remain in this vale of tears weeping and mourning, in exile and misery, no prayer is so necessary, none so befitting our condition, as the Kyrie, this heartfelt appeal, this humble cry for mercy to the triune God,¹⁰

⁸ In omni Dei obsequio, praesertim in oratione et laude divina, duo nobis consideranda incumbunt, videlicet Dei misericordia et nostra miseria. Intelligo autem pro misericordia Dei omnia, quae ad bonitatem ejus respiciunt, scilicet caritatem ejus et liberalitatem et patientiam super nos. Per nostram vero miseriam universa intellego, quae nostram imperfectionem, culpam et fragilitatem concernunt. Haec igitur intente nobis pensanda sunt, quatenus ex contemplatione divinae bonitatis atque clementiae respiremus et cum fiducia ad thronum gratiae accedamus, in plenitudine fidei, certissime agnoscentes, quia quidquid oraverimus Patrem in nomine Filii, dabitur nobis, si tamen perseveranter infatigabiliterque pulsemus. Dicit non valet, quantum omnipotenti Deo perseverans ac fiducialis oratio placeat. Ex consideratione vero nostrae miseriae humiliemur et displiceamus nobis vilesque simus in oculis nostris. . . . Sic ergo sacrosancta Ecclesia convenienter instituit, ut post Introitum, in quo laus Dei cantata est, ad nos ipsos redeamus et Dei misericordiam imploremus dicentes: *Kyrie eleison*, i.e. Domine miserere. Et dicitur novies, quatenus nostram imperfectionem novies profitentes ad perfectionem ac societatem novem ordinum Angelorum perducamur (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 9).

⁹ Wiseman, *loc. cit.*

¹⁰ Inter omnia verba deprecativa verbum hoc *Miserere* videtur efficacissimum et insuperabile esse et Omnipotenti quodammodo praevalere. Nam quidquid dicenti *Miserere* dixerit Deus, ipse orans opponere potest et dicere: *Miserere*. Si dixerit Deus: "Impius es et omni misericordia mea indignus," respondeat miser: *Miserere*. Nam quia indignus sum, imo indignissimus et quasi infinite indignior, quam ego ipse comprehendere valeo, ideo dico et oro: *Miserere mei*. Et quidquid huic orationi objiciatur, scil. quod non oro ex zelo justitiae, ex caritatis affectu, idem verbum resumam dicamque: *Mise-*

who is compassionate and merciful, long-suffering and plenteous in mercy (Ps. 102:8). "Man born of woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries" (Job 14:1), "all his days are full of sorrows and miseries" (Eccles. 2:23); who can enumerate them: the sins, temptations, dangers, defects, weaknesses, sufferings, wants, diseases, cares, adversities, hardships, and tribulations that here below surround man and oppress his heart? Freedom and redemption, protection and assistance, consolation and refreshment, poor man finds only with God, who is good and whose mercy endureth forever (Ps. 117:1). "As a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear Him; for He knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are dust" (Ps. 102:13 f.). The mercy of God will follow us all the days of our life (Ps. 22:6); and like a never-setting star in the heavens, it sheds its gentle and consoling rays upon us, in the morning as well as in the evening of life. But in order that the plenitude of divine mercy may descend upon us, the cry of the Kyrie must proceed from a heart penetrated with a lively sense of its poverty and misery.¹¹

THE GLORIA

1. After the Kyrie the Gloria frequently follows. It is called the greater doxology because, in comparison with the *Gloria Patri*, it contains more extensive praise of the triune God; it is called the Angelic Hymn¹² because its opening words were sung by a host of heavenly spirits on the plains of Bethlehem on the night of Christ's birth.

rere. Etenim quia ex zelo justitiae et caritate non oro, peto ut mihi miserrimo miserearis et des mihi ex zelo justitiae atque ex caritate et ut tibi placeat orare. A tua justitia ad misericordiam tuam confugio, quae in infinitum major est omni malitia et miseria mea: ideo miserere mei, a cujus verbi prolatione numquam cessabo (Dion. Carthus., De orat., a. 27).

¹¹ Constat ex his, cum quanta humilitate et affectione contritioneque cordis haec sacratissima verba Kyrie eleison dicenda sint, non cursorie, sed morose, quatenus presbyter omne genus peccati sibi indulgeri desideret, et tanto haec verba ferventius dicat quanto ea saepius iterat. Nam et ideo saepius iterantur, ut semper devotius explicentur (*idem., Exposit. Miss., 9*).

¹² If the Gloria is called *hymnus angelicus*, the Te Deum *hymnus ss. Ambrosii et Augustini*, the Preface *hymnus gloriae*, then the word *hymnus* is not used as a technical term, but mainly in the general sense of a chant or song of praise; for, in a stricter sense, by a church hymn is understood a spiritual canticle expressing religious sentiments in a concise form and composed, or at least adapted, for public liturgical use.

The compiler of this ancient hymn cannot be historically ascertained; only this much is undoubtedly certain: the Gloria is not of Latin, but of Greek origin, and it came from the East.¹³ The Latin text, therefore, is not the original one, but a somewhat free translation or rearrangement of the original Greek text, which for good reasons is ascribed to St. Hilary of Poitiers, Doctor of the Church (d. 366).

In the Orient it was customary in the third century to make use of the greater doxology in the liturgy, but only as a morning hymn in the little hours of the Divine Office, not at the Eucharistic celebration. Even now it is not recited at Mass by the Greeks; but only the words of the angels, without further additions, are to be found in some Oriental liturgies, for instance, in that of St. James, where they are repeated three times.

With regard to the insertion of the Gloria into the Roman Mass, we have only obscure and uncertain accounts.¹⁴ The use of the Gloria was originally and for a long period rather restricted: it served for the expression of Christmas joy and Easter exultation.¹⁵ Until nearly the close of the eleventh century the rubrics of the Gregorian

¹³ In a somewhat altered composition, but which in all probability is the original, we find the greater doxology already in the *Apostolic Constitutions* (VIII, chap. 47) as an ecclesiastical morning prayer.

¹⁴ According to the *Liber Pontificalis*, Pope Telesphorus (d. 136 or 138) prescribed the Angelic Hymn for Christmas night; and Pope Symmachus (d. 514) for Sundays and the feasts of martyrs. Telesphorus constituit, ut . . . Natali Domini noctu Missae celebrarentur . . . et ante sacrificium hymnus diceretur angelicus, h. e. *Gloria in excelsis Deo*. Symmachus constituit, ut omne die dominica vel natalicia martyrum *Gloria in excelsis* hymnus diceretur (Duch., I, 129, 263). About the middle of the eleventh century, the ordinance of *Sacrament. Gregor.* was still in force: Dicitur *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, si episcopus fuerit, tantummodo die dominico sive diebus festis; a presbyteris autem minime dicitur nisi solo in Pascha. (Cf. Bern. Augiens. [d. 1048], *Libell. de quibusdam rebus ad Missae officium pertinentibus*, chap. 2.)

¹⁵ Until the ninth century the Gloria, as the *Te Deum* at present, was sung in solemn thanksgiving. Since the eleventh century at the Introit, Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei there occur many so-called tropes, that is, explanatory and amplified additions with an abundance of melody. These insertions or adornments of the liturgical text, as a rule, took place only on feast days and were often collected in separate books (*libri troparii vel troponarii*). An amplified Gloria, *Gloria Marianum*, was still recited here and there at the time of the revision of the missal, in spite of the issued prohibition; therefore, in the *Ordo Missae* of the Roman Missal, after the Gloria the express ordinance was inserted: Sic (*thus, as it is given in the missal and without addition*) dicitur *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, etiam in Missis beatae Mariae, quando dicendum est.

Sacramentary prevailed, which granted or prescribed the recitation of the Gloria by the bishop on all Sundays and feast days; by the priest, on the contrary, only at Easter. But from that time this privilege of the bishops has been extended also to priests. Now the Gloria is said in almost all Masses except those celebrated with purple vestments and ferial Masses celebrated with green vestments. The Gloria and the Te Deum are enthusiastic, sublime chants of joy and exultation, expressive of festal rejoicing; hence both are omitted on days and in seasons which are devoted mainly to mourning and penance, or which at least are without a festive character.¹⁶

2. The greater Doxology is as follows:

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

Laudamus te: benedicimus te: adoramus te: glorificamus te: gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam: Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.

Domine, Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe: Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris. Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe, cum sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.

We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we adore Thee, we glorify Thee. We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.

O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son, O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Who sitteth at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

For Thou only art holy, Thou only art the Lord, Thou only, O Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

¹⁶ Micrologus (chap. 2) wrote at the close of the eleventh century: In omni festo, quod plenum habet officium, excepto intra Adventum Domini et Septuagesimam et natali Innocentium tam presbyter quam episcopus *Gloria in excelsis* dicunt. Quod etiam numquam post meridiem legitur dicendum nisi in Coena Domini, ubi chrisma conficitur et in sabbatis Paschae et Pentecostes. According to Amalarius (IV, chap. 30), the Gloria was omitted dur-

The Gloria is the sublime triumphal chant of redemption, part of which first resounded from the choir of heavenly hosts; the rest is an outpouring from the heart of the Church. Choirs of angels intoned it at the birth of the Saviour; the Church, initiated in the mysteries of God, has continued and completed it.¹⁷ On the plains of Bethlehem the heavenly notes of the "*Gloria in excelsis*" resounded;¹⁸ they pealed forth with the sublimity and power of tones of thunder, full and melodious as "the roaring of many waters." The angels glorify the Child in the crib. With His birth honor is restored to God and peace to men. And this makes the angels rejoice greatly. When at Bethlehem, amid the silence of the midnight hour, the flower from the root of Jesse came forth and bloomed, visible to mortal eye, filling the world with its fragrance, then could the heavens open, then did the angels sing melodies, such as the listening earth had never heard before, melodies as might be sung only to

ing Advent about the ninth century *in aliquibus locis*. The same statement is made by Honorius of Autun (d. 1145) in the twelfth century (cf. *Gemma animae*, III, chap. 1). In the Roman Church, on the contrary, the Sundays of Advent were celebrated in a festive manner until toward the close of the twelfth century, with white vestments and the Angelic Hymn (cf. *Ordo Rom. XI*, n. 4). From this date Rome also took up the practice that had for a long time existed in other churches, *ut hymnus angelicus laetius solemniusque Dominici natalis die repeteretur*.

¹⁷ Hymnum angelicum, in quo verbis quaedam ab angelis circa nativitatem dominicam in laudem Dei sunt prolata, sequentes ss. Patres ad communem sanctae et individuae Trinitatis laudationem dulcissimas et congruentissimas dictiones addiderunt, ut sicut ejus principium a coelestibus est ordinatum ministris, ita etiam tota ejus series divinis esset plena mysteriis (Walafrid. Strabo, chap. 22).

¹⁸ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will" (Luke 2:14). The angelic hymn of praise is to be considered not as a wish but as an assertion, and, therefore, not *ἔστω*, *sit*, but *ἔστω*, *est*, is to be understood. By the birth and the whole work of the Saviour, infinite glory is given to God reigning in heaven, and on earth peace (the fullness of all the supernatural goods of salvation) to men, on whom, instead of anger, the divine good will or pleasure (*bona voluntas Dei*; cf. Ps. 5:13; 50:20) now again rests. In their liturgical use the angels' words form a chant of praise, intoned by the Church or by us, and may then properly be considered as a wish (*sit*). Here, indeed, there is question of the subjective realization and individual application of that which in the Angelic Hymn is represented as already realized and accomplished. In like manner, we may refer the words *bonae voluntatis* also to the good will of men redeemed, effected by the divine favor and grace; this good disposition, this desire of salvation, is indispensable if we wish to draw down on ourselves the divine pleasure and the plenitude of peace.

grace a triumph wherein the eternal God celebrated the victories of His own boundless love.

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. ("Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.") Thus do we joyfully sing at the celebration of Mass in unison with the choir of heavenly hosts; for it is at the altar that this joyful message of the angel has its perfect fulfillment. There all due honor and the highest glory are rendered to God; for an infinite person, the God-man Jesus Christ, humbles and sacrifices Himself to the praise and adoration of the divine Majesty. There true peace is imparted to man; for Christ, by His sacrifice, purchased for us pardon, reconciliation, and happiness. The words, *Gloria Deo et pax hominibus*, constitute the theme of the entire hymn. The Gloria is a chant of praise, thanksgiving, and petition; for the praise of God is interrupted by thanksgiving and petition, which are likewise acts of adoration and contribute to proclaim the divine glory.

Gloria in excelsis Deo ("Glory to God in the highest"). The heavenly hosts never weary of praising and magnifying God. St. John in a vision heard the heavenly chant: "Let us be glad and rejoice and give glory to Him," the Lord our God, the Almighty (Apoc. 19:7). In this grand hymn, this eternal canticle of praise once heard on the plains of Bethlehem, all creation, and especially man, should unite. In praise of the Most High do the stars twinkle, the flowers bloom, the birds sing; but far more precious and exalted is the praise which man consciously and freely presents to God by prayer. Hence out of the fullness of our heart we cry to the Lord: *Laudamus te*¹⁹ ("We praise Thee"). Yes, let us praise the Lord, for

¹⁹ At the words *laudare, benedicere, adorare, glorificare*, the varied meaning and the proper succession is worthy of consideration. The most general idea, contained in all four expressions, is that of honoring; for they denote religious veneration, but each in a different manner. *Laus* and *benedictio* are marks of honor which consist in acknowledging, extolling, and announcing the perfections, privileges, virtues, and merits of others with heart and mouth. *Laus Dei est sapida quaedam cognitio majestatis et perfectionis divinae, ejusque per verba interiora et exteriora magnificentio et exaltatio* (Alvarez de Paz, *De studio orationis*, Bk. IV, Part III, chap. 14). *Laudare* and *benedicere* are indeed often used without distinction, but here their signification may be somewhat distinct; for *benedicere* (= to praise) expresses an intensive, corroborated, and increased praise, as is evident from the liturgical doxological formula *Benedictus Deus* ("May God be highly praised"). Through the liturgical use of this formula, the word *benedictus* has obtained a certain solemnity, and in the Old Testament, as well as in the New,

He is great and exceedingly worthy of praise, and of His greatness there is no end (Ps. 144: 3). Let us proclaim aloud, let us with heart and lips exalt His infinite power and majesty, His never-failing goodness and mercy, His boundless holiness and justice, His impenetrable ways and decrees. It is the blessed duty and vocation of the priest always to praise God, seven times a day to withdraw from the world and in the hours of prayer to chant the praises of the Lord.²⁰

Benedicimus te ("We bless Thee").²¹ The blessing, that is, the praising of God, is a spirited and sublime praise, proceeding from the overflowing sentiments of the heart, which we offer to the Lord chiefly to acknowledge Him as the source of all blessings, graces, and mercies imparted to us. The consideration of the divine mercies inflames the heart to bless the name of the Lord, who above all is deserving of praise.²² To the praise of the Most High, St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, exhorts us: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual canticles, singing in grace in

where it occurs in eight passages, it is almost always employed only with reference to God (Rom. 8:5). Not merely in degree, but essentially different from *laus* and *benedictio*, is *adoratio* (adoration). In this restricted meaning *adorare* is to be taken, as it otherwise often designates religious veneration in general. If to the knowledge and confession of the infinite majesty of God a corresponding subjection is added, then *laus* and *benedictio* become *adoratio* (adoration). The word *glorificare* (to exalt, to ennoble) includes a further quality: it designates a special *laudare*, *benedicere*, et *adorare*, such as brings about among other persons glory for the one that is praised, extolled, and adored. Gloria idem fere est quod honorifica laus; addit enim effectum quemdam, quem laus efficit in aliis, scil. bonam existimationem de re laudata. Est enim gloria clara cum laude notitia; unde glorificare aliquem nihil aliud est quam eum ita laudare, ut apud alios bona ejus existimatio inde oriatur (cf. Suarez, disp. LI, sect. I, n. 1-4).

²⁰ Non est laboriosa, sed amabilis et optanda servitus, in Dei laudibus perpetuo assistere (Beda Venerab., I, homil. IX).

²¹ Cf. S. August., *Enarrat. in Ps.*, 66:1. Benedicimus Deum, in quantum ejus bonitatem corde recognoscimus et ore confitemur (S. Thom., *In ep. ad Rom.*, chap. 1, lect. 7).

²² *Benedicimus te* = bonum de te vel tibi dicimus. Nos benedicimus Deo, et Deus benedicit nobis, sed differenter valde. Nam benedictio Dei est collatio munerum divinorum et multiplicatio eorundem; benedictio igitur Dei est causa bonitatis et gratiae et sanctitatis in nobis. Benedictio vero, qua nos Deum benedicimus, est quaedam confessio, qua omnia bona Deo adscribimus tanquam fonti bonitatis et sanctitatis ac gratiae (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 10).

your hearts to God" (Col. 3:16). "Singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19) for all gifts and favors conferred.

Adoramus te ("We adore Thee"). Adoration in itself is far more sublime than the praise and extolling of God; for it is that supreme honor which may not be given to a mere creature, but which is due and may be rendered only to the divine Majesty. It is by adoration that man worships his God as the infinitely perfect Being, before whom all that is created vanishes as mere nothingness. Adoration is peculiarly the prayer of the angels and saints in heaven. And we also in this vale of tears, being animated with holy joy and fear, should "adore and fall down and weep before the Lord that made us" (Ps. 94:6), so that heaven and earth may form together a choir of humble, joyous adoration.

Glorificamus te ("We glorify Thee"). The Lord for His own honor and glory hath created all things (Prov. 16:4); the faithful hath He called, redeemed, and sanctified, that they may be "unto the praise of the glory of His grace" (Eph. 1:6). Every creature is in its way destined to glorify God. All that we do should be done for the greater glory of God, should tend to promote God's honor: *Omnia ad majorem Dei gloriam*. We principally proclaim God's glory by praising Him, exalting Him, and adoring Him. When we praise, exalt, and adore God, we bear a public testimony to His power, wisdom, and goodness, we acknowledge His absolute perfection and supreme dominion, spread His fame and His honor, make known His name.²³ The Psalmist admonishes us: "Bring to the Lord glory and honor, bring to the Lord glory to His name, adore ye the Lord in His holy court!" (Ps. 28:2.)

Now the hymn of praise, exaltation, and adoration changes to a canticle of thanksgiving of almost ecstatic joy: *Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam* ("We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory").²⁴ These words have a wonderful and profound mean-

²³ *Glorificamus te*. DICIMUR Deum sanctificare vel magnificare, dum ei in sanctitate et aequitate servimus sicque eum magnum et sanctum esse ostendimus. Sic quoque Deum glorificamus, dum nomen ipsius aliis manifestamus, ac per hoc ipsum famosum et in animo aliorum gloriosum efficimus (*ibid.*).

²⁴ The words *propter magnam gloriam tuam* may likewise be referred to the four foregoing expressions, and thus the "great glory" of the heavenly Father may be indicated as the reason and object of our praise as well as of our adoration and glorification, but even then it needs to be explained how we may also thank God "on account of His great glory." In the Celtic Stowe

ing, springing as they do from an ardent and pure love of God. We thank God for gifts and benefits received; but how can we thank Him because of His great glory? Many writers, in seeking to solve the difficulty here presented, would have, for example, the Incarnation or the mercy of God understood to be the glory and magnificence that inspire our grateful thanks. This meaning is evidently too restricted, for the expression "glory" is here to be taken in its most comprehensive sense: it refers to the internal as well as to the external glory of God. We therefore thank God because of His great glory, which from all eternity He has in Himself and of Himself; we also thank Him by reason of that great glory which He has procured and continues to procure for Himself in time by the works of His hands.

God in Himself, that is, according to His nature, is infinitely glorious, infinitely worthy of glory, the uncreated glory itself. This interior, eternally unchangeable, and impenetrable glory of God we must admire, praise, adore; it may also be a subject of gratitude for us, inasmuch as by the perfect love of God, the divine glory becomes in a manner our property and the source of joy to us.²⁵ For this love of benevolence unites us most intimately with God. "He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him" (I John 4:16). Nothing pleases the loving soul more than the consideration of the infinite majesty, beauty, goodness, holiness, wisdom, power, and mercy of God; therefore, it is not surprising that the soul breaks out into a joyous chant of thanksgiving because of the eternal and infinite glory of God.

Still our thanks have reference principally to the exterior glory of God, wherewith heaven and earth are filled. The rays of the glory of the Creator and Redeemer strike us everywhere. In the works of His power, the magnanimous deeds of His love and mercy,

Missal of the seventh or eighth century we read: *Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam misericordiam tuam.*

²⁵ Gaudium est quies animi in bono suo jam adepto. Bonum autem proprium non solum est quod quisque in se habet, sed etiam quod habet in aliis sibi conjunctis. Aspicias ergo Dominum ut benignissimum et dilectissimum Patrem tuum, a quo genitus es, et (ut speras) ad aeternam haereditatem efficaciter vocatus, et omnia ejus bona propria reputabis. Gaudebis de omnibus perfectionibus Dei tui, ut de ejus sapientia, bonitate et potentia et reliquis, ut de bonis benignissimi Patris tui. Et sufficiat tibi, quod ipse sit infinite beatus et dives adeoque exultes de gloria ejus (Alvarez de Paz, *De studio orationis*, Bk. VI, Part III, chap. 12, exercit. 11).

the Lord has exteriorly revealed His interior glory. If God acts outwardly, He glorifies Himself; but this self-glorification of God redounds to man's profit and constitutes our happiness and bliss.²⁶ God's glory is our salvation; that which gives God glory, gives us an abundance of graces and blessings. The creation of heaven and earth, the Incarnation, the life, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, the institution of the Eucharistic sacrifice and of the sacraments, the guidance of the Church throughout all ages, the sanctification and happiness of man, the future transformation of the world—all these works have for their object, first of all, the glory and honor of the Most High, and, at the same time, the welfare and salvation of man. Our supreme good, our eternal happiness, is the highest glory of God: nowhere is God more glorified than in heaven, where the blessed contemplate, enjoy, love, praise, and glorify forever face to face His infinite goodness and beauty.²⁷ The thanksgiving offered to the Lord on account of His great glory thus has reference principally to the marvelous works and ways of God in the kingdom of nature and of grace, from which flows our happiness and beatitude.²⁸ The Church does not say: We thank Thee, O Lord, for Thy many benefits or mercies; but she expresses herself in terms exceedingly beautiful and ingenious: "We thank Thee for Thy great glory."

²⁶ Deus "omnia operatus est propter se," h. e. operatus est omnia ad hoc, ut suam bonitatem, sapientiam, potentiam, magnificentiam, gloriam etc. creaturis ostenderet et communicaret, quod est bonum creaturarum, non Dei. Deus enim ex hac sui communicatione nihil acquisivit, cum nihil ei addi possit (unde et gloria, qua eum glorificant homines, Angeli et creaturae omnes, nihil ei addit, cum ipse in se habeat gloriam increatam et infinitam); sed creaturae suam essentiam, proprietates, dotes, omneque bonum suum hauserunt a Deo (Corn. a Lap., *In Proverb. Salom.*, 16:4).

²⁷ Dei glorificatio completur ipsa exaltatione et beatitudine Sanctorum, seu potius ipsa exaltatio et beatitudo Sanctorum est suprema Dei gloria objectiva et formalis, quod Deus ut summum bonum a creatura per visionem, amorem et inde consequentem beatitudinem in perpetuas aeternitates possidetur (Franzelin, *De Deo uno*, thes. 29).

²⁸ Dum Deus spectat suam summam gloriam, eo ipso necessario spectat et intendit summum bonum nostrum, quia summa ejus gloria est summum bonum nostrum et summum bonum nostrum non potest esse nisi summa ejus gloria. Unde non minus Deo gratias agere debemus, quod quaerat gloriam suam, quam quod quaerat salutem nostram, quia gloria ejus est nostra salus. Hoc in Hymno angelico Ecclesia innuit, cum ait: "Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam;" beneficia enim ipsius in nos sunt gloria ejus (Lessius, *De perfect. divin.*, XIV, chap. 3).

From the heights of the holy and enthusiastic praise of God the Gloria descends to the depths of a humble prayer of supplication; now follows a more detailed amplification of these words of the angels: "*In terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*" ("On earth peace to men of good will"). Peace and reconciliation with God proceed from the Child in the manger, who by His death on the cross established peace and reconciliation between heaven and earth (Col. 1:20). Thus amid the loud jubilant strains of the Gloria, the Church reminds us of our sinfulness and poverty, and humbly petitions our Lord, who brought peace into the world, to relieve our miseries, to reconcile us with the Father and grant us peace. The petition is addressed to Jesus Christ,²⁹ and the most moving reasons are set forth for Him to hear our prayer and to listen to the voice of our supplication (Ps. 129:2).

Domine, Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe: Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris ("O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son, O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father"). With this invocation the Church exhausts herself in extolling her heavenly chief and spouse: she exalts His divinity and sovereignty over all creatures; she praises Him as the only-begotten Son, whom the Father begot before the morning star, before all time (Ps. 109:3), and in whom He is eternally well pleased (Matt. 17:5); she celebrates Him as the divine victim for the honor of God and the salvation of the world; she combines all His divinely human perfections and privileges in the name of Jesus (= Saviour, Redeemer), and Christ (= the anointed, that is, the highest prophet, priest, and king).³⁰

Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis ("Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us"). In torrents and to the

²⁹ Dominus Christus, qui nos exaudit cum Patre, orare pro nobis dignatus est ad Patrem. Quid felicitate nostra certius, quando ille pro nobis orat, qui dat quod orat? Est enim Christus homo et Deus: orat ut homo; dat, quod orat, ut Deus (S. August., *Serm.*, CCXVII, n. 1). Petere et orare competit Christo secundum naturam assumptam, sed posse implere debetur ei secundum naturam assumptam (S. Bonav., III, dist. 17, a. 2, q. 1).

³⁰ Clarificatio nominis Christi est manifestatio cognitionis habitae de Christo, qua cognoscitur esse Dei Filius et Christus et Jesus, et quodlibet istorum est nomen super omne nomen. Nam Filius Dei nominat personam in una natura; Christus autem et Jesus nominant personam in duabus naturis; sed Christus nominat personam in humana natura relata ad divinam, quia dicitur unctus. Jesus autem nominat personam in divina natura relata ad humanam, quia Jesus dicitur Salvator esse et ideo in nomine Jesu Christi debet omne genu curvari (Phil. 2:10), sicut in nomine Filii Dei (*ibid.*, dist. 18, dub. 2).

last drop did Christ shed His precious blood for the atonement and the cleansing of all sins, which unceasingly deluged the world and provoked God's justice to punish. The Son of God assumed a truly human heart, making it the throne of mercy, even allowing it to be opened and pierced with a lance, in order to show mercy and compassion on our weaknesses and errors.

*Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem*⁸¹ *nostram* ("Who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer"). Almost the same words are repeated; for the Church is greatly moved by the mercy and condescension of our divine Saviour, who has loved us and washed our sins in His blood (Apoc. 1:5). Since He has given Himself for all as a propitiatory sacrifice, He will also attend to the petitions of them that fear Him, and He will save them (Ps. 144:19).

Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis ("Who sitteth at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us"). In the holy of holies in heaven Christ reigns at the right of the Father, that is, He excels, even according to His human nature, all creatures in dignity, power, and plenitude of grace; in the fullest measure He shares in the power, sovereignty, and glory of God. In His heavenly exaltation and glorification He is not only our all-powerful mediator and advocate with the Father, but also our most merciful God and Master, who is ever ready with divine power and clemency to forgive us, to succor us in every want, and to assist us in every danger.

In the beginning of the Gloria, we present the Lord our God our homage and our thanks; mindful of our constant necessities, we then address the most ardent supplication to Jesus Christ, who died and rose from the dead, who sitteth at the right hand of God and intercedes for us (Rom. 8:34). This cry for mercy and for a favorable hearing is changed, at the end, into spirited tones of joy; the Gloria now peals forth in sublime praise of the triune God.

⁸¹ *Deprecatio* = the solicitous, urgent, earnest petition, and also, the petition to avert, the petition for grace and pardon. *Precationem et deprecationem, multi nostri hoc idem putant, et hoc quotidiano usu jam omnino praevaluit. Qui autem distinctius latine locuti sunt, precationibus utebantur in optandis bonis. deprecationibus vero in devitandis malis. Precari enim dicebant esse precando bona optare; imprecari mala, quod vulgo jam dicitur maledicere; deprecari autem, mala precando depellere* (S. August., *Epist.* 149 [al. 59], *ad Paulin.*, n. 13).

Quoniam tu solus ³² *Sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe, cum sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.* (“For Thou only art holy, Thou only art the Lord, Thou only, O Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.”) The more profoundly Jesus Christ has debased and humbled Himself for us and for our salvation, so much the more joyfully and gratefully do we chant these words, so replete with an enthusiastic confession of His absolute holiness, sovereignty, and majesty: of His divinity. “The All Holy, the Lord God, the Most High”—these titles are frequently used in Holy Scripture to designate the true God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are by their essence “the only Holy,” ³³ “the only (boundless) Lord,” and “the only Most High.” ³⁴

Jesus Christ is “the (infinitely) Holy One” and, therefore, the source and prototype of all created holiness; even in His humanity

³² The word *solus* may relate either to the preceding subject *tu* or to the following predicate *Sanctus, Dominus, Altissimus*: “Thou alone art (with the Holy Ghost and the Father) the Holy One, the Lord, the Most High,” or “Thou art (with the Holy Ghost and the Father) the only (essentially) Holy One, the only Lord, the only highest.” If *tu* is combined with *solus*, then naturally only the creatures, but not the two other divine persons, are excluded from the possession of the predicate. Non dicimus absolute, quod solus Filius sit Altissimus, sed quod sit Altissimus cum sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris (S. Thom., IIa, q. 31, a. 4 ad 4). A passage parallel to *solus* and *Sanctus* combined together, is found in the prayer of our Saviour to His Father: *Haec est vita aeterna, ut cognoscant te, solum Deum verum* (“This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God”; John 17:3). *Divinae naturae propria attribuuntur Filio Dei, cum ipse solus Sanctus, solus Dominus et solus Altissimus esse enuntiatur. In quibus quidem tribus Filii Dei celebrationibus particula “solus” non excludit reliquas duas divinas personas, Patrem, inquam, et Spiritum Sanctum, quin potius eas includit, cum illa tria praedicata Sanctus, Dominus et Altissimus sint essentialia et divinitatis concernant substantiam. . . . Ex quo protinus evadit dilucidum, particulam illam “solus” naturas alias a divina, ut angelicam et humanam, hic excludere. Non enim angelus aut homo secundum eam rationem sanctus est, qua dicitur Deus sanctus, quandoquidem Deus est absolute Sanctus, Dominus et Altissimus, natura sanctitatem habens, dominatum et altitudinem, et ex se Angelus autem et homo non suapte natura neque ex se sanctimoniam habet, dominium et celsitudinem, sed participatione et sola gratia quadamque a Deo dependentia, perinde atque aër et aqua claritatem mutuantur a sole per se lucido (Clichtov., *Elucidat.*, III).*

³³ Like *Dominus* et *Altissimus*, the word *Sanctus* also is not to be taken here as an adjective, but as a substantive: it designates Him whose whole essence is holiness and from whom proceeds all created holiness.

³⁴ “Let them know that the Lord is Thy name; Thou alone art the Most High (*tu solus altissimus*) over all the earth” (Ps. 82:19).

are to be found all the treasures of grace and virtue. He is still "the Lord,"⁸⁵ the absolute proprietor, sovereign, and judge of the universe; He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords (I Tim. 6: 15), whom all creatures serve and to whom man in particular owes the most profound reverence and submission. He is "the Most High," since by reason of His divine greatness, grandeur, and majesty He infinitely excels all created things. His holy humanity also is exalted and glorified above all things; for God raised Him from the dead and placed Him at His right hand in heaven, above all kingdoms, above all power and might and every name that is mentioned, not only in this world, but also in the world to come.

Thus ends the glorious hymn of praise with a joyous look to heaven and to the glorious majesty of the triune God. We exult because the Son of God possesses with the Holy Ghost the same glory which the Father has from eternity. "Every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2: 11).

3. While the priest recites the Gloria, he stands erect at the middle of the altar with hands joined; only a few simple ceremonies are prescribed to emphasize certain words of the text. At the words *Gloria in excelsis*, the priest, without raising his eyes at the time, extends and elevates his hands to the shoulders, thus giving vent to his eagerness and longing to praise and magnify God. At *Deo* he again joins his hands and bows his head profoundly toward the crucifix on the altar (or toward the Blessed Sacrament when it is exposed). This profound inclination of the head is several times repeated: to express the interior acts of adoration (*adoramus te*), of gratitude (*gratias agimus tibi*), of petition (*suscipe deprecationem nostram*), of reverence (*Jesu Christe*), and to give expression to these acts of homage not merely in words, but also by movements of the body. At the last words of the Gloria the celebrant signs himself with the sign of the cross, principally to close the sublime hymn in a suitable and worthy manner. But as the sign of the cross is of itself a symbolical representation of the Trinity, it may also be referred to the glory of the Holy Trinity expressed in the concluding words of the hymn; for the acknowledgment of the three

⁸⁵ Nomen et ratio Domini soli omnipotenti Deo plene, summe, pure ac proprie competit, quippe qui solus universale, primordiale, independens ac nulli subjectum habet dominium (Dion. Carthus., *In Luc.*, 1:68).

divine persons is often, although not always, accompanied by the sign of the cross.³⁶

4. This Angelic Hymn should be recited and sung with angelic devotion.³⁷ During its recitation we should unite in heart and lips with the choirs of the heavenly hosts, who daily assemble around the altar and never grow weary of chanting God's praise and our happiness, as they once sang at the crib of the newborn Saviour.³⁸

In this hymn we are reminded of the marvelous joy which came to the whole world when God sent to condemned man a Saviour from heaven. This hymn the Church of God likewise sings with great joy, like unto that joy which any man might in all reason experience on favorably and bounteously receiving what he stood in great need of, for which he had entertained an ardent desire, and for which he had earnestly and suppliantly prayed. As though our cries to God had just now been heard and we had just obtained from God the fulfillment of our desires, the priest begins with great joy to praise God: "Honor and glory be to God in the highest," and the choir, in the place of all the congregation, who can no longer restrain their hearts overflowing with exultation, unite with the priest and with lips and heart jointly sing the praises of

³⁶ *Litania Kyrie eleison finita, dirigens se Ponifex contra populum incipit Gloria in excelsis Deo et statim regyrat se (he turns around) ad Orientem (to the altar) usquedum finiatur (Ordo Rom. I, n. 9).* This turning of the celebrant to the people while intoning, which probably was meant to invite and summon them to praise God, was no longer customary in the ninth century. According to Amalarius (d. 857) the Gloria was intoned while facing the east (that is, toward the altar, where our Lord is), but on the Epistle side (cf. *De ecclesiast. offic.*, III, chap. 8). Later on it was judged more suitable to recite the Angelic Hymn before the image of the Crucified in the middle of the altar (cf. Durand., *Ration.*, IV, xiii, 1).

³⁷ *Hoc angelicum canticum cum magna cordis laetitia ac devotione dulcissima est cantandum sive legendum, quod fieri nequit, nisi intellectus in contemplatione Dei stabiliter atque sincere firmetur. Quanto enim verba fuerint diviniore, tanto ampliorem advertentiam et elevationem mentis puriorem requirunt; quo etiam sensus divinorum verborum affectuosior est atque profundior, eo modica cordis distractio vehementius nocet ac impedit. Postremo quum Deus attente orandus sit, attentius tamen laudandus est, et tanto attentius quanto majus ac dignius est Deum laudare quam orare (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 10).*

³⁸ *Quaedam dicuntur a choro, quae pertinent ad populum, quorum quaedam chorus totaliter prosequitur, quae scil. toti populo inspirantur; quaedam vero populus prosequitur sacerdote inchoante, qui personam Dei gerit, in signum quod talia pervenerunt ad populum ex revelatione divina, sicut fides et gloria coelestis, et ideo sacerdos inchoat Symbolum fidei et Gloria in excelsis Deo (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 4 ad 6).*

God, who has acted so mercifully toward us, praising and extolling His graces in many joyful words.³⁹

Cardinal Wiseman says of the Gloria: "No composition ever lent itself more perfectly to the musician's skill; none ever afforded better play to the rich and rapid succession of every mode, gay and grave; none better supplied the slow and entreating cadence, or the full and powerful chorus. In the simple Gregorian chant, or in the pure religious harmonies of Palestrina, it is truly 'the Hymn of Angels.'" ⁴⁰

The glorious apostle and protector of Rome, St. Philip Neri, on the day of his death (the feast of Corpus Christ, May 26, 1595) celebrated a low Mass at a very early hour. At the *Gloria in excelsis* he was suddenly rapt in ecstasy and he began to sing; full of devotion and jubilation of heart, in a clear, loud voice, he sang the "Angelic Hymn" from the beginning to the end, as though he had already departed from earth and was rejoicing among the choirs of the blessed spirits.

³⁹ *Ein Vergissmeinnicht*, p. 65.

⁴⁰ "On Prayer and Prayer-Books," *Essays on Various Subjects*, II, 199.

CHAPTER XXI

THE COLLECT

AFTER the Gloria, or the Kyrie, follows the principal prayer, that is, the special prayer for the day or the feast, which is usually called the Collect.¹ It has here an appropriate place in the arrangement of the Mass rite; for by the humble and confident cry for mercy in the Kyrie, as well as by the praising of the divine power and goodness in the Gloria, we have placed ourselves in the proper attitude for prayer, disposing ourselves to receive from God a favorable answer to our petitions. "He hath had regard to the prayer of the humble, and He hath not despised their petition" (Ps. 101:18); "the prayer of the humble and the meek hath always pleased Thee" (Judith 9:16). The Collects are prayers of petition,² in which the Church by the mouth of the priest presents to God her maternal desires and interests, in order to obtain for her children the special gifts and graces corresponding to the different feasts and seasons of the year. The Collect, although but a small part of the liturgy

¹ In the Roman Missal the heading of this prayer is *Oratio*, whereby it is in an eminent sense characterized as a prayer. The name *Collecta* is ascribed to it in the summarized exposition of the Mass rite (*Ritus celebr. Miss.*, tit. 11, n. 1). To the proper prayer of the day there are generally added some others; they too are called *Collectae*, whether prescribed by the rubrics and decrees (*Orationes praescriptae*) or ordered (*Orationes imperatae*, sc. a *Superiore*) by ecclesiastical superiors (pope or bishop), or on certain days of lower rite, when they are added by the celebrant (*ex privata devotione*) to the others (*Orationes votivae*).

² In officio Missae est ordinatissima mixtio commemorationis divinae excellentiae, quam laudamus, et recognitionis nostrae miseriae, pro qua oramus; nam post Confessionem ante altare, in qua nostram profitemur miseriam, inchoatur Introitus, qui est cantus laudis divinae, et statim subjunguntur *Kyrie eleison*, in quo rursus humiliamus nos ipsos, nostram miseriam declarantes. Hoc finito ad Dei laudem convertimur, dicentes *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, quo completo *Oratio* sequitur, in qua denuo consideramus nos ipsos et misericordiam imploramus miseriae nostrae (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 11).

of the Mass, presents some very important and interesting features.

1. The name *Collecta*.³ The formulas for Mass are uniformly arranged; they all have the same arrangement of prayers and readings. The first prayer comes before the Epistle and is called *Oratio*, or the Collect (collected prayer); the second forms the conclusion of the Offertory and is called the *Secreta* (silent prayer); the third and last follows the Communion and is called the Postcommunion (Communion prayer). The origin and meaning of the name Collect is interesting.

The word *collecta*⁴ frequently designated in former times the congregation of the faithful assembled for religious services, and principally for the Sacrifice of the Mass; then it was made to designate the celebration of divine worship itself: the ordinary morning and night prayer, the prayer in choir, the Holy Sacrifice. *Collecta* was the name especially given to the preparatory divine service held on the station days in a particular church (*ecclesia collecta*), which preceded the procession to the station church. At this preliminary celebration the blessing and concluding prayer of the celebrant, the *Oratio ad Collectam* (the prayer at the assembly), formed the principal part. The longer term *Oratio ad Collectam* was then abbreviated and merely the word *Collecta* was used to designate the prayer, thus transferring the name of the whole service to the principal part. Now, if the name Collect was originally given to that prayer which was addressed to the assembled people at the preparatory service of the station celebration (*super populum collectum*), then it was evident that the first Mass prayer to be said soon after in the station church should likewise be called Collect, since it also was a prayer at the *collecta*, that is, at the assembly held for divine worship.⁵

³ Sequitur oratio prima, quam Collectam dicunt (*Ordo Rom. II*, n. 6). Prima oratio dicitur aliquando Oratio, aliquando Collecta (*Amalar. [d. 857], Eclog.*, n. 23). Oratio sive Collecta statim subsequitur, quantumvis Collecta proprie vocetur oratio illa, quae fit in processione, cum populus et universus clerus ab una ecclesia procedit ad alteram (*Beleth.*, chap. 37).

⁴ *Collecta* (from *colligere* = to collect or to gather) is a substantive form instead of *collectio*. In the Vulgate and the Fathers *Collecta* is also the name of the (public) gathering of alms for charity. (Cf. I Cor. 16:2.) The corresponding Greek word *synaxis* (*σύναξις* from *συνάγω*) is also frequently used to denote the assemblies of the faithful for divine worship, the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice, and especially Holy Communion.

⁵ *Collectam* proprie dici volunt eam orationem, quae olim super populum

Like the Mass prayers in general, this prayer before the Epistle is not merely a private prayer of the priest, but a liturgical one, a public prayer which the celebrant recites in the name and by the commission of the Church, and with a special intention for the welfare of the whole Christian people.⁶ At the altar the priest stands as mediator between God and man, he there presents the desires and interests of all before the throne of God. To him applies what is said of the prophet Jeremias: "This is a lover of his brethren and of the people Israel, this is he that prayeth much for the people and for all the city" (II Mac. 15:14). The faithful assisting at the sacrifice are of one heart and one soul, they pray interiorly and unite with the priest, who, as their representative, collects their supplications and desires to present them before God.⁷

As a collective prayer, the Collect is still to be considered under another aspect. It is considered as a prayer which in comprehensive brevity embodies the most important petitions: a summary of all that we, in consideration of the day's celebration, especially seek to obtain from God.⁸ In a similar manner the Collect returns in almost every hour of the Divine Office as a concluding prayer summarizing all that precedes.⁹ It is thus the peculiar prayer of the day, the prayer in which the Church repeatedly expresses what is nearest to her heart and what she principally desires for her children.

Finally, some writers, in a manner more edifying than solid, see in the name *Collecta* an admonition for priest and people to keep all

fieri solebat, quando collectus in unum erat cum universo Clero in una Ecclesia, ut ad aliam procederet, in qua Statio celebranda erat. Ex quo fieri potuit, ut ad reliquas hujusmodi orationes Collectae nomen dimanarit (Bona, *Rer. liturg.*, II, v, 3).

⁶ Oratio publica est, quae a ministris Ecclesiae pro populo manifeste ac solemniter funditur, quam oportet non solum esse mentalem, sed etiam vocalem (Dion. Carthus., IV, dist. 15, q. 6).

⁷ Orationes, quae circa principium Missae dicuntur, Collectae vocantur eo quod sacerdos, qui fungitur ad Deum legatione pro populo petitiones omnium in eis colligat et concludat (Innocent. III, *De sacr. altar. myster.*, II, chap. 27).

⁸ "This name of Collects, in fine, has its origin in the fact that the words, of which they are composed, are taken from all that is most touching and beautiful in Holy Scripture, in the treasures of tradition, or even in the lives of the saints whose feasts are celebrated; it is a wonderful epitome, a substantial abridgment which sums up everything" (Pichenot, *Les Collectes*, p. 8).

⁹ Prime and Compline have, as liturgical morning and evening prayers, always the same Oration, and in the Vespers of Lent the *Oratio super populum* is recited.

their senses and thoughts collected in order to offer to God in profound recollection of spirit (*collectis animis*) the supplications comprised in the prayer.¹⁰ Collect is, therefore, an ingenious, deeply significant term for the first prayer of the Mass; the name itself recalls the beautiful station solemnities of early Christian ages, at the same time it characterizes the Oration as a liturgical prayer of the priest, draws attention to the rich contents embodied in its few words, and reminds us of the pious disposition of soul required for its recitation.¹¹

2. **The kissing of the altar.**¹² The Collect is introduced by the kissing of the altar, the mutual salutation, and the invitation to prayer. After the celebrant at the conclusion of the Gloria has made the sign of the cross on himself, he immediately, without joining his hands,¹³ kisses the altar in the middle, because the altar stone there represents Jesus Christ, the living head and cornerstone of the Church, and there rest the relics of the martyrs. In the kissing of the altar we may distinguish a twofold meaning: first, it is an expres-

¹⁰ Sequitur oratio, quae Collecta dicitur eo quod omnes adstantes Missae se debeant devote colligere et cum sacerdote fideliter orare (S. Bonav., *Exp. Miss.*, chap. 2).

¹¹ Brevis haec oratio ideo Collecta dicitur, quia populo in unum congregato et collecto recitatur, vel quia sacerdos legatione apud Deum pro omnibus fungens omnium vota in unum colligit, vel quia ex selectis s. Scripturae et Ecclesiae verbis compendiosa brevitate colligitur, vel quia omnes collectis animis affectus suos et mentem ad Deum attollunt (Bona, *loc. cit.*).

¹² Already the ancient Roman *Ordines* and all the missals of the Middle Ages prescribe the kissing of the altar several times during the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice. The unauthorized assertion that the kissing of the altar in this manner at the celebration of Mass is, "without doubt, repeated too frequently" (Lüft, *Liturgik*, II, 542), is absolutely to be rejected; for the present ordinance and practice of the Church, according to which the celebrant kisses the altar quite often, is based on the signification of this liturgical *osculum*. As the specially dedicated place of sacrifice, as the resting place of the body and blood of Christ, as the tomb of the relics of the martyrs, and as the symbol of Christ, our divine victim, the altar is incontestably the most excellent and the holiest part of the Church and therefore deserving of all the veneration rendered by the kissing. This liturgical kiss does not merely apply to the sanctified place of sacrifice, but principally to the invisible victim and sacrificing priest, whom the altar symbolically indicates. If the priest thinks of this, he will be touched by this ceremony and incited to devotion, and will joyfully repeat the kissing of the altar in order, in his own name and in the name of the faithful, to present anew to our Saviour sacrificing Himself for us, due love, veneration, and gratitude.

¹³ In like manner the hands must not be joined after the sign of the cross at the end of the Credo and Sanctus (S. R. C., November 12, 1831).

sion of benevolent love; secondly, a sign of reverence and devotedness. The special meaning of kissing the altar at this part of the Mass is now evident. In a full sense, the altar is a symbol of Christ and the saints united with Him in glory; it represents the triumphant Church in heaven, of which Christ is the head and the elect are His members. Now, since the priest stands at the altar as a mediator between heaven and earth, he therefore first salutes with a kiss the triumphant Church,¹⁴ then by the *Dominus vobiscum* he salutes the Church militant in words that call down upon the latter salvation and blessing.

3. **The priest's salutation.** With hands joined before his breast and with downcast eyes, the priest reverently turns toward the people; then, while slowly extending and joining the hands (without raising them), he salutes the entire Church with the benediction: *Dominus vobiscum* ("The Lord be with you").¹⁵ This motion of the hands, which is repeated in precisely the same manner at the *Oremus*, harmonizes perfectly with the meaning of the words spoken. The extending of the hands expresses the earnest desire of the priest that the blessing he invokes may be bestowed; the joining of the hands signifies that the priest humbly mistrusts his own strength and confidently abandons himself to the Lord.

This salutation¹⁶ is repeated eight times during the celebration of Mass to continually excite and increase the spiritual union of the priest and people during the Holy Sacrifice. As the meaning of this general formula of salutation varies, its special signification must be

¹⁴ The priest kisses the altar each time before turning to the people, and, with the words *Dominus vobiscum*, wishes the people to their very face, as it were, the divine blessing in a more impressive manner. He would not turn to the people without having previously evinced toward the sanctuary this reverence, and he would at the same time indicate that all the help and all the blessings of grace that he wishes to the people present, must come from the altar and from our union with the Saviour sacrificing Himself upon it.

¹⁵ This formula of well-wishing dates back to the Old Testament. In the book of Ruth it is related that Booz greeted his reapers in the field with the words: "The Lord be with you," and that they answered him: "The Lord bless thee" (Ruth 2:4). To the Blessed Virgin the archangel Gabriel said: *Dominus tecum*, "The Lord be with thee" (Luke 1:28).

¹⁶ At the recitation of the Divine Office only the priest and deacon (but not the subdeacon) may say the *Dominus vobiscum* before and after the prayer; by this is signified that there is here a question of a canonical salutation, which presupposes the sacrament of orders on the part of him who pronounces the blessing.

explained in connection with what occurs. Where the Lord is, there He imparts manifold graces and blessings. By the formula *Dominus vobiscum* are wished all the goods which are connected with the presence of the Lord.

While expressing his wish that the Lord come into the hearts of the people, the priest at the same time intends to implore for the faithful the grace, light, and strength necessary for a good and perfect prayer.¹⁷ The words *Dominus vobiscum* in this place are, consequently, a request for the assistance of divine grace to enable the faithful to pray efficaciously and to ask for what is proper, since all our sufficiency is from God, and without Christ we can do nothing profitable for salvation (II Cor. 3:5; John 15:5). Prayer presupposes the assistance of divine grace, without which its practice is not possible. "We know not what we should pray for as we ought"; therefore the Spirit must help our infirmity. Yes, the Holy Ghost Himself "asketh for us with unspeakable groanings" (Rom. 8:26), that is, He awakens in us the desire to pray, He urges us to pray, He grants us devotion and perseverance in prayer, He renders our prayer pleasing and meritorious in the sight of God.¹⁸ "The spirit of grace and of prayers" (Zach. 12:10), which the Lord pours out over His Church, is indeed a great and precious gift, since prayer itself is the source of so many blessings.

In addition to the grace of prayer, which is here first of all desired, the salutatory blessing of the priest comprises numberless other graces; for when the Lord enters into a pure and penitent heart, at the same time all good things come along with Him: riches, glory, peace, joy, and happiness. When our Lord is with us, He imparts the desire for all that is good, strength in all combats and persecutions, consolation in all sufferings, and encouragement in all temptations. Therefore, the priest could not wish anything better to the faithful than what is included in the greeting, *Dominus vobiscum*.

¹⁷ *Dominus vobiscum*, i.e. gratiam vobis infundat devote mecum orandi et sacra verba digne atque salubriter audiendi, et haec verba ex libro Ruth sumpta videntur, suntque affectuose a sacerdote dicenda, velut a mediatore inter Deum et populum, secundum exigentiam caritatis fraternae, quae in sacerdotibus exuberantior esse debet (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 11).

¹⁸ Illo modo recte accipitur, quo solet significari per efficientem id quod efficitur, i.e. gemere, desiderare et postulare nos faciat Spiritus sanctus, dum scilicet gemendi atque postulari cordibus nostris inspirat affectum (S. Fulgent., *Contra Fabian.*, fragm. 5).

And how do the people respond to this greeting of the priest? By the lips of the acolyte or the choir they answer with the corresponding greeting: *Et cum spiritu tuo* ("And with thy spirit").¹⁹ The same or a similar wish for a blessing St. Paul frequently employed in his Epistles.²⁰ Out of gratitude for the imparted salutation and blessing, the people express the wish that the Lord would with His enlightening and strengthening grace replenish and penetrate the spirit²¹ of the celebrant, that he may, as a man of God, a truly spiritual man, be enabled to present in a worthy manner the petitions and supplications of the whole Church. The priest does indeed greatly stand in need of the assistance of this grace when he is standing at the altar; for "holy is this place, where the priest prays for the transgressions and sins of the people." In that he prays and offers as a minister of the Church, he discharges the most exalted duty that the Church has to fulfill toward God. The priest appears at the altar by commission of the Church, the immaculate spouse of Christ, there to recite for the welfare of the living and the dead those venerable prayers which she herself, inspired by the Holy Ghost, has composed and prescribed. Now, if we are already obliged to prepare our soul carefully for every private prayer, how much more is this preparation necessary for the prayers of the Mass.²² How fitting, then, is this response

¹⁹ "If the Holy Ghost were not in this your common father and teacher, you would not recently, when he ascended this holy chair and wished you all peace, have cried out with one accord: 'And with thy spirit.' Thus you cry out to him, not only when he ascends his throne and when he speaks to you and prays for you, but also when he stands at this holy altar to offer the sacrifice. He does not touch that which lies on the altar before wishing you the grace of our Lord and before you have replied to him: 'And with thy spirit.' By this cry you are reminded that he who stands at the altar does nothing, and that the gifts that repose thereon are not the merits of a man, but that the grace of the Holy Ghost is present and, descending on all, accomplishes this mysterious sacrifice. We see indeed a man, but God it is who acts through him. Nothing human takes place at this holy altar" (Chrysostom, *First Homily for the Feast of Pentecost*, n. 4).

²⁰ *Dominus Jesus Christus cum spiritu tuo* (II Tim. 4:22). *Gratia Domini nostri Jesu Christi cum spiritu vestro* (Gal. 6:22).

²¹ *Nec vacat mysterio, quod sacerdoti dicenti: Dominus vobiscum non respondeatur: Et tecum, sed: Et cum spiritu tuo, quod verbum est majoris momenti magisque spirituale, quasi respondentibus optent, Dominum implere spiritum ejus devotione, ut magno fervore pro omnibus oret, ita ut ejus oratio non solum lingua proferatur, sed multo magis corde et spiritu* (De Ponte, *De christ. hom. perfect.*, IV, tr. II, chap. 11, § 2).

²² *Quamvis oratio boni sacerdotis efficacior sit ad impetrandum quam mali, tamen oratio, imo et totum officium mali sacerdotis virtutem sortitur et ad im-*

of the people, begging God to be with the spirit of the praying priest.

The bishop also salutes the faithful during Mass with the *Dominus vobiscum*, except in this place, before the Collect, on those days on which the Gloria is said, when his salutation is: *Pax vobis* ("Peace be to you").²³ The connection between this salutation and the Angelic Hymn should be noted: the bishop invokes that peace which is announced in the Gloria.²⁴ Therefore, as it was the privilege of the bishop to recite the Angelic Hymn on all Sundays and feast days, whereas priests were permitted to recite it only at Easter, so the bishops alone were allowed to salute the faithful immediately after the Gloria with the *Pax vobis*. From the end of the eleventh century the recitation of the Gloria ceased to be the exclusive privilege of bishops, but the greeting, *Pax vobis*, was still reserved to them. This formula has a certain preference over *Dominus vobiscum*; this preference does not lie in its contents, but in the fact that our Lord Himself frequently used the salutation, *Pax vobis*, and thus sanctified it. Therefore, if the bishop salutes the faithful with *Pax vobis*, in a special manner he manifests himself to be the representative of the Lord, who after His resurrection said to His disciples: "Peace be to you."²⁵ As successors of the apostles, bishops also pos-

petrandum fit efficax, in quantum sacerdos talis orat et agit in persona totius Ecclesiae. Praeterea quamvis ubique et semper Deus ab omni christiano reverenter et pure atque sollicitè exorandus consistat, a sacerdote tamen in Missa tanto ardentius sinceriusque orandus est, quanto causa orandi est major et ipsum officium dignius, persona quoque Christo vicinior, ut puta mediator Dei et plebis (Dion. Carthus., *loc. cit.*).

²³ Postea salutans populum Pontifex dicit *Pax vobiscum* sive *Pax vobis*. Respond. *Et cum spiritu tuo* (*Ordo Rom. II*, n. 6). Before the Offertory it says (n. 9): Salutatur episcopus populum dicens: *Dominus vobiscum*. The words *Pax vobis* were regarded, even in the tenth century, as a festive, joyful formula of salutation and were, therefore, not used on penitential days. The *Ordo Rom. XIV* (written before the middle of the fourteenth century) contains the rubric: Ante orationem non dicit: *Pax vobis*, sed tantum: *Dominus vobiscum*, et sic in omnibus feriis et dominicis tam Quadragesimae quam et Adventus, exceptis Dominica Gaudete et Laetare (chap. 79).

²⁴ Episcopus celebrans in festis in prima salutatione dicit: *Pax vobis*, quod post resurrectionem discipulis dixit Dominus, cujus personam repraesentat praecipue Episcopus (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 5 ad 6).

²⁵ Pontifex salutationem praemittit ad populum dicens: *Pax vobis*; illius utens eulogio, cujus fungitur pontificio. Minor autem sacerdos ait: *Dominus vobiscum*. Ut episcopus se ostendat Christi vicarium, prima vice dicit: *Pax vobis*. Quoniam haec fuit prima vox Christi ad discipulos, cum eis post resur-

sess (in addition to other privileges) a greater power of dispensing graces and blessings than priests enjoy; for they possess the plenitude of the power of orders for the administration and dispensation of the heavenly treasures of grace. This sublime and more complete power of blessing, connected with the bishop's consecration and dignity, is very appropriately exhibited by this salutation of the bishop at the beginning of Mass, as well as by the concluding benediction at the end of Mass, wherein the threefold sign of the cross is given. The salutation of peace, *Pax vobis*, which the bishop, after the example of Christ and the apostles, utters on certain days in the Mass, contains in itself the plenitude of every good. However, salvation and blessing for time and eternity are also essentially comprised in the *Dominus vobiscum*; for where our Lord is, there also is His peace.²⁶

Both the sacerdotal and the episcopal salutation come from the lips of the representative of Christ, not as a mere empty wish, but as a blessing spoken with the efficacy of higher power, containing within itself supernatural strength; so that in reality it imparts the good it expresses to all whose hearts are capable of receiving it.²⁷ The Lord stands at the door and knocks; to any one who hears His voice and opens the door to Him, He will come and enter with His peace (Apoc. 3:20).²⁸

4. **The *Oremus*.** Standing at the Epistle side of the altar, the priest humbly and reverently bows his head to the crucifix upon the altar, extends his hands and presently joins them again, while saying the word: *Oremus* ("Let us pray"). This is an invitation to pray in common, which the priest directs both to himself and to those present; he invites all to honor God, to raise the heart and mind to Him. We will pour out our heart to the Lord, acknowledge our poverty and misery, and expect and implore from God, the all-

rectionem apparuit. Ad instar vero sacerdotum ceterorum dicit postea: *Dominus vobiscum*; ut se unum ex ipsis ostendat (Innoc. III, *De sacr. alt. myst.*, II, chap. 24).

²⁶ The Greeks always use the formula: "Peace be to all," to which the congregation answer: "And with thy spirit."

²⁷ *Sola est oratio, quae Deum vincit* (Tertull., *De Oratione*, chap. 29).

²⁸ Post introitum sacerdotis ad altare litaniae aguntur a clero, ut generalis oratio praeveniat specialem sacerdotis; subsequitur autem oratio sacerdotis et pacifica primum salutatione populum salutans, pacis responsum ab illo accipit, ut vera concordia et caritatis pura devotio facilius postulata impetret ab eo, qui corda aspicit et interna dijudicat (Raban. Maur., *De clericor. institut.*, I, chap. 33).

merciful and the all-powerful, salvation and help in all our necessities. That this prayer of the Mass should be made in common is indicated, not only by the name, *Collect*, and the invitation to prayer, *Oremus*,²⁹ but, moreover, by the priest's speaking aloud. For the priest prays aloud to call the attention of the faithful to join at least mentally with him in his prayer and to pray along with him. Prayer is the liturgical accompaniment of the sacrifice. The best and the most profitable participation in the Holy Sacrifice consists in this, that those present follow the priest step by step, praying and offering with him.³⁰

The priest's greeting to the people has for its purpose to encourage them, attracting and directing their hearts to prayer. And it is meant for us all. For prayer in church is not a simple act of one alone, nor is it for one alone, but it is *Collecta*, that is, a joint prayer said by the entire congregation of the faithful and in behalf of the whole congregation. Although but one pronounces the words, yet all the others should with heart and mind pray with him. Therefore we are reminded of the Lord, that we may seriously recollect ourselves and put aside all levity and frivolous thoughts, for we are in the presence of the greatest and the most powerful of Lords, treating with Him and beseeching Him who is our Master, who has power over our life and death, over fortune and misfortune, who has the power to cast both our soul and body into eternal fire, as He says Himself, but who is also bountiful and merciful, and who will gladly bestow upon us all the good which we earnestly and with firm confidence ask of Him. Consequently, every Christian should be attentive to the greeting: "The Lord be with you," and to the admonition: "Let us pray." Then we should, as members of God's Church, unite in prayer. Whoever does not understand the words of the prayer, can indeed in general be mindful of God and beseech Him graciously to receive the prayer of His Church and grant to us who are on earth what is needful and profitable for soul and body, through Christ our Lord.³¹

Some of the liturgical prayers are recited standing, and some kneeling. In ancient times it was customary on the Sundays of the

²⁹ Non *Oro*, sed *Oremus* dicit, quia vocem totius Ecclesiae exprimit (Honor. Augustod., *op. cit.*, I, chap. 93).

³⁰ Sacerdos salutatione praemissa dicit *Oremus*, ubi oraturus alios hortatur ut secum orent. Tunc ejus pro nobis maxime suscipitur oratio, si nostra ei jungatur devotio. . . . Oportet ergo ut et in Missa et in ceteris officiis cor nostrum jungamus cum voce sacerdotis (Robert. Paulul., *De offic. eccles.*, chap. 15).

³¹ *Ein Vergissmeinnicht*, pp. 67 f.

year and during the whole Eastertide to pray standing.³² The standing up should remind us of the Lord's glorious resurrection and of life eternal. On these days the invitation to common prayer has always been made by the simple formula, *Oremus*. And although we stand up at the prayers, we ought at the same time to abase ourselves in humility of heart before the face of the Lord. During the seasons when the spirit of penance should be more prominent, it is befitting to manifest even exteriorly, by genuflecting, the interior humility and reverence of the heart.³³ Hence, for example, on the Ember days as well as on other days that have several lessons and prayers (Wednesday after *Laetare* Sunday, Wednesday of Holy Week, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and the vigil of Pentecost), some of the prayers are introduced by the words, *Flectamus genua* (let us bend the knees) and the answer *Levate* (arise).³⁴ Before we address our petitions to God, we will profoundly humble ourselves in the consciousness of our sinfulness, and also express our repentance and contrition.

³² "On Sundays we consider it improper to pray kneeling (*de geniculis*). The same privilege we enjoy from Easter until Pentecost" (Tertull., *De corona militis*, chap. 3). The various methods of prayer in use among Christians already in the most ancient times, Prudentius (*Cathermerin.*, II, verses 48 ff.) has collected very beautifully in the following lines:

Te, Christe, solum novimus:
Te mente pura et simplici,
Te voce, te cantu pio,
Rogare curvato genu,
Flendo et canendo discimus.

In them is expressed the inmost prayer of the heart, which is the requisite foundation of every other mode of prayer, *mente pura et simplici*; vocal prayer without singing, *voce*, and with singing, *cantu pio*; prayer with genuflection, *curvato genu*, and prayer with singing and tears, *flendo et canendo*. Cf. Arevalo, *loc. cit.* (Migne, LIX, p. 789).

³³ Cf. Honor. Augustod., *Gemma animae*, chap. 117. In Quadragesima ideo ad Missam *Flectamus genua* dicimus, quia corpus et animam in poenitentia nos humiliare inuimus.

³⁴ Formerly the deacon said the *Flectamus genua* (upon which all present prayed kneeling for some time in silence) as well as the *Levate*. According to the present rite the priest recites the *Oremus*, the deacon *Flectamus genua* (and all except the celebrant bend the knee), and the subdeacon the *Levate*. But if the priest says the *Flectamus genua*, he must also genuflect; the acolyte in that case answers *Levate*. The reason for this difference is that in the latter case the celebrant considers himself among those whom he summons to genuflect, while in the former case it suffices for the deacon to unite in genuflecting, to which he invites those present (with the exception of the celebrant). Cf. Quarti, *Comment. in Rubr. Missal.*, I, xvii, 3.

Frequently a double *Oremus* occurred in the Mass: the first was followed by an announcement for whom and for what intention the prayer should be made; the second preceded the prayer proper. This original form is still retained in the liturgy of Good Friday at the great or solemn intercessory prayers, which date from the first Christian centuries; in them the Church shows herself as the loving mother of the entire human race, inasmuch as she prays at the foot of the cross for the redemption of the whole world.

5. **Contents of the Collects.** The Collect itself is distinguished as much for the beauty and perfection of its form as for the depth of its contents. The Collects are prayers of petition: the innumerable needs and necessities of soul and body form the substance of the supplications therein expressed. In them we seek to obtain all kinds of favors and blessings, and implore the averting of every evil. The Collects indeed ask of God no more than what is petitioned for in the Lord's Prayer; but the object of these petitions is presented in various expressions. Thus we pray for the grace to serve God, to let the light of divine faith shine in our works, to become rich in good works, to know well our duty and to be strengthened in its fulfillment, to become interiorly changed and renewed according to the image of our Saviour, to be supported by His continual help and to be confirmed in all righteousness, to grow strong spiritually and corporally so as to be able to overcome every evil, to be rescued from all sufferings and tribulations, to be safeguarded against all perverting error, to draw down upon ourselves by purity of body and mind the good pleasure of heaven, to abhor all that is unchristian, to faithfully observe the divine commandments, to love the commandments of God and to long for His promises, to understand and put in practice what is right and perfect, to be enabled to serve God in undisturbed and pure cheerfulness, to grow in every virtue, to walk in accordance with God's pleasure; thereby to arrive at the enjoyment of the beatific vision, the happy enjoyment of eternal life.

Each Collect contains a special petition. The reason for imploring precisely this or that favor lies in the special character of the Mass on the various days and feasts, or the special motive for the celebration of the Mass. In the liturgical cycle of feasts the sacred history and the entire work of redemption are repeated and renewed. The Church celebrates the mysteries of Christ and of His blessed Mother,

as well as the anniversaries of His saints, so that they may become for priest and people a school and a source of supernatural life. The ecclesiastical year, by reason of its instruction and the stream of grace flowing throughout its channel, should induce and enable us so to employ the shortness of time that we may happily arrive at the blissful life of eternity. At the same time the weekdays and Sundays and feast days during the course of the year should constantly bring before our mind other truths and mysteries, and continually secure for us new graces. In this way the Collects and other variable parts of the Mass enable us to celebrate the Church year to our profit and advantage, to lead an interior life in harmony with it, and to manifest its spiritual fruit in our conduct.

6. **Form of the Collects.** The Collect is, therefore, a prayer of petition for the particular grace of the day; but in what form is this petition clothed? Amid all the variety and diversity of the Collects there still prevails a certain uniformity in their construction, which shows that they have been composed according to a specified rule. The petition is not simply presented to God by itself, but is supported by other kinds of prayer, in order that it may be made so much the more fervent and efficacious. Praise, adoration, thanksgiving—in short, all kinds of prayer are finally resolved in petitions, for petitions are for us in our present state the most important and necessary kind of prayer. Petition also forms the peculiar essence of the Collects. But by what other acts is this petition usually accompanied? St. Paul mentions—and probably here there is question of public worship—supplications (urgent entreaty, to which a powerful motive is added that the prayer may be heard the sooner), prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings.³⁵ These four kinds of prayer

³⁵ *Obsecro primum omnium fieri obsecrationes, orationes, postulationes, gratiarum actiones pro omnibus hominibus* (I Tim. 2:1). These expressions of the Apostle are differently interpreted. (Cf. S. Thom., IIa IIae, q. 83, a. 17. Suarez, *De Relig.*, Tr. IV, Bk. II, chap. 3, n. 3-8.) St. Augustine finds indicated in them the whole course of the Mass. *Aliqua singulorum istorum proprietates inquirenda est, sed ad eam liquido pervenire difficile est: multa quippe hinc dici possunt, quae improbanda non sint. Sed eligo in his verbis hoc intelligere, quod omnis vel paene omnis frequentat Ecclesia, ut preces (sc. obsecrationes) accipiamus dictas, quas facimus in celebratione Sacramentorum, antequam illud quod est in Domini mensa incipiat benedici; orationes, cum benedicatur et sanctificatur et ad distribuendum comminuitur, quam totam petitionem fere omnis Ecclesia dominica oratione concludit. . . . Interpellationes (sc. postulationes) fiunt, cum populus benedicatur: tunc enim antistites velut advocati susceptos suos (*their clients*) per manus impositionem*

are not only found alternately in the course of the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, but they are, for the most part, combined in each Collect,³⁶ and thus form a most effectual prayer of petition. The person praying must approach God, elevate himself to God (*oratio*), and then present his petitions (*postulatio*); and to obtain more speedily what is asked for, he joins to it his motives, one of which is gratitude or thanksgiving (*gratiarum actio*); for in so far as we are grateful for benefits received, do we obtain graces yet more plentifully.³⁷ But the most efficient means for having our petitions granted, is to beg them of God by the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ; hence the concluding words, "through Christ our Lord," words which express the entreaty (*obsecratio*).

The Collect for Pentecost, for example, is as follows:

Deus (*oratio*), qui hodierna die corda fidelium sancti Spiritus illustratione docuisti (*gratiarum actio*), da nobis in eodem Spiritu recta sapere et de ejus semper consolatione gaudere (*postulatio*). Per Dominum nostrum . . . (*obsecratio*).

O God (*elevation of the soul*), who today by the light of the Holy Ghost didst instruct the hearts of the faithful (*thanksgiving*), give us by the same Holy Spirit a love for what is right and just and a constant enjoyment of His comforts (*petition*). Through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . (*supplication*).

Thus the Church complies with the admonition of the Apostle: "In everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God" (Phil. 4:6).

miserericordissimae offerunt potestati. Omnibus peractis et participato tanto sacramento, gratiarum actio cuncta concludit, quam in his etiam verbis ultimam commendavit Apostolus (S. August., Epist., 149 [al. 59], ad Paulin., n. 15 f.).

³⁶ Cf. Guyet, *Heortologia*, III, chap. 2, q. 4. The *oratio* (elevation of the mind to God) is usually contained in the words *Domine* or *Deus* or *Domine Deus* or *Omnipotens et misericors Deus*; the *gratiarum actio* in the mention of some benefit of God; the *postulatio* in the expressions: *concede, da, largire, praesta, tribue*; the *obsecratio* in the concluding formula: *per Dominum nostrum*.

³⁷ De acceptis beneficiis gratias agentes, meremur accipere potiora ut in Collecta dicitur (S. Thom., *loc. cit.*). Gratiarum actio est orationis completio et integralis pars ejus, per quam tam ipsa oratio Deo fusa exaudibilis redditur, quam sequentibus orationibus via ac praeparatio exauditionis aperitur. Qui enim gratus est de acceptis et de minoribus regratiatur, majoribus donis efficitur dignus (Dion. Carthus., *De oratione*, a. 3).

The prayers may be addressed to the holy and indivisible Trinity or to any one of the divine persons. When it is addressed to only one of the divine persons, it is self-evident that the other two persons are not excluded, but rather virtually included; and to make this obvious they are, as a rule, expressly mentioned. It is the same with respect to the Collects. Whether they are directed to the Father or to the Son, there follows at any rate at the conclusion an explicit confession and solemn acknowledgment of the Holy Trinity.³⁸

The Collects were originally and without exception addressed to the Father; for the Father is the First Person of the Blessed Trinity and as such He is, in a manner, the original source, not only of the divine nature which from all eternity He imparts to the Son and with the Son to the Holy Ghost,³⁹ but of all created things. To the Father are principally attributed (appropriated) power and majesty, which are revealed in the creation of the world; the Father has sent us His only-begotten Son, and together with Him He has given us all things. Jesus Christ Himself offered His whole life, actions, sufferings, and especially His prayers to God the Father. The Saviour in His prayer to God was not only our advocate, but also our model in prayer, our leader in prayer. He always prayed to His Father, "to show that the Father is His origin, from whom He from eternity receives His divine nature and by whom His human nature also was created, and from whom it received all the good that it possessed."

When the Church while praying usually has recourse to the Father, she follows in this respect not merely the example of Christ, but also His teaching: "Amen, amen I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you" (John 16:23). In this a further reason is indicated why the Collects, for the most part, are addressed to the Father. Our petitions should be presented "in

³⁸ Neque enim praejudicium Filio vel sancto Spiritui comparatur, dum ad Patris personam precatio ab offerente dirigitur; cujus consummatio, dum Filii et Spiritus sancti complectitur nomen, ostendit nullum esse in Trinitate discrimen. Quia dum ad solius Patris personam honoris sermo dirigitur, bene credentis fide tota Trinitas honoratur, et cum ad Patrem litantis destinatur intentio, sacrificii munus omni Trinitati uno eodemque offertur litantis officio (S. Fulgent. [d. 533], *Ad Monim.*, II, chap. 5).

³⁹ Patrem sancta Ecclesia in precibus poscit, quem esse originem Filii et Spiritus sancti recta credulitate cognovit. Ideo autem nomine Filii et Spiritus sancti orationes precesque consummat, ut sanctam Trinitatem unius esse naturae ac majestatis ostendat (S. Fulgent., *Contra Fabian.*, fragm. 29).

the name of Jesus." Jesus is the mediator through whom all our prayers and supplications ascend to heaven, and through whom all graces and merits descend upon earth; hence we conclude the Collects with these words, "through our Lord Jesus Christ." This rule is especially observed at Mass, in which the Son offers Himself to the heavenly Father.

Some of the Collects are now addressed to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, because they have a particular and closer relation to the mystery of the Incarnation or to the incarnate Word.⁴⁰ On the other hand, we do not find in our missal a single Collect addressed to the Holy Ghost, although in the liturgy there are other prayers to the Holy Ghost and hymns in His honor, wherein He is invoked and glorified as God.⁴¹

The form of the conclusion of the Collect may vary somewhat according to the context of the prayer.⁴² The usual form of conclusion

⁴⁰ For example, the prayer to the Most Blessed Sacrament, on the feast of the Finding of the Cross, on several feasts of the Passion and of St. Joseph.

⁴¹ *Tota Trinitas una et eadem adoratione colenda est, puta unus Deus, cum in ipsis personis sit una numero majestas et deitas; nihilominus cum unaquaque increata persona sit in se vere subsistens persona, potest unusquisque fidelis preces suas specialiter dirigere ad quamlibet divinam personam et eam secundum se specialiter exorare, non tamen cum actuali aliarum personarum exclusione, quasi ipsa sola sit adoranda. Hinc in Missae Officio orationes Ecclesiae ad Patrem specialiter effunduntur, interdum ad Filium, ut cum dicimus: "Fidelium Deus omnium Conditor et Redemptor," communiter vero ad Patrem, tanquam ad totius Trinitatis principium, i.e. primam fontalem personam a nullo manantem; sic et aliquae laudes, orationes, hymni, sequentiae ad Spiritum sanctum specialiter depromuntur (Dion. Carthus., *Elementat. theolog.*, prop. 128).*

⁴² The prayers to the Father usually conclude: *Per Dominum nostrum J. Chr.* . . . ; those to the Son always: *Qui vivis et regnas cum Deo Pater.* . . . Sometimes the Collects addressed to the Father conclude: *Per eundem Dominum* . . . (when, for instance, the Son was mentioned at the beginning or in the middle), or: *Qui tecum vivit et regnat* . . . (if this mention is made at the conclusion). This naming of the Son may be done by the words *Christus, Verbum, Unigenitus, Salvator*, and so forth, or also merely according to the sense (S. R. C., March 11, 1820). When the person of the Holy Ghost is mentioned directly and actually, as is not the case in such expressions as *spiritus dilectionis, fortitudinis, fervoris, adoptionis, gratiae salutaris*, the concluding formula is: . . . *in unitate ejusdem Spiritus sancti* . . . (S. R. C., November 12, 1831). But in order to obtain these modifications of the conclusions, the naming of the Son or of the Holy Ghost must not merely be in one of the preceding Orations, but it must be found in the last, to which the conclusion is attached (S. R. C., May 23, 1835; April 8, 1865). Outside of the Divine Office and the Mass, all Orations have the shorter concluding formula: *Per (eundem) Christum Dominum nostrum* or *Qui vivis et regnas in (or per*

is as follows: *Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus: per omnia saecula saeculorum.* ("Through our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son, who with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth forever and ever.") Thus the Collects end with a magnificent praise of the Holy Trinity. How solemn, how overpowering, how grand are these concluding words! With what courage and confidence, with what consolation and consciousness of victory should they fill us! "Were it not for the intercession of our mediator, without doubt, the cry of our supplication would go up unheard in the presence of God."⁴⁸ The Church prays with a lively faith in the mediatorship of Jesus and an unshaken confidence in His merits; since Christ has merited for us all grace, He has, therefore, secured a favorable answer also to our prayers. For Christ's sake we are favored and blessed by God. Whenever God looks upon the face of His Anointed, in whom He is eternally well pleased, He will

omnia) saecula saeculorum, if in the liturgical books the longer one is not expressly ordered, as, for example, in the Litany of the Saints (S. R. C., December 20, 1864). When several prayers occur, only the first (to which, however, at times another *sub una conclusione* is joined) and the last have a special concluding formula. The *Oremus* precedes only the first and second Orations at Mass, while in the Divine Office all the prayers are introduced with this cry, as here the antiphon together with the versicle is inserted between the separate orations.

As the prayers are addressed to the omniscient God, in them only the simple or the double proper names may be employed (for example, *Joanna Francisca, Petrus Coelestinus*) and similar designations which express their dignity (for example, *Apostolus, Martyr, Confessor, Virgo*, but never *Vidua*, because this is not a title of honor). To them may also be added the names *Joannes Chrysostomus* and *Petrus Chrysologus*; for *nomina Chrysostomi et Chrysologi adjectiva potius sunt et vel facundiam vel vim et efficaciam divini sermonis recensitis Sanctis quasi supernaturali inditam virtute designant.* (S. R. C., March 8, 1825; December 7, 1844 ad 9.) All other surnames, of any nature whatsoever (*cognomina*, for example, *de Matba, a Cruce, Benitius, Nonnatus, Quintus*; and *patria*, for instance, *de Cortona, de Paula, Nepomucenus*, with the exception of *Maria Magdalena*), must be omitted, as they are necessary only for us to distinguish the saints one from another. The name *rex* and *regina* may be added, but not of the kingdom over which the saints have reigned (for example, *Danorum, Scotiae*). (S. R. C., December 22, 1629; June 23, 1736.) Cf. Guyet., *Heortolog.*, III, chap. 2, q. 5; Cavalieri, *Oper. liturg.*, II, chap. 38; Beleth, *Ration.*, chap. 54.

⁴⁸ *Adjutor quaeritur, ut desiderium exaudiatur, quia nisi pro nobis interpellatio mediatoris intercederet, ab aure Dei procul dubio postrarum precum voces silerent* (S. Greg., *Moral.*, XXII, chap. 17).

through Christ⁴⁴ and for the sake of Christ graciously receive our petitions and graciously hear them by pouring out upon us His abundant mercies and blessings.⁴⁵

The *Amen* that the acolyte says at the end of the Collect in the name of the people,⁴⁶ is a solemn expression of the wish that the petitions offered be graciously heard and fulfilled: "So be it done." This word occurs even in the Old Testament, especially in the divine worship; and on account of its antiquity and solemnity, and its frequent use also by our Lord, the term is highly venerable and has, therefore, been adopted, without being translated, into the Church's liturgy.⁴⁷ "This word was so frequently on the lips of our Saviour, that it pleased the Holy Ghost to preserve it in the Church of God."⁴⁸ In the New Testament our Lord frequently uses it in His exhortations at the beginning of sentences to arouse the attention of His hearers and forcibly to emphasize and impress some thought.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ *Patri dicimus orantes "Per Dominum nostrum J. Chr. Filium tuum" poscentes, ut per ipsum faciat quod oramus, per quem nos facere dignatus est ut essemus. Omnia enim Pater per Filium fecit et facit, quia unus Dominus J. Chr. per quem omnia (I Cor. 8:6). (S. Fulgent., Contra Fabian., fragm. 31.)*

⁴⁵ *Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum: hoc est, per ipsius dignitatem et per virtutem ejus et efficaciam et per ejus meritum et per intercessionem orationemque ejus. Quae omnia significat hoc verbum omniaque sub eo Ecclesia comprehendit, allegans omnes titulos, quos Christus habet, ut omnes ejus orationes ab aeterno Patre exaudiantur et impleantur (Arias, Thesaur. inexhaust., I, tr. III, cap. 16).*

⁴⁶ In the first centuries the entire congregation responded. Already St. Justin Martyr writes in his first Apology (chap. 67) that all the congregation join in the liturgical prayers and thanksgivings, by saying "Amen." St. Jerome says of the Roman Basilicas: *ad similitudinem coelestis tonitruum Amen reboat (Commentar. in epist. ad Galat., II). Amen hebraeum est, quod ad omnem sacerdotis orationem seu benedictionem respondet populus fidelium (Raban. Maur., De clericor. institut., I, chap. 33). Amen confirmatio est orationis a populo (Pseudo-Alcuin., De divin. offic., chap. 40).*

⁴⁷ Duo verba *Amen* et *Alleluja* nec Graecis nec Latinis nec barbaris licet in suam linguam omnino transferre vel alia lingua enuntiare. Nam quamvis interpretari possint, propter sanctorum tamen auctoritatem servata est ab Apostolis in iis propriae linguae antiquitas. Tanto enim sacra sunt nomina, ut etiam Joannes in Apocalypsi referat se Spiritu revelante vidisse et audivisse vocem coelestis exercitus tamquam vocem aquarum multarum et tonitruum validorum dicentium *Amen* et *Alleluja*: ac per hoc sic oportet in terris utraque dici sicut in coelo resonat (S. Isid., *Etymolog.*, VI, xix, 20 f.).

⁴⁸ *Catech. Rom.*, IV, chap. 17, q. 3, n. 1.

⁴⁹ Christus geminavit dixitque "Amen, Amen" ad ostendendam rei gravitatem, sublimitatem et certitudinem (Corn. a Lap., *In Joann.* 3:3).

At the conclusion of prayers, blessings, creeds, doxologies, and hymns it is sometimes the expression of the ardent desire of the heart (= *fiat*, be it so); sometimes the formula of solemn confirmation and consent (= *verum est*, it is so).⁵⁰ Such is its meaning in the liturgy, and to this meaning entirely corresponds the grave and solemn manner in which it is sung by the choir at the conclusion of the Gloria and the Credo. The concluding *Amen* is, therefore, a repetition and confirmation of the petitions which have been presented in the Collects; it is an expression of the ardent desire and confident hope of being favorably heard by God.⁵¹ The people, as it were, put their seal upon the petitions made by the priest by answering: *Amen*: "Be it done, be it as you have asked." We should, then, always pronounce this short but significant word with recollection of mind and fervor of heart, as do the angels in heaven (Apoc. 7:12).⁵²

7. **How the Collects are to be said.** According to the prescription of the Church, during the recitation of the Collects the hands of the priest are to be extended and elevated before the breast, but in such a way that the ends of the fingers do not reach beyond the breadth and height of the shoulders.⁵³ This rubric leaves room for no extravagant and unbecoming gestures. "If we pray with modesty and humility, we recommend our petitions to God far better, inasmuch as we do not raise our hands too high, but only moderately and becomingly."⁵⁴ This position of the body in praying (the extending and raising of the hands) is proper and well calculated to increase

⁵⁰ In Hebrew the Amen as an adjective signifies reliable, faithful, true, firm; as a substantive: fidelity, truth; as an adverb: truly, assuredly.

⁵¹ Omnes respondent *Amen*, h. e. utinam fiat, sicut petis, et ita verum est, sicut dixisti. In quo solo verbo continetur, quidquid sacerdos pluribus dixit, et tanto affectu verbum illud dici potest, ut non minus promereatur unico illo verbo prolato, quam si protulisset omnia. Deus enim Dominus noster non tam verborum multitudinem respicit, quam fervorem affectuum (De Ponte, *loc. cit.*).

⁵² Amen est orationis signaculum fructuosum et animi recollectivum. Dicendo enim *Amen*, anima summatim fertur ad omnia praeinducta et renovatur affectio impetrandi, sicque oratio cum fervore finita plenior sortitur effectum (Dion. Carthus., *In Matt.*, chap. 6).

⁵³ Dignorum summitas humerorum altitudinem distantiamque non excedat. On this Lohner remarks: Unde colligitur, in altum elevatos digitos esse debere et non in aequali cum palma altitudine constitutos et quasi jacentes, ut multi faciunt. Sed et distantia manuum cum decore servanda est (*De sacrif. Miss.*, VI, tit. 5).

⁵⁴ Tertull., *De Orat.*, chap. 17.

devotion in him who prays and to edify those present; it is, at the same time, so natural and expressive that it has always been the customary position at prayer among all nations. Israel was victorious in its battle against Amalek when Moses raised his hands in prayer; but when he allowed them to fall ever so little, Amalek triumphed (Exod. 17:8-11). Solomon placed himself before the altar of the Lord in the presence of the people of Israel and extended his hands towards heaven (III Kings 8:22). David cries out: "Hear, O Lord, the voice of my supplication when I pray to Thee, when I lift up my hands to Thy holy temple" (Ps. 27:2). The adorable hands of Jesus were also extended and elevated on the cross, when along with His bloody sacrifice He offered prayers and intercession for the whole world. This divine model the primitive Christians had before their eyes and imitated when they prayed with arms outstretched in the form of a cross.⁵⁵

Hundreds of paintings, tombstones, enamels and sculpturings of the catacombs represent the blessed in heaven and the faithful on earth praying with arms extended in the form of the cross. "We have the command," writes St. Maximus, "to pray with uplifted hands, so that even by our corporal bearing we may confess the passion of the Lord." And St. Peter Chrysologus remarks: "Does not he who extends his hands, pray even by the position of his body?" . . . When, therefore, in the first ages the clergy and faithful in general were accustomed to pray with outstretched arms, and when the martyrs often even suffered and died in this posture, they thereby confessed the Saviour extended on the cross, and presented His merits to the heavenly Father.⁵⁶

The manner in which the priest, according to the rubrics, must now hold his hands at the altar, presents no longer the form of the cross, as was the case in the ancient Christian manner of prayer; but the position of his uplifted hands should still remind us of our Saviour praying and sacrificing Himself upon the cross.⁵⁷ The extending of the hands is, so to speak, an embracing, a collecting to-

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Non ausa est cohibere poena palmas
In morem crucis ad Patrem levandas

—Prudent., *Peristephanon*, hymn VI, verses 106 f.

56 P. Wolter, O. S. B., *Die römischen Katakomben*, II, 43.

⁵⁷ Passis quondam sublatisque brachiis orabant, ut statum, quo Christus oravit in cruce, imitarentur. Consultius vero existimavit Ecclesia, si ad eum modum, quo nunc utimur, Collectae recitarentur, ne veteri retenta consuetudine orandi passis extensisque brachiis, inconcinnis et ridiculis figuris aperiretur locus (Benedict XIV, *De Miss. sacrif.*, II, vi, 5).

gether of all the wants and desires and necessities of the faithful. The elevating of the hands denotes and promotes the uplifting of the heart to God,⁵⁸ the soaring of the soul above earthly things to that which is above, where Christ ascended with arms extended. This position of the hands extended and raised is a sign of the ardent desire for help, an expression of the fervor and urgency with which the petitions are presented, a symbol of confidence, and an assurance of being favorably heard. Thus the priest stands at the altar and cries to the Lord and stretches out his hands for rescue and redemption, which must come from above. If he at the concluding formula of the Collect again joins his hands, he thereby manifests the sentiments of ardent devotion, the humble disavowal of his own strength, the devout desire to give himself entirely to the Lord and to rest in the Lord; he also acknowledges God as the Supreme Good, whence, as from the fountain and source of all graces, every gift comes to us through Jesus Christ.⁵⁹

As is evident from many testimonies of the Fathers,⁶⁰ it was an ancient custom to turn toward the east when praying; accordingly the churches were generally built in this direction, so that the priest and the faithful, when at prayer, might look toward the rising of the sun. The principal symbolical reasons for this are, according to St. Thomas,⁶¹ the three following. First, the position of the person who prays is considered with reference to the divine Majesty, revealed to us in the movement of the heavens; this movement of the heavens takes place from the east. Secondly, we seek to express by this position that we desire to return to Paradise, which was situated in the east. Thirdly, we turn in that direction because we thereby think of Jesus Christ, who is the true light of the world and is, therefore, called the *Oriens*, that is, the rising Sun of justice, and who at His second coming, as judge of the living and the dead, will appear as lightning coming out of the east and passing even into the west (Matt. 24:27).

⁵⁸ *Levat sacerdos manus orando ad designandum, quod oratio ejus dirigitur pro populo ad Deum* (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 5 ad 5).

⁵⁹ *Manuum junctio significat omnium bonorum a Deo fluentium in ipso unitatem et conjunctionem* (Durand., *Ration.*, IV, vii, 5).

⁶⁰ "Who will not admit at once that the direction of the rising sun is evidently the one toward which we should turn when at prayer, to show that the soul looks to the rising of the true light [Jesus Christ]?" (Origen, *On Prayer*, chap. 32.)

⁶¹ IIa IIae, q. 84, a. 3 ad 3.

8. **The number and value of the Collects.** From apostolic times a number of prayers and supplications were offered at the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. In our missals may be found Collects which date from the first Christian centuries. The saintly popes, Leo I (440-61), Gelasius (492-96), and Gregory I (590-604) deserve great credit, not only for having faithfully preserved the treasure of traditional prayers, but also for having added new ones. Most of our Collects are venerable for their antiquity and their use throughout many centuries.

Until about the twelfth century, the Roman Church was accustomed to recite but one Collect before the Epistle. However, in the eleventh century other churches departed from this original practice by reciting several Collects; only the consecrated number of seven was not to be exceeded.⁶² With the development of the liturgical calendar, a fixed law was gradually formed regulating the number of prayers to be said at Mass. Since the thirteenth century the prescribed number of prayers has been determined according to the respective rank (*ritus*), dignity (*dignitas*), and solemnity (*solemnitas*) of the feasts of the ecclesiastical year. The greater the feast, the more deeply recollected we should enter into its spirit, the more we should concentrate all our thoughts and sentiments upon the mystery celebrated; hence for the feasts of the highest rank (*duplex*) only one Collect is properly appointed.⁶³ The cele-

⁶² Amalarius (d. about 847) attests in the *praefatio altera* to his principal work, that even in his time some *juxta affectum* recited two or three Collects, although in Rome only one was said, even on Sundays upon which the feast of a saint fell. Micrologus (in the eleventh century) defends this *antiqua vel romana traditio*, but adds these remarks: Sed hoc jam pauci observant, imo plures in tantum orationes multiplicant, ut auditores suos sibi ingratos efficiant et populum Dei potius avertant quam ad sacrificandum alliciant. Hoc autem sapientioribus multum displicet, qui etsi aliquando antiquam traditionem alii morigerando excedunt, in ipsa tamen sua excessione modum tenere et aliquam rationem attendere solent. Unde et in Missa, etsi non semper una tantum oratione sint contenti, septenarium tamen numerum in orationibus raro excedunt. . . . Hoc autem summopere solent observare, ut in Missa aut unam, tres aut quinque aut septem orationes dicant (*De eccles. observat.*, chap. 4). Debet dici una oratio, sicut una epistola et unum evangelium, propter fidei unitatem . . . sed ex Patrum institutionibus quandoque dicuntur tres vel quinque vel septem. Praetor hos numeros alius est, non dico reprehensibilis, sed extraordinarius. . . . Pares non sunt dicendae, quia "numero Deus impar gaudet." . . . Quotcunque dicantur, sola prima conclusione debita terminentur (Sicard. [d. 1215], *Mitral.* III, chap. 2).

⁶³ Oratio est explicativa desiderii. Sed desiderium tanto est sanctius, quanto

bration of a feast of a lesser rite (*semiduplex*) is of less importance, hence other commemorations and petitions may find expression in our prayer; on feasts of such rite three Collects are generally said. The lowest rite (*simplex*) allows the priest to go beyond the consecrated number of three and to present to the Lord various needs. As often as the rubrics leave the priest free to add one or more prayers to those prescribed, he must take care that the number be an uneven one,⁶⁴ for this symbolizes the indivisibility of the Supreme Being and the unity of the Church. Never should more than seven Collects be said.

As to the value of the prayers of the Mass, but one opinion can be expressed in their regard: as to form and contents they are incomparable models of prayer. The language of the Collects is calm, simple, and plain, yet not without ornament; their contents exceedingly rich and profoundly dogmatic. One need but reflect in devout meditation on the text of a Collect, and he will discover what a wealth of sublime thoughts and holy emotions is embodied in those brief, substantial words. It is, therefore, very difficult, often even impossible, to translate these prayers without impairing their full meaning and weakening their force. That profound connoisseur of the Roman liturgy, Cardinal Wiseman, says of the Church's prayers:

There is a fragrance, a true incense in those ancient prayers which seems to rise from the lips, and to wind upwards in soft, balmy clouds, upon which angels may recline, and thence look down upon us, as we utter them. They seem worthy to be caught up in a higher sphere, and to be heaped upon the altar above, at which an angel ministers. . . . They partake of all the solemnity and all the stateliness of the places in which they were first recited: they retain the echoes of the gloomy catacomb, they still resound with the jubilee of gilded basilicas, they keep the harmonious reverberations of lofty groined vaults. . . .

Nothing can be more perfect in structure, more solid in substance,

magis ad unum restringitur, secundum illud Ps. 26:4: "Unum petii a Domino, hanc requiram" (S. Thom., IIa IIae, q. 83, a. 14).

⁶⁴ The priest, however, is not bound, *in simplicibus, feriis et votivis*, to add another prayer, so that the *numerus impar* may be observed (S. R. C., December 2, 1684). Regarding the *Missa quotidiana* for the departed *curandum est, ut orationes sint numero impares* (S. R. C., September 2, 1741). Quod si in quotidianis Missis pro defunctis plures addere orationes celebranti placuerit, uti rubricae potestatem faciunt, id fieri potest tantum in Missis lectis, impari cum aliis praescriptis servato numero et orationi pro omnibus defunctis postremo loco assignato (S. R. C., June 30, 1896).

more elegant in conception, or more terse in diction, than the Collects, especially those of the Sundays and of Lent. They belong essentially to the traditional deposits of the Church. . . . There is, in fact, hardly a Collect in which some singular beauty of thought, some happy turn of phrase, is not to be found. . . . Each is almost invariably composed of two parts, which may be called the recital and the petition. The first contains either a declaration of our wants, . . . or a plea for mercy, or for a favorable hearing. . . . Nothing strikes one so much as the noble and appropriate terms in which the Deity is addressed, and the sublime greatness in which His attributes are described. . . . The petition itself is ever most solemn, devout and fervent; often containing a depth of thought which would supply materials for a long meditation. . . . If any one thinks that these prayers, so easy in appearance, require no great power to imitate them, let him try to compose a few, and he will soon find their inferiority to the old ones; he will see that it is far from easy to put so much meaning into such a small compass, and still more difficult to come up to the beauty and greatness of thought generally condensed in the ancient form.⁶⁵

The Collects are to be reckoned among the most precious liturgical treasures of the Church; they are masterly, unsurpassable prayers, distinguished alike for their solid force and pithy brevity, as for their fragrant charm and imperishable freshness.

9. **Examples.** The petition contained in the Collect is, as a rule, based on the Mass of each day. This is evident in the various feasts of the ecclesiastical year. The birth of the Saviour of the world is the mystery, the great joy of the holy feast of Christmas. On this holy night the Holy Sacrifice is offered three times to the glorious Trinity (*in nocte, in aurora, in die*). Now what are the desires and petitions of the Church on this great feast? In the first Collect she implores of God, who "enlighteneth this most holy night with the brightness of Him who is the true light, to grant that we who have known the mysteries of this light of earth, may likewise come to the enjoyment of it in heaven." In the prayer of the second Mass the Church addresses to almighty God the petition that He would "grant to us, who are flooded (*perfundimur*) by the new light of the Word made flesh, the grace that this light may be so reflected by our actions, as it shines through faith in our mind." The Collect of the third Mass contains the petition that "the new birth in the flesh of Thy only-begotten Son may free us, whom the ancient

⁶⁵ "On Prayer and Prayer-Books," *Essays*, II, 148 f., 170 ff.

slavery holds under the yoke of sin." On the feast of the Ascension we beg of God the grace which elevates us above all that is earthly that "we also may with our mind dwell among heavenly things."

In the Masses in honor of the saints, the subject of the petition is, in general, that by their example and merit, by their doctrine and intercession, we may advance in the spiritual life and attain eternal joys; that we may enjoy their mediation, protection, and intercession; that, animated by their example, we may be converted to God, produce worthy fruits of penance, walk in the simplicity and innocence of heart, endure all adversity with constant patience, despise all that is earthly, temporal, and perishable, and, on the contrary, long for and strive after all that is heavenly, eternal, and imperishable; that we may love what they loved, do what they taught, imitate what they have done, and obtain what they possess. Frequently the Church prays for their imitation in a particular virtue, for example, love of our neighbor, constancy in faith, confidence in God, the spirit of prayer, mortification; or for special protection against a particular evil. Such petitions for special graces and virtues are usually based upon some fact, miracle, or prominent characteristic in the life of the saint whose feast is celebrated. Thus the Church prays to almighty God on the Nativity of St. John Baptist that He would grant "His people the grace of spiritual joys, and direct the minds of all the faithful into the way of eternal salvation." On the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas the Collect is as follows: "O God, who by the wonderful learning of blessed Thomas, Thy confessor, dost enlighten Thy Church, and by his holy works dost render her fertile; grant, we beseech Thee, that we may perceive with our mind what he taught, and in our lives fulfill by our imitation what he practised."

On the Sundays of Advent we implore the Lord to "stir up Thy power and come; that by Thy protection we may deserve to be freed from the imminent dangers of our sins, and be saved by Thy deliverance"; and we beg God to "stir up our hearts to prepare the ways of Thy only-begotten Son, that through His coming we may be enabled to serve Thee with purified minds." The Collects of the Lenten liturgy have reference almost always to the same subject, for they generally implore the grace to worthily and profitably employ this solemn time of penance. With an astonishing variety this petition is expressed in an ever new and changeable form. Thus,

for example, the Church begs God to “grant that our mind, chastened by the mortification of the body, may shine brightly in Thy sight with the desire for Thee”; she prays “that the faithful who by abstinence mortify their body, may by the fruit of good works become quickened in spirit”; “that we, who are commanded to abstain from carnal food, may also refrain from pernicious vices”; “that, fervently persevering in fasting and prayer, we may be delivered from the enemies of both soul and body”; “that the chastisement which we have inflicted on the body may serve to the strengthening and fortifying of the soul”; that “our fast may be pleasing to the Lord, make us worthy of divine grace, and lead us to the fountains of eternal salvation.”

The second half of the ecclesiastical year, the time from Pentecost to Advent, represents the pilgrimage of the children of God to their eternal home, their heavenly country. This pilgrimage is indeed accompanied with hardship and labor, but is also full of hope and consolation.⁶⁶ We feel that we are pilgrims and strangers coming from afar, who seek a better heavenly country, the city which God hath prepared for us (Heb. 11:13-16). Therefore, in the Collects of this season, the Church prays that God, the strength of all that hope in Him, may send us the help of His grace, that, in the fulfillment of His commandments, we may please Him by thought and by deed; she prays that God would multiply His mercies toward us, that guided by Him we may make use of temporal goods in such a manner as not to lose those which are eternal; that under the guidance of God, the world may be ruled peacefully and the Church may enjoy undisturbed devotion; that God, who has prepared invisible goods for all who love Him, may pour into our hearts the fire of His charity, that, by loving Him in all things and above all things, we may obtain His promises which surpass all understanding; that God’s infallible providence may avert from us all that is hurtful and grant us all that is profitable for us; that God may give us the spirit of always knowing and accomplishing what is right and just; that He would give us an increase of faith, hope, and charity, and in order that we may attain the happiness that He has promised, He

⁶⁶ *Deliciae spiritus nostri divina cantica, ubi et fletus sine gaudio non est. Fideli homini et peregrino in saeculo nulla est jucundior recordatio quam civitatis illius unde peregrinatur; sed recordatio civitatis in peregrinatione non est sine dolore atque suspirio. Spes tamen certa reditus nostri etiam peregrinando tristes consolatur et exhortatur (S. August., *Enarrat. in Ps.*, 145:1).*

may fill us with love for His holy commandments. As faithful children, who are pilgrims as yet at a distance from their true home, suffering and struggling,⁶⁷ we can ask or desire nothing better than what is expressed in these Sunday prayers.

⁶⁷ Ab octavis Pentecostes usque Adventum Domini (Ecclesia) recolit tempus peregrinationis. In hoc est nobis perpetua pugna et lucta adversus tres infestissimos hostes, mundum videlicet, carnem et diabolum. Mundus est hostis sophisticus, caro hostis domesticus, diabolus hostis antiquus. Nullus tamen istorum hostis est efficacior ad nocendum quam inimicus noster familiaris, scil. caro, quam fovemus indumentis et reficimus alimentis, cui tanquam jumento tria debentur: cibus ne deficiat, onus ut mansuescat, virga ut non indirecte, sed directe incedat (Beleth., *Ration.*, chap. 56).

CHAPTER XXII

THE EPISTLE

1. With the *Amen* of the Collect the service of prayer comes to an end. Now follow the readings from the Bible, which are connected with each other by various forms of chant and are often crowned by the Creed. What signification have the readings from Holy Scripture in the liturgy of the Mass? In the Mass the Saviour's entire work of redemption is shown forth and renewed; the celebration of the Mass embraces in its several parts the whole operation of the Redeemer. As the Lord exercised during His mortal life the office of mediator, thus He continues to exercise it in His Church, and that in a sacramental manner. Christ came as mediator between God and man, to reconcile and unite Heaven and earth with each other. God sent His Son to save the world and to bring godliness and the promise of the life which is to come (John 3:17; I Tim. 4:8). Christ has come from God unto "wisdom and justice and sanctification and redemption" (I Cor. 1:30), that is, as Redeemer He is the source not only of grace and sanctification, but also of enlightenment in all truth for mankind.

The first office of the Redeemer was to teach the truth and the law of God, exteriorly by the words which fell from His lips, and interiorly by the light which He infused into hearts. Already the Prophet remarks that in the days of the Messiah "the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the covering waters of the sea" (Isa. 11:9). The Spirit of God hovered over the Saviour, anointed Him and sent Him "to preach the gospel to the poor" (Luke 4:18). Christ came into the world to give testimony to the truth, and He taught the way of God in truth (John 18:37; Matt. 22:16). In Him were "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" and the fullness of His grace we have all received (Col. 2:3; John 1:14-16).

Only after the Lord, as the teacher of truth, had shown the way to heaven, did He die on the cross to unite man again with God in grace and love. Now all this is repeated in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Before the Saviour becomes present on the altar at the Consecration as a mystical victim, He speaks to us words of eternal life, first by His prophets and apostles, then by Himself. The Epistle and Gospel come before the sacrificial action. In this arrangement is revealed the connection between the teaching of truth and the mystery of the altar, between the word of God and the divine eternal Word, who was made flesh and who under the Eucharistic veil is again present and dwells among us.

The sacramental God-man is not merely the life, but also the way and the truth for us men (John 14:6); only where the fountain of grace of the Eucharistic sacrifice flows, does the truth of Christ shine forth in full and undimmed splendor. The altar of grace and the pulpit of truth are sanctuaries intimately connected: they are in the same house of God, and the priest who offers the sacrifice also proclaims the heavenly doctrine. The Church, therefore, most appropriately combines the reading of the prophetic and evangelical word with the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is eminently termed "the mystery of faith."¹ The announcement of the truth precedes the accomplishment of the sacrifice; for knowledge is the beginning of salvation. The living word of God is the seed whence proceeds the imperishable life of faith, which here below is perfected by grace and in the next life is transformed into glory.

The Church prefers to employ in her liturgy the words of Scripture, because they are especially holy and venerable, efficacious and full of grace; they are, indeed, the words of God, words that have the Holy Ghost for their author. Therefore are they so well adapted to manifest to the Lord our sentiments, desires, and petitions. To commune with God in prayer, to praise Him, to thank Him, to supplicate Him, to pour out to Him in chant our heart's joys and complaints, we can find no words more fitting than those which God Himself has put into our mouth and inspired through His "Holy

¹ *Instructio fidei est duplex: una quae fit noviter imbuendis, scil. catechumenis et talis instructio fit circa baptismum. Alia autem est instructio, qua instruitur fidelis populus, qui communicat huic mysterio et talis instructio fit in hoc sacramento et tamen ab hac instructione non repelluntur etiam catechumeni et infideles (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 4 ad 4).*

Spirit, who within us beseeches Heaven in our behalf with unutterable groanings." In the readings which now follow the service of prayer, we have the word of God, by which He speaks to us and instructs us in all doctrine and truth. These readings teach us the science of the saints and show us the kingdom of God. They afford us abundant material for growth "in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:18).

2. From apostolic times the canonical books have been read aloud at the assemblies of divine worship, and principally at the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice.² For a long time it belonged to the bishop to select the parts of Scripture which were to be read. St. Justin Martyr (d. 166 or 167), who describes the order of divine worship among the Christians, says that at the Sunday assemblies the writings of the apostles (the books of the New Testament) or the writings of the prophets were read as long as time permitted.³ With the gradual development of the liturgical year, the distribution of the passages to be read changed more and more according to the new feasts, until finally, in the sixteenth century, the present arrangement of the Epistles and Gospels for the missal was determined. In this matter St. Jerome, who, by order of Pope Damasus I (366-384), completed and corrected the traditional arrangement of the biblical passages for the Mass, deserves great credit.

What rule was followed in the choice and arrangement of the biblical readings? The Epistles and the Gospels bear the closest connection with the course and spirit of the ecclesiastical year; the Church's selection, therefore, was made in conformity with the celebration of the feast or day. Indeed, among the variable parts of the Mass formula, the lessons selected from Holy Scripture occupy the principal place. In them, as a rule, the idea of the ecclesiastical season or feast finds its most perfect expression.

3. According to a general rule that has few exceptions, every

² In the first four centuries the liturgical celebration of Mass began with the reading of Scripture, at which the different books of the Bible were read (as they are still in the breviary) in a continuous order (*in continua serie*). (Cf. the 124 sermons of St. Augustine on the Gospel of St. John and St. John Chrysostom's homilies on the epistles of St. Paul.) For the highest feasts there were chosen already from the beginning appropriate passages, that is, such passages as had reference to the mysteries celebrated. With the progressive evolution of the ecclesiastical year, the *lectio continua* was replaced by a series of biblical extracts arranged for the various feasts and festal seasons.

³ *First Apology*, chap. 67.

Mass formula has two biblical readings,⁴ the first of which is called the Epistle and the other the Gospel. The first reading may be taken from any part of the Old and New Testaments except the four Gospels and the Book of Psalms; but generally—for example, on all the Sundays of the year—the Epistle is taken from the writings of the apostles. Hence it is that the name *Epistola* (letter) was used to designate the first pericope, even when it was not taken from the Epistles of the apostles but from some other part of Holy Scripture.⁵ And from the fact that this pericope was not sung in former times, but only read,⁶ it is still called in the superscription or heading of the missal, *Lectio*, that is, lesson or reading.⁷

⁴ In the Mozarabic and Ambrosian liturgies, the Gospel is usually preceded by two lessons (generally one from the Old, the other from the New Testament). On Ember Saturdays there were formerly, according to the Roman rite, twelve lessons read by twelve lectors (that is, six lessons read first in Latin and then in Greek); hence in the ancient liturgical books these Saturdays are called *Sabbata duodecim lectionum s. in duodecim lectionibus*. At present they still retain the six lessons (five from the Old Testament and one from the New) before the Gospel, while Ember Wednesdays have but two. In the pope's High Mass the Epistle and Gospel are still sung both in Latin and Greek.

⁵ Because this first reading was more frequently taken from St. Paul's epistles, it was called also *ἀπόστολος* to distinguish it from *εὐαγγέλιον*. Under the former term were included not only the epistles of the apostles, but also the Acts of the Apostles and the Apocalypse. Postmodum dicitur Oratio; deinde sequitur Apostolus (*Sacrament. Gregor.*).

⁶ *Lectio dicitur quia non cantatur ut psalmus vel hymnus, sed legitur tantum. Illic enim modulatio, hic sola pronuntiatio quaeritur* (Isid., *Etymolog.*, VI, xix, 9). The present mode of delivering the Epistle is a tone between singing and simple reading: it is a manner of singing in which the whole text is delivered in a monotone (*tono recto*) without modulation (except at an interrogation, when the voice descends half a tone, but in the last syllable returns to the dominant tone). The rubrics designate this as chanting. Subdiaconus cantat Epistolam alta voce (*Cerem. Episc.*, II, viii, 40). The ancient liturgists called it *choraliter legere* (reading in a choral manner). The reading or singing tone of the Gospel is somewhat more melodious and, therefore, more festive.

⁷ In regard to the superscription *Lectio libri Sapientiae*, it is to be observed that it is given not only to extracts from the Book of Wisdom itself, but also to selections from the Book of Jesus the son of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), from Ecclesiastes, the Canticle of Canticles, and the Book of Proverbs—all these taken together are called by the Fathers and in the liturgy, Books of Wisdom (*libri Sapientiales*). Notandum est, non omnia verba ex s. Scriptura esse desumpta, sed initium fere semper et interdum etiam finem ab Ecclesia dumtaxat additum esse, ut convenientius inchoetur aut claudatur Epistola. Hinc Epistolae desumptae ex s. Paulo initium vox "fratres" et finis frequenter

In former times, perhaps up to the fifth century, it was the duty of the lector to read the Epistle; but from that time forward the solemn reading of the Epistle was assigned to the subdeacon, who only since the fourteenth century was especially empowered for that office by a special rite at his ordination.⁸ In ancient churches the ambo⁹ stood in the space between the sanctuary and the nave. If a church had two ambos, one served for the reading of the Gospel and the other for that of the Epistle. If there was but one ambo, then the Gospel was read from the highest step and the Epistle from

“in Christo Jesu Domino nostro.” Si vero ex aliorum Apostolorum Epistolis sumatur, vox “carissimi”; si ex Prophetis, verba “in illo tempore” ab initio praeponuntur, et in fine non raro verba “dicit Dominus omnipotens” subjunguntur (Lohner, *De ss. Miss. sacrif.*, VI, tit. 6).

⁸ In the thirteenth century Durandus answers the question: Quare subdiaconus legit lectiones ad Missam, cum non reperiatur hoc sibi competere vel ex nomine vel ex ministerio sibi concesso? (*Ration.*, II, viii, 4.) In former times even the lectors were allowed to read the Gospel. St. Cyprian mentions this when speaking of the confessors Aurelius and Celerinus, whom he had ordained lectors about the year 250 (cf. *Epist.*, 38, 39). Antiquioribus temporibus Lectorum ordo legendo Evangelio fuit destinatus. Verum saeculo IV visum est Patribus nostris, reverentiam et venerationem Evangelio debitam omnino exigere, ut tantum munus non amplius Lectoribus, qui jam ut plurimum ex puerili aetate eligebantur, sed ministris sacris, saltem Diaconis committeretur, qui ad sacerdotalem dignitatem proxime accedebant (Krazer, IV, a. 1, § 235). However, the handing of the Book of the Gospels at the ordination of the deacon came into use only gradually after the tenth century. (Cf. Amalar., *De ecclesiast. offic.*, II, chaps. 11 f.; Morin., *De sacris ordinat.*, III, ix, 1; *ibid.*, xii, 2.)

In a High Mass without the assistance of the *ministri sacri*, a lector in surplice sings the Epistle (*Rubr. Miss.*, II, vi, 8). On April 23, 1875, the S. R. C. gave this answer: Quum Missa cantatur sine ministris et nullus est clericus inserviens qui superpelliceo indutus Epistolam decantet juxta Rubricas, satius erit quod ipsa Epistola legatur sine cantu ab ipso Celebrante; nunquam vero in Ecclesiis monialium decantetur ab una ex eis. Accordingly it is indeed more proper (*satius*) that the celebrant in a High Mass without sacred ministers should merely read the Epistle, but he is not forbidden to sing it. The priest in this matter should conform to the ordinance or general practice of the diocese. Only in a case of actual necessity may a superior permit a cleric who is not in a higher order to vest as subdeacon (however, without maniple) and sing the Epistle in a *Missa solemnis* and perform the remaining functions of a subdeacon (S. R. C., July 15, 1698).

⁹ The ambo is an immovable tribune or oblong pulpit up to which a few steps lead. It serves for the solemn reading of the Holy Scriptures, the announcement of divine worship, and so forth. In the Basilica of St. Clement at Rome are to be found three ambos; beside the ambo for the Epistle, is another marble stand arranged for the Old Testament lessons.

a lower one. Thus the prominence due the Gospel over the Epistle was expressed both by the manner of delivery and by the person of the reader and the place of reading.¹⁰

All the books of the Old and New Testaments possess the same divine character, the same divine dignity and authority, inasmuch as they have God for their author and are inspired by the Holy Ghost, and are, therefore, in a true and full sense the word of God; but in other respects a certain distinction of rank can and must be given to them. That which the Holy Ghost imparts through the medium of the inspired writers can be more or less important, the manner of communication can be more or less perfect. In this respect the superiority of the New Testament over the Old is surely manifest, and again in the New Testament itself the four Gospels take precedence of the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse. For in the work of divine revelation there is a continual and gradual progression. The foundations laid in the Old Dispensation, were brought to perfection in Christ and His apostles. The Old Testament is included, developed, and completed in the New.

The crown of the supernatural revelation consists in this, that God spoke to us, not only by the prophets and apostles, but also through His only-begotten Son (Heb. chap. 1). The prophets and apostles were, indeed, organs of the Holy Ghost, who announced through them heavenly truths; still they were only human messengers of salvation. Jesus Christ, on the contrary, is a divine person; He is truth itself; He is the true light of the world; all His words, works, and miracles are eminently divine works and actions, full of divine spirit and life, of infinite truth and depth. The Gospels place before our eyes the life of Jesus Christ, the word and

¹⁰ From the most ancient times (cf. *Ordo Rom. I*, n. 10), it was customary to sit in choir with head covered at the solemn reading of the Epistle, whereas from the beginning it was customary to stand with head uncovered while the Gospel was sung. Although the subdeacon no longer reads the Epistle to the people from the ambo (as he formerly did until towards the end of the Middle Ages), but at the left side turned towards the altar, he must, nevertheless, both before and after reading it make a genuflection (*in gradu*) in the middle of the altar. The subdeacon receives the blessing from the celebrant, who represents Christ, only after he has finished reading, because the Old Law, symbolized by the Epistle, was fulfilled, or annulled, by Christ (Math. 5:17-20); the deacon, on the contrary, is blessed by the celebrant before he reads the Gospel, because the Gospel is derived from Christ (cf. Durand., *op. cit.*, IV, chap. 17).

example of the eternal Wisdom made flesh; in them appears the God-man Himself, teaching and acting, suffering and triumphing, whereas in the Epistles the Holy Ghost speaks to us, instructs and admonishes us, only by His human messengers and servants. Hence it is usually said that the instruction of the people takes place first in the Epistle, in a preparatory and imperfect manner through the doctrine of the prophets and apostles; then the faithful are more perfectly instructed through the teachings of Christ as contained in the Gospel.¹¹ The Epistle, therefore, is read before the Gospel because it is subordinate to it, prepares for it, leads to the understanding of it.¹² Both readings harmonize with one another and mutually complete each other; they would express a common thought, or at least kindred ideas. But as the subject or the mystery of the ecclesiastical celebration appears more closely and more fully exposed at one time in the Epistle, at another time in the Gospel, it may in general be said that both readings mutually explain and throw light on each other, so as to constitute together a whole. On the feast of the Most Holy Trinity, for example, the Apostle in his grand Epistle (Rom. 11:33-36) glorifies the impenetrable secrets of the Divinity, while in the Gospel (Matt. 28:18-20) the adorable mystery of three persons in God, which forms the foundation of faith and is its crown, is clearly and distinctly set forth. The Epistle of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-11) announces and describes in detail the coming of the Holy Ghost, while the Gospel (John 14:23-31) contains the promise of the Comforter and His blessed gifts.

Many of the Epistles are taken from the Old Testament, for the following reasons. The Old Testament is a divine testimony to Christ and to His kingdom. Whenever the Church found in it some

¹¹ *Instructio fidelis populi dispositive quidem fit per doctrinam prophetarum et apostolorum, quae in Ecclesia legitur per lectores et subdiaconos;—perfecte autem populus instruitur per doctrinam Christi in Evangelio contentam, quae a summis ministris legitur, scilicet a diaconibus (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 4). Epistolarum doctrina respectu evangelicae doctrinae, quae immediate a Christo profluxit, est imperfecta et ordinatur ad eam sicut ad finem. Intellectus namque Epistolarum disponit ad intellectum Evangeliorum; propterea Epistola ante Evangelium legitur (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 12).*

¹² *Anteponitur in ordine quod inferius est dignitate, ut ex minoribus animus audientium ad majora proficiat et gradatim ab imis ad summa conscendat (Walaf. Strabo, chap. 23). According to the liturgists of the Middle Ages, the Epistle precedes the Gospel because it represents the Law and the Prophets, or the efficacy of the Precursor of Christ, or the preaching of the seventy-two disciples, who prepared the way for the Saviour.*

striking prophecy or figure of a New Testament mystery or event, she incorporated it, if possible, as an Epistle in the Mass, as a supplement to the Gospel or an explanation of it. Most of the Masses in honor of the Mother of God have Epistles taken from the Old Testament, and these have preferably been selected from the Books of Wisdom.

Another reason why the Church inserted in the liturgy of the Mass lessons from the Old Testament is found in the following reflection. In the Old Law salvation had not yet appeared and the light had not as yet risen, but darkness and the shadow of death enveloped all nations; it was a time of anxious and painful expectancy, a time of sighing and longing for redemption. Lessons taken from this dark period are well fitted to impress the character of penance on those days on which they are used. This explains why the Church on all ferial days from Ash Wednesday until Tuesday in Holy Week exclusively uses lessons from the Old Testament. They are intended to awaken, nourish, and strengthen within us a true penitential spirit; for, like so many voices from the ages before Christ, they impressively admonish us that by sin we have become estranged from God and have strayed back into the night of death. On those days which have several Old Testament lessons, such as the Wednesdays and Saturdays of Ember weeks,¹⁸ the earnest spirit of penance is still more deeply stamped. Coming down to us from apostolic times, the Ember days are, according to their original intent and purpose, days of penance, on which we are expected, by prayer, fasting and alms-giving, to purify and to sanctify our souls; they are also days of thanksgiving and petition for the blessings of the seasons. Later on they became also ordination days, because they were specially suitable for the conferring of holy orders.

4. At the conclusion of the Epistle the acolyte, in the name of the people, answers: *Deo gratias* ("Thanks be to God"). What is more befitting than that we should thank the Lord from the bottom of our heart for the divine instruction which He has imparted to us by the mouth of His messenger? In the Epistle almighty God, so to speak, sends a letter, a writing from heaven, to us miserable crea-

¹⁸ Only on the Wednesday of the Pentecost Ember week are there two New Testament lessons; the reason is that the penitential character of this Ember Week is in many respects superseded by the festal spirit of the octave.

tures.¹⁴ Should we not with faith and reverence receive His words which are of infinite dignity, power, and depth of meaning, and obey them with cheerfulness and alacrity? Every word emanating from the mouth of God is supernatural and heavenly food for the life of the soul. Holy Scripture, more than any other writing, is fit to instruct us for salvation, to teach, reprove, correct, indoc-trinate in justice, that the man of God may be perfect, furnished for every good work (II Tim. 3:15-17). By means of the biblical readings the minister of God plants and waters the field of our heart; let us be grateful for this, and the Lord will then give the increase, so that the heavenly seed of the living word may germinate and thrive, blossom and produce fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold (I Cor. 3:6-9; Matt. 13:3-23). But in order that this fruit of salva-tion may ripen, in order that we may advance in the holy love of God and in every Christian virtue to perfection, we must not only receive and preserve the divine word with a perfect heart, but we must persevere in patience amid all sufferings and contradictions, amid all temptations and combats.

It is peculiar to the Christian always to return thanks to God through Christ our Lord, who has revealed Himself to us full of truth and grace, who in the character of a penitent has taken our place and submitted to the death of the cross, who is our mediator and advocate with the Father. Hence the words *Deo gratias* were, at the time of the persecution of the Christians, the watchword or the mark by which, as a short profession of faith, the *ostiarius* (the doorkeeper) recognized as Christians those who sought admission into the place of public worship. At the same time there was com-prised in this expression of gratitude a confession of the sentiments with which the Christians were urged to assist at divine worship, which they regarded as a grace from God. No wonder that the words *Deo gratias* found their way into the liturgy and occur so frequently. They are found already in St. Paul's Epistles (I Cor. 15:57; II Cor. 2:14).

¹⁴ Sunt et Angeli cives nostri: sed quia nos peregrinamur, laboramus, illi autem in civitate exspectant adventum nostrum. Et de illa civitate, unde peregrinamur, literae nobis venerunt: ipsae sunt Scripturae, quae nos hortantur, ut bene vivamus (S. August., *In Ps. 90 serm.*, II, n. 1).

CHAPTER XXIII

THE INTERPOSED CHANTS

THE Church has assigned to the choir the task of executing, in the name of the congregation, the various parts that are to be sung. These are very appropriately and skilfully inserted in the liturgy of the Mass, for sacred chant produces many wholesome results: ¹ it makes divine worship more solemn and more majestic, elevates the mind, exhilarates the heart, renders the disposition more peaceable, inclines to devotion, excites to piety, softens to mildness and compunction of spirit, produces a flow of tears and raises a desire of amendment, enables the soul to soar above the earth and all that is earthly and to lose itself in heavenly meditation. St. Augustine depicts the powerful impression made by the chant of the Ambrosian hymns upon his soul: "How I wept, O Lord, amid Thy hymns and chants, greatly moved by the voices of Thy sweetly singing Church! They poured themselves into my ears, these voices, and like drops Thy truth penetrated my heart: the fervor of devotion was awakened, tears flowed, and ah, how happy I was then!" ² Thus the chants at the celebration of Mass, by a pleasing variety, drive away weariness and keep the participation of the faithful in the divine service ever on the alert. Formerly they had a larger scope and were in the form of responsories, or alternate singing, conducted, according to a certain rule of repetition, by precentors and the choir.

The chant which follows the Epistle and precedes the Gospel is a connecting link between these two biblical readings. It varies at

¹ Psallendi utilitas tristia corda consolatur, gratiores mentes facit, fastidiosos oblectat, inertes exsuscitat, peccatores ad lamenta invitatur. Nam quamvis dura sint carnalium corda, statim ut psalmi dulcedo insonuerit, ad affectum pietatis animum eorum inflectit (S. Isid., *Sentent.*, III, vii, 31).

² *Confess.*, IX, chap. 6.

the different periods of the ecclesiastical year, and accordingly bears different names. Sometimes the Gradual alone occurs; but for the most part it is followed by an Alleluja or the Tract. Sometimes the Gradual, or the Alleluja, or the Tract, is followed by the Sequence. During the Easter season the Gradual is entirely replaced by the greater Alleluja, and once (on Good Friday) by the Tract.

THE GRADUAL

The word *Graduale*³ comes from *gradus* = step. To distinguish the responsory that occurs between the Epistle and the Gospel from the responsories of the Divine Office, it was, in time, called *Graduale*, from the place in which it was sung; for the leading singer who intoned the longer chant after the Epistle and sang it alternately with the choir, stood (in the Roman Church) on an elevated step, that is, on the same step of the ambo from which the Epistle had previously been read.⁴

The Apostolic Constitutions (II, chap. 57) already prescribe a chant of psalms after the reading from the Old Testament. St. Augustine several times mentions that between the apostolic reading

³ The original designation was: *Responsum, Responsorium, Responsorium graduale, Responsorius* (sc. *cantus vel psalmus*). The name *Responsorium* (from *respondere*), that is, alternate singing, expresses the way and manner of the singing, namely, *quod uno canente chorus consonando respondet* (Isidor., *De offic. eccles.*, I, chap. 8). Accordingly, the responsory-hymn consists of two parts, of the *Responsorium* proper (R.) and the *Versus* (V.). Often (but not always) the other explanation holds good, by which *Responsorium* would designate a chant of the choir answering the contents of the preceding reading, *quia lectioni convenire et quodammodo respondere debet* (Benedict. XIV, *De ss. Miss. sacrif.*, II, v, 15). *Responsorium dicuntur a respondendo. Tristria namque tristibus, et laeta laetis debemus succinere lectionibus* (Rupert. Tuitiens., *De divin. offic.*, I, chap. 15).

⁴ *Subdiaconus ascendit in ambonem* (—non tamen in superiorem gradum, quem solus solet ascendere qui Evangelium lecturus est—*Ordo Rom. II*, n. 7) et legit (sc. Epistolam). Postquam legerit, cantor cum cantatorio (*Antiphon or Gradual*) ascendit et dicit *Responsum* (*Ordo Rom. I*, n. 10). Non tamen ascendit superius, sed stat in eodem loco, ubi et lector, et solus inchoat *Responsorium* et cuncti in choro respondent et idem solus *Versum Responsorii* cantat (*Ordo Rom. II*, n. 7). *Lectionem quae legitur post sessionem, sequitur cantus, qui vocatur responsorius* (Amalar., *De ecclesiast. offic.*, III, chap. 11; cf. Amalar., *Eclog. in Ord. Rom.*, n. 14). According to others this chant was called *Graduale*, because it was sung while the deacon with his attendants went from the altar to the steps (*gradus*) of the choir-stand and ascended them, in order to sing the Gospel. (Cf. Bellarm., *De Missa*, II, chap. 16.)

(Epistle) and the Gospel an entire psalm should be sung responsorily.⁵ Thus in this place whole psalms were sung until the fifth century; but in the *Antiphonarium* of St. Gregory the Great, this psalm-chant is reduced to a few verses, as it now stands in our missal. Even in its present abridgment the Gradual chant has preserved its previous responsory form; for all the Graduals consist of two parts: the first retains the name, *responsorium*, the other bears the title, *versus* (V).⁶ In most cases both parts are taken from the Psalms; not unfrequently, however, passages from other books of the Old and New Testaments are used; only a few times do we meet with texts which are not from the Bible.⁷ Thus do we find everywhere in the liturgy "words of Holy Scripture which the Church, with a delicacy of thought, has appropriately selected and causes, like so many brilliant gems, to glisten in her divine service."

The object and meaning of the Gradual can generally be easily seen and determined if we take into consideration that this choir chant, with the three other variable chants (Introit, Offertory, Communion), forms a whole which bears the impress or idea of the feast or of the ecclesiastical year, that is, gives in various ways expression to the fundamental thought of the liturgical celebration of the day. Sentiments and resolutions similar to those of the Introit are again expressed or amplified in the chant that comes between the readings, that we may be ever more penetrated with the spirit of the day's celebration. Hence the intimate connection between the Gradual chant and the two scriptural lessons which it binds together is made evident. The Epistle and Gospel, as well as the Gradual chant which comes between them, are selected with regard to the central idea of the liturgical celebration; accordingly, the

⁵ Primam lectionem audivimus Apostoli. Deinde cantavimus Psalmum. Post haec evangelica lectio decem leprosos mundatos nobis ostendit et unum ex eis alienigenam gratias agentem mundatori suo (S. August., *Serm.*, CLXXVI, n. 1).

⁶ Formam habet Responsorii Graduale, imo et Responsorium semper appellatur in Antiphonario S. Gregorii, et frequentius a Radulpho et aliis rituum interpretibus. Unde sicut Responsorii duae sunt partes, ita et Gradualis: prior una, quae ipsa *Responsorii* nomen retinet, posterior altera huic cohaerens et annexa, quae *Versus* dicitur (Guyet., *Heortolog.*, III, chap. 25, q. 3).

⁷ This is the case, for example, in the Gradual of the feast of the Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin Mary: *Dolorosa et lacrymabilis* . . . ; and in the Gradual, *Benedicta et venerabilis* . . . , which occurs in many Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Here also belongs the first part of the Gradual in Requiem Masses: *Requiem aeternam*. . . .

readings and the chant harmonize with one another: in both the peculiarity of each ecclesiastical celebration is reflected, but in a different way, as the character of an instructive reading or an inspiring chant demands.⁸ In the reading God descends to us, speaks to us, makes known His mysteries and His will to us, addresses exhortations and admonitions to us, terrifies us by threats, and consoles us with His promises; in the chant, on the contrary, we soar upwards to God, make known our devotion and fervor, we praise, thank, love, admire, implore, lament, and rejoice. This harmonious blending of instructive readings with affective singing brings along a beneficial variation in the divine service.

In the Gradual chant we give appropriate expression to our lofty dispositions, we utter sentiments of joy or sorrow, various impressions and resolutions which have been awakened in us by the day's celebration and by the Mass in general, as well as by the reading of the Epistle in particular.⁹ In a certain sense, then, we may say that the interposed chant is an echo of the Epistle and a suitable transition to the Gospel. In order, then, to expound thoroughly the meaning of the Gradual chant, it must always be conceived and explained in its twofold relation: to the preceding Epistle and the following Gospel.

Usually the Gradual is not sung or recited alone, but it has an appendix, which, according to the tenor of the ecclesiastical celebration, bears the impress of joy or of sorrow. Expressive of joy is the Alleluja, which is generally added to the Gradual throughout the year. It consists of two allelujas, a verse, and another alleluja; hence it is often called the Alleluja verse.¹⁰ In this addition the

⁸ In lectione auditores pascuntur, sed in cantu quasi aratro compunctionis corda conscinduntur; habet enim musica quamdam vim ad flectendum animum (Sicard., *Mitral.*, III, chap. 3).

⁹ Utraque Gradualis pars, perinde atque Introitus, modo invitationem et exhortationem continet, modo collaudationem et congratulationem, nonnumquam prosopopoeiam vel apostrophen, saepissime vero omnium narrationem aut invocationem (Guyet., *loc. cit.*).

¹⁰ Alleluja canimus, quoniam ad laudes angelicas in hoc itinere festinamus; Versus, quoniam sic euntes, laborantes, festinantes ad Dominum revertimur, unde et Versus cantantes ad Orientem nos convertimur; et attende, quod Alleluja, prius summotenus dictum, praesentis contemplationis gaudium repraesentat, sed postea repetitum cum jubilo gaudium designat aeternum et tam angelorum quam beatarum animarum convivium. Unde et hoc hebraicum nomen in officio remanet peregrinum, quoniam gaudium illud peregrinatur ab hac vita et nos a Domino peregrinamur. Congrue igitur post Graduale

Gradual expands and rises into a joyful chant, which thrills through the soul.¹¹ The verse between the three allelujas is frequently not a mere continuation, but rather a clearer development and a more perfect expression of the thoughts contained in the Gradual. The reason for this is the fact that in selecting the verse the Church gave herself freer scope. While she compiled the Gradual almost always entirely from the Psalms, she did not adhere so strictly to this rule in the composition of the Alleluja verse, but she often employed therein other biblical texts and, especially in Masses celebrated in honor of the saints, verses of ecclesiastical origin. In this way it was easier to designate more distinctly the subject of the day's celebration. One of the verses thus composed by the Church is sung on the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin: *Assumpta est Maria in coelum, gaudet exercitus angelorum.*

The Gradual lies midway between the mournful Tract and the exultant Alleluja: it denotes the laborious and difficult pilgrimage of the children of God through life to their heavenly country.¹² Therefore, at one time the Gradual is connected with the Tract, at another with the Alleluja, according as the sufferings and pains of penance or the consolations and hopes of future eternal rest predominate in our earthly pilgrimage.¹³ At certain times the Gradual is entirely omitted or gives place to the Tract, for the reason that grief of soul has reached its profoundest depths, as on Good Friday;

cantatur, quia post actionem sequitur contemplatio, post luctum poenitentiae canticum laetitiae, post irriguum dilationis magnitudo consolationis, quoniam . . . qui seminant in lacrymis, in exultatione metent. Congrue quoque in Alleluja jubilamus (= we continue to sing the last syllable with varied melodious turns), ut mens illuc rapiatur, ubi Sancti exsultabunt in gloria et laetabuntur in cubilibus suis (Ps. 149), quod gaudium nec potest verbis exprimi nec omnino taceri: non exprimitur propter magnitudinem, non tacetur propter amorem (Sicard., *loc. cit.*).

¹¹ Versus nihil sinistrum aut triste, sed totum jucundum et dulce debent sonare (Innoc. III, *op. cit.*, II, chap. 33).

¹² Graduale significat non jam requiem remuneratorum, sed laborem operantium (Rupert. Tuit., I, chap. 24). In hoc quidem tempore peregrinationis nostrae ad solatium viatici dicimus Alleluja: modo nobis Alleluja canticum est viatoris, tendimus autem per viam laboriosam ad quietam patriam, ubi retractis omnibus actionibus non remanebit nisi Alleluja (S. August., *Serm.*, CCLV, n. 1).

¹³ Post lectionem cantatur a choro Graduale, quod significat profectum vitae, et Alleluja, quod significat spiritualem exultationem, vel Tractus in officiis luctuosus, quod significat spiritualem gemitum: haec enim consequi debent in populo ex praedicta doctrina (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 4).

or it is displaced by the Alleluja, because the soul, as it were, forgets the troubles of this life and can but rejoice with the blessed of heaven, as during Eastertide.

THE TRACT

At certain times the joyful Alleluja chant after the Gradual is replaced by the Tract, which is of an entirely different tenor. Whereas the Gradual with the Alleluja is a spirited hymn of joy, the Tract adds a grave, mournful, and penitential character to the interposed chant.

*Tractus*¹⁴ is a musical term; it relates primarily, not to the contents, but to the manner of singing. The peculiar, characteristic manner of singing called *tractus* consisted in this, that all the verses were continuously sung by one singer in a slow, protracted measure, without interruption from the choir. This uniform and measured way of chanting, in contrast to the animated, alternate singing of the Gradual and Alleluja verse, is evidently suited for the expression of sorrow and penitential sentiments. For this reason the Tract replaced the jubilant alleluja, and became the peculiar characteristic of the Lenten rite: it occurs only on days especially devoted to exercises of prayer and mortification, to works of penance, and fervent prayers for divine grace and mercy. What the somber purple is to the eye on these days of penance, the touching chant of the Tract is to the ear, a sigh of penitential grief.

The Tract is a continuation or amplification of the Gradual, and according to its contents harmonizes with it: at times it expresses quiet sentiments of joy, hope, and confidence; more frequently, however, it utters the supplication of a contrite heart oppressed with distress and suffering. The Tract is nearly always taken from Holy

¹⁴ *Tractus* = the drawing, the extension, the slow movement of the words; *tractim* = in one strain, drawn, extended, slowly. We find the Tract already in the most ancient Roman *Ordines*. Cantor dicit Reponsum. Si fuerit tempus ut dicat Alleluja, bene; sin autem, Tractum; sin minus, tantummodo Responsum (*Ordo Rom. I*, n. 10). Saeculo decimo complures sibi persuaserunt, quod tractim canere nihil aliud significaret, quam cunctanter lento et tristi tono canere; hinc jusserunt, ut non amplius unus, sed plures et quidem bini Tractum alternis canerent vicibus, ea tantum servata lege, ne chorus eos interrumpere (Krazer, sect. 4, art. 1, cap. 4, § 234). Tractus dicitur a trahendo, vel quia lente et lugubriter cantatur, vel quia olim tractim et sine interruptione a cantore canebatur (*De Carpo, Biblioth. liturg.*, I, a. 2).

Scripture, especially from the Psalms; often various biblical texts are freely joined together; only seldom is it partly or wholly of ecclesiastical origin. Sometimes it is long, sometimes short; it always comprises, with but few exceptions, more than two verses. On three occasions (on the first Sunday of Lent, Palm Sunday, and Good Friday) almost an entire psalm is chanted. Not all those days have a Tract on which the joyful Alleluja chant is omitted; it rather serves to distinguish certain more strictly penitential days from others, or to bring the festive expression of some Masses more into harmony with the spirit of Lent. The most sorrowful day of the year, Good Friday, has two Tracts; at other times only one is prescribed.¹⁵

The Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays in Lent were, from the earliest period, the most prominent days of penance; ¹⁶ hence they have a tract specially arranged for penitents. With the exception of Wednesday in Holy Week, this Tract is always the same. It is as follows:

Ps. 102:10. Domine, non secundum peccata nostra, quae fecimus nos: neque secundum iniquitates nostras retribuas nobis.

V. Ps. 78:8 f. Domine, ne memineris iniquitatum nostrarum antiquarum: cito anticipent nos misericordiae tuae, quia pauperes facti sumus nimis.

V. (*Ad hunc versum genuflectitur.*) Adjuva nos, Deus salutaris noster: et propter gloriam nominis tui, Domine, libera nos; et propitius esto peccatis nostris, propter nomen tuum.

Ps. 102:10. O Lord, deal not with us according to our sins: nor reward us according to our iniquities.

V. Ps. 78:8 f. Remember not, O Lord, our former iniquities: let Thy mercies speedily prevent us, for we are become exceedingly poor.

V. (*Genuflect.*) Help us, O God, our Saviour: and for the glory of Thy name, O Lord, deliver us; and forgive us our sins for Thy name's sake.

¹⁵ On Ember Saturdays the Tract follows the Epistle only, and thus closes the five chants (Graduals) that are annexed to the five preceding lessons and are, thus to speak, regarded as one single Gradual. Rupert of Deutz remarks on this circumstance, that on Ember Saturdays and on Wednesday in Holy Week, after the Epistle, as well as on Good Friday after the (two) lessons, not the Gradual with the Tract, but merely the Tract without the Gradual follows, whereby the expression of penitential sorrow is augmented in the highest degree (*De divin. off.*, V, chap. 13).

¹⁶ They are called *feriae legitimae*, that is, official penitential days, the

This Tract is a fervent supplication for mercy, for the pardon of sin, and for obtaining the assistance of grace to persevere in a life of virtue.¹⁷ For all this we pray, not indeed relying on our merits, but wishing to honor the name of God, that He may thereby be glorified and praised. But to make our cry of supplication and our petition still more pressing, we bend the knee at the last verse in token of our profound humility and compunction.

The ecclesiastical year has no influence whatever on the Requiem Mass, which is always the same. It has throughout the entire year a Gradual with a Tract,¹⁸ which, with the exception of an inserted verse from the Psalms, was composed by the Church herself. The Gradual and Tract for the Requiem Mass is always as follows:

Graduale. Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine: et lux perpetua luceat eis.

V. Ps. 11:7. In memoria aeterna erit justus: ab auditione mala non timebit.

Tractus. Absolve, Domine, animas omnium fidelium defunctorum ab omni vinculo delictorum.

V. Et gratia tua illis succurre, mereantur evadere iudicium ultionis.

V. Et lucis aeternae beatitudine perfrui.

Gradual. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord: and let perpetual light shine upon them.

V. Ps. 7. The just shall be in everlasting remembrance: he shall not fear the evil hearing.

Tract. Release, O Lord, the souls of all the faithful departed from the bonds of their sins.

V. And by the assistance of Thy grace may they escape the sentence of condemnation.

V. And enjoy the bliss of eternal light.

observance of which was transplanted from the East to the West. The mystical reasons for selecting the *feriae legitimae* (fer. II, IV, VI) are given by Quadt, *Die Liturgie der Quatembertage*, pp. 111 f.

¹⁷ Admiranda est virtus orationis versuum horum et omnino saluberrimum est mentali affectu cum attentione ingenti, cum praecordiali sapore hos sacros versus depromere, quoniam possibilis foret coelum et terram perire quam talem orationem inefficacem existere (Dion. Carthus., *In Ps.*, 78:8).

¹⁸ Tam Graduale quam Tractus in Missis defunctorum nullam unquam mutationem subeunt; adeo luctuosa officia sunt Missae de Requiem, quae nobis objiciunt Purgatorii animas a facie Dei projectas, in inmanissimis tormentorum generibus excruciatas, ut aptae haud sint suscipere vel intermixta admittere laetitiae signa, unde et respuunt vocem Alleluja (Cavalieri, *Oper. liturg.*, III, x, 3).

As a tenderly solicitous mother, the Church begs God the Father to take His and her suffering children out of purgatory into the peace of heaven and light of glory. The Church is encouraged thus to pray and intercede, because the souls that are expiating in purgatory led God-fearing and devout lives here on earth. She then implores the Lord to remove the last obstacle to glory; and while she suddenly represents to herself these souls at the moment of their departure from the body and out of this world, she entreats for them a favorable judgment, that they may soon be admitted to the possession of eternal joys.

The Alleluja and Tract are, therefore, at different times added to the ordinary Gradual to express the various interior sentiments of the Church. Although the times of Advent and Lent are in many respects liturgically alike, there is a distinction made with regard to the Alleluja. Advent has a character partly grave and partly joyful; it is indeed still night, but the first rays of the dawn and of the rising Sun already chase away the dark shadows. On the four Sundays of Advent, the somber hue of the purple vestments of the Church announces the penitential spirit of the holy season, while the Alleluja after the Gradual gives expression to the joyful expectation.¹⁹ The Church stamps this season with the seal of her joy and of her anxious solicitude; she intermingles the Alleluja amid her sighs, knowing well that "joy will drown all sorrow on that night which is brighter than the clearest day."

The case is entirely different during the period from Septuagesima until Easter. This is the greatest and strictest penitential season of the Church; hence the Alleluja is totally withheld from her lips.²⁰ She is overwhelmed with sorrow; she weeps over the malice of sin, which covers the earth. As faithful children of the Church we should heed her admonition and exercise ourselves in works of penance. Our hearts, sullied by sin and the love of the world, we should bathe in the tears of sorrow and compunction before we presume to per-

¹⁹ *Quamvis cum gaudio boni servi spectent, adventum Domini sui, tamen maximum gaudium recolunt in praesentia ejus (Amalar., De eccles. offic., IV, chap. 30). Adventus partim est laetitiae, quia Alleluja dicitur et cantus in jucunditate cantatur; partim tristitiae, quia Te Deum, Gloria in excelsis et Ite Missa est reticentur (Radulph. Tungren., De canon. observantia, prop. 16).*

²⁰ Alleluja certis quidem diebus cantamus, sed omni die cogitamus. Si enim hoc verbo significatur laus Dei, etsi non in ore carnis, certe in ore cordis—"semper laus ejus in ore meo" Ps. 33:2 (S. August., *Enarrat. in Ps.*, 106:1).

mit that hymn of pure souls, the alleluja, to again cross our lips.²¹

The alleluja, that chant of the heavenly Jerusalem, ceases to resound during the season of Lent, which so deeply impresses our hearts with the consciousness of our earthly banishment and pilgrimage; the modest and tranquil melody of the Tract alone expresses our silent grief, our longing, our petition to be heard, our lament and hope.²² Yet we lovingly cling to the jubilant Alleluja chant, and only reluctantly separate ourselves from it; and this we express at the Vespers on the Saturday preceding Septuagesima,²³ by repeating twice the alleluja after the *Benedicamus Domino* and *Deo gratias*.²⁴ And after that it resounds no more within the hallowed precincts of the sanctuary until it is again introduced with solemnity in the High Mass on the vigil of the feast of Easter. Then after the Epistle the alleluja forms the beginning of the Gradual chant, and is sung three times alternately by the priest and the choir, each time on a higher tone. As Easter dawns, not only the Tract but also the Gradual must now be laid aside; the joyful peal of the alleluja rings out again and again during Eastertide.

²¹ Cf. S. Benedicti, *Regula*, chap. 15. Speciale caput s. Benedictus instituit de Alleluja, tanquam de voce divina vereque angelica nec nisi ad Angelis aut certe ab hominibus vitae puritate angelicos spiritus imitantibus decantanda (Martene, *Regul. commentata*, chap. 15).

²² Cuncti tractus fletum et tristitiam in humilitate sonorum denuntiant. Tristitiae tempus exigit, ut Alleluja, quod laetantium carmen est, intermitteretur. Bene ergo tractus, qui interim pro Alleluja cantatur, altitudinem atque excellentiam gaudii, gravi succentu et modestis declinat incessibus (Rupert. Tuit., *De div. off.*, IV, chap. 6).

²³ According to the prescription of St. Benedict, the Alleluja was sung *usque ad caput Quadragesimae*, that is, until the first Sunday of Lent; this was customary in many order of monks (Benedictines and Cistercians) for a long period, and it is still in use in the Ambrosian rite. Thus writes Radulph of Rivo, Dean of Tungern (d. 1403): Benedictini et Ambrosiani servant Alleluja usque ad Dominicam Quadragesimae (*De canon, observantia*, prop. 16). The breviary ascribes the present practice to St. Gregory the Great: constituit, ut extra id tempus, quod continetur Septuagesima et Pascha, Alleluja diceretur.

²⁴ In the Middle Ages, antiphons, hymns, and sequences, filled with child-like naïveté and simplicity, were sung on the eve of Septuagesima as a farewell to the Alleluja. (Cf. Guéranger, *Le temps de la Septuagésime*, p. 121; Sicard., *Mitral.*, VI, chap. 1.)

THE GREATER ALLELUJA

The Hebrew word *alleluia* signifies literally: "Praise the Lord!"²⁵ And because it has a peculiar meaning and dignity, a force of expression and emphasis peculiarly its own, it has not been translated into other languages.²⁶ Thus in the cry of the alleluja are the tongues of all nations lifted up in unison to praise and adore God even here on earth with one voice and one sound, as will most perfectly be done in the world to come.²⁷ The blessed inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem, the angels and saints, sing without ceasing their endless alleluja, as already Tobias (13:21 f.) announced in prophetic vision: "The gates of Jerusalem shall be built of sapphire and of emerald, and all the walls thereof round about of precious stones. All its streets shall be paved with white and clean stones, and alleluja shall be sung in its streets." The beloved disciple describes a vision which he beheld in heaven: "After these things I heard, as it were,

²⁵ In view of the joy and consolation found in the pious death (*mors pia vel sacra*) of the Christian (*Beati mortui, qui in Domino moruntur*; Apoc. 14:13), the Alleluja formerly was sung even in the liturgy of the dead; this is still the case among the Greeks, who even during Lent do not omit the Alleluja. From Rome, St. Jerome writes (*Ad Oceanum, Epis.*, 77) that at the funeral obsequies of Fabiola "Psalms were sung and the allelujas resounding aloft re-echoed (*quatiebat*) throughout the gilded ceilings of the temples." Even outside of divine worship in the primitive times of Christianity, the chanting of alleluja was very common. Thus St. Jerome remarks that young children even had been trained to sing the alleluja *balbutiente lingua*, and that in the fields of Bethlehem this chant might everywhere be heard (*Quocumque te verteris, arator stivam tenens Alleluja decantat*). Seamen sang the alleluja, and the shores re-echoed the cry (*responsantibus ripis*; Sidon. Apollin., II, ep. 10). In many places it was customary by this word to call the inmates of the convent to the hours of common prayer.

²⁶ Illud advertendum, multo majorem vim apud Hebraeos habere hanc vocem "Alleluja" quam apud Latinos "Laudate Deum"; hoc est enim exhortantis vel excitantis ad Deo laudes reddendas: at Alleluja vim potius habet interjectionis quam verbi, et vehementem sonat affectum acclamantis prae gaudio et ex laude Dei exsultantis atque in jubilum vocemque laetitiae erumpentis (Bona, *De divin. Ps.*, chap. 16, §7, n.7). Alleluja vox hebraica est et sonat "laudate Dominum" vel "laus Deo," cum gaudii tamen laetitiaeque plenitudine (Carli, *Biblioth. liturg.*).

²⁷ Rectissime et pulcherrime generalis sanctae Ecclesiae mos inolevit, ut hoc divinae laudationis carmen propter reverentiam primae auctoritatis a cunctis per orbem fidelibus hebraea voce cantetur. Quod ideo fit, ut per talis consonantiam devotionis admoneatur Ecclesia, quia et nunc in una fidei confessione ac dilectione Christi consistere debeat, et ad illam in futuro patriam festinare, in qua nulla diversitas mentium, nulla est dissonantia linguarum (Beda Venerabilis, II, hom. 10).

the voice of much people in heaven, saying: Alleluja. Salvation and glory and power is to our God. . . . And I heard . . . the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunders, saying: Alleluja, for the Lord our God the Almighty hath reigned. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give glory to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath prepared herself" (Apoc. 19: 1, 6 f.). The souls of the blessed in heaven overflow with joy and happiness; hence their language becomes a canticle of praise. Thus they continue for all eternity in heaven what upon earth was their delight and felicity; for the Church sings in an antiphon: "When clothed with mortality, Thy saints, O Lord, cried out: Alleluja, alleluja, alleluja."

The literal meaning of the word alleluja (hallēlū = praise, yah = God) is no longer clearly felt; in the mouth of the Church the word alleluja becomes transformed as a powerful cry of joy and exultation, and especially of happy Easter jubilation.²⁸ The Church on earth is midway between the Synagogue and the heavenly Jerusalem; accordingly the cry of the alleluja resounds more frequently in the divine worship than it did in the service of the Old Law, but yet not without interruption, as it peals forth in the Church triumphant. This cry of triumphant praise and salvation (Ps. 117:15), which descended from heaven to our poor earth, resounds in the

²⁸ Quinquagesima (*the fifty days of Eastertide*) ab ipso dominicae resurrectionis die inchoare et gaudiis potius laudibusque divinis quam jejuniis (Patres nostri) voluerunt esse celebrem, quatenus annuis ejus festis dulcius admoneamur, desiderium nostrum ad obtinenda festa, semper accendere fixumque tenere, quia non in tempore mortalitatis hujus, sed in aeternitate futurae incorruptionis vera nobis quaerenda felicitas, vera est invenianda solemnitas, ubi cessantibus cunctis languoribus tota in Dei visione ac laude vita geritur—juxta hoc quod propheta corde pariter et carne in Deum vivum exsultans aiebat: "Beati qui habitant in domo tua, Domine; in saecula saeculorum laudabunt te" (Ps. 83). Unde merito Quinquagesimae diebus in memoriam hujus nostrae quietissimae ac felicissimae actionis crebrius ac festivius Alleluja canere solemus (*ibid.*). Dum s. Gertrudis cum devotione et intentione omnes vires et sensus tam interiores quam exteriores extenderet, et se ad cantandum Matutinas in gloriam Dominicae resurrectionis praepararet, dum imponeretur Invitatorium Alleluja, dixit ad Dominum: "Doce me, instructor benignissime, quali devotione te laudare possim per Alleluja, quod toties in festo isto repetitur." Respondit Dominus: "Convenientissime poteris me per Alleluja collaudare in unione laudis supercoelestium qui per idem jugiter collaudant in coelis." Et adjecit Dominus: "Nota igitur quod in illa dictione Alleluja omnes vocales inveniuntur praeter solam vocalem o, quae dolorem signat, et pro illa duplicatur prima, scil. vocalis a." (S. Gertrud., *Legat. divinae pietatis*, IV, chap. 27).

liturgy principally from Holy Saturday until the Saturday after Pentecost; for this great octave of weeks is a joyful time. The celebration of holy Eastertide is nothing else than the triumph of the Redeemer and the redemption wrought by Him: the celebration of the victory over sin, death, and hell. All the liturgy refers to the eternal, blessed life of glory, upon which Christ has entered and which He has acquired for us. The resurrection and ascension of Christ, as well as the descent of the Holy Ghost, are sources of true and lasting joy, so that for a time we seem to forget the combats and labors of our earthly pilgrimage, and, full of joy and gratitude, we join in the alleluja of the citizens of heaven without ever becoming weary of repeating it again and again. The alleluja is the outpouring of that grand Easter joy with which our hearts are filled to overflowing; it is the festive song, the exultant cry over the happiness of our redemption.

What is the form of the Alleluja chant during Eastertide? Whereas the Gradual is still retained during Easter week, it is omitted on the Saturday before Low Sunday, and thenceforth until the feast of the Holy Trinity two allelujas are sung (as antiphons) followed by two verses, each with an alleluja. "The Gradual, as a canticle of mourning, is omitted during Eastertide, and the alleluja is repeated almost without measure, to note that salvation has been purchased for us, by the death and resurrection of Christ, and the way to eternal joys has been opened, where with all the blessed we shall sing to our Lord an eternal alleluja."²⁹

On the feast of Christ's ascension, the Epistle and Gospel narrate the glorious entrance of the Redeemer into His eternal glory and beatitude. The intermediate chant likewise announces this triumphant and solemn entrance of Christ.

Alleluja, alleluja.

V. Ps. 46:6. Ascendit Deus in jubilatione, et Dominus in voce tubae. Alleluja.

V. Ps. 67:18 f. Dominus in Sina in sancto; ascendens in altum, captivam duxit captivitatem. Alleluja.

Alleluja, alleluja.

V. Ps. 46:6. God hath ascended with jubilee, and the Lord with the sound of trumpet. Alleluja.

V. Ps. 67:18 f. The Lord is among them in Sinai, in the holy place; He hath ascended on high, and hath led captivity captive. Alleluja.

²⁹ *Ein Vergissmeinnicht*, p. 78.

When our Lord entered victoriously and gloriously into the holy of holies of heaven, which is the true Sinai, the angelic choirs rejoiced that the King of Glory ascended on high leading captivity captive: bringing with Him the just of ancient times, whom He delivered as the prize of victory from limbo and introduced into the kingdom of eternal light as captives of His redeeming love.

That the Gradual is still continued during Easter week appears strange. The liturgy of the Easter vigil is already radiant with the splendor of light and fire, it resounds throughout with the joyous exultation of the Resurrection. During the entire week following Easter, the Church cries out: *Haec dies, quam fecit Dominus: exultemus et laetemur in ea* ("This is the day, which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad therein"). (Ps. 117:24.)³⁰ During the first thousand years of Christianity the Church had a special reason for inserting the Gradual during the octave of Easter; this reason lay in the peculiar form of divine worship, which had reference especially to the newly baptized, who on Holy Saturday, by means of the laver of regeneration, had risen to a new life. During the entire week they were instructed in the truths and mysteries of the Christian religion, and went about wearing white robes all the while in token of the innocence and holiness acquired in baptism.³¹ On Saturday the baptismal solemnities were ended and the white garment was laid aside.³² Like the rest of the liturgical celebration, the Gradual of Easter week was also arranged with special regard to the neophytes,³³ but it is difficult to determine more minutely what was the purpose and meaning of the Gradual for the newly baptized.

³⁰ Merito cantatur hic versiculus in die Paschae tam frequenter, quoniam Christus, sol justitiae, candor lucis aeternae, lux lucis et fons luminis, qui erat in die Parasceves passionis caligine obscuratus atque in monumento lapideo tanquam densissima nube absconditus, in die Paschae de sepulcro glorificatus, candidus et rubicundus processit, illuminans mundum, noctem infidelitatis et tenebras ignorantiae de cordibus discipulorum ejiciens (Dion. Carthus., *In Ps.*, 117:23).

³¹ In the *Gregorian Sacramentary* all the days of Easter week are designated as *feriae in Albis*.

³² As the practice varied in the different churches, this did not take place in many localities until Sunday; hence we still have the name *Sabbatum in Albis* and *Dominica in Albis scil. depositis*. In ancient liturgical books the octave day of the feast of Easter is also called *Dominica post Albas (depositas)*.

³³ Graduale, quod est cantus laborantium in hac peregrinatione, jam dictum est ad hos dies resurrectionis usque in Pentecosten non pertinere, sed propter baptizatos per hanc hebdomadam in officiis additum esse (Rupert. Tuit., *De divin. offic.*, VIII, chap. 1).

THE SEQUENCE

On certain days the Alleluja's joyful praise³⁴ or the mournful melody of the Tract continues to resound in a prolonged canticle, which is universally called Sequence (*Sequentia*): the sentiment of joy or sorrow already awakened finds its greatest intensity and its fullest expression in the Sequence. How did the Sequences originate, and at what time were they inserted in the liturgy? Already before the ninth century it was customary to continue singing melodiously the last syllable of the alleluja without any further text. To this harmonious series of many notes to one syllable (a textless melody) different names were given: *Neuma*, *Jubilus*, *Jubilatio*, *Sequentia*.³⁵ Such *Neumae* (songs without words) are an exultation of the soul carried away with holy enthusiasm; they indicate the transcendent joy of the blessed, which is endless and unspeakable; for so surpassingly great and above all measure is the happiness of heaven, that the feeble language of poor mortals has not words to adequately express it.³⁶ In the ninth century various hymn verses began to be set to these joyful airs, and to them the name Sequence was then transferred.³⁷ The first composition of such chants, as well as their introduction into the celebration of Mass, is ascribed to a monk of St. Gall, St. Notker (*Balbulus*, the Stammerer; d. 912). Of him it is said: "at the time his equal was not to be found, he was a vessel of the Holy Ghost" and "favored by God with the gift of divine praise for the edification of the faithful." Such religious poems soon won great public praise and were extensively circulated; they increased to the extent that every Sunday, except during the season of Septuagesima,

³⁴ Post Alleluja *Sequentia* jubilatur (*Consuetud. Cluniac.*, I, chap. 43).

³⁵ This extension of the Alleluja according to Cardinal Bona (*Rer. liturg.*, II, vi, 5) is called Sequence, quia est quaedam veluti sequela et appendix cantici Alleluja, quae sine verbis post ipsum sequitur. Probably *sequentia* = regulated succession or series (cf. Boëth., *De Arithmetica*, I, chaps. 10 and 23).

³⁶ *Pneumata*, quae in Alleluja fiunt, jubillum significant, qui fit, cum mens aliquando sic in Deum afficitur et dulcedine quadam ineffabili liquescit, ut quod sentit, plene effari non possit. *Beatus populus, qui scit jubilationem* (Ps. 88), id est, qui saepe experitur et praegustat hanc dulcedinem, et sic interius movetur, ut quod praesentit nec dicere sufficiat nec possit tacere (Robert. Paulul., *De offic. eccl.*, II, chap. 19). Cf. S. August., *Enarrat. in Ps.*, 99:4.

³⁷ The other name for these hymns is *Prosa*. It is meant to indicate that in the Sequences neither metrical rules nor a homogeneous arrangement of stanzas are strictly observed, as is the case with actual hymns (cf. Clichtoveus, *Elucidator. eccles.*, IV).

and almost every feast had a Sequence. Among many inappropriate compositions, many excellent chants full of lyrical animation are to be found.

The revised Roman Missal has retained but five Sequences, which serve to distinguish particular feasts (Easter, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, and the two feasts of the Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin) and the Requiem Masses. Even though the authors of the Sequences cannot always be assigned with certainty,⁸⁸ these hymns "proved how completely in those golden ages of devotion men might be the tongues, so to speak, of the Church, and express her holiest feelings."⁸⁹ The five Sequences of our missal belong incontestably to the most glorious and most sublime creations of the hymnology of the Church; they are variegated but equally fragrant blossoms "of Christian poetry, of that poetry, forsooth, which sings on earth the mysteries of heaven and prepares us for the canticles of eternity" (Guéranger); each of them has its peculiar beauties and excellencies.

a) The Easter Sequence, *Victimae paschali*, which in the Middle Ages found numerous imitations, is a *dulce canticum dramatis*, a sweet dramatical chant, in the form of a dialogue, that sings the praises of the glorious resurrection of the Saviour. In it the Christians are exhorted to offer, out of gratitude, sacrifices of praise to our true Easter Lamb, Jesus Christ; for Christ, the Lamb of God, was immolated to purchase and redeem the sheep: Christ, the Good Shepherd, innocence itself, laid down His life for His flock, that He might reconcile the guilty to His Father. Death and life struggled together, engaged in a marvelous combat; but now the Prince of life, who had died, reigns in the imperishable life of glory. Then Mary Magdalen is appealed to as an eyewitness of the Resurrection: "Tell us, O Mary, what hast thou seen in the way?" She testifies to the Lord's resurrection: "I saw the tomb of the living one and the glory of the

⁸⁸ In all probability the Easter Sequence, *Victimae paschali*, is erroneously ascribed to St. Peter Damian (d. 1072); in an Einsiedeln manuscript (Schubiger, *Sängerschule von St. Gallen*, p. 91 ff.) of the eleventh century, the court chaplain of Conrad II, Wipo of Burgundy, is mentioned as its author. The Pentecost Sequence, *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, is said to have been composed by King Robert of France (d. 1031), or by Innocent III (d. 1216). St. Thomas (d. 1274) composed the Sequence for the feast of Corpus Christi. It is said that the *Stabat Mater* was composed by Jacopone da Todi (d. about 1306), and the *Dies irae* by Thomas of Celano (d. about 1255).

⁸⁹ Wiseman, "On Prayer and Prayer-Books," *Essays*, II, 150.

resuscitated; as witnesses of this, I beheld the angels, the napkin and the linen cloths." And triumphantly she adds: "Christ, my hope, is risen," and she announces to the apostles that the risen one will go before them into Galilee. Upon this assertion follows the joyful acknowledgment of the faithful: "We know that Christ is truly risen from the dead." This Easter hymn concludes with the fervent petition, that the King of Glory, who has overcome the sting of death, may have mercy on us.

b) The Sequence for Pentecost, *Veni sancte Spiritus*, can have come but from a heart wholly inflamed with the fire of the Holy Ghost. It is an incomparable hymn, breathing of the sweetness of paradise. This Pentecostal hymn contains a wealth of deep thought and affections, in a form remarkable as much for beauty as for brevity.⁴⁰ The entire hymn is an ardent and devout supplication to the Holy Ghost, in which, on the one hand, His mysterious imparting of grace is depicted in a manner uncommonly tender and charming, and, on the other hand, the wants of our earthly pilgrimage is represented in a manner exceedingly simple and touching. The Holy Ghost is called by the Church: "The finger of God's right hand," that is, the treasurer and dispenser of all the gifts and graces which Christ has merited for us. But He not only gives us His gifts, but He comes Himself and dwells in a sanctified soul as in His living temple. How beautifully expressed is the strong and ardent desire for the joyful coming of the Holy Ghost into the soul, in the four consecutive invocations: *Veni*: "Come," O Holy Ghost. "O most blessed Light," continues the Church in her prayer to the Holy Ghost, "fill the inmost hearts of Thy faithful! Without Thy will there is nothing in man, nothing harmless." And because our wretchedness is unspeakably great and manifold, the Church goes on imploring for her children: "Wash what is soiled, water what is parched, heal what is wounded. Bend what is stiff, warm what is cold, guide what is astray." As at the beginning, she repeats at the close with equal ardor and earnestness four consecutive times the

⁴⁰ *Omni commendatione superior est, tum ob miram ejus suavitatem cum facilitate apertissima, tum ob gratam ejus brevitatem cum ubertate et copia sententiarum, tum denique ob concinnam ejus in contextu venustatem, qua opposita inter se aptissimo nexu compacta cernuntur. Crediderimque facile, auctorem ipsum (quisquis is fuerit) cum hanc contexit orationem, coelesti quadam dulcedine fuisse perfusum interius, qua Spiritu sancto auctore tantam eructavit verbis adeo succinctis suavitatem (Clichtov., loc. cit.).*

petition: *Da*: "Give," O Holy Ghost. "Give to Thy faithful confiding in Thee, Thy sevenfold gifts. Give them the merit of virtue; give a happy end; give them never-ending joy." ⁴¹

c) The *Lauda Sion*, the Sequence for the feast of Corpus Christi, belongs to those "supernatural hymns uniting the strictness of dogma with a sweetness and a melody more like echoes of heaven than mere poetry of earth." ⁴² St. Thomas, the angel of the schools, is the author of this hymn of praise to the adorable sacrifice and sacrament of the altar; he reveals therein the profound learning of a cherub as well as the inflamed love of a seraph; with a clearness and a penetration of thought equaled only by ardor of feeling he unveils the hidden, unfathomable riches, beauties, and sweetnesses of the Holy Eucharist, which is our heaven in this vale of tears and sin.

One of the most useful literary productions of St. Thomas, in which the Church even now takes great delight, is the office of the Blessed Sacrament, which on the occasion of the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi, Pope Urban IV engaged St. Thomas to compose. Not only are the psalms and antiphons, lessons and responsories chosen by him replete with the most beautiful and fruitful references to the mystery of the altar, but also the hymns composed by him, as the *Pange lingua*, *Sacris Solemniis*, *Verbum supernum* and *Lauda Sion*, are full of fervor and devotion and pearls beyond price in the hymnal treasury of the Church. The same grand mind that, like the whale, dived down into the lowest depths of the sea of Christian speculation and, like the lion, destroyed with fiery strength the errors against faith, soared like the eagle into the greatest heights of Christian poetry. No element pertaining to the Deity was foreign to him. ⁴³

⁴¹ To this Sequence also apply the beautiful words, written by Denis the Carthusian in reference to the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus*: Hunc hymnum cum omni puritate et elevatione mentis ad superdulcissimum Spiritum sanctum cantemus. Cumque nihil impedit nos a desiderata plenitudine susceptionis Spiritus sancti et exuberantia charismatum ejus, nisi negligentiae nostrae, distractiones corporeae et vitia, praesertim sensuales affectus, satagamus haec omnia evitare ac erubescamus. Dominum illum majestatis immensae, hospitem sanctitatis atque munditiae penitus infinitae, invitare ad visitandum, ingrediendum et inhabitandum corda nostra adhuc imparata ac sordida. Menta ergo contrita, recollecta, affectuosa invocemus, laudemus, adoremus Spiritum sanctum. Toto corde afficiamur ad eum, cujus omnia attributa, proprietates et nomina dulcedinem redolent, amabilissima exstant consolationemque largiuntur (*Hymn. aliq. veter. eccles. Enarratio*).

⁴² Faber, *The Blessed Sacrament*, p. 14.

⁴³ Laurent, *Hagiolog.*, II, 388.

Incomparably beautiful and heartfelt are the concluding words, wherein the Church prays to the Saviour as the Good Shepherd concealed in the Sacrament, that He would here below guide the sheep purchased with His precious blood, protect them, and finally lead them to the ever-green pastures of paradise.

O Good Shepherd, our true bread,
 Jesus, mercy on Thy flock;
 Deign to feed us, to protect us,
 Deign to make us see Thy blessings
 In the land of living men.

Thou who knowest and canst all things,
 Who here feedest us mortal men,
 Grant that we may be Thy guests;
 Make us coheirs and companions
 Of Thy saintly citizens.

d) How touching is the *Stabat Mater*, this dolorous lamentation on the Sorrowful Mother of God! At first the Sequence depicts the overwhelming anguish of the Virgin Mother. She stood at the foot of the cross wholly plunged in grief (*dolorosa*) and bathed in tears (*lacrymosa*) while her Son was shedding all His blood on the cross. "Who, unmoved, can behold her bewailing her Son?" Therefore the loving soul implores the Sorrowful Mother that she would permit us to realize and share her grief. "Holy Mother, grant that the wounds of the Crucified may be deeply impressed in my heart. . . . Grant that I may be wounded by His wounds, that I may be inebriated with His Cross and with the blood of thy Son." Finally there follows a supplication to Christ for the full fruit of His redeeming sufferings: "When my body shall die, then grant that the glory of paradise be given to my soul." ⁴⁴

⁴⁴ The *Stabat mater dolorosa* is outwardly simple in form and versification: and this, indeed, is precisely the mark of true poetry, which with little outward show, almost unadorned, attains the highest object, and understands how to place in the most simple form the richest contents. If we abstract from its form in order to briefly grasp the contents of the beautiful Sequence, we observe that they also are very simply arranged. The first, second, and fourth stanzas in a few words unfold the historical event which took place beneath the Cross, according to St. John (19:25) and St. Luke (23:35). The remaining stanzas, on the contrary, contain reflections, affections, petitions and resolutions, that the passion and death of Christ may, in view of the sorrows of His holy Mother, not be devoid of fruit for us, but may impart

e) The grandest, most magnificent hymn of the Church is the chant for the funeral rites, the world-renowned and ever-admired *Dies irae*, which is remarkable for its majesty, sublimity, and affective power, and its language of the most childlike simplicity and expressiveness; through its realistic illustration and poetical description, its words fall upon the soul as claps of thunder. Very appropriate to its contents is also the choice of the three-versed stanza, which has a touching pause in its movement. As to contents and form, this hymn is a perfect work of art; the judgment of all connoisseurs designates it as the most sublime composition that human genius ever produced in this style of poetry. The terrors of the general judgment, before which all the vain pride of this world shall sink into dust and ashes, are depicted in this chant for the dead in lines of such dread sublimity and grand simplicity that the soul spontaneously imagines herself removed to the gates of eternity and already beforehand feels penetrated with the woes and dread of that day of tribulation and anguish, of lamentation and misery.

Then what terror shall befall us
When the Judge shall come to call us,
To judge all things most rigorously.

Wondrous sound the trumpet flingeth,
Through earth's sepulchers it ringeth,
All before the throne it bringeth.

Death and nature are amazed
When the creatures are upraised
To make answer to their Judge.

When the Judge shall then be seated,
All that's hid shall be revealed;
Nothing unavenged remaineth.

The contemplation of so terrifying a spectacle draws from sinful man the exclamation:

to us vigor in life, comfort in suffering, and in the end be to us the source of bliss. . . . Happily and beautifully does the form bear out the context in this poem. The solemn, sonorous beginning places us at once in the mournfulness of the occasion. How resigned is the language in the resolutions, how gentle in the petitions, how melodious when announcing in advance the happiness of paradise, in the last stanza in which the soul longs for heaven! (Kröll, *Kanzelreden*, II, 870 f.)

What shall I, poor wretch, be pleading?
 Who for me be interceding,
 When the just are mercy needing?

There is nothing left for him to do but to have recourse to the mercy of the "King of dreadful majesty." This is done in the following humble, childlike, and trustful appeal for grace and favor:

Think, kind Jesus! My salvation
 Caused Thy wondrous Incarnation;
 Leave me not to reprobation.

Faint and weary Thou has sought me,
 On the Cross of suffering bought me;
 Shall such grace in vain be brought me?

Righteous Judge of vindication,
 Grant Thy gift of absolution
 Ere that day of retribution.

The concluding petition is for all the faithful departed: "Kind Jesus, Lord, grant them rest."

The insertion of the last two Sequences (*Stabat Mater* and *Dies irae*) in their respective Masses belongs to a later period and is to be regarded as a departure from the general rule; for, from earliest times, sequences were always festive and joyful chants which followed the Alleluja and replaced the sounds of jubilant praise without text. The *Dies irae* always follows the Tract, while the *Stabat Mater* follows either the Tract or the Alleluja verse. To both sequences the words of Wiseman are applicable: "Even when the Church mourns, she must have her song—attuned in a deeper key, but still enlivening sorrow itself with hope."⁴⁵ Singing always introduces a cheerful, refreshing element into the divine service, even though the service bears the grave character of a holy grief.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 157.

⁴⁶ Defunctorum Missae et neumate et ipso Alleluja carent, et nihilominus Sequentia quadam, quae simul maeroris et aliqualis gaudii argumentum est, eadem condecorat Ecclesia in symbolum consolationis, quam defunctorum animae inter purgatorii gemitus habent super securitate de sua aeterna beatitudine, praxis instar, quam servat Ecclesia in Sabbato sancto, in quo tractum unit cum Alleluja, ut semiplenam laetitiam ostendat ac paschale gaudium in spe proxima. Quae Sequentia etiam alia habet commoda, majus scilicet defunctorum suffragium et commiserationem ac nostram admonitionem super novissimis (Cavalieri, III, x, 6).

If we compare the varied form and composition of the chant intervening between the Epistle and Gospel, we cannot but admire with what refined delicacy the Church understands how to set forth the manifold dispositions and shades of the soul's interior life, from the most profound sorrow to the height of joy. Thus the soul becomes ever more worthily prepared and disposed to receive the word of God, now about to be announced in the Gospel.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Ideo non ab apostolica vel evangelica lectione, quod majus esse constat, Missa inchoatur, sed potius canendo et psallendo, quatenus dulcedo suavitatis corda audientium prius demulceat, et sic post modulationem suavis cantilenae in spiritualibus rebus populus per compunctionem mentis intentus, salutifera Evangelii verba ardenti affectu suscipiat (Pseudo-Alcuin., *De divin offic.*, chap. 40). The Alleluja chant denotes the joy of the heart in view of the glad tidings of the Gospel. Alleluja ante lectionem evangelicam a cantore interponitur, ut laudetur ab omnibus, cujus gratia salvantur omnes, quasi dicat. Quia verba Evangelii salutem conferentia mox audituri estis, laudate Dominum, cujus beneficio hanc gratiam percipere meruistis (*ibid.*).

CHAPTER XXIV

THE GOSPEL

THE reading of the Gospel constitutes the highest point of the first part of the Mass. The word Gospel is here employed in the strictest sense, and according to this interpretation it designates a pericope (περικοπή), that is, a part or fragment selected for liturgical purposes from the four Gospels. In the New Testament, as a rule, "gospel" has a more comprehensive meaning. *Evangelium* (εὐαγγέλιον) means good or joyful tidings. Joyful tidings in its sublimest sense is the entire revelation of God through Christ; it is the fullness of all truth and grace, which Christ brought into the world. These joyful tidings of salvation and peace resounded first from the mouth of angels to the devout shepherds of Bethlehem: "Behold, I bring you good tidings (*evangelizo*) of great joy, that shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David" (Luke 2:10 f.). Our Saviour Himself testifies that the Holy Ghost anointed and sent Him to announce good tidings to the poor (*evangelizare pauperibus*), to heal the contrite of heart, to preach deliverance to the captives, and give sight to the blind (Luke 4:18). Justly, therefore, is the work of redemption called the gospel, that is, good and joyful tidings.¹ For is it not a joy to be delivered from the bondage of sin and Satan, to have been rescued from the depth of misery, the abyss of endless torment and insupportable darkness? Is it not an ecstatic joy to be blessed with the fullness of peace, to have God in human form redeem us and from on high visit us and live among us? The redemption which Christ accomplished shed immeasurable blessings upon the earth; for the poor human race it became an endless source of unutterable joy and divine consolation.

¹ Lex nova est perfecte et simpliciter evangelium, i.e. bona annuntiatio, quia annuntiat maxima bona, scil. coelestia, spiritualia et aeterna (S. Thom., *In ep. ad Galat.*, chap. 1, lect. 2).

How precious, therefore, must the holy Gospels be to us, in which are recorded by God's own hand the wonderful deeds and mysteries of redemption! The words of the Gospel are words of eternal wisdom, of the uncreated Word Himself, who in the simplicity of human language and human actions, in parables intelligible to children, but also publicly and without figures, has taught the plenitude of divine truth and science. As in the beginning He called into existence the whole natural world, so He likewise gave being to the whole supernatural world of Christianity by short and simple words, but words full of infinite meaning and creative power. The value of the Gospels consists principally in the fact that they give us a perfect, living picture of the person, of the conversation and actions, of the life and passion of our divine Saviour, by the description of chosen eyewitnesses and, what is infinitely more significant, through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Grace flowed from the lips of Jesus, and a divine beauty transfigured His countenance; now in the Gospel we continue to hear "the sweetness of His words" and to look at His face full of heavenly benignity and majesty.

The readings from the Gospels at Mass serve not merely for instruction and edification, but are at the same time a liturgical action by which religious veneration and homage are paid to the word and truth of God, hence to God Himself, who is present in His word as our teacher. This explains the customs, full of meaning, which surround the reading of the Gospel, especially at the solemn celebration of Mass. Next to the body and blood of the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and the grace of the Holy Ghost, the Church esteems nothing so highly as the word of God in the Gospel. To the Gospel are paid the honors of a divine service: when it is solemnly chanted, it is surrounded with the splendor of lights and the fragrance of incense.

1. **Liturgical preparation for announcing the Gospel.** To announce the words of eternal life at the Holy Sacrifice, is an exalted and sublime office. Since the fourth century the solemn reading of the Gospel at divine service belongs to the deacon or to the priest, but both must specially prepare themselves that they may be worthy to now lend, as it were, their heart and mouth to the Lord for the announcement of His heavenly truth. Suitable preparation for announcing the divine word consists in a perfect purification and sanctification of heart and mouth. Indeed, the soul should not only be

free from all sin, from all base, earthly, and selfish motives, but should moreover, be sanctified by a blessing from above. For this purpose two prayers are now recited: the one for purification, the other for the bestowal of the blessing. The priest stands in the middle of the altar; raising his eyes aloft, as if "to the mountain whence assistance comes," he soon lowers them again; with body profoundly inclined and with hands joined, but without resting them on the altar, he prays:

Munda cor meum ac labia mea, omnipotens Deus, qui labia Isaiae Prophetae calculo mundasti ignito: ita me tua grata miseratione dignare mundare, ut sanctum Evangelium tuum digne valeam nuntiare. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Jube, Domine, benedicere.

Dominus sit in corde meo, et in labiis meis, ut digne et competenter annuntiem Evangelium suum. Amen.

Cleanse my heart and my lips, O almighty God, who didst cleanse the lips of the prophet Isaias with a burning coal: vouchsafe so to cleanse me by Thy gracious mercy, that I may be able worthily to proclaim Thy holy Gospel. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Give me Thy blessing, O Lord.

The Lord be in my heart and on my lips, that I may worthily and in a becoming manner announce His holy Gospel. Amen.

First comes the petition for interior purification (*Munda cor meum*). The Fathers frequently mention that the soul should receive the word and truth of God with a purity similar to that required for receiving the Eucharist. Wisdom enters not into an unclean soul nor does it dwell in a body subject to sin (Wisd. 1:4). How difficult it is to walk undefiled on the dusty path of this earthly life! The heart is not only sullied by sin, but its purity is likewise dimmed by passion, distraction, earthly inclinations, and worldly attachments. Hence the humble petition of the priest, that the Lord would purify his heart; for only a stainless heart is a vessel worthy of divine truth and wisdom. This purity of the inner man is the first and principal requisite; but that is not all: the lips also which pronounce words so holy must be pure. "For the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth; because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 2:7). The mouth

of the priest is consecrated for heavenly mysteries, hence no profane sound should proceed therefrom. But with what ease and levity does not the talkative tongue sin, if we endeavor not with all our might to master it. Incalculable is the multitude of the sins of the tongue. Hence the priest is fully aware how necessary it is that his lips be purified anew from all stains of idle, worldly, and sinful talk. Thus for interior and exterior cleansing the priest prays before he begins to announce God's word.

This petition has its foundation in a symbolical reference to a mysterious event in the life of the prophet Isaias (6:5-10). He relates his call, consecration, and mission to exercise the office of a prophet. In a marvelous vision he beheld the glory of the God of hosts and heard the canticle of the angels praising Him; filled with holy awe, he acknowledged and confessed his sinfulness and unworthiness. Then a seraph took from the heavenly altar of incense a live coal, touched with it the lips of the Prophet, saying these words: "Behold! this hath touched thy lips, and thy iniquities shall be taken away, and thy sin shall be cleansed." Then only did Isaias say: "Lo, here am I, send me!" The live coal in the Prophet's vision is a symbol of grace and of its efficacy. Grace is like a spiritual fire which so consumes and destroys all earthly dross in the soul that it becomes more brilliant and radiant than the finest gold and silver. The fire of the grace of the Holy Ghost not only purifies the heart, but also enlightens the mind with exalted wisdom and inflames the soul with heavenly love.

"Give me Thy blessing, O Lord." ² The blessing asked for is two-

² *Jubere* in this formula, much used in the liturgy, in order to express the petition with more humble modesty and reverence, has the signification of *velle* or *dignari* = deign. The deacon says: *Jube Domne benedicere*, because he does not ask the blessing immediately from God, the absolute Master (*Dominus*), but from the priest (*Domnus*). The name *Dominus* was given to God the Lord alone, while the abbreviated word *Domnus* was a distinguished title bestowed upon personages high in authority. In the Litany of the Saints the pope is called *Domnus Apostolicus*. From *Domnus* originated the form *Dom* and *Don*. Also among the Greeks there is a difference between *Kύριος* (= *Dominus*, *Deus*) and *Κόμης* (= *domnus*). (Cf. Bona, *De Psalm. divin.*, chap. 16, § 14, n. 5.) *Sacerdos ad altare ratione excellentissimi ministerii, quod exercet, aptus non videtur alium quam Deum in superiorem agnoscere, et ideo sicut ratione pontificiae dignitatis Papae et episcopalis Episcopo, dum ad Matutinum in choro lectionem legunt, datum est dicere Jube Domine et non Domne, ita idipsum datum est sacerdoti celebranti* (Cavalieri, II, chap. 34).

fold: that the Lord would be in the purified heart as well as on the purified lips of the priest. If the Lord be in the heart of the priest, then will he worthily (*digne*) announce the tidings of salvation, that is, with recollection and attention, with a holy joy and zeal, with profound humility and reverence. If the Lord be on his lips, then will the priest announce the Gospel competently (*competenter*), that is, in a proper manner, clearly and distinctly, with power and energy, so that all may be edified.³ Prepared in this manner, the priest is a pure channel which receives within itself the salutary waters of the Gospel and then conveys them into the hearts of the faithful.

2. **Delivery of the Gospel.** After the above preparatory prayers the priest goes from the middle of the altar to the Gospel side, where the missal must be placed so that the back of the book is not parallel with the back of the altar, but is turned diagonally toward the corner of the altar, so that the priest, when reading the Gospel, is half turned toward the people (*semiversus*) and looks northward. In this position the priest reads or sings the Gospel; of which the beginning, middle, and conclusion are now to be considered.

a) The opening formula comprises the mutual salutation and the announcement of the Gospel to be read. What graces do priest and people mutually wish each other in this place by the well known salutation, *Dominus vobiscum: Et cum spiritu tuo?* Here there is question that the word of God be correctly understood, that it be embraced with faith and faithfully followed. For the Lord says by the prophet: "As the rain and snow come down from heaven and return no more thither, but soak the earth and water it and make it to spring and give seed to the sower and bread to the eater: so shall My word be which shall go forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall do whatsoever I please, and shall prosper in the things for which I sent it" (Isa. 55: 10 f.). It does not suffice that the sound of the word penetrates our ears; but it is more necessary that the Spirit of truth, together with His unction and heavenly light of grace, should teach us interiorly, in order that we may be

³ Monendi sunt sacerdotes, ut internae devotioni etiam externam jungant, ita ut majori pausa et distinctione, quam alia, quae clara voce dicuntur, Evangelium pronuntient, quia est verbum Verbi et sapientia incarnatae Sapientiae. Et quidem praemissis tot diligentis et petita attentione populi valde indecens esset, sanctissima verba praecipitare (Quarti, *Comm. in Rubr. Miss.*, II, vi, 2).

able to understand and love the wonderful sublimity and unfathomable riches of the Gospel. The Spirit of God, with His mysterious power, also moves and attracts us that we may unreservedly abandon ourselves to the divine word in thought, will, and deed. A lively, clear, and ardent faith is a precious gift which God bestows on us, and, at the same time, a virtue which we must acquire and increase. By the mutual salutation, therefore, priest and people implore for each other the grace of the Lord to love, embrace, and obey the divine truths with a cheerful faith.⁴

The Gospel passage to be read is announced in simple words. If the pericope begins with the first words of one of the four Gospels, which is rarely the case, the heading is, for instance: *Initium sancti Evangelii secundum Matthaeum* ("The beginning of the holy Gospel according to St. Matthew").⁵ If the extract to be read is taken from the context that follows the beginning of the Gospel, which as a rule is the case, then the announcement runs thus: *Sequentia*⁶ *sancti Evangelii secundum Matthaeum* ("Continuation of the Holy Gospel, according to St. Matthew"). The acolyte thereupon answers in the name of the people: *Gloria tibi, Domine* ("Glory be to Thee, O Lord"). When the good tidings are announced, how can we do otherwise than break forth in words of praise to our Lord? He has revealed Himself to us in an altogether incomparable manner, preferring us to millions who still remain in darkness.⁷

⁴ *Doctrina sine adjuvante gratia, quamvis infundatur auribus, ad cor nunquam descendit: foris quidem perstrepat, sed interius nil proficit. Tunc autem Dei sermo infusus auribus ad cordis intima pervenit, quando Dei gratia mentem interius ut intelligat tangit. Sicut enim quosdam flamma caritatis suae Deus illuminat, ut vitaliter sapiant, ita quosdam frigidus torpentesque deserit, ut sine sensu persistent (S. Isid., *Sentent.*, III, x, 1 f.).*

⁵ The headings of the Gospels are very ancient, but they are of ecclesiastical origin. They appropriately express that one and the same Gospel of Jesus Christ was written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost by the Evangelists in a fourfold manner. This is comprised in the little word *secundum* = according. *Evangelistae, quum sint quatuor, non tam quatuor Evangelia, quam unum quatuor (Quartetto) varietate pulcherrima consonum ediderunt (Beda Vener., *Prooem. in Luc.*).*

⁶ *Vox Sequentia non singularis est numeri, sed pluralis, significatque ea, quae sequuntur in textu Evangelistae (Guyet., *Heortolog.*, III, chap. 27, q. 2).*

⁷ *Respondet populus: Gloria tibi, Domine. In Evangelio agitur de gloria Dei et nostra, scil. quod diabolum vicit et victor ad gloriam Dei Patris ascendit; quod nos redemit et nobis majora promisit. Audientes igitur Evangelii mentionem, nos ad Orientem vertimus et exclamamus in laudem Creatoris:*

At the words *Sequentia* (or *Initium*) *sancti Evangelii*, the priest with his thumb imprints a cross on the first words of the Gospel passage, then on his forehead, mouth, and breast. The sign of the cross is made on the book ⁸ to express that the whole Gospel, the whole doctrine and work of salvation, is comprised and contained in the one mystery of the Cross, the bloody sacrificial death of the God-man, undergone for the redemption of the world. Hence St. Paul calls the Gospel simply "the word of the Cross," and although he had been taken up to the third heaven, where he saw and heard things not given to man to utter, yet he wished to know and to preach nothing else than Jesus Christ and Him crucified: his only glory he sought in the Cross of Christ, in which is our salvation, life, and resurrection. The mystery of the Cross, which is to the world a scandal and a folly but to us the power and wisdom of God, includes in itself all other mysteries of Christianity. The Cross shows forth the love, wisdom, and providence of God; it teaches all Christian virtues: renunciation of the world and of self, humility, obedience, faith, patience, hope, love of God and of our neighbor. The cross with which the Gospel in the missal is signed, is intended to remind us of all this.

On their forehead, mouth, and breast ⁹ the priest and the faithful make the sign of the cross, in order to express, by this beautiful symbolism, that they wish to bear and preserve the doctrine of the Cross in their mind, on their lips, and in their heart, and that they are not ashamed to proclaim openly and joyfully to the world, both

*Gloria tibi, Domine, quasi dicamus: Quod in Evangelio praedicatur, et nos credimus et speramus, nobis proficiat, nobis eveniat, sine fine permaneat. Et exinde: Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo inest et inerat gloria, et ita populus glorificat Deum qui misit nobis verbum salutis et fecit redemptionem plebis suae, juxta quod in Act. Apost. (11:18) dicitur: Et glorificaverunt Deum (Sicard., *Mitral.*, III, chap. 4).*

⁸ This is not a *benedictio libri*, but merely a symbolical *signatio* of it. *Libro crucem imprimit sacerdos, tanquam si dixerit: hic est liber Crucifixi (Beleth., Ration., chap. 39).*

⁹ The *Ecloga Amalarii Abb. in Ord. Rom.* mentions here only the *signatio frontis*, and the *Ordo Rom. II*, n. 8, has in addition the *signatio pectoris*. But already Honorius of Autun wrote in the first half of the twelfth century: *Per cordis signationem fides verbi accipitur; per oris signationem confessio Christi intelligitur; per frontis signationem operatio Evangelii exprimitur (Gerama animae, I, 23).* In pectoris signo fides et in oris signo confessio, in frontis signo intelligitur operatio, quasi dicat: Signo me in fronte, ore et pectore, quia crucem Christi non erubesco, sed praedico et credo (Sicard. [d. 1215], *loc. cit.*).

by word and deed, the glory of the cross of Christ. For the priest, who is to preach Christ crucified, this sign of the cross is at the same time a serious admonition to lead a life hidden with Christ in God, to be attached with Christ to the cross, and to be crucified to the world. Our Lord Himself once revealed to Blessed Angela of Foligno that the word of the Gospel penetrates powerfully to the soul only when it proceeds from lips reddened with His precious blood. But since the cross is not only a significant sign but also an efficacious one, it can here be considered principally as a protection against the Evil One, to prevent his coming and snatching the seed of the divine word out of our hearts.¹⁰

b) As has been said above, each Gospel is selected with regard to the ecclesiastical year with its cycle of feasts and holy seasons. Indeed, the Gospel excels in meaning and importance all the other variable parts of the Mass formula; ¹¹ it gives most perfect expression to the fundamental thought of the day's celebration. The Gospel is to be explained in harmony with the other portions of the Mass which are to be read and sung; but in order that the true and entire sense may be obtained, the Gospel must often be explained allegorically or in a liturgically mystical manner.¹²

The prominent position and sublime signification of the Gospel is clearly evident in the ecclesiastical rite. First, the Gospel is read

¹⁰ In order to obtain this grace, they formerly signed themselves again with the holy cross after the reading of the Gospel. *Perlecto Evangelio, iterum se signo sanctae crucis populus munire festinat (Ordo Rom. II, n. 8). Debet quilibet post Evangelium se signo crucis munire contra diabolum, qui Evangelio lecto confestum insidiatur, ne capiat in nobis sermo (lest the word of God may take root in our hearts).* (Sicard., *loc. cit.*)

¹¹ *Sanctum Evangelium principale est omnium, quae dicuntur ad Missae officium. Sicut enim caput praeeminet corpori, et illi cetera membra subserviunt, sic Evangelium toti officio praeeminet et omnia, quae ibi leguntur vel canuntur, intellectuali ratione illi consentiunt (Rupert. Tuitiens., De divin. offic., chap. 37).*

¹² Exaggerated is the assertion, that "the Evangelical pericope appears as a pure, bright precious stone, in which the idea of each day is depicted in wonderful clearness" (Kindhäusser); for frequently the *sensus accommodatus* or the mystical reference of the Gospel to the mysterious life of the Church is not so clear to the eye, but deeply hidden, and, therefore, it is not always easily discerned. If we would at all times adhere merely to the literal explanation, then the pericope would often be too superficially conceived, and its signification in the ecclesiastical year would not be grasped according to the sense of the Church. This, for example, applies to many of the Sunday Gospels after Pentecost.

on the right side of the altar, as the right side is generally regarded as the more honorable. As the churches and altars, in consequence of a very ancient custom, were usually built to face the east, the book on the Gospel side is so placed as to be turned toward the north,¹³ and in this there is a mystical meaning.¹⁴ For as the beautiful life of nature in the warm sunny south is a symbol of the higher life of grace, so the dark and frigid north is considered to have an evil significance and to symbolize the kingdom of the Evil One.¹⁵ The dormant, snowbound regions of the North, enchained in the death grip of winter's frosts, represent in a suitable manner the dreary and lifeless condition of heathenism. But now the Gospel is read toward the north as a sign that the good tidings of heaven have changed the icy night and coldness of mankind into the mild warmth of summer, and awakened them to an imperishable spiritual spring of grace and mind.¹⁶ The Gospel's bright rays have changed rugged winter into gentle spring.

In like manner, the fact that all present stand when listening to the Gospel, has a deep significance.¹⁷ This rite probably dates from

¹³ Formerly the deacon read the Gospel looking toward the South (*ad quam partem viri solent confluere*). Thus it is prescribed in the very ancient *Ordo Rom. II*, n. 8. Still Honorius of Autun (*Gemma animae*, I, chap. 22) already in the beginning of the twelfth century remarks that the deacon, when reading the Gospel, should turn no longer *secundum Ordinem* to the South, but *secundum solitum morem* to the North.

¹⁴ The assertion is erroneous, that the ordinance of reading the Gospel at the right side of the altar has its origin exclusively in a reason of necessity; in the circumstance, namely, that the left side of the altar must be left free for the sacrificial gifts, that is, for the presentation of the sacrificial elements. For this, it would suffice merely to remove the missal after the reading of the Gospel. The present rubric has its origin, therefore, in a higher or mystical reason.

¹⁵ Isa. 14:13; Jer. 1:14; 4:6.

¹⁶ Verba Evangelii levita pronuntiaturus contra septentrionem faciem vertit, ut ostendat verbum Dei et annuntiationem Spiritus Sancti contra eum dirigi, qui semper Spiritui Sancto contrarius existit et in nullo ei communicat. . . . Sicut enim per austrum, qui ventus est calidus et leniter flat, Spiritus Sanctus designatur, qui corda quae tangit ad amorem dilectionis inflammat, ita et per aquilonem, qui durus et frigidus est, diabolus intelligitur, qui eos quos possidet ab amore caritatis atque dilectionis torpentes et frigidus reddit. Quod enim per aquilonem diabolus designetur, ostendit propheta dicens: O Lucifer, qui dicebas in corde tuo: "Sedebo in lateribus aquilonis" (Isa. 14:13). (Pseudo-Alcuin., *De divin. Offic.*, chap. 40.)

¹⁷ In the *Liber Pontificalis* we read that the holy Pope Anastasius I (399-401) prescribed or rather inculcated anew to the priests the very ancient

apostolic times and has a manifold mystical meaning. By standing at the Gospel we would first testify that God's gospel of peace and glory fills us with great joy, and that the truth of Christ has made us truly free and brought us spiritual resurrection; for by "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17), the fetters of slavery, the bonds of sin and passion, are cut asunder. Furthermore, standing is a mark of the profound reverence, esteem, and attention due to the word of Jesus Christ. Finally, to stand is the posture of the servant in the presence of his master. In the Gospel, Christ our Lord appears as our teacher; and by the fact that we receive His word standing, we express our obedience and our readiness to serve Him; we avow our alacrity and willingness to do all that He requires of us and recommends to us, in order that we may be not merely hearers, but also doers of His commandments and counsels (James 1:22).¹⁸

At Solemn Mass the reading of the Gospel is honored by the splendor of lighted tapers and the fragrance of incense. During the singing of the Gospel, the two acolytes hold lighted torches and stand one on each side of the book. St. Jerome already defended the higher meaning of this ancient custom of lighting candles at the Gospel, inasmuch as he insists that thereby we should give expression to the joy and jubilation of our hearts at the good tidings of salvation. Above all, the light by its brightness and its glow symbolizes Jesus Christ, the Sun that knows no setting and the Light of the City of God on earth as well as in heaven. By means of the Gospel, God has called us to the wonderful light of Christian truth and grace. In this dark vale of the earth "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths" (Ps. 118:105).

custom of standing at the reading of the Gospel (*Constit. Apost.*, II, chap. 57). Hic constituit, ut quotiescunque Evangelia sancta recitantur, sacerdotes non sederent, sed curvi starent. According to a pseudo-Isidorian letter (in opposition to an abuse which had crept in), he ordained "that while the holy Gospels were read in the church, the priest and all present should not remain seated, but reverently bow . . . and stand, while attentively listening to and devoutly honoring the words of the Lord."

¹⁸ Martene gives (*Regula commentat.*, chap. 11) the following reasons for standing during the reading of the Gospel: a) Honor et reverentia s. Evangelii; b) quod non deceat alios sedere stante s. Evangelii lectore, qui "Domini nostri Jesu Christi personam gerit" (Rupert., II, *in regul. s. Ben.*); c) ut hac nostri corporis dispositione demonstramus, nos tanquam veros Dei servos ad ejus, quae proferuntur, exsequenda mandata semper esse paratos.

Wherever in the world the word of God does not shine and enlighten, profound darkness hovers over the ways of man and over man himself. For then not only the surety as to how to act rightly, but even the origin and end of our pilgrimage . . . is enveloped in darkness. This darkness is enlightened and becomes marvelously bright through the word of God; by this word the ground on which we stand becomes clear, and the way we have to follow to reach our destiny is made manifest. From the word of God beams a secure light to guide us amid the various directions and helps, as well as amid the various wants, obstacles, and dangers we meet on this path so stern and so difficult to be determined (Reischl).

By the gospel we should become as light in the Lord and shine always as children of light, by producing fruits of light in all goodness, justice, and truth. If, enlightened and filled with fervor by the light of the gospel, we lead a life resplendent with the brightness of virtue and purity, we shall then be fulfilling that admonition of the Lord: "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

The incensing at the Gospel is also rich in symbolism.¹⁹ In the first place, the incensing of the book of the Gospels is to be regarded as an act of reverence and honor paid to "the words of eternal life," which the Lord here speaks to us. The fragrant clouds that envelop the book call to mind how the good odor of the knowledge of Jesus Christ is spread abroad by the announcement of the Gospel. "Thanks be to God, who always maketh us to triumph in Christ Jesus, and manifesteth the odor of His knowledge²⁰ by us in every place. For we are the good odor of Christ unto God, in them that are saved . . . the odor of life unto life" (II Cor. 2:

¹⁹ Sicard of Cremona (d. 1215) mentions the incensing of the book of the Gospels. After signing himself with the cross, "the deacon incenses the book" (*Mitral.*, III, chap. 4). The incensing of the celebrant, after the reading of the Gospel, is first mentioned in the *Ordo Rom. V*, n. 7. Subdiaconus accipiat a diacono Evangelia, et exhibeat ea ad deosculandum episcopo, quibus exosculatis exhibeatur ei et incensorium. In the Middle Ages the celebrant, while putting incense into the censer, at this place frequently said these words: *Odore coelestis inspirationis suae accendat et impleat Dominus corda nostra ad audienda et implenda Evangelii sui praecepta.*

²⁰ *Odor notitiae* is, according to St. Thomas, *notitia de Deo, quae habetur per fidem, et illuminat intellectum et delectat affectum*; therefore, a loving, fervent, blissful knowledge of the divine mysteries. (Cf. *In Epist. II ad Cor.*, chap. 2, lect. 3.)

14-16). The incense furthermore admonishes us with what heavenly ardor of devotion the words of the Gospel should be announced by the deacon or the priest and be listened to by the faithful and laid up in their hearts. As the bright flame of the lighted taper is an image of a pure life, so the sweet fragrance of incense also symbolizes a virtuous, God-fearing life. Christ's doctrine and grace should make of us a good odor unto God and men. This will be the case if, by innocence and purity, by mildness and mercy, by humility and meekness, by constancy and patience, by mortification and austerity, we propitiate and please God, and also edify and console our neighbor. Virtue, indeed, exhales a sweet and a refreshing perfume; in testimony of this, the Lord has often wonderfully provided that the bodies of the saints during their lifetime or after death exhale a sweet scent, altogether supernatural and heavenly.²¹

c) When the reading of the Gospel has ended, the acolyte answers in the name of the people: *Laus tibi, Christe* ("Praise be to Thee, O Christ").²² The priest kisses the initial words of the passage just read, saying at the same time: *Per evangelica dicta deleantur nostra delicta* ("By virtue of the words of the Gospel may our sins be blotted out"). Thus the reading of the holy Gospel is closed, not only with a chant of thanksgiving, but also with a kiss and a prayer.²³

²¹ The body of St. Peter of Alcantara remained, after the soul had departed, still supported by his brethren in a kneeling posture, with hands raised heavenward; the cell was filled with a marvelously sweet odor, a celestial light surrounded the venerable remains, and the ravishing melodies of the angelic choirs filled the air with their glorious strains. His body, which had previously been emaciated and worn out, withered and wasted from continual mortification, bronzed by the air and the heat of the sun, suddenly became dazzling white and slightly rosy, like the flesh of a delicate child, and emitted a bright light; but his eyes especially, which during life had been so carefully guarded, sparkled like two precious stones of rare beauty.

²² Formerly the answer was *Amen* or *Deo gratias* or *Benedictus, qui venit in nomine Domini*. Lecto Evangelio quisque dicere debet *Amen*. Vel ut alii volunt, recitato Evangelio, statim dicamus oportet *Deo gratias*, quemadmodum post quamlibet lectionem sive capitulum. Sed melius est ut dicatur *Amen* ac nos cruce contra diabolium muniamus, ne ipse sermones Domini ex pectore nostro rapiat (Beleth. [d. about 1165], *Ration.*, chap. 39; cf. Sicard., *loc. cit.*). Already St. Benedict prescribes in his *Rule* (chap. 11): Legat abbas lectionem de Evangelio, cum honore et tremore, stantibus omnibus. Qua perlecta respondeant omnes *Amen*. Here *Amen* mainly denotes devout assent.

²³ The book of the Gospels, or rather, the sacred text of the Gospels in general, represents our divine Savior Himself and was, therefore, ever a

Jesus Christ teaches the science of salvation and points out the way of life by word and example, announced to us by the Gospel. Joyfully moved by a feeling of heartfelt gratitude for the blessed truth and grace of the Gospel, the faithful break forth into words of praise and glorification, saying: "Praise be to Thee, O Christ!" This concluding formula corresponds in sentiment to the introductory formula: "Glory be to Thee, O Lord," just as the kiss of the book and the signing of it with the cross also harmonize with each other.

What is the meaning of kissing the Gospel? After having tasted and experienced in the Gospel how sweet the Lord is, how faultless His doctrine, how good and refreshing His consolations and promises, the heart of the priest overflows with happiness and joy, and he kisses the words of eternal life in order to testify his profound reverence, his great and ardent love for them. This liturgical kiss, therefore, expresses the thought of the Psalmist: "More to be desired than gold and many precious stones [are the words of the Lord], and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb" (Ps. 118: 111; cf. Ps. 118 *passim*). "What the world values most is threefold: riches, whose principal symbol is gold; beauty, represented by precious stones; and pleasure, symbolized by the honeycomb. Yet nothing of all that the earth can bestow is comparable to the joy and refreshment imparted by the word of God" (Reischl). The Gospel be-

subject of religious veneration, as were the images of Christ. The manifold ceremonies at the reading of the Evangelical pericope are likewise so many symbols and signs of veneration for the holy Gospels and of grateful joy at the glad tidings of salvation. The kissing of the Gospel after it has been read, is also the expression and, so to speak, the seal of these sentiments. Formerly it was customary to present to all present the book of the Gospels (in some places closed, in others open) to be kissed. (Cf. *Ordo Rom. II*, n. 8.) Under Pope Honorius III (1216-27) this was forbidden. According to the present practice one person only kisses the Gospel, and that, as a rule, is the celebrant. But if a prelate (that is, the pope, a cardinal, a nuncio, the patriarch, the archbishop or the bishop of the diocese) assist at the Mass, the book is kissed only by him (and if there are more than one, by the highest in dignity). (Cf. *Cerem. Episc.*, I, chap. 30.) In Requiem Masses the introductory benediction formula (*Jube . . . Dominus sit . . .*) and at the close of the Gospel the kiss with the accompanying words (*Per evangelica . . .*) are omitted. The Church evidently wishes to respond to the just exigencies of human nature, when in Requiem Masses for the departed she avoids exterior signs of joy and, therefore, omits such rites and prayers (as those just mentioned) which denote joyful sentiments and impart to the holy action a more festive disposition, or which tend to impart a blessing to the living. (Cf. *Quarti, Comment. in Rubr. Miss.*, II, xiii, 1.)

stows that heavenly wisdom of which Solomon says: "I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her. Neither did I compare unto her any precious stone: for all gold, in comparison of her, is as a little sand, and silver in respect to her shall be counted as clay. I loved her above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light; for her light cannot be put out" (Wisd. 7:8-10).

If the Gospel is taken into the heart and preserved therein with all that esteem and submission, love and joy, which the kissing of the book denotes, then is the Gospel also able "to blot out our sins." However, the words of the Gospel do not blot out sins as do baptism and penance: they are only a kind of sacramental in a more general sense and have, therefore, the power of awakening and promoting that disposition of soul by which venial sins are effaced, or which renders one worthy of receiving the sacraments. The word of God, which is accompanied by the interior working of grace, exercises a redeeming, healing, and sanctifying influence on man when he is properly disposed, by exciting faith, hope, and charity, fear and contrition, conversion and amendment of life. It is not only a powerful means of ridding the soul of sin and imperfections, but it possesses other beneficial effects besides. "Are not My words as a fire, saith the Lord, and as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23:29.) Indeed, the words of the Lord are spirit and life; they are powerful, two-edged, penetrating. When Christ on the road to Emmaus "opened" to the two disciples the meaning of the Scriptures, their hearts burned within them (Luke 24:32). The word of God has a marvelous power for enlightening the eyes, for imparting wisdom to the lowly and the humble, for rejoicing the heart and refreshing the soul. In like manner, may the living and life-giving word of God, which abides forever, impart to us "salvation and protection,"²⁴ may it purify, consecrate, and sanctify our souls ever more and more. For the Gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16).²⁵

²⁴ Cf. the benediction in the third nocturn: *Evangelica lectio sit nobis salus et protectio.* (Cf. S. Ambr., *Enarrat. in Ps.*, 39:16.)

²⁵ *Verbum Dei animam vivificat, infundens ei spirituale gaudium, sicut etiam apparet in hominibus laicis et idiotis, qui licet non intelligant quae leguntur, sentiunt tamen gaudium Spiritus et inde ad poenitentiam animantur. Verbum etiam Dei efficacem reddit animam ad virtutes et quaecunque bona et penetrat eam omnia ejus interiora illustrando* (S. Mechtild., *Lib. spec. grat.*, III, chap. 19).

CHAPTER XXV

THE CREED

1. On certain days and feasts, the announcement of the good tidings of salvation is followed by the solemn profession of faith. The heart, full of joy and gratitude, exclaims: *Credo* ("I believe"). When the *Credo* occurs, it forms the answer to the voice of God, who has spoken to us by His prophets and apostles, even by His own Son. The liturgical symbol recited at Mass is as follows:

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem coeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium. Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum. Et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula. Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero. Genitum, non factum, consubstantialem Patri: per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis. (*Hic genuflectitur.*) Et incarnatus est de Spiritu sancto ex Maria Virgine: et homo factus est. Crucifixus etiam pro nobis: sub Pontio Pilato passus et sepultus est. Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas. Et ascendit in caelum: sedet ad dexteram Patris.

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God; born of the Father before all ages: God of God, light of light, true God of true God; begotten not made, consubstantial to the Father; by whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven; (*here genuflect*) and became incarnate by the Holy Ghost, of the Virgin Mary; and was made man. He was crucified also for us, suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was buried. And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, sitteth at

Et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos: cujus regni non erit finis. Et in Spiritum sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem: qui ex Patre Filioque procedit. Qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur: qui locutus est per Prophetas. Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum. Et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

the right hand of the Father; and he is to come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, of whose kingdom there shall be no end. And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified; who spoke by the prophets. And one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the remission of sins. And I expect the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

There are a number of ecclesiastical symbols of faith, which contain the principal points of dogma in pregnant brevity,¹ and hence such symbols of belief serve for the profession of faith in communion with the Church.² The first in origin and the simplest is the Apostles' Creed, which most probably is of strictly apostolical origin and forms the basis of the others, as all later symbols are only a development and extension of it.³ Next to the Apostles' Creed (*symbolum Apostolorum*), the so-called *Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed* (*symbolum Patrum*) holds the most prominent place. This Creed is called Nicene because the definition of the first General Council of Nice (325) regarding the divinity of the Son is therein

¹ Symbolum est regula fidei brevis et grandis: brevis numero verborum, grandis pondere sententiarum (S. August., *Serm.*, LIX, n. 1).

² *Symbolum* (σύμβολον) = mark, characteristic, true sign, by which a person may be recognized or be identified. By the profession of faith the faithful are distinguished from heretics and unbelievers. Beati Apostoli Ecclesiae Dei, quam adversus militiam diabolici furoris armabant, mysterium symboli tradiderunt, ut quia sub uno Christi nomine credentium erat futura diversitas, signaculum symboli inter fideles perfidosque secerneret et alienus a fide atque hostis appareret Ecclesiae (S. Maxim. Taurin., *Homil.*, LXXXIII, *de traditione symboli*). Symbolum per linguam graecam signum vel collatio interpretatur. Discessuri enim Apostoli ad evangelizandum in gentibus hoc sibi praedicationis signum vel indicium posuerunt (S. Isid., *Etymolog.*, VI, xix, 57).

³ Cf. MacDonald, *The Apostles Creed*.

almost literally recorded; it is called Constantinopolitan because, although not first arranged in this order by the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381), it was, however, there received and confirmed as Catholic. The fact that not only the divinity of the Father, but also the divinity of the Son and of the Holy Ghost are so expressly and emphatically emphasized in this symbol of faith, rendered this Creed particularly suited for the solemn profession of the true faith at divine worship. This Creed was introduced into the sacrificial liturgy of the East in the beginning of the sixth century, mainly in opposition to the Arian and Macedonian heresies. Later the great National Council of Toledo (589), in Spain, resolved and decreed that in the Mozarabic rite, immediately before the Pater Noster, the profession of faith of Constantinople should be recited aloud by all the people.⁴ Toward the end of the eighth century the same Creed was incorporated into the Mass rite in France and Germany.⁵

It is far more difficult to determine at what period the Roman Church began to recite or sing the Credo during Mass. Since apparently contradictory testimonies on this point exist in the ancient documents, liturgists differ greatly in their opinions. According to the lucid and reliable information of the Abbot Berno of Reichenau⁶ (d. 1048), the general adoption of the Credo into the Roman

⁴ In the Mozarabic celebration of Mass the priest says: *Fidem, quam corde credimus, ore autem dicamus*. He then elevates the sacred host so that it may be seen by the people, and holding it over the chalice, he recites the Symbol alternately with the choir or assistants. Its recitation, therefore, is here an act of immediate preparation for Holy Communion.

⁵ *Symbolum quoque fidei catholicae recte in Missarum solemnibus post Evangelium recensetur, ut per sanctum Evangelium "corde credatur ad justitiam," per Symbolum autem "ore confessio fiat in salutem."* Et notandum, Graecos illud Symbolum, quod nos ad imitationem eorum intra Missas assumimus, potius quam alia in cantilenae dulcedinem ideo transtulisse, quia Constantinopolitani concilii proprium est, et fortasse aptius videbatur modulis sonorum quam Nicaenum, quod tempore prius est, et ut contra haereticorum venena in ipsis etiam sacramentorum celebrationibus medicamenta apud regiae suae urbis sedem confecta fidelium devotio replicaret. Ab ipsis ergo ad Romanos ille usus creditur pervenisse; sed apud Gallos et Germanos post dejectionem Felicis (*Bishop of Urgel*) haeretici (*Adoptianists*), sub gloriosissimo Carolo Francorum rectore damnati, idem Symbolum latius et crebrius in Missarum coepit officiis iterari (Walafrid. Strabo [d. 849], *De exord. et increm.*, chap. 23).

⁶ In his document, *De quibusdam rebus ad Missae officium pertinentibus*, chap. 2, he mentions what he witnessed during his sojourn in Rome. Baronius,

Mass rite took place only at the beginning of the eleventh century, during the pontificate of Pope Benedict VIII and at the request of the emperor, Henry II. On February 14, 1014, which fell that year on Sunday, Henry II was anointed and crowned Emperor in the Basilica of St. Peter's. The devout Emperor noticed that during the coronation Mass the Credo had not been sung, as was customary throughout Christendom. Inquiring into the cause for this omission, he was informed that the Roman Church, which had never departed from the Catholic faith and had never been corrupted by heresy, had no need for such a profession of faith. But the Emperor requested as a coronation gift for himself and for the edification of the faithful, who from all parts of the world flocked to Rome, that the Pope would prescribe the insertion of this profession of faith into the Solemn Mass; the Pope deemed it advisable to introduce into Rome a custom which henceforth for all times would be a testimony of the lively faith of the holy Emperor and which, in consequence, would enkindle this ardor of faith in thousands of hearts.

The rite for the recitation of the Creed is simple. Its recitation in a loud voice invites all present to unite in heart and mind with the priest and joyfully to repeat the Creed with him. At the first words, the hands of the priest are raised and extended, to evince the joyful, believing, adoring sentiments of the heart. During its recitation, the hands remain joined before the breast; this devout attitude corresponds with the humble homage and the confiding abandonment of oneself to the absolute truth and veracity of God, and with the perfect submission of the will and of the understanding to the infinite majesty and sovereignty of God. The three devout inclinations of the head, at the words *Deum*, *Jesum Christum*, and *simul adoratur* (at the confession of faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost), express due reverence to the three divine persons. The words, *Et incarnatus est*, are accompanied by a genuflection, slowly made in order appropriately to revere and glorify the Incarnation, this mystery of God's inconceivable condescension.⁷ At the last

Bona, Menardus, Lupus, Gavantus, Renaudot, Bellotte, Mari, Lesley, and Zaccaria have adopted this explanation.

⁷ If the celebrant, the deacon, and subdeacon are seated while these words are sung by the choir, as a rule they make only a profound bow with head uncovered. But at Christmas and at the Annunciation (when the latter feast is transferred, *in ipsa die translationis*; S. R. C., September 25, 1706) they must rise from their seats and kneel down on the lowest step of the altar, on the

words, *et vitam venturi saeculi*, the priest makes the sign of the cross. This sign of the cross has been variously interpreted: it can be understood as referring to the entire symbol, or merely to the words immediately preceding. In the former case it is evident how appropriate it is to conclude and seal the Credo with the sign of the cross, because the latter is not only a brief profession of our faith, but also our shield and buckler against all the adversaries of our faith.⁸ With this signification we can easily harmonize the other, which places the sign of the cross in special relation to the concluding words: "and the life of the world to come." According to this explanation, it would here signify the fundamental truth that only the royal road of the Cross, the way of sorrow and suffering, leads to the home of imperishable joys. Besides this allusion, that the way of the Cross is the path to eternal glory, it contains the admonition that the sign of the resplendent cross will appear in the heavens with Christ at His second coming to judge the world.

While in the Greek liturgy the symbol of faith is placed after the kiss of peace which follows the Offertory, the Roman liturgy orders its recitation after the Gospel; and whereas in the former the Creed is a constituent part of every Mass celebrated, it occurs in the latter only on certain days as a mark of special distinction. The Credo has the more suitable position in the Roman liturgy. It makes no difference whether it is regarded as the end of the first part of the Mass or as the beginning of the second part, it is in any case the most proper connecting link between the two parts. As the blossom and fruit of the preceding Scriptural readings,⁹ it forms a fitting conclusion of the general divine service; but at the same time it is also the basis for the special sacrificial celebration about to begin, which is called the "mystery of faith."

2. Since, therefore, only certain Masses are distinguished and

Epistle side (*utroque genu cum capitis inclinatione*), because on these days the mystery of the Incarnation is celebrated in a special manner. (S. R. C., June 11, 1701; May 23, 1846.)

⁸ Signaculum crucis virtutem passionis Christi ostendit. Hoc ergo quando fronte imprimitur, christianus munitur. Quando contra imminens periculum opponitur, adversaria virtus fugatur. Primum ad arma, secundum ad tela; primum ad defensionem, secundum ad impugnationem (Hugo de s. Vict., *De Sacrament.*, Bk. II, Part IX, chap. 8).

⁹ Quia Christo credimus tanquam divinae veritati (Joan. 8:46), lecto Evangelio, symbolum fidei cantatur, in quo populus ostendit se per fidem Christi doctrinae assentire (S. Thom., q. 83, a. 4).

privileged above others by the solemn profession of faith, we must consider what were the reasons for admitting the symbol into the sacrificial rite.¹⁰ As a rule, liturgists classify under three heads the principal reasons for the recitation of the symbol, and these they designate by the words, *mysterium, doctrina, solemnitas*.

a. Accordingly, the first principal reason for the adoption of the Credo lies in the mystery celebrated. The Credo is recited on certain days and feasts whose historical foundation or dogmatic subject is contained in the symbol, that is, one of the mysteries expressly mentioned therein or at least acknowledged as included therein.¹¹ Since the celebration of divine worship on such days is consecrated to the commemoration and to the honor of a special mystery of faith, it is proper to confess this mystery by the solemn singing or recitation of the Credo. Among such days are reckoned:

a. *All Sundays.* Sunday is devoted to the commemoration of many mysteries recited in the symbol. Its celebration is especially ordained to honor the triune God, who wrought so many great works of salvation on the first day of the week, which corresponds to our Sunday. For on this day was commenced the creation of the world in the beginning of time; and in the fullness of time the new creation of the fallen world was accomplished by Christ's resurrection¹² and the sending of the Holy Ghost. Some writers hold that on this day Jesus Christ was born, and at the Circumcision shed His first blood. Not only the resurrection of the Lord, but the other mysteries also commemorated on Sunday occasioned the recitation of the Credo on this day.

b) *The feasts of the Holy Trinity and Pentecost, as well as all the feasts of Jesus Christ and of His Blessed Mother.* In the Credo

¹⁰ From the statement of Innocent III (*De sacr. alt. myst.*, II, chap. 51) it follows that already in the twelfth century certain rubrics had obtained regarding the recitation or omission of the Credo on certain days. The practice was, and continued to be, widely different until the liturgical development was concluded in the revision and the new edition of the missal under Pius V.

¹¹ According to John Beleh, the Credo was recited in the twelfth century in *eorum tantummodo festis, quorum in Symbolo fit mentio* (*Ration.*, chap. 40).

¹²

Primo dierum omnium
Quo mundus exstat conditus
Vel quo resurgens Conditor
Nos morte victa liberat.

—St. Gregory the Great

we proclaim the name and glory of the three divine persons. Hence it is entirely fitting that we recite the Credo on the feasts of the Holy Trinity and of each of the three divine persons. The principal mysteries of Christ's life are, moreover, specifically mentioned in the Credo. These we celebrate with special feasts during the course of the ecclesiastical year. In these mysteries the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, is inseparably connected with her Son; therefore these special feasts of Mary are distinguished by the Credo.

c) *The feasts of the angels.* The reason for reciting the Credo on the feast of the angels is found in the mention made of them in the word *invisibilia*, by which the angels are understood. The recitation of the Credo in the Masses of the angels can be further based on their mission and calling; for they are "all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation" (Heb. 1:14). As messengers of God, the angels are active in the work of redemption; they announce to man the decrees and revelations of God. An angel brings to Mary the joyful tidings that she is to become the mother of the Saviour. They appear at His birth, resurrection, and ascension, and they will accompany Him on His return to judge the world. They labor untiringly for the extension and progress of the kingdom of God upon earth; to the Church they are a heavenly, protecting guard in all her sufferings and combats with the powers of hell and the hatred of the world.

d) *The feast of All Saints.* The Credo is recited on the feast of All Saints because they are the triumphant, glorious members of the "one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church."

e) *The celebration of the Dedication of the Church and its anniversary* are also distinguished by the recitation of the Credo, for the material house of God is a figure of the Church militant and triumphant, of the kingdom of Christ on earth and in heaven.

b) The second principal reason for the recitation of the Symbol is designated by the word doctrine. For this reason the honor of the Creed is bestowed upon the principal and secondary feasts of the apostles, evangelists, and doctors of the Church when they are celebrated *sub ritu duplici*.

a) The Symbol contains the doctrine taught by the apostles, and it mentions expressly as one of the four marks of the true Church that she is apostolic. The apostles introduced into the world the Church instituted by Christ and they spread it over the whole earth.

They were the organs of the Holy Ghost and the infallible bearers of revelation; they announced all that Christ did and suffered for our salvation.¹³

b) By the hands of evangelists the Holy Ghost Himself wrote down the history of redemption, the tidings of salvation of the kingdom of Christ, the doctrines and mysteries of our faith, and the means of grace handed over and entrusted to the Church as a precious treasure.

c) The doctors of the Church are chosen and glorious men,¹⁴ of whom "nations shall declare his wisdom, and the Church shall show forth his praise" (Ecclus. 39:14). With the depth of their knowledge corresponded the height of their sanctity. Enlightened with light from above and inflamed with ardor for the truth, they have in their conversation and writings gradually developed, confirmed, and defended the doctrine of Christ against the attacks of error and calumny. Because they have illumined the whole world with the light of faith, their feasts are distinguished by the recitation in the Mass of the joyful and solemn profession of faith.

All the other saints—martyrs and confessors, holy women and sacred virgins—possessed indeed the virtue of faith in a heroic degree, and some of them even merited for themselves the immortal honor to extend the faith, yet in this respect they are outranked by the apostles, evangelists, and doctors of the Church, and in the Mass of their feast the Credo is properly left out.¹⁵

d) Only on the feast of St. Mary Magdalen does the Church make an exception; besides the Mother of God, to St. Mary Magdalen alone among all the female saints is given the distinction of the rec-

¹³ Isti [scil. Apostoli] sunt viri sancti, quos elegit Dominus in caritate non ficta, et dedit illis gloriam sempiternam: quorum doctrina fulget Ecclesia, ut sole luna (*Breviar. Roman.*).

¹⁴ At present the following saints are venerated as Doctors of the Church: 1. Athanasius; 2. Basil the Great; 3. Gregory of Nazianzum; 4. John Chrysostom; 5. Ambrose; 6. Jerome; 7. Augustine; 8. Gregory the Great; 9. Thomas Aquinas; 10. Bonaventure; 11. Anselm; 12. Isidore of Seville; 13. Peter Chrysologus; 14. Leo the Great; 15. Peter Damian; 16. Bernard; 17. Hilary; 18. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori; 19. Francis de Sales; 20. Cyril of Jerusalem; 21. Cyril of Alexandria; 22. John Damascene; 23. Venerable Bede; 24. John of the Cross; 25. Albert the Great; 26. Robert Bellarmine; 27. Anthony.

¹⁵ Hence the mnemonic:

D A credit; M V C, per se, non credit.

D = Doctores, A = Apostoli, M = Martyres, V = Virgines et Viduae, C = Confessores.

itation of the Creed on her feast. Why is this? Probably because Magdalen, after the Mother of God, first beheld the risen Saviour and, as an eyewitness of His resurrection, she was sent by Him to the apostles as the first promulgator of the mystery of His resurrection. Mary Magdalen went to the disciples and announced to them: "I have seen the Lord, and these things He said to me" (John 20: 18). St. Jerome in the life of St. Marcella writes: "Mary Magdalen, on account of her fervor and the ardor of her faith, received the name of one 'standing on a high tower,'¹⁶ and she was found worthy, the first of all even before the apostles, of beholding the risen Lord."

c) The third reason for inserting the Credo in the ritual of the Mass is some special solemnity: the profession of faith is often sung or recited publicly to enhance the exterior splendor of the feast or Mass. According to this rule, the following feasts or Masses are entitled to the Creed:

a) The so-called patronal feasts, that is, the feast of the principal patron of the church and of the place.¹⁷ The patron of a church is that saint under whose invocation and in whose honor the church has been erected and dedicated. Since the church has received its name (its title) from this saint, he is usually called in liturgical language, the titular of the church, even if he be not at the same time the patron of the place. Moreover, the title of a church is not always that of a saint or an angel, but is taken from some mystery, for example, that of the Holy Trinity. By the patron of the place, on the other hand, we understand that saint who is chosen as the special intercessor or protector of a parish, diocese, province, or nation, and who is invoked and honored as such.¹⁸

¹⁶ Magdalena from *Migdol* = the observatory or the tower.

¹⁷ Titularis sive patronus ecclesiae is dicitur, sub cuius nomine seu titulo ecclesia fundata est et a quo appellatur. Patronus autem loci proprie is est, quem certa civitas, dioecesis, provincia, regnum etc. delegit velut singularem ad Deum patronum (S. R. C., May 9, 1857).

¹⁸ Churches, therefore, have either titular feasts in a stricter sense, or patronal feasts; places, on the contrary, have only patronal feasts. There is a distinction between *patronus vel titulus principalis* and *patronus vel titulus minus principalis s. secundarius*. The Symbol properly is only for the chief (*festum primarium*), but not for the secondary feast (*festum secundarium*) of the principal patron or principal patrons, as only the principal feast *sub ritu dupl. I. cl. cum oct.* is celebrated. The feast of the *patronus vel titulus minus principalis* is usually celebrated only *sub ritu dupl. maj. vel min.*, and that without octave, and has, therefore, no Credo. (Cf. S. R. C., December 2, 1684; September 15, 1691; August 22, 1744.) The regular priests recite the

b) The Credo is recited in the Mass of the feast of a saint in that church in which the body or at least a notable relic (*reliquia insignis*) is preserved.¹⁹ The Credo is also recited in the Solemn Mass which, "on account of an extraordinary concourse of people" is celebrated in honor of the saint who has a special altar in the church.

c) The solemn votive Masses which, on important occasions, are celebrated by order or with permission of the bishop, also have the Credo; those however have no Credo which are sung on ordinary weekdays in purple vestments.

The octave is nothing else than the continuation and completion of the celebration of the feast; therefore, if a feast has a Credo, the whole octave of the feast receives also this distinction. If feasts that have no Credo fall during such an octave or on a Sunday, they then receive it on account of the day on which they are celebrated.

Thus the Church has, according to well established principles, prescribed the Credo as a special distinction of the feasts and days which have a close relation to the profession of faith. This profession of faith, proclaimed so loudly and solemnly at the Holy Sacrifice, should always emanate from hearts filled with joy and gratitude to God; for great indeed is the grace of the Catholic faith.

Sprouting from heaven and descending to earth, faith unites earth with heaven; coming forth from out of the boundless ocean of eternal light, its rays penetrate the dark night which envelops man, enlightening his pathway through this dark vale of life. What was man before this heavenly light penetrated darkness, when the nations were still sitting in the shadow of death (Luke 1:79; Ps. 106:10; Matt. 4:16), and what would the child of earth be, even now, were he not enlightened from a higher world? What a sad, dark picture humanity presents without faith! The light of faith dawns, and where previously there ruled but folly and passion, and strife and fear, and darkness and ruin, there are now found truth and virtue and peace and light and life eternal. Faith

Credo also on the principal feast of their founder, but not of the other saints of their order (S. R. C., March 12, 1836; July 22, 1848).

¹⁹ As notable relics of a saint are considered, for example, the head, an arm, or leg, if they are entire, that is, consisting of both bones, and every other portion, in which the martyr specially suffered, provided it is still entire and not too small, and is regularly approved by the bishop. The integrity of a relic may also be restored by the artificial joining of the separate fragments of a member. A hand, a foot, a thigh bone or shin bone alone does not answer as *reliquia insignis s. major* (S. R. C., January 13, 1631; S. C. Indulg., June 12, 1822).

brings to man consolation, instruction, warning, confidence, fortitude, and self-denial on his journey through life; faith inspires him with courage and hope in death; and faith accompanies him beyond the tomb to a blissful immortality, and in the more beautiful land of light and glory it removes the dark veil from his eyes and enables him to behold his God face to face. Thus the holy, Christian faith is to man a true heavenly messenger that religion sends before him to prepare his way. Again, faith is a brilliant star which serves him as an unfailing guide on his dangerous passage to his heavenly country. Faith is to him an angel, who supports him in his arms, a strong defence and refuge in every danger. Thus faith renders us truly happy here and hereafter.²⁰

²⁰ Geissel, III, 123.

SECTION II

The Offertory

THE first part of the Mass rite is prescribed to purify the heart and to enlighten the mind, as well as to enliven faith and to excite devotion. Now, after the proper dispositions have been formed in priest and people by means of these preliminary prayers and readings, the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice proper begins. Since this holy mystery is not only offered and consecrated as a sacrifice, but also received as a sacrament, the representation of the real sacrificial service is naturally divided into three distinct parts:

1. The Oblation, that is, the offering of the sacrificial elements.
2. The Consecration, that is, the accomplishment of the sacrificial action.
3. The Communion, that is, the participation in the accomplished sacrifice.

The Offertory, Consecration, and Communion are the principal parts of the Mass: they are intimately connected with one another, but are not of equal significance, importance, or necessity in the accomplishment of the sacrifice. The sacrificial act proper (*sacrificatio vel immolatio corporis et sanguinis Christi*) is accomplished in the Consecration, which, therefore, forms the center and essence of the Mass. In the second place, according to rank, comes the Communion of the officiating priest, which belongs, although not to the essence, yet to the completeness of the Eucharistic sacrifice. Less important and significant than these two parts is the Offertory, in which the elements of bread and wine, requisite for the accomplishment of the Eucharistic sacrifice, are dedicated and offered to God.

In the Oblation, therefore, the sacrifice is prepared, at the Consecration it is really accomplished, and during the Communion it is entirely concluded and finished.

CHAPTER XXVI

PREPARATION FOR THE OBLATION

THE prayers and ceremonies of the Offertory constitute a most appropriate, although not an essentially necessary, preparation for the sacrificial action accomplished at the moment of Consecration. To comprehend the true sense and the abundant contents of the rite and prayers of the Offertory, the following points should be considered.

The words and the rite of the oblation before the Consecration relate to a twofold object: to the elements of bread and wine, and also to Christ's body and blood. In the first place, the oblation (*oblatio*) relates to the Eucharistic elements: the bread and wine are withdrawn from common use, consecrated to God, and previously sanctified, that they may be in a manner prepared and made fit for their unspeakably exalted destiny. We give up all claim to these earthly gifts and offer them to the Most High, with the intention and desire that He would change them in the course of the sacrifice into the most holy body and blood of Christ. Accordingly, this portion of the Mass rite includes manifold petitions to the Most High, that He graciously accept and bless or consecrate the bread and wine offered.¹

Yet the Offertory has not exclusively for its object the mere elements of bread and wine, but also the real object of the sacrifice of the New Law: the body and blood of Christ, which by Consecration take the place of the former substances of bread and wine, and thus become present on the altar.² The Church, therefore, does not

¹ During the Middle Ages, many prayers were said during the Offertory for the consecration of the elements. Sanctifica ✠, quaesumus Domine Deus, hanc oblationem, ut nos Unigeniti corpus (*or* sanguis) fiat.—Oblatum tibi, Domine, munus sanctifica, ut nobis unigeniti Filii tui D. N. J. C. corpus et sanguis fiat. (Cf. Ebner, *Quellen und Forschungen*, p. 296 ff.)

² Respondeo, illam oblationem panis et vini, quae fit in Missa, non esse obla-

wait until the change of substance has taken place to offer the victim; already in the Offertory she offers the divine victim to the divine Majesty, regarding, as it were, the approaching Consecration of the sacrificial elements as having already taken place.³ The offering (*oblatio*) of the sacrificial gifts may precede and follow the accomplishment of the actual sacrificial act (*immolatio, sacrificatio*), as in our Mass rite, in which a similar oblation repeatedly takes place for the glorification of the divine name and for the salvation of the living and of the dead. From this point of view it can be explained why the Church already designates her oblation by such names as: *immaculata hostia, calix salutaris, sancta sacrificia illibata, sacrificium laudis*, which in their full sense are applicable only to Christ's sacrificial body and blood.

From the liturgical prayers of the Offertory, therefore, we may by no means conclude that the offering of the elements of bread and wine is a real sacrifice or constitutes a part of the Eucharistic sacrifice.⁴ Only Jesus Christ, present on our altars under both species as

tionem sacrificativam, sed simplicem oblationem, qua offertur materia, ex qua facienda est hostia sacrificanda. . . . Dicitur autem panis hostia, quia in ipso tanquam in materia, ex qua facienda est, praeexistit hostia et quia ipsam repraesentat: unde cum nondum sit praesens hostia, offertur Deo simplici oblatione tanquam praeparatoria in pane tanquam in typo. Quia cum sit futura panis spiritualis et vestita accidentibus panis, assumitur panis ut materia praevia tanquam typus illius (Pasqualigo, *De sacrific. N. L.*, I, q. 30, n. 8).

³ This view is not opposed to the meaning of the Offertory prayers, which are here considered; for even according to the ordinary mode of speaking, the demonstrative pronoun *hic* (this) generally refers to things near the person speaking. Now such things can either really and perceptibly be near (*demonstratio ad sensum*), or be merely represented as present and thought to be present (*demonstratio ad intellectum*). All scholastics of the Middle Ages acknowledge this distinction in explaining the words of consecration. Pronomen hoc facit demonstrationem ad intellectum et ad sensum simul, sic intelligendo, quod demonstrat aliquid quod est objectum intellectus et aliquid quod est objectum sensus (Richard. a Med., IV, viii, a. 3, q. 1). The expressions: *hanc hostiam, hanc oblationem, hoc sacrificium*, and so forth, that often occur in the Offertory prayers before the Consecration, may, therefore, grammatically be referred equally as well to Christ's body and blood, which in the light of faith are seen as already present, as to the bread and wine which the celebrant beholds with his corporeal eyes immediately before him.

⁴ Dico, hanc oblationem nullo modo pertinere ad substantiam hujus sacrificii, neque ut essentialem partem neque ut integram, sed tantum esse ceremoniam quamdam praeparationem ab Ecclesia institutam ad conciliandam devotionem et reverentiam animosque fidelium excitandos ad mysterium ipsum peragendum (Suarez, disp. 75, sect. 3, n. 1). Vera sacrificialis oblatio

symbols of His death, is the perpetual sacrifice of the Catholic Church, our real and true sacrifice.

As soon as Christ, by virtue of the Consecration, has descended from heaven, as soon as He has taken up His abode with us under the humble appearances of bread and wine, He offers Himself to His Father a clean oblation amid a sin-stained human race, shows His wounds to His Father and holds up His death before Him, and in His wounds and death exhibits all His obedience, all His humiliations and His love. And we, fully conscious of our unworthiness, take up this clean oblation with a thrill of joy and offer it to the Father. The offering of the bread and wine, which previously takes place in the Mass, removes the bread and the wine from ordinary use and dedicates them to God, that He may change this inefficacious offering into the true oblation that worketh salvation. This offering of bread and wine should serve to prepare us and to raise our hearts to the Lord, who is to appear and to whom the prayers of the Church already beforehand refer, and whom the Church meets with rejoicings as she, in the spirit of meditation, beholds Him approaching: "Blessed is He, that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!" But when He does come, it is not in the splendor of His glory that He appears, but under the images of His passion and death.⁵

Until far into the thirteenth century, the Roman Church had in this portion of the Mass rite only the Offertory chant (*Offertorium*) of the choir and the secret oblation prayer of the priest (*Oratio super oblata* = *Secreta*);⁶ all the other intervening prayers of the Offertory were only later admitted into the Roman rite,⁷ after they had already been adopted by other churches. All these prayers collectively were in former times not improperly styled the *canon minor*, as their contents indicate they were in many ways connected with the *canon major*, the real Canon.

non intellegitur esse, donec materia illa, quae ad divinum cultum dicata jam est, benedicitur et sanctificatur; nulla ergo petitio fit per hanc oblationem, sistendo in pane et vino, sed in ordine ad eorum consecrationem, per quam Christus vere sacrificatur et offertur; quod est petere per incruentam Christi sacrificeationem ex pane et vino sub eorumque speciebus faciendam (*ibid.*, disp. 83, sect. 2, n. 8).

⁵ Eberhard, I, 337.

⁶ Circa oblationem duo aguntur: scil. laus populi in cantu offertorii, per quod significatur laetitia offerentium, et oratio sacerdotis, qui petit ut oblatio populi sit Deo accepta (I Par 29:17). (S. Thom., IIIa, q.83, a.4.)

⁷ Romanus Ordo nullam orationem instituit post Offerendam ante Secretam (*Microlog.*, chap. 11). The prayers now prescribed we meet for the first time in *Ordo Rom. XIV*, chap. 53. Perfect unity in regard to the rite and prayers at the offering of the sacrificial elements was restored only in the sixteenth century by the publication of the newly revised missal.

THE OFFERTORY CHANT

1. The Offertory is introduced by the kissing of the altar and the mutual salutation: *Dominus vobiscum. Et cum Spiritu tuo.*⁸ By these words priest and people reciprocally express the desire that the Lord would assist them by His grace and power, in order that with lively faith and with proper dispositions they may celebrate the Eucharistic sacrifice and in union with it offer themselves to the Most High as an acceptable gift. The nearer the moment of the sacrifice approaches, the more urgently do we require assistance from above.

The *Oremus*, which the priest then says, relates not merely to the Offertory chant, but also to the whole series of prayers that are said during the Offertory. All present are thereby exhorted to unite with the celebrant in sentiments of devotion, in a spirit of recollection, with attention, with heartfelt fervor, and, in union with him, to pray and make the offering in silence; for the interior sentiments of prayer and sacrifice alone impart to our offering true value in the sight of God.

After the *Oremus*, the priest recites an antiphon, which in the missal is called *Offertorium*.⁹ From apostolic times until about the eleventh century, there was always a procession at the Offertory. All the faithful who were to be admitted at the table of the Lord, and only these, were authorized and at the same time bound to offer

⁸ Quartum officium (= distinctio, *part*) Offertorium vel Offerenda vocatur, quod incipit a *Dominus vobiscum*. Consuetudo est quod cum nuper ad operarios ingredimur, eos salutemus. Sic, secundum quosdam, cum de uno officio ad aliud transitum facimus (*that is, at the beginning of a new part of the Mass*), salutationem praemittimus (Sicard., *op. cit.*, III, chap. 5). Lecto Evangelio populus offert, chorus cantat, sacerdos suscipit, Deoque corde et ore et manibus repraesentat et incurvatur et orat. Officium igitur, quod nos dicimus Offerendam, ab eo loco inchoatur, ubi post Evangelium sacerdos dicit *Dominus vobiscum* et finitur in eo loco, ubi excelsa voce dicit: *Per omnia saecula saeculorum* (Hildeb. Turon., *De exposit. Missae*).

⁹ The word *Offertorium* designates in a more comprehensive sense also the so-called Little Canon, that is, all the prayers and rites of the Offertory until the conclusion of the *Secreta*. Already in the *Ord. Rom.* the antiphon in question is called *Offertorium*, and it is distinguished from the added verses: *Canitur offertorium cum versibus* (*Ord. Rom. II, n. 9*). The word *offertorium*, which is found only in Church Latin, had previously several other meanings. Thus in old documents it designated, for example, the book in which the Offertory chants were contained, then the sacrificial gifts themselves. *Pontifex, Offertorio lecto, . . . accipit offertorium* (*the lighted candles*) *ab omnibus ordinatis* (*Pontif. Roman., De ordinat. Presbyt.*).

their gifts at the Offertory. The rite of this offering differed at various places and times. For the most part, only bread and wine could be brought to the altar as an offering; from these gifts the materials for the sacrifice were selected.¹⁰ The Offertory procession of the clergy and the people was accompanied by singing, to excite a joyful disposition in the givers, since God "loveth a cheerful giver." We cannot determine when the chant accompanying the procession was introduced.¹¹ Its particular development is ascribed to St. Gregory the Great. In his Antiphonary the Offertory chant consists of an antiphon and several verses. The whole antiphon was first entirely sung, and then partly repeated after several verses. It was a responsorial chant sung by two choirs. When, after the twelfth century, the ancient custom at the Offertory gradually disappeared,¹² the psalm chant was abridged. In our missal there remains

¹⁰ According to an ancient custom and an ecclesiastical ordinance, the faithful formerly offered, in more or less close reference to the Eucharistic sacrifice, all manner of material gifts (*oblaciones, προσφοραι*), to provide the material for the divine service, as well as for the maintenance of the clergy and the poor. Thus they offered, for example, corn, fruit, grapes, milk, honey, wax, oil, later on money also. The offering of such objects, however, could not be made at the same time as that of the bread and wine, which served for consecration, but it was done generally before or after Mass in a particular place in the Church, or also in the house of the bishop. These religious offerings were already in themselves a meritorious and satisfactory act of virtue; in addition to this, they who offered them would thereby participate in the Eucharistic sacrifice and gain the Eucharistic sacrificial fruits in more abundant measure. In this twofold connection the oblations of the faithful served *pro remedio vel pro redemptione animae*, that is, to efface sin, as is often expressed in the old documents. From this ancient custom there was gradually developed the present practice, in existence for many centuries, of giving Mass stipends for the special application of the so-called ministerial sacrificial fruits. Of the loaves presented, only a portion was ordinarily blessed and at the close of the celebration distributed to the non-communicants, later on to all present, or sent to the absent as a mark of union with the Church, the so-called Eulogies, *εὐλογία, benedictio, panis benedictus, ἀντιδωρον* (substitute for Holy Communion). Among the Greeks Eulogies are still in use.

¹¹ *Offertorium, quod inter offerendum cantatur, quamvis, a prioris populi consuetudine in usum christianorum venisse dicatur, tamen quis specialiter addiderit officiis nostris, aperte non legimus, sicut et de Antiphona, quae ad communionem dicitur, possumus fateri: cum vere credamus priscis temporibus Patres sanctos silentio obtulisse vel communicasse, quod etiam hactenus in Sabbato sancti Paschae observamus (Walafrid. Strabo, chap. 23).*

¹² Remains of these are the offerings still in use at Requiem Masses and the festal offerings practised in many congregations; likewise the offering of a lighted candle when receiving holy orders, as well as the presentation of

only the antiphon designated by the name *Offertorium*, which the priest recites immediately before offering the sacrificial gifts; but it is still sung by the choir, as in former times, during the Offertory.

2. The *Offertorium* is now a shorter or longer verse, generally taken from the Psalms, sometimes from the other books of Holy Scripture; only a few have been composed by the Church herself. As to its contents, it does not relate to the oblation, as the name would seem to imply.¹³ Rather it changes during the course of the ecclesiastical year, and gives expression to the dominant thought of the feast or season; therefore it has precisely the same significance and purpose as have the foregoing Introit and Gradual chants. The same spirit that pervades these two choral chants, resounds again in the Offertory, strengthens the festal dispositions, reawakens the thoughts and feelings with which we should offer or assist at the sacrifice.

The following Offertory read in Requiem Masses deserves special notice:

Domine, Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae, libera animas omnium fidelium defunctorum de poenis inferni et de profundo lacu: libera eas de ore leonis, ne absorbeat eas tartarus, ne cadant in obscurum: sed signifer sanctus Michael repraesentet eas in lucem sanctam: Quam olim Abrahae promisisti et semini ejus.

V. Hostias et preces tibi, Do-

Lord Jesus Christ, King of Glory, deliver the souls of the faithful departed from the flames of hell, and from the deep pit. Deliver them from the lion's mouth, lest hell swallow them, lest they fall into darkness: and let the standard-bearer, St. Michael, bring them into the holy light: Which thou hast promised of old to Abraham and his posterity.

V. We offer Thee, O Lord,

two large lighted candles, of two loaves and two small casks of wine at the consecration of a bishop and at the benediction of an abbot. Cf. *Pontif. Roman.*

¹³ Oblationes offeruntur a populo et Offertorium cantatur a clero, quod ex ipsa causa vocabulum sumpsit quasi offerentium canticum (Raban. Maur., *De clericor. institut.*, I, chap. 33). Dicto Symbolo cantatur Offertorium sive Offerenda, ut aliqui dicunt. Appellatur autem Offertorium ab offerendo, quia tunc offerimus. Sed necessario hic considerandum est, tria omnino esse quae offerre debemus: primo nosmetipsos, ac deinde ea quae sacrificio sunt necessaria, scil. panem. vinum et aquam, et si qua sunt alia sacrificio apta (Beleth, *Ration.*, chap. 41),

mine, laudis offerimus: tu suscipe pro animabus illis, quarum hodie memoriam facimus: fac eas, Domine, de morte transire ad vitam: Quam olim Abrahae promisisti et semini ejus.

a sacrifice of praise and prayers: accept them in behalf of the souls we commemorate this day: and let them pass from death to life. Which Thou didst promise of old to Abraham and his posterity.

This is the only Offertory which has retained its original form: it consists of an antiphon, a verse, and the concluding antiphonal words repeated. The text is difficult to understand; hence so many different interpretations have been given to it.¹⁴

THE SACRIFICIAL ELEMENTS

Wheaten bread (*panis triticeus*) and wine of the grapes (*vinum de vite*) are the two elements which are necessary for the accomplishment of the Eucharistic sacrifice; hence they are frequently called the matter of the Holy Sacrifice. This mode of speech, however, must not be misunderstood. It does not say that bread and wine belong to the Eucharistic offerings in the same way that the body and blood of Christ are offered. As on the cross, so on the altar Jesus Christ alone is our victim. The substances of bread and wine appertain to the Eucharistic sacrifice, inasmuch as they are changed into Christ's body and blood; the species of bread and wine serve to

¹⁴ St. Peter designates the place of punishment of the damned by the words *infernus* and *tartarus*, writing, that "God spared not the angels that sinned: but delivered them, drawn down by infernal ropes to the lower hell, unto the torments, to be reserved unto judgment" (*rudentibus inferni detractos in tartarum tradidit cruciandos*). By the words: *Ad infernum detraheris in profundum lacu* (Isa. 14:15), which apply to the chief of the fallen angels, hell is likewise designated. St. Michael is the "standard-bearer" (*signifer*), that is, the prince and leader of the angelic choirs that protect the faithful in the agony of death against the attacks of the infernal spirits and conduct the souls that have faithfully struggled into the heavenly paradise. Hence the Church sings in an Antiphon: *Archangele Michael, constitui te principem super omnes animas suscipiendas* ("Archangel Michael, thee have I constituted as prince, to receive all souls"). The promise of salvation (of eternal light and life) was repeatedly made to Abraham as the "Father of believers" and to his spiritual children. The earthly Chanaan promised him (Gen. 12:7; 17:8), "the land of promise," was a type (figure) of the true Chanaan, that is, of the kingdom of God here below and in heaven (Heb. 11:8-12). Terra promissionis erat figura regni coelestis seu patriae et quies illius figura fuit quietis beatorum in coelis (Dion. Carthus., *In Ps.*, 94:11). Cf. also God's word to Abraham: *Ego merces tua magna nimis* (Gen. 15:1).

make the offering of the body and blood of Christ a visible sacrifice. Considering the close relation of the elements of bread and wine to the Eucharistic sacrifice, we should handle them with great care and reverence even before their consecration.

1. Our Lord and Saviour, at the first celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice, consecrated bread and wine and prescribed the use of these elements for the accomplishment of the unbloody sacrifice in His Church for all future time. Christ indeed freely and out of His good pleasure chose bread and wine for this sacred purpose; but since His divine wisdom orders all things sweetly, there are certainly some reasons which show the suitability of these sacrificial elements. The Eucharist is not only a sacrifice, but it is also a sacrament; under both of these points of view the bread and wine are clearly proper for their high destiny.¹⁵ In this place only the fitness of these gifts for the purpose of the Eucharistic sacrifice is chiefly to be considered.

When God united the human soul with the body, thereby imparting life to the body, He, for the support of this life within us, directed us to the natural life without, and in the beginning ordered us to draw the nourishment of our life from the vegetable kingdom. In the state of man's innocence, the trees of Paradise yielded spontaneously for man their fruits, substantial and succulent, delightful to the taste; but after his fall, banished from Paradise to the earth, which of itself yields but thorns and thistles, man has been obliged to wrest support from the earth by hard labor in the sweat of his brow. The grain of wheat, which is the fat of the land, and the grape, which ripens in the sun, in a manner contain the marrow and blood of the earth, and are intended mainly to renew man's substance and to refresh his blood; therefore they are the chief means for the nourishment of his life. Nowhere do these grow

¹⁵ Si quaeratur, cur panis et vinum sint hujus sacramenti materia, dicendum, quod principalis causa institutio est divina, cujus institutionis multiplex est ratio. Primo ex parte usus sacramenti, quoniam panis et vinum communius in cibum et potum proveniunt, sicque per ea in spiritualem refectionem manducimur magis apte. Secundo ex sacramenti effectu, quia panis prae ceteris cibis sustentat corpus et vinum laetificat cor. Ita et hoc sacramentum magis laetificat et sustentat caritate inebriatos, quam alia sacramenta. Tertio ex ritu celebrationis, quoniam duo ista tractantur mundius ac frequentius, quam cetera alimenta. Quarto ex significatione duplicis rei sacramenti istius. Panis namque ex multis granis conficitur et vinum ex multis acinis confluit, quod competit ad significandum corpus Christi verum ac mysterium. Quinto ex representatione ejus, quod praecessit. Grana namque in area conculcantur, panis in fornace decoquitur et vinum in torculari exprimitur, et ita per ea Christi passio designatur (Dion. Carthus., IV, dist. 11, q. 3).

wild, but in all places they thrive only by man's careful and laborious cultivation; and when he has harvested the ears and gathered in the grapes, it is still by renewed labor that he must prepare them for food and drink.

If, therefore, on one hand, bread and wine are gifts of God, they are, on the other, products of man; the sweat of his brow cleaves to them before they are changed into his flesh and blood. Hence they are eminently suited as gifts of man to God; in presenting them we offer to God our fatigue and labor, and in the offering of these gifts we bring to God, so to speak, our flesh and blood, our body and life. Therefore, before our Lord can give and leave us His flesh and blood as a sacrifice, we must offer to Him bread and wine, by separating and withdrawing these articles from the ordinary wants of life, and reserving and sanctifying them for Him for His sacrifice. Consequently, in ancient times the Church permitted the faithful to bring bread and wine to the house of God and to place them on the altar, and the priest accepted them both for the sacrifice and for his daily support.¹⁶

Ears of wheat and bunches of grapes are the most noble and most valuable products of the vegetable world; they compose, so to speak, the flesh and blood of the earth. These "firstlings of God's creatures and gifts" ¹⁷ represent, therefore, nature in her entirety, which is in a manner offered to God in the oblations of bread and wine obtained from the wheat and from the grapes. The offering of bread and wine symbolizes also the donation of man himself and of his life; for bread and wine are the most excellent means of nourishment.¹⁸ In the bread and wine, then, man offers himself and all that he is and has.¹⁹

¹⁶ Laurent, *Christol. Predigten*, II, 67.

¹⁷ S. Iren., *Adv. haeres.*, IV, xvii, 5).

¹⁸ *Prima causa (for the offering of bread, wine and water) est, quia inter omnia humanae vitae sustentandae necessaria, haec tria sunt mundiora et utiliora et magis necessaria, propterea potius debuerunt apponi quam alia, et in id quod mundius est et utilius omnibus et super omnia ad vitam aeternam capessendam magis necessarium, transferri et transformari, i.e. in corpus Christi et sanguinem (Lib. de canone mystici libam., chap. 2).* This little work is no longer ascribed to John of Cornwallis, but to Richard, a Premonstratentian of the monastery of Wedinghausen (diocese of Cologne).

¹⁹ On the words of the Canon, *qui tibi offerunt pro se suisque omnibus*, Robert Paululus remarks, the small word "*pro*" hoc sensu non inconvenienter accipitur, ut haec, scil. panem et vinum quae in victu vitae animalis principalia sunt, offerendo seipsos et sua omnia, i.e. totum victum suum offerre dicantur. Praecipua quippe illius portio sunt et totum figurant (*De offic. eccles.*, II, chap. 29).

2. The Church requires that the matter used for the consecration be not only valid and genuine, but also licit and as perfect as possible. The bread destined for the sacrificial action must have been made of pure wheaten flour that has been mixed with natural water and baked in the fire; the bread should be pure and fresh. The sacrificial wine must have been pressed from ripe grapes and fully fermented, not soured nor settled nor artificially composed; as to the color or taste, it may be red or white, strong or light, naturally sweet or tart. With regard to the color, it is to be remarked that, although red wine symbolizes more perfectly than the white the blood of Christ, still white wine is to be preferred because in its use at the altar cleanliness can more easily be observed. Another prescription respecting the sacrificial elements is that the bread is required to be unleavened and the wine to be mixed with a little water. The use of unleavened bread and the mixing of wine with water have a higher meaning and are, therefore, strictly prescribed by the Church; although they are not required for the validity of the sacrifice, yet they are absolutely required for the lawfulness of the consecration.

a) The bread should be unleavened.²⁰ This is a strict ordinance of the Church for the priests of the Latin rite, while the uniate Greeks²¹ are strictly enjoined, according to an old custom, to consecrate only leavened bread.²² Unleavened and leavened bread are

²⁰ *Azymus panis* = *panis sine fermento* (instead of *fermentum* = fermentation, fermenting mixture, leaven, ζύμη) *vel non fermentatus*, from ἄζυμος. Substantive *azymon* = unleavened bread. The second syllable is made short by Prudentius and others. Bread raised with leaven, leavened bread, is called by Isid. (*Etymolog.*, XX, ii, 15) *panis fermentacius*, i.e. *fermentis confectus*, also *panis fermentalis vel fermentatus*. In omnibus Scripturis invenimus panem indifferenter dici, sive fuerit azymus sive fuerit fermentatus (Humbert., *Adversus Graecor. calumnias*, n. 12).

²¹ In the East the Armenians and Syro-Maronites (like the Latins) use unleavened bread.

²² Among the Greeks it appears that leavened sacrificial bread, from the most ancient times, was exclusively or at least generally used. The historic question has not as yet been solved, what kind of bread the Western Church used for the sacrifice during the first ten centuries. Three different views regarding it prevail among Catholic theologians since the seventeenth century when the controversy was most animated. P. Sirmond, S. J. (d. 1651), in his *Disquisitio de azymo, semperne in usu altaris fuerit apud Latinos*, defended the assertion (in its universality, at any rate, exaggerated and incorrect), that the Western Church in the middle of the ninth century consecrated exclusively leavened bread. Christopher Lupus, O. S. Aug. (d. 1681), first opposed this opinion. But as its chief opponent, Mabillon, O. S. B. (d. 1707), came forth, who principally in his *Dissertatio de pane eucharistico azymo ac*

equally valid matter of the sacrifice; the one as well as the other has its peculiar mystical signification. Yet there are more numerous and better reasons for the usage prevalent in the Latin Church; hence the rite of the latter is to be preferred. These reasons are principally the following:

a) At the institution of the Eucharist, Christ used unleavened bread. "On the first day of unleavened bread" the Saviour kept the Pasch with His disciples; therefore, at the time in which the Jews, according to the ordinance of the law, were obliged to have nothing leavened in the house or to partake of it. Consequently it is generally admitted that Christ consecrated unleavened bread.²⁸ Although the words of the Lord to His apostles and their successors commanding them to do the same as He had done at the Last Supper, may not have been a formal command to consecrate unleavened bread, still it is evident that in so grave and sacred a matter the example of Christ should not easily be departed from. The Church has not the slightest reason to depart from it; on the contrary, she has every reason to retain the use of unleavened bread after the example of Christ, since in many respects the unleavened bread is preferable to the leavened bread.

b) The unleavened bread symbolizes very appropriately the Eucharistic victim and the Eucharistic food of the soul. The leaven penetrates and soon leavens the entire mass of flour in which it is mixed, changing it into savory bread. The Saviour Himself (Matt. 13:33) calls the divine truth and grace a heavenly leaven that trans-

fermentato, defended the diametrically opposite opinion, namely, that in the West the constant and general use of unleavened sacrificial bread had prevailed; he admits the partial use of leavened bread only among the apostles. Cardinal Bona, O. Cist. (d. 1674), takes a middle view, employing the inconclusive arguments used by both opponents to make it probable that the Roman Church, until late in the ninth century, permitted the use of leavened as well as of unleavened sacrificial bread. The views of Mabillon and Bona since that time have had the greater number of adherents. On the side of Mabillon are, for example, Martene, Macedo, Ciampini, Cabassutius, Boucat, Berti, Simmonet, Sandini; on Bona's side, for example, Tournely, Witasse, Bocquillot, Grancolas, Graveson, Natalis Alexander.

²⁸ *Credimus panem illum, quem primum Dominus in coena mystica in mysterium corporis sui consecravit, infermentatum fuisse, maxime cum in tempore paschae nullum fermentum cuiquam vesci, sed nec in domo habere illi licebat* (Raban. Maur., *De cleric. instit.*, I, chap. 31). Even though our Saviour had anticipated the Paschal meal, which can by no means be proved, the use of leavened bread would not in consequence follow.

forms mankind. Otherwise leaven is usually employed in an evil sense; ²⁴ in its fermentation it works decomposition or decay; therefore it serves as a figure of the unclean, perverse, and corrupted. Unleavened bread, on the contrary, which has undergone no such process of fermentation, is a symbol of purity and cleanliness. Accordingly only unleavened bread can appropriately indicate the superhuman holiness and purity of the Eucharistic victim, as well as the incomparable purity and incorruption of the Eucharistic food of the soul.

c) Inasmuch as unleavened bread calls to our mind how unspeakably pure and bright the transfigured body of Christ is, at the same time it also reminds us of the purity of heart and body with which we should approach the table of the Lord and receive the food of angels. According to the counsel of the Apostle (I Cor. 5:7 f.), we must purge out the old leaven of sin and passion, of wickedness and wantonness, that we may be a new paste, and be enabled, when thus sanctified, to partake of the immaculate flesh of the Eucharistic victim. These thoughts are beautifully expressed in the paschal hymn which says: "Christ is our paschal sacrifice, while for unleavened bread we need but heart sincere and purpose true" (*pura puris mentibus sinceritatis azyma*).²⁵

b) To the sacrificial wine a small quantity of natural water must

²⁴ Fermentum significat caritatem propter aliquem effectum, quia scilicet panem facit sapidiorum et majorem; sed corruptionem significat ex ipsa ratione suae speciei (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 74, a. 4 ad 3). In another passage he says: In fermento duo possunt considerari. Primo sapor, quem tribuit panis, et secundum hoc per fermentum significatur sapientia Dei, per quam omnia quae sunt hominis sapida redduntur; secundo in fermento potest considerari corruptio, et secundum hoc per fermentum potest intelligi uno modo peccatum, alio modo homo peccator (*In I Cor.*, chap. 5, lect. 2).

²⁵ Unleavened bread is also different in appearance and taste from the daily bread that we eat; hence it is suitable, by its appearance, to indicate that under the Eucharistic veil no ordinary bread, but the true and living bread of heaven, is concealed, that preserves the spiritual life of grace and ensures the blessed life of immortality. The unleavened bread, which was eaten with the paschal lamb and bitter herbs, is called "bread of tribulation" (*panis afflictionis*; Deut. 16:3), because it was a reminder of the labors and oppression endured in Egypt; in this it also symbolizes the Eucharistic banquet celebrated in memory of the bitter passion and death of Christ. Cf. Algerus, *De sacramentis corp. et sang. dominici*, II, chap. 10. The ferment that penetrates and invigorates the mass of meal, is indeed a figure of the divinity, clothing itself with human nature, but *panis est proprie sacramentum corporis Christi, quod sine corruptione conceptum est, magis quam divinitatis ipsius* (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 74, a. 4).

be added, according to apostolic ordinance and the strict discipline of the Church. As this commingling is a holy ceremony, it must take place at the altar before the oblation and be made in the chalice itself. Even a drop answers the purpose. It is advisable and always safer to pour but a little water into the chalice,²⁶ so that the wine is not too much weakened and thus perhaps be spoiled. This mixture is so important and, therefore, so strictly prescribed that a priest would never be allowed to begin the Holy Sacrifice if he foresaw that no water could be procured. Profoundly significant are the reasons that favor the fitness of this strict ecclesiastical ordinance and practice.

a) It is certain that the Lord at the institution of the Eucharist consecrated wine mixed with water, since the addition of water to the wine at the paschal meal was a permanent and universally practiced custom from which the Lord surely did not depart.²⁷ The ancient liturgies and holy Fathers are unanimous in asserting that the Saviour mixed water with the wine at the Last Supper.²⁸ Thus from the time of the apostles the Church has everywhere and at all times faithfully followed the example of her divine Master and has ever consecrated only wine mixed with water. She regarded it, as St. Cyprian writes in his letter to Caecilius, as proper that at the mixing and offering of the chalice of the Lord, she should observe the true tradition, so that at His glorious and triumphant return He

²⁶ The *Florentinum* gives: *aqua modicissima* and *paululum aquae*; the rubric: *parum aquae*. Hence the well known adage: *quanto paucior, tanto potior*. "Although the reasons for the mingling of the water are so manifest that without mortal sin it may not be omitted, yet the Sacrament exists when it is not done. But priests should be attentive that, as in Mass water must be taken with the wine, yet only a little must be added. For according to the opinion and judgment of ecclesiastical commentators, this water is changed into wine" (*Catech. Rom.*, II, chap. 4, q. 16). *Vino consecrando miscenda est aqua naturalis tantum et modica, et per modum sacrae ceremoniae, ad altare et in calice* (Sporer, *Theol. sacrament.*, II, chap. 3, sect. 2, § 3).

²⁷ As a rule, red wine mingled with water was used for the paschal celebration.

²⁸ The mingling of the wine with water is not *de necessitate sacramenti neque praecepti divini*, but only *de necessitate praecepti ecclesiastici*, that is, *apostolici*. In the Fathers and in councils and liturgies, the Eucharistic chalice, that is, its contents (before the Consecration), has, for example, the following denominations: *κράσις, κράμα, ποτήριον κεκραμένον, calix mixtus, temperamentum calicis, poculum aquae et vini, calix dominicus vino mixtus, calix vini et aquae plenus, vinum aqua mixtum, calix dominicus vino et aqua permixtus, mixtum, temperatum*.

may find us adhering strictly to that which He had exhorted us, observing what He had taught and doing what He had done.

Besides this historical reason there are also mystical and symbolical reasons.²⁹

b) The wine destined to be changed into the blood of Christ is mixed with water at the altar, that by these two elements the blood and water which flowed from the wound in the side of Christ may be represented.³⁰ The piercing and opening of the heart of Jesus, from which the stream of blood and water flowed forth, is a wonderful event³¹ and, at the same time, one full of mystical meaning, which should in a very special manner engage the attention of men. For this occurrence not only proves the truth and reality of the sacrificial death of Christ, but it moreover involves a profound symbolism; for the stream of blood and water which proceeded from the pierced heart of Jesus symbolizes all the graces and blessings that flow to us from His passion and death. The water symbolizes baptism, which is the laver of purification and regeneration; the blood signifies the Eucharist, the fountain of reconciliation and strength for life eternal. But since baptism is the beginning, the Eucharist, the end and complement of the remaining sacraments, they are all included in these two principal ones. The outpouring of blood and water from the pierced side of the Redeemer, therefore, symbolically expresses that all the sacraments have their origin in His sacrificial death, that is, that they derive from it their power and plenitude of grace. But the Church is the only lawful possessor and administrator of the sacraments, by virtue of which she in her members is ever undergoing purification and sanctification; hence

²⁹ Sicut propter imitationem magis exactam, et propter mysterium Ecclesia latina praecipit consecrationem in azymo, sic propter eandem imitationem, et propter mysterium Ecclesia universalis praecipit consecrationem in vino non puro, sed lymphato (Lugo, *loc. cit.*).

³⁰ It is the better established and the more general opinion that the right side of the Saviour (together with His Sacred Heart) was opened by the lance. Dominus meus Jesus post cetera inaestimabilis suae erga me beneficia pietatis, etiam dextrum sibi propter me passus est latus fodi: quod videlicet non nisi de dextera mihi propinare vellet, non nisi in dextera locum parare refugii. Utinam ego talis merear esse columba, quae in foramine petrae habitat et in foramine lateris dextri (S. Bernard., *In Ps. 90 serm.*, VII, n. 15).

³¹ In this outpouring of blood and water from a heart that beat no longer, the holy Fathers behold a great miracle. Contumelia a Judaeis illata in signum prodiit, quia de corpore extincto sanguis verus et aqua pura miraculose manavit (Ludolph. de Saxon., II, lxiv, 13).

the holy Fathers behold in the pierced heart of Jesus also the divine origin of the Church. They say that from the opened side of the second Adam, while slumbering in death, the new Eve, that is, the Church, was formed and came forth.³² Thus from the pierced heart of Jesus, the pure, immaculate Church was born, and thence the inexhaustable fountain of her graces originated. The rite of the mixing of wine and water in the chalice should remind us of these mysteries.

c) The commingling of wine and water in the chalice refers also to that intimate, mystical relationship existing between Christ and His Church.³³ The wine is a symbol of Christ; the water is a symbol of man. "The waters which thou sawest," said the angel to John, "are peoples and nations" (Apoc. 17:15). The drops of water which have been poured into the chalice no longer exist as water, but they are diffused in and incorporated into the wine, partaking of its qualities. Similar is the union of the faithful with Christ,³⁴ by virtue of which they are made partakers of the divine nature, that is, by sanctifying grace they are made children of God and His heirs. For from the head, Jesus Christ, who is filled with all the treasures of the divinity, the unction of grace flows down to His members, descending even to the hem and extremity of the garment of the Church (Ps. 132:2), so that she becomes wholly penetrated with the precious flow of heavenly gifts. By the commingling of wine and water before the oblation, we are to understand, first of all, the sacrificial communion between Christ and the Church, that is, this ceremony is intended to place before our eyes Christ, as the head, in union with the Church, as His mystical body, offering sacrifice and being offered in sacrifice at the celebration of Mass. At the same time, is indicated that unspeakably intimate and exalted

³² Sopor ille viri (*Adam*; Gen. 2:21) mors erat Christi, cujus examinibus in cruce pendentis latus lancea perforatum est atque inde sanguis et aqua profluxit (John 19:34): quae sacramenta esse novimus, quibus aedificatur Ecclesia (S. August., *De civit. Dei*, XXII, chap. 17). Cf. Pius XII, Encyclical *Mystici corporis*.

³³ Consulte a prioribus statutum est, ne vinum in sacrificio sine aquae admixtione offeratur, ut videlicet per hoc significetur, populos qui secundum Joannem (Apoc. 17:15) aquae sunt, a Christo, cujus sanguis in calice est, dividi non debere (Walafr. Strabo, *De exord. et increm.*, chap. 16).

³⁴ Cum aqua in vinum convertitur, significatur, quod populus Christo incorporatur (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 74, a. 8 ad 2). Aqua significat populum, qui est insipidus, et sapidus fit per conjunctionem cum Sapientia, Christo, sicut aqua, cum adjungitur vino (S. Bonav., IV, dist. 11, p. 2, a. 1, q. 3 ad 6).

relation which is realized between the children of the Church and our Redeemer by the sacrifice and sacrament of the Eucharist. This is that supernatural espousal of which the Apostle wrote to the Christians of Corinth: "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (II Cor. 11:2). It commences here below in sanctifying grace and is consummated above in eternal glory.

d) Finally, our rite is calculated to symbolize that mystery by which the divine and human natures are united together in one person, the incarnate Son of God. This mystery is the root and source of every supernatural relation of man with God in time and eternity.

3. To the elements of the sacrifice are due the most scrupulous care and the greatest reverence, even before the oblation.³⁵ Every

³⁵ The bread selected for the consecration was generally called *oblata* or *hostia*. The figure and size were not prescribed in the first centuries, but left to the judgment of the celebrant and people, *prout erat cuique studium atque devotio in religione divina* (Bernold., *Constant.*). Si de primis Ecclesiae saeculis agitur, quando ipsae populi oblationes immolabantur, perspicuum est, alia tum forma non fuisse, quam quae panum erat oblatorum. Integri enim ac solidi, ut oblati fuerant, consecrabantur consecratique in partes ad distribuendum comminuebantur (Sirmondus, *Disquis. de azymio*, chap. 4). In reference to the example of our Saviour, who consecrated a loaf (a cake, a slice, a round) of the unleavened paschal bread, the round form had even at a very early period the preference, the more so as it is regarded as a symbol of perfection. Already St. Epiphanius (d. 403) mentions that the Eucharistic sacrificial bread is round in shape (*The Anchor*, chap. 57). In the Middle Ages it received names that allude to its circular form, for example, *corona oblationum*, *circulus*, *rotula panis*, *panis rotularis*. According to an ordinance of the Sixteenth Synod of Toledo (693), the sacrificial bread should be specially and carefully prepared, be white and of moderate size; finally, not a piece, but whole loaves were to be consecrated (*panis integer et nitidus, qui ex studio fuerit praeparatus, neque grande aliquid, seu modica tantum oblata*). It was already then baked in iron moulds, provided with symbolical pictures and Scriptural signs (*host-irons, ferrum oblatorium, ferrum oblatarium, ferramentum characteratum*). Moreover, in the eleventh century the consecrated breads were still so large that they had to be broken and divided for the Communion of the faithful (*particulae*). Tenues oblatas ex simila (*of the finest wheaten flour*) praeparatas integras et sanas sacris altaribus superponimus et ex ipsis post consecrationem fractis cum populo communicamur (Humbert. Card. [d. about 1064], *Advers. Graec. calumn.*, n. 33). From this time on they gradually became smaller and thinner, until they received the present (coin) form. As a rule, now only hosts that are whole may be distributed; but the name *particulae*, that has clung to them, still reminds us of the ancient practice of the breaking of bread. Decet revera panem candidissimum esse et mundissimum, si facultas non defuerit, qui transferri debet

precaution must be taken to procure freshly and properly made hosts and pure grape wine for the sacrifice of the altar. During the Middle Ages devout princes and princesses esteemed it a high honor to be allowed to prepare and to provide the bread and wine for the Holy Sacrifice.³⁶ In convents the preparation of the sacrificial bread was even accompanied with religious solemnity and a kind of divine service. Thus was it prepared in the world-renowned Benedictine abbey of Cluny.³⁷ At prescribed hours the monks performed manual labor; but that they might also be sanctified in the midst of their occupations, they worked amid the singing of psalms. But special care was bestowed upon the preparation of the bread for the sacrifice; amid the singing of psalms the seed destined for it was confided to the earth and the ripe grain was gathered; amid divine praises grain after grain was selected, carefully washed, and carried in a special sack to the mill by one of the most exemplary monks. There he first washed the two millstones, covered them with cloths, robed himself in white, and then, with veiled face so that his eyes alone were uncovered, he began to grind the wheat. With similar care the sieve was then washed and the flour sifted. To prepare the bread from the flour was the duty of the highest official of the monastic church; two monks and a recently admitted brother shared the holy labor with him. Being well washed and clothed in white garments, they baked the hosts in a blessed vessel. It is proper that even today persons consecrated to God prepare with reverence the bread for the Holy Sacrifice, regarding this preparation as a work of love.

in splendidissimum corpus Agni immaculati (Algerus, *De sacram. corp. et sang. dom.*, II, chap. 9). Cf. Mabillon, *Acta SS. O. S. B.*, III, praef. n. 57-60; Gerbert, *Vetus Liturgia Alemannica*, I, disp. IV, chap. 3.

³⁶ S. Wenceslaus summa religione sacerdotes veneratus suis manibus triticum serebat et vinum exprimebat, quibus in Missae sacrificio uterentur (*Brev. Rom.*).

³⁷ Cf. *Consuetud. Cluniac.*, III, chap. 13 (*De hostiis qualiter fiant*); Krazer, sect. III, art. 2, chap. 3.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE OBLATION

THE OFFERING OF THE HOST

THE next preparation of the elements of the sacrifice takes place during the Mass itself,¹ and it includes the separation, dedication, and blessing of the bread and wine for the exalted end to which they are destined. This preliminary sanctification of the Eucharistic elements, if not essentially necessary, is yet in the highest degree just and proper.² The earthly elements are to be taken from the sphere of nature into the higher order of grace: they are to become holy things before the Holy Ghost changes them into the body and blood of Christ. At the Last Supper, Jesus Himself, in His character of high priest, took the bread and the chalice with wine "in His holy and venerable hands, and raising His eyes to heaven to God, His almighty Father, giving thanks, He blessed" the earthly gifts of bread and wine.³ The Church, therefore, imitates

¹ The preparation of the offering, that is, the pouring of the wine into the chalice and the mixing of water in it, took place, in the Middle Ages, usually before the prayers at the foot of the altar, that is, immediately after the priest had ascended the altar, and also the bread and the wine were then often offered to God not one after the other, but both together by a single prayer. Cf. the present rite of the Dominicans.

² Per prolationem sacrorum verborum et signa crucis panis et vinum aptantur et quasi meliorantur, ut sint condigna materia, quae in corpus et sanguinem Christi convertatur. Si enim vestes et templum ac vasa ecclesiae benedicuntur et sanctificantur, ut sint apta instrumenta divini obsequii, quanto rationabilius est, panem et vinum ante consecrationem benedici, ut sint apta materia transubstantiationis supermirabilis atque divinae. Nam et aliorum sacramentorum materiae propter reverentiam sacramenti ante usum suum sanctificantur, ut aqua baptismi vel chrisma seu oleum (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 18).

³ The Lord celebrated the Pasch of the New Testament by blessing (εὐλογήσας, *benedicens*) the bread and the chalice, as also by giving thanks (εὐχαριστήσας, *gratias agens*) to God the Father. Both words εὐλογεῖν and εὐχαριστεῖν are not simply synonymous, but are often used to designate one

our Lord when, in the course of the sacrificial celebration up to the time of the consecration, she repeatedly blesses the Eucharistic elements and implores of God their acceptance, sanctification, and transformation.

The offering of the elements begins with the offering of the host, wherein we may distinguish the act and the prayer of oblation.

1. **The act of oblation.** The priest takes the paten with the host and elevates it; he offers it as a sacrificial gift to the Lord God "who dwells in the highest," and he does this by holding it before His eyes and praying that the Lord would graciously accept it.⁴ The raising of the host is intended to express the act of presentation. At the same time the priest, in conformity with the first words of the accompanying prayer, raises his eyes to the crucifix on the altar and lowers them again almost immediately, mindful of his unworthiness. After the conclusion of the prayer, the celebrant makes with the paten and host the sign of the cross over the place on which the host is to be placed.⁵ This ceremony is intended to bring before the mind in a

and the same prayer, in so far as the blessing therein contained is connected with thanksgiving. At all events by this *εὐλογεῖν* or *εὐχαριστεῖν* we must not understand merely the uttering of the words of consecration; for there is thereby designated another act entirely different from the consecration, that is, a preparatory prayer of blessing and thanksgiving preceding the consecration, the conclusion of which are the words of the consecration. This presanctification of the elements was wholly appropriate, since their species remained after the consecration, and, in like manner, the thanksgiving also was appropriate before and during the performance of a mystery equally glorious for God as beneficial for men. (Cf. Knabenbauer, *Ad Matt.*, 26:26; Cornely, *Ad I Cor.*, 10:16 and 11:24.)

⁴ In oblatione panis et vini dicuntur aliquae orationes valde tenerae, devotae ac sanctae a sacerdote, quasi spiritualiter *habente in manibus thus lucidissimum et panes propositionis* (Lev. 24:7), qui in mensa Domini offeruntur. Et quamvis sacerdos satisfaciat, orationes illas eo affectu dicens, quem ipsa verba insinuant, bene ad ea attentus, tamen magis adhuc specialiter quum accipit Patenam cum hostia in manibus, debet spiritualiter in ea cor proprium ponere et corda omnium circumstantium, imo et omnium fidelium, ut ea etiam Deo offerat cum ea celsissima intentione, quod quemadmodum hostiam illam offert, quae est purus panis, ut ejus substantia destructa convertatur in corpus ipsius Christi, ita cor suum et omnium fidelium offerat, ut in eis destruat quidquid terrenum est, et convertat ac per amorem et imitationem transformet in ipsum Christum, ita ut desinant esse quod erant et vivere more antiquo, incipiant autem esse et vivere sicut ipse omnium Redemptor (De Ponte, *De christ. hom. perf.*, IV, tr. II, chap. 12, § 1).

⁵ There is, moreover, already a cross cut in the altar stone and anointed with chrism, when the altar was consecrated, in the very place (the middle

striking manner that the cross and altar are holy places, where, though in a different manner, one and the same sacrifice was once or is now offered. The very same body that hung upon the cross, is laid on the altar; as the cross was once deemed worthy to bear the atoning sacrifice for the world, so is now the altar.

2. The oblation prayer.

Suscipe, sancte Pater, omnipotens aeterne Deus, hanc immaculatam hostiam, quam ego indignus famulus tuus offero tibi Deo meo vivo et vero, pro innumerabilibus peccatis et offensionibus et negligentis meis, et pro omnibus circumstantibus, sed et pro omnibus fidelibus Christianis, vivis atque defunctis: ut mihi et illis proficiat ad salutem in vitam aeternam. Amen.

Accept, O holy Father, almighty and eternal God, this unspotted host, which I Thy unworthy servant offer unto Thee, my living and true God, for my innumerable sins, offences, and negligences, and for all here present; as also for all faithful Christians, both living and dead, that it may avail both me and them for salvation unto life everlasting. Amen.

This prayer, which is as terse in composition as it is rich in thought, affords an answer to various questions that may be asked with regard to the Eucharistic sacrifice. Who is to receive and accept the host? "The holy Father, the almighty and eternal God." ⁶ The Church in the Mass generally addresses herself to God the Father, uniting herself to the Saviour, who on the altar offers Himself to His heavenly Father. In the full and complete sense God alone deserves the name of Father, as Christ says: "Call none your father upon earth; for one is your Father, who is in heaven" (Matt. 23:9). Yes, God is our Father; we are His children. Through His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, He has conferred upon us the dignity as well as the goods and privileges of children of God. What love has He not thereby shown us! God is not merely the

of the altar) where the host is placed. Quod sacerdos oblata in altari deponit super crucem in consecratione altaris cum chrismate factam, hic est Christus, qui carnem suam cruci affixit (Sicardus, *Mitræ*, III, chap. 6).

⁶ Pensa, cui offeras, utpote Deo Patri omnipotenti et aeterno, ex cujus bonitatis, dilectionis, pietatis, munificentiae ac beneficiorum contemplatione debes vehementi dilectione accendi, atque ex consideratione suae majestatis et aequitatis debes reverentia timore et omni humiliatione tui ipsius repleti. Hinc ante celebrationem et in ea debes bonitatem, caritatem, liberaliter et misericordiam Dei Patris ad homines intueri, mirari et honorare (Dion. Carthus., *De sacr. altar.*, a. 16).

best and the most liberal of fathers, but He is also the infinitely "holy Father." Thus does the Saviour call Him in His sacrificial prayer as high priest (John 17:11). Therefore as His children, it is incumbent on us to be, after the Saviour's example, holy in all our conduct; for we should be perfect as is our Father in heaven (Matt. 5:48). God, whom we may with confidence call our Father, is, moreover, the "almighty, eternal God," to whom, on account of His majesty and glory, the sacrifice of the most profound reverence and humble subjection is due. Finally, He is the "living and true God," to whom alone sacrifice may and should be offered. In the liturgy the Lord is often designated as the living and true God (I Thess. 1:9), in contradistinction to the inanimate and false gods, which are vain, powerless, without life, and full of deception. The priest offers to the "living and true God," who created heaven and earth. The "living" God is life itself, the eternal, uncreated life, the source of all life: from Him proceeds both natural and supernatural life, the life of grace and glory in the world of angels and of men. In God all things live and move; without Him there is no life. The "true" God is truth itself, the primordial and purest truth, the fountainhead of all truth.

What is offered to God the Father? An "unspotted host."⁷ By this expression the Eucharistic sacrificial body of Christ, as well as the Eucharistic sacrificial bread, is to be understood. That the term, "unspotted host," is not exclusively applied to the bread there present, but is to be referred also to the body of the Lord soon to be present under the appearance of bread, is clearly evident from the context, as also from the comparison of this prayer with other oblation prayers recited before the consecration. Only the body of Christ is that unspotted host which secures for us atonement of sin and salvation, for which supplication is made.⁸ The Church,

⁷ This spotlessness is frequently commented upon in the liturgy, because it is the first and essential requisite, in order that the sacrificial gift may be acceptable to God.

⁸ *Panis non est immaculata illa hostia pro expiatione peccatorum oblata, sed solus Christus. Itaque sensus horum verborum hic est: Suscipe, sancte Pater, immaculatam hostiam, quam ego indignus servus tuus ex hoc pane per mirabilem conversionem confecturus sum et tibi oblaturus. . . . Unde sacerdos in Offertorio orat Deum, ut acceptet hostiam a se ex hoc pane conficiendam et offerendam, et ut victima ex pane conficienda prosit sibi et aliis. Atque simul per caerimoniam illam sacrat Deo materiam remotam sacrificii ad sacrificium eucharistiae decentius peragendum (Antoine, *De sacrif. Missae*, q. 2).*

therefore, looks on the bread resting on the paten and chosen for the consecration as already consecrated, and in offering it has already Christ's body in view. Hence the priest already before the consecration calls the gift that he offers immaculate, unspotted; for Christ is the absolutely pure, holy, and spotless victim. The unspotted host on the altar is, therefore, that "clean oblation" announced by the prophet Malachias. This offering of the body of Christ is, in a measure, to be distinguished from the offering which takes place after the consecration; and the difference consists in this, that here at the same time the bread is still presented and dedicated to the Lord God with the desire that He would accept it for the purpose of consecration, bringing the oblation of the bread to its final termination by the consecration. Consequently the expression, "unspotted host," can and ought to be understood of the sacrificial bread lying on the paten.⁹ To two things therefore, namely, to the sacrificial body of the Lord, in spirit regarded as already present, and to the sacrificial bread soon to be changed, which is present in reality, the eye and heart of the priest are directed while he raises on the paten the "unspotted host," imploring its favorable acceptance by the heavenly Father.

Who performs the offering? The priest, who acknowledges himself an unworthy servant of God. The priest is God's servant; the Lord has called him into His sanctuary, that he may serve Him there all the days of his life. But it is especially at the altar that the priest is penetrated with a sense of his unworthiness to discharge this honorable and sublime service. The humblest office in the house of God is more exalted than the greatest worldly position. Now, when the priest considers his misery and frailty, his ingratitude and sinfulness, how painfully should he not realize that he is quite unworthy to serve the Most High, above all, in the most holy mystery of the altar!

For whom does the priest offer the sacrifice? In the first place, for

⁹ After the Consecration not only the body and blood of Christ, but also the figurative bread and wine offerings of Melchisedech are designated as *immaculata hostia*. Bishop Odo of Cambrai (d. 1113) remarks in respect to this designation (*Expos. in Canon. Miss.*, dist. 3): Ab immaculata [Virgine] sumpta est haec hostia, ideo et ipsa immaculata. Et hoc loco admonemur quod panis appositus altari debet esse candidissimus et in quo nulla possit inspicere macula, ut hoc appareat in figura, quod praedicatur de substantia, ut pura et immaculata videatur exterius figura, cujus substantia dicitur interius pura et immaculata.

himself, then for all present, and finally, for all Christians. The celebrant, therefore, first offers the unspotted host as a sacrifice of propitiation for his own sins, to obtain remission of all guilt and punishment. The priest knows full well that he is not (as he should be) holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, but that he is encompassed with infirmity; therefore in the first place he offers sacrifice for his own sins, and afterward for those of his people (Heb. 7:26).¹⁰ He confesses his sins and faults and negligences to be "innumerable."¹¹ *Delicta quis intelligit?* (Ps. 18:13.) Who can understand and take a note of all his sins? ¹² The possibilities of failing and stumbling are numerous. Even the just man falls seven times a day, and we all fail in many things. Though our sins be but trivial, they are still many, and in their number lurks the danger. All the sins incident to the very living of this wretched life of ours, the priest

¹⁰ Christus Dominus noster, qui aeternitate sacerdotii sui omnes tibi [Deo] servientes sanctificat sacerdotes, quoniam mortali carne circumdati, ita quotidianis peccatorum remissionibus indigemus, ut non solum pro populo, sed etiam pro nobis [sacerdotibus] ejusdem te Pontificis sanguis exoret (*Sacrament. Gregor.*).

¹¹ Tu Christi sacerdos considera temetipsum, *quis sis*, h. e. quam defectuosus et fragilis in natura . . . quam culpabilis in vita, quam *innumerabilibus* vicibus quotidie peccans, saltem in venialibus, per omissionem et commissionem, per interiorum et exteriorum incustodiam sensuum, per irrefrenationem linguae, per in exemplaritatem et scandalum, per cogitationes inutiles, per distractiones, levitates, negligentias etiam in divinis, per immoderantias cibi ac potus, per inordinatas circa quaecunque creata affectiones. In his et consimilibus multis adverte te quotidie toties esse culpabilem ac peccantem, ut *nequeas numerare*, nec singula possis attendere, imo exorare indigeas et exclamare ad Dominum: *Delicta quis intelligit? Ab occultis meis munda me* (Dion. Carthus, *De sacramento altaris serm.*, 3).

¹² P. Roothaan, S. J., distinguishes in his *Annotations to the Exercitia spiritualia* of St. Ignatius the *peccata et offensiones et negligentiae* of our oblation prayer in the following manner: a) Peccata quaevis, seu gravia seu levia, sive cogitationis sint, sive verborum sive operum sive etiam omissionis. Peccata, intelligo culpas proprie sic dictas. b) Offensiones, culpa minus proprie dictae, seu involuntariae, in quas scilicet offendere fragilitatem nostram in tot tamque variis vitae hujus casibus pronum est, ferme ut per viam salebrosam incedenti frequenter offendere seu impingere vel nolenti accidit. Et tamen, cautius incedendo, offensiones hujusmodi minuere Dei famulus potest et debet. c) Negligentiae eae, quae ad rationem quidem peccati omissionis non pertingunt, sed in actiones nostras irreperere, easque si minus vitiare omnino, tamen imperfectas minusque acceptas Deo reddere solent, suntque profecto innumerae, sive intentionis puritatem et intensionem spectes sive modos omnes, quibus actiones nostras ornari ac perfici in Dei conspectu decet, pro mensura luminis et gratiae nobis a Domino communicatae.

would daily atone for and efface by the sacrifice of the altar.¹³ The priest, in the second place, offers and prays expressly for all present: for all those who are devoutly assisting at the divine service and who are uniting in the sacrifice; such persons, consequently, receive a more special and abundant share in the fruits of the sacrifice. But like a loving, solicitous mother, the Church forgets none of her children; she therefore permits the priest to offer and pray for all the faithful who belong to the communion of saints and who still stand in need of assistance, consequently, for all her children, "whether this present world yet retains them in the flesh or the world to come has already received them stripped of their mortal bodies," whether they still are combating on earth or suffering in purgatory.

For what purpose is the sacrifice offered? That to all it may avail for eternal life, that it may apply to them the benefits and blessings of redemption, not merely for time, but for all eternity. Salvation (*salus*) is the ideal and the sum of all the good things that Christ brought into the world, for we acquire possession of these goods when we obtain salvation. This salvation begins for us already here below but is completed only in the blessedness of the world to come. Now, on the altar there flows the universal and inexhaustible fountain of salvation, whence all spiritual gifts come to us. Hence the priest prays that the Eucharistic sacrifice may be so efficacious a means of salvation that all may attain to glory of soul and body in eternity.¹⁴

¹³ Non solum lavit Christus nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine suo, quando sanguinem suum dedit in cruce pro nobis, vel quando unusquisque nostrum mysterio sacrosanctae passionis illius baptismo aquae ablutus est, verum etiam quotidie tollit peccata mundi. Lavat-itaque nos a peccatis nostris quotidie in sanguine suo, cum ejusdem beatae passionis ad altare memoria replicatur, cum panis et vini creatura in sacramentum carnis et sanguinis ejus ineffabili Spiritus sanctificatione transfertur, sicque corpus et sanguis illius non infidelium manibus ad perniciem ipsorum funditur et occiditur, sed fidelium ore suam sumitur in salutem (Beda Venerab., I, homil. XIV).

¹⁴ After the offering of the host, the paten, when the Mass is not a solemn one, is concealed under the corporal until after the Pater noster (cf. Microl., *op. cit.*, chap. 10). In Solemn Masses, however, the subdeacon holds the paten enveloped in the veil that hangs from his shoulders. The original and peculiar reason for keeping it thus covered is, that the paten (as also the chalice), being a blessed and sacred object, should, as far as possible, be withdrawn from profane gaze (cf. Lebrun, *op. cit.*, III, a. 6).

THE OFFERING OF THE CHALICE

In a similar manner the chalice also is dedicated and offered to the heavenly Father; ¹⁵ but the offering is preceded by the preparation.

1. The preparation of the chalice comprises the pouring of the wine into the chalice and the mixing with it of a little water which was previously blessed by the sign of the cross. It is asked why the sign of the cross is made over the water only and not over the wine and why in Requiem Masses the blessing of the water also is omitted. The most reliable explanation rests on the symbolical meaning to be found in the mingling of the wine and water. The wine symbolizes Christ, who has no need of a blessing and gains no advantage from His union with the people; hence the wine is not blessed. The water symbolizes the faithful, who greatly need divine grace and receive the greatest gain from their union with Christ; hence the sign of the cross is made over the water before it is mingled with the wine.¹⁶ The sign of the cross, therefore, does not apply so much to the water itself, as to the people signified by the water.¹⁷ This also explains why the sign of the cross is omitted in Requiem Masses. The whole rite of the Requiem Mass aims at giving to the departed souls the greatest possible assistance, hence some parts which refer exclusively to those present (the living) are omitted. Thus, for example, the celebrant at the Introit makes the sign of the cross, not over himself, but over the book, which here in a certain way represents the suffering souls; and at the conclusion of the Mass he does not bestow the blessing on those present. For the same reason, at the

¹⁵ That the Oblation prayer of the chalice is always addressed to the Father, is manifest from the Mozarabic Missal, in which the prayer is as follows: Offerimus tibi, Domine, Jesu Christi Filii tui calicem humiliter implorantes clementiam tuam, ut ante conspectum divinae majestatis tuae cum odore suavitatis ascendat. Per eundem Chr. (Migne, P.L., LXXXV, 528).

¹⁶ Vinum in hoc loco Christum significat, qui nulla eget benedictione; aqua populum qui in hac vita nequit esse sine peccato, propter quod indiget benedictione Dei, ut reddatur dignus ad unionem cum Christo. Ad hoc igitur significandum aqua benedicitur, quando vino admiscetur (Durand., IV, xxx, 21).

¹⁷ The former rite had not this signification; it was differently constituted, as the cross was not made over the water, but the water was poured into the chalice in the form of a cross: *Archdiaconus infundit (aquam) faciens crucem (= in modum crucis) in calice* (Ordo Rom. I, n. 14). The Ordo Rom. XIV, chap. 72, had the rubric: *demum* (after pouring the water into the wine) *signat super calicem semel*.

Offertory he omits to bless the water, that is, the people symbolized by the water.

The prayer recited at the mixing of the water with the wine is as follows:

Deus, qui humanae substantiae dignitatem mirabiliter condidisti, et mirabilius reformasti: da nobis per hujus aquae et vini mysterium, ejus divinitatis esse consortes, qui humanitatis nostrae fieri dignatus est particeps, Jesus Christus, Filius tuus, Dominus noster; Qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti, Deus: per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

O God, who in creating human nature hast wonderfully dignified it, and still more wonderfully reformed it: grant that by the mystery of this water and wine, we may be made partakers of the divine nature of Him who vouchsafed to become partaker of our human nature, namely, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

The foregoing prayer, which occurs in the ancient sacramentaries as a Christmas Collect,¹⁸ contains in part the mystical meaning of the mingling of the water and wine. In it we beg for that participation in the divine nature (II Pet. 1:4) which consists in this, that poor, frail human nature, by the communication of heavenly gifts and graces, is elevated to a supernatural state, endowed with inestimable riches, and clothed with incomparable beauty. Hence the holy Fathers speak of a deification of man, by which they understand a supernatural, mystical, blissful union with God. "They in whom the Holy Ghost dwells become deified."¹⁹ The virgin martyr Agnes referred to these gifts of grace when, full of enthusiasm, she spoke of her heavenly spouse: "With sparkling and glittering gems hath He covered my breast, with golden garments hath He clothed me, with artistic and precious jewels hath He adorned me, and, moreover, He hath shown me incomparable treasures, which are to be mine if I remain true to Him." To participate in the divine life, in the divine glory of Jesus Christ, we therefore pray: *per hujus aquae et vini mysterium*, that is, by the mystery which is represented by the present mingling of water and wine. This mystery is manifold:

¹⁸ There the words *per hujus aquae et vini mysterium* are wanting.

¹⁹ S. Athanas., *Epist. I ad Serap.*, n. 24.

at one time it represents the Incarnation (the union of the human and divine natures) and also the passion and death of the Saviour (the issue of water and blood from Christ's pierced heart), hence the whole work of redemption; for these two mysteries are the original source of all grace for us. Another mystery signified by the mixing of wine and water is the mystical union of the faithful with Christ, principally as accomplished in the reception of the Eucharist.²⁰ By this union with the head, divine life diffuses itself throughout the members, as from the stock of the vine the vivifying and fructifying sap flows on to the branches. The more intimately we become incorporated with Christ by means of the Eucharist, the nearer we draw to the fountain of all graces, and the more plentifully are they diffused in our soul.

That we may be the more readily heard, we gratefully acknowledge the exceedingly great mercy the Lord has shown us in creating and redeeming us.²¹ Therefore we implore that the work which God has wonderfully begun, He may mercifully complete in us by imparting to us the divine life of grace here below and of glory hereafter.²² In a wonderful manner did God create man: He made man the king of the visible world, setting him but a little below the angels, with honor and glory He crowned him; but He enriched and adorned human nature with supernatural gifts. From the blissful heights of Paradise man precipitated himself into the depth of sin and misery; then God in a still more wonderful manner restored him and raised him up from his fall. God's love, wisdom, and power are incomparably more gloriously displayed in the redemption

²⁰ "Under the form of bread the body is given to thee, and under the form of wine the blood is given to thee, that, by partaking of the body and blood of Christ, thou mayst become one body and blood with Him. In this manner we also become Christ-bearers, in that His body and blood are distributed throughout our members. Therefore, according to the blessed Peter, we become partakers of the divine nature" (S. Cyrill. Hierosol., *Cat. mystag.*, IV, n. 3).

²¹ Ipse erit reformator tuus, qui fuit formator tuus (S. August., *Enarrat. in Ps.*, 103:4). Duo sunt, quae principaliter attendere debet humana circumscriptio: dignitatem suae conditionis et excellentiam suae reformationis. Dignitatem suae conditionis, ut peccare timeat; excellentiam redemptionis, ut gratiae redimentis ingratus non existat (Ivon. Carnot., *Serm.*, XXII).

²² Grace is the beginning, the principle and the root of glory, and glory is the completion, the blossom and the fruit of grace. Gratia et gloria ad idem genus referuntur; quia gratia nihil aliud est quam quaedam inchoatio gloriae in nobis (S. Thom., *IIa IIae*, q. 24, a. 3 ad 2).

than in the creation of the world. *Nihil nobis nasci profuit, nisi redimi profuisset*, sings the Church. "It would have availed us nothing to have been born, unless the regeneration had been added."

2. The oblation of the chalice also comprises the act and the prayer of oblation.

a) **The act of oblation.** The priest raises the chalice as though he would present it to God; but here the celebrant does not cast his eyes down, as at the offering of the host, but he keeps them fixed on the crucifix while he is offering the chalice. The reason lies in the accompanying prayer of offering, with which this raising of the eyes harmonizes, since the prayer contains the petition that this sacrificial offering "may ascend as an agreeable odor" to the throne of the Most High. Moreover, this offering prayer does not expressly remind the celebrant of his unworthiness. Before the priest puts down the chalice,²⁸ he makes the sign of the cross with it over the altar, to signify that in the chalice and upon the altar that same precious blood is offered which was shed on the wood of the holy cross.

b) **The oblation prayer.**

Offerimus tibi, Domine, calicem salutaris, tuam deprecantes clementiam, ut in conspectu divinae majestatis tuae, pro nostra et totius mundi salute cum odore suavitatis ascendat. Amen.

We offer unto Thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation, beseeching Thy clemency that it may ascend before Thy divine Majesty as a sweet odor for our salvation and for that of the whole world. Amen.

As the above prayer shows, "the chalice of salvation" (Ps. 115: 13) is here offered. Although the chalice now contains merely the wine mixed with water, it is yet called the chalice of salvation (a chalice bringing salvation) because the sacrificial wine will soon be

²⁸ During the Middle Ages the chalice was not put behind the host as now, but was placed to the right, that is, towards the Epistle side, near the host, by which was symbolically indicated, that blood and water flowed from the right side of our Lord. Ita juxta Romanum Ordinem in altari (panis et vinum aqua mixtum) componenda sunt, ut oblata (i.e. hostia) in corporali posita, calix ad dextrum latus oblatae ponatur, quasi sanguinem Domini suscepturus, quem de latere dominico profluxisse credimus (Microl., *De eccles. observat.*, cap. 10). This practice continued in the Roman Church until the fifteenth century, while in other places the present rite was introduced still earlier, *ut Christi stantis ante crucem memoria haberetur*, or rather, *ob majorem securitatem, ne calix tam facile effundi posset*.

changed into the sacrificial blood of Christ. In the offering of the chalice there is contained, at the same time, the petition that the Lord would change the wine into Christ's blood and graciously accept this blood from our hands: ²⁴ "may it ascend before Thy divine Majesty as a sweet odor." Only the consecrated chalice is truly a "chalice of salvation," as it alone contains that divine blood which was shed on the cross as a sacrifice and ransom.²⁵ In the chalice we daily offer that sacred blood which once flowed through the members of the Saviour's body and gave Him strength to love, to labor, and to suffer for us, that divine blood, the source of salvation and life, which throughout eternity flows through the heart of Jesus. In the chalice is offered that blood which has brought eternal salvation to all the elect; for in heaven the blessed stand around the throne of the Lamb of God, singing unto Him: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God in Thy blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and hast made us to our God a kingdom and priests, and we shall reign on the earth" (Apoc. 5:9 f.).

Who offers the chalice of salvation? "We offer," the priest says here, whereas at the offering of the host he said, "I offer." It makes no great difference whether the singular or plural number is used. The priest stands at the altar as the representative and authorized agent of the Church; therefore he offers the host, as well as the chalice, in the name of all the faithful, and they, especially those who are present, offer in conjunction with the priest.²⁶ This participation of the

²⁴ According to an *Ordo Missae* of the beginning of the twelfth century, the priest says here, hence before the consecration, at the offering of the chalice: Offerimus tibi, Domine, Jesu Christi Filii tui sanguinem. Humiliter imploramus clementiam tuam, ut ante conspectu divinae majestatis tuae cum odore suavitatis accedat. *Odor suavitatis* (= *odor suavissimus*) is a figurative expression, often occurring in the Old Testament. "To ascend as a pleasing odor" is to say, that God takes pleasure in the offering and graciously receives it.

²⁵ Orat sacerdos, ut calix oblatus "in conspectu divinae majestatis cum odore suavitatis ascendat," cum illo scil. mystico odore, qui ex ipso calice, cum consecratus fuerit, suavissime exspirat (Bona, *Rev. liturg.*, II, ix, 5). It is only the chalice changed into Christ's blood that is truly an *odor suavitatis*.

²⁶ St. Cyprian says that the Christians assemble in common with the brethren and celebrate with the priest of God the divine sacrifice (*in unum cum fratribus convenimus et sacrificia divina cum Dei sacerdote celebramus*; cf. *De Orat. domin.*, chap. 4). Already the Apostle (I Cor. 10:16) writes: "The chalice of benediction which we bless," that is, consecrate; in this the faith-

faithful in the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice is now made expressly prominent when the plural is used, as frequently occurs in the Canon. The participation of the faithful is explicitly expressed at the offering of the chalice because by the mingling of the water with the wine, the union of the faithful with Christ has just been symbolically represented, and this union is therefore now suitably expressed in the offering of the chalice. Some writers hold that the plural, "we offer," refers to the priest and the deacon, who in Solemn Masses offers the chalice with the celebrant and recites the prayer with him.²⁷

We offer the chalice "for our salvation and for that of the whole world." Mass is, in the first place, a means of grace and salvation for the children of the Church, who especially receive in bountiful measure of the fruit of the sacrifice. But they who do not belong to the communion of the Church are by no means entirely excluded from the blessing of the sacrifice. The Church prays and offers that all may be saved and may attain unto the knowledge of the truth. Countless blessings daily flow from the altar and diffuse themselves over the vast expanse of the earth. In the Mass, as on the cross, Christ is "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (I John 2:2). If this "sacrifice for sin" were no longer left us, what else would remain for the world "but a certain dreadful expectation of judgment, and the rage of a fire which shall consume the adversaries?" (Heb. 10:27.) Although the Lord sees that the wickedness of men is great on the earth, and that all the thought of their heart is bent upon evil at all

ful are included, who assist at the sacrifice, and, by the Amen they say, make the prayers of the priest, as it were, their own.

²⁷ The deacon is at the same time the representative of the people and the consecrated assistant of the priest; in the first quality, he brings to the priest the matter of the sacrifice; in the second, he supports the priest in the oblation of the chalice and assists him, after the completion of the sacrifice, in the distribution of the sacrificial food, so that the last function has its foundation in the first (Scheeben, III, 607). *Paratus debet esse diaconus progredi cum sacerdote ad sacrificium altaris, ad martyrium, ad evangelizandum. Experire certe utrum idoneum ministrum elegeris, cui commisisti Domini (corporis et) sanguinis consecrationem—non ad conficiendum, sed ad assistendum. Quia sicut secretarius altaris particeps est confectionis Eucharistiae cum sacerdote; non quia sumat vel conficiat nec quod hos sine eo non possit fieri, sed quia celebrius et in majori reverentia conficitur corpus Domini cum praesentia, ministerio et testimonio illius (Petr. Cantor., *Verbum abbreviat.*, chap. 60).*

times, yet He no longer says: "I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth" (Gen. 6:5, 7); for He promised that no flood should henceforth come to destroy all flesh, and that He would no more curse the earth on account of man (Gen. 9:15). But why? Because the Lord God scents the sweet savor of the sacrifice (Gen. 8:21) that is offered daily on thousands and thousand of altars for the salvation of the whole world.

The Church offers Christ's sacrifice from the rising to the setting of the sun, every day and at every hour, without interruption and without end. As the sun moves around the earth, and as he advances in his course, shedding light and life, so also in the same round with him daily travels the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, diffusing around the earth, as it is offered up, spiritual life in the Church and in its members. At the morning's dawn, priests ascend the altar to offer the Holy Sacrifice, hour after hour other priests succeed them, and to these, others still in every country wherein the Church has followers, and the offering of sacrifice goes on until the daily cycle is completed and to the last link is joined the first in the sacrificial chain and the perpetual sacrifice continues anew. This is the true eternal fire that is never extinguished, the sacrificial fire which burns day and night in the sanctuary in honor of the Almighty. This is the eternal high priesthood, the perpetually offered sacrifice of the high priest. Without ceasing does it go up to heaven, and without ceasing does God come down to the altar to become present in the Sacrament for our sakes, that we all together and each one in particular may be partakers of this sacrifice and of the whole plenitude of grace. Unceasingly does the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass fasten an eternally new bond between heaven and earth, between God and man. Truly the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is a worship of God such as He is deserving of, a divinely ordained, true, and perfect divine service of adoration and subjection to God, of contrition and reconciliation, of praise and thanksgiving, and of the glorification of the Saviour invisibly and yet visibly enthroned among us on the altar; a divine service ever renewed and continued to the end of the world, when He shall come again in judgment amid the clouds of heaven with power and majesty. (Geissel.)

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE SELF-IMMOLATION AND THE EPIKLESIS

THE SELF-IMMOLATION

1. Bread and wine are now on the altar, set apart from profane use and dedicated to the service of the sacrifice; soon their substance will be changed, and under their appearances Christ's body and blood will be offered. In union with this divine sacrifice, we should offer ourselves with all that we are and have. Where Christ, the head, offers Himself, there the members of His mystical body must also be offered together with Him. Thus the Church prays that God would not only sanctify the elements of bread and wine just offered, but would also, by the Eucharistic sacrifice, make us wholly worthy to be presented to Him as an eternal sacrificial gift.¹ This self-offering of the Christian people has already been symbolically effected in the previous offering of the wine mixed with water; but now the self-offering is to be made especially for the purpose of awakening and enlivening sentiments of self-sacrifice, which are necessary for the proper offering of the sacrifice of the altar. For God favorably receives the sacrifice from our hands and for our salvation only when we present ourselves in the sanctuary animated with devout sentiments of self-immolation.

2. Therefore the priest, now in the name of all the faithful offering with him, recites the following prayer of offering, during which, with humble compunction, he makes a moderate inclination of the body and, to express fervent supplication, he supports his joined hands on the altar.

¹ Sanctifica, quaesumus Domine Deus noster, per tui sancti nominis invocationem hujus oblationis hostiam, et per eam nosmetipsos tibi perface munus aeternum (*Secreta in festo ss. Trinit.*).

In spiritu humilitatis et in animo contrito suscipiamur a te, Domine; et sic fiat sacrificium nostrum in conspectu tuo hodie, ut placeat tibi, Domine Deus.

In a spirit of humility and with a contrite heart may we be received by Thee, O Lord; and grant that the sacrifice we this day offer in Thy sight, may be pleasing to Thee, O Lord God.

In order to fully appreciate the meaning of these words and to recite them in the proper spirit, we should remember by whom and in what place they were spoken for the first time. They are taken from a longer, humble, penitential prayer recited by the three young men in the Babylonian furnace. Faithful to God's law, they would not adore the statue of the king and therefore were cast into a burning furnace. Praising God, they walked about in the flames, which did not harm them in the least. They offered themselves as a propitiatory sacrifice for their sins and for those of their people in order to obtain mercy. "In a contrite heart and humble spirit let us be accepted. . . . So let our sacrifice be made in Thy sight this day, that it may please Thee" (Dan. 3:39 f.). In similar words the celebrant here prays that the Lord would graciously receive him and the faithful people, for the sake of their humble, penitential sentiments, as a spiritual sacrifice; and, if so accepted, then the Eucharistic sacrifice, when offered by them in the sight of God with these dispositions, will be graciously accepted by God from their hands.

The three young men were ready to offer their lives cheerfully in sacrifice to God by a bloody martyrdom; after their example we should present ourselves to God to suffer a life of perpetual sacrifice and an unbloody martyrdom. "As gold in the furnace He hath proved them, and as a victim of a holocaust He hath received them" (Wisd. 3:6). Thus should we also, filled with humility and compunction, offer ourselves to God as a holocaust in the furnace of suffering and tribulation, of persecution and temptations. A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit; a contrite and humbled heart He does not despise (Ps. 50:19). Yes, a heart penetrated with penitential love and sorrow, a mind bowed down with compunction will always be favorably received and accepted by the Lord. It is the best disposition that we should bring with us to the altar. When the Lord breathed forth His spirit amid the darkness that enshrouded Mount Calvary, many of the beholders were seized with such fear

and sorrow that they returned to their homes striking their breast (Luke 23:48). Should not we also be penetrated with regret and contrition, with a penitential sorrow, as often as we celebrate in the Mass the remembrance of Christ's bloody death?

During this holy function we must offer ourselves with compunction of heart as a sacrifice; for when we commemorate the mystery of the passion of our Lord, we must imitate that which we celebrate. The Mass will be a sacrifice for us to God when we have made an offering of ourselves. But we should, moreover, after retirement from prayer, endeavor as far as we are able, with God's assistance, to keep our mind in recollection and renewed strength, so that passing thoughts may not distract it, nor vain joy find its way into the heart, and that our soul thus may not, by carelessness and fickleness, again lose the spirit of compunction it has acquired.²

Our entire life should be a cheerful, uninterrupted offertory. We should present ourselves in body and soul³ as a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God (Rom. 12:1). Whatever moves and affects the soul in joy and sorrow, in prosperity and adversity, in distress and death, we place upon the altar during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and we are sure of consolation and relief. Yes, all the children of the Church should unite in the offering, all the faithful should be incorporated into and offered along with the one great and eternal sacrifice, uniting with it all their own sacrifices, trials, and sufferings.

THE EPIKLESIS

The so-called epiklesis (invocation)⁴ is found in all liturgies. But in the Greek and other Oriental liturgies it follows the act of con-

² S. Greg., *Dial.*, IV, chap. 59.

³ Quid, fratres, nos offerimus aut quid retribuimus Domino pro omnibus quae retribuit nobis? Christus pro nobis obtulit hostiam pretiosiore quam habuit, nimirum qua pretiosior esse non potuit—et nos ergo faciamus quod possumus, optimum quod habemus offerentes, quod sumus utique nosmetipsi. Ille seipsum obtulit: tu quis es qui teipsum offerre cuncteris? Quis mihi tribuat, ut oblationem meam dignetur majestas tanta suscipere? Duo minuta habeo, Domine, corpus et animam dico: utinam haec tibi perfecte possim in sacrificium laudis offerre! Bonum enim mihi longeque gloriosius atque utilius est, ut tibi magis offerar, quam ut deserar mihi ipsi. Nam ad meipsum anima mea conturbatur, in te vero exsultabit spiritus meus, si tibi veraciter offeratur (S. Bernard., *De Purific. B. M. serm.*, III, n. 3).

⁴ By the word *ἐπικλήσις* (from *ἐπικαλέω*) = invocation, a liturgical prayer is designated, which implores the consecration of the sacrificial elements and

secration; in the Roman liturgy it has its place among the oblation prayers which precede the consecration. Simple, yet expressive and majestic, are the ceremonies and words of this invocation supplicating the Holy Ghost to bless and change the sacrificial elements. Just before, at the offering of himself, the priest took a posture of humility; but now he again raises his body and lifts up his head, and in an erect posture he solemnly invokes the Holy Ghost, while looking heavenward, raising, extending, and then immediately joining his hands before his breast. At the word *benedic* (bless) he makes the sign of the cross over the chalice and the host.⁵ While this ceremony symbolically represents the blessing implored of the Holy Ghost and consecrates the gifts, the raising of the eyes and the motion of the hands denote longing and desire for the descent of the Holy Ghost from on high.

Veni Sanctificator omnipotens
aeterne Deus, et bene✠dic hoc
sacrificium tuo sancto nomini
praeparatum.

Come, the Sanctifier, O almighty and eternal God, and bless ✠ this sacrifice, prepared for the glory of Thy holy name.

That this invocation is directed to the Holy Ghost is beyond doubt.⁶ He is called *Sanctificator* (the Sanctifier) in the language of the Church to distinguish Him from the Father and the Son, inasmuch as the imparting of all sanctifying graces and charismatical gifts is ascribed to Him. From this prayer it is clearly evident that up to the present the sacrifice has been but "prepared" for the glorification of the divine name, the acknowledgment and praise of the infinite majesty and perfection of God. Only by honoring and adoring God do we obtain His gifts and graces; only in so far as

the imparting of the sacrificial fruits by the Holy Ghost, or at least through the Holy Ghost.

⁵ In celebratione quisque calicem et oblata non circulo aut digitorum vacillatione, ut quidam faciunt, sed junctis et extensis digitis cruce signet sicque benedicat (*Pontif. Roman., Ordo ad Synodum*).

⁶ Mitte, Domine, quaesumus, Spiritum Sanctum, qui et haec munera praesentia nostra tuum nobis efficiat sacramentum, et ad hoc percipiendum nostra corda purificet (*Sacrament. Leonian.*). In the Mozarabic Missal this prayer is as follows: Veni sancte Spiritus sanctificator: sanctifica hoc sacrificium de manibus meis tibi praeparatum (Migne, *P.L.*, LXXXV, 113). In the sacramentary manuscripts of the Middle Ages it is, for instance, given as follows: Veni sanctificator omnium, S. Spiritus, et sanctifica hoc praesens sacrificium ab indignis manibus praeparatum et descende in hanc hostiam invisibiliter, sicut in patrum hostias visibiliter descendisti.

we seek God's honor and glory do we secure our well-being and salvation. The concluding words implore the blessing of the Holy Ghost over the gifts of bread and wine. To understand this petition, three questions must be answered: What does *benedicere* (to bless) generally mean? What blessing is here asked? Why is this blessing expected only from the Holy Ghost?

Benedicere properly means to speak well, to say what is good. This can be done in many ways: if one already possesses the good that is said of him, then *benedicere* is to exalt, magnify, praise, or glorify the possessor; if a person (or thing) does not as yet possess the good, but if the speaker by his word wishes to procure it for him or to give it to him, then *benedicere* means speaking well for someone, wishing him something good. In this instance we must especially distinguish as to the one who speaks the words of blessing. The blessing word of God is efficacious and all-powerful, it is an actual benefit and infallibly imparts good to the creature. The liturgical blessing of the Church also is never without fruit, but it is always a "good wish imparting sanctification and good gifts,"⁷ for Christ has commissioned her with full power to bless. Finally, the simple faithful also may bless, that is, impart good by desire and prayer,⁸ but this private blessing is evidently not always crowned with success.⁹

In this place there is question especially of the blessing of consecration, which is to be effected by the descent of the Holy Spirit. No higher blessing can assuredly be imparted to the gifts prepared

⁷ *Benedictio est sanctificationis et gratiarum votiva collatio* (S. Ambros., *De benedict. patr.*, chap. 2).

⁸ *Dividi solet benedictio etiam in ecclesiasticam et laicam. Ecclesiastica vim habet ex meritis et intercessione Ecclesiae, et ex institutione ejusdem Ecclesiae competit solum ministris sacris, videlicet episcopis vel aliis sacerdotibus. Benedictio vero laica vim habet ex merito personali eam conferentis: unde peti solet benedictio a viris sanctis vel etiam fundatur in auctoritate naturali, sicut ea quae confertur a parentibus suis filiis et utraque dici solet benedictio privata, quatenus confertur privata auctoritate; e contra benedictio ecclesiastica dicitur publica, quatenus confertur publica Ecclesiae auctoritate* (Quarti, *De bened.*, I, sec. 1, dub. 2).

⁹ *Benedicere est bonum dicere. Contingit autem bonum dicere tripliciter. Uno modo enuntiando, puta cum quis bonum alterius laudat. Alio modo imperando, et sic benedicere per auctoritatem est proprium Dei, cujus imperio bonum ad creaturas derivatur; ministerium autem pertinet ad ministros Dei, qui nomen Domini super populum invocant. Tertio benedicit quis optando, et secundum hoc benedicere est bonum alicui velle et quasi bonum pro aliquo precari* (S. Thom., *In Epist. ad Rom.*, chap. 12, lect. 3).

than that they be consecrated, changed into the body and blood of Christ by the almighty power of the Holy Ghost. The material elements of the sacrifice receive the most perfect blessing imaginable, in that they become Christ's body and blood offered in sacrifice, which again on their part are sources of blessing for us.¹⁰ When the priest, with the sign of the cross, blesses and sanctifies the gifts on the altar, he prays for the gracious presence of the divine victim and for the plenitude of blessing flowing from His wounds. He implores this miracle of the Eucharistic consecration to be wrought by the Holy Ghost, the "almighty, eternal God," who, by reason of His unlimited power, can bestow and impart every blessing.

Why, finally, is the Third Person of the Deity, the Holy Ghost, invoked to change the material elements by His almighty blessing into divine sacrificial gifts? The proximate reason lies in the analogy which the consecration bears to the Incarnation. The great similarity and relation between the accomplishment of the Eucharist on the altar and the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God in the womb of the immaculate Virgin Mary are often commented on by the Fathers and are expressed also in the liturgy.¹¹ The Incarnation is, in a manner, renewed and enlarged in the Eucharistic consecration.¹² For the same reason the miracles of the Incarnation and consecration are ascribed to the efficacy of the Holy Ghost: ¹³ both

¹⁰ The Eucharist is a blessing in its highest meaning.

¹¹ Thus, for example, on the feast of Corpus Christi the Christmas Preface and the concluding stanza, *Jesu, tibi sit gloria, Qui natus es de virgine*, are prescribed. *Altari tuo, Domine, superposita munera Spiritus Sanctus assumat, qui hodie beatæ Mariæ viscera splendoribus suæ virtutis replevit (Sacrament. Gregor.).*

¹² St. Chrysostom (*De beato Philog.*, hom. 6) compares altar and crib, remarking that on them the body of Christ reposes, no longer wrapped in swaddling bands, but wholly reclathed by the Holy Ghost. An instrument customary in the Greek liturgy and known by the name star (*ἀστήρ, ἀστερίσκος*) also reminds us of the Incarnation. It consists of two intersecting arcs turned downwards. Assuredly the asterisk serves, in the first place, as a protecting cover for the Eucharistic bread, especially after the Consecration, that it may not be touched by the velum spread over it; at the same time it symbolizes by its appearance the star that stood over the place where the child Jesus lay. When, therefore, the priest has incensed the asterisk and placed it on the discus under the veil, he says: *et veniens stella adstitit ubi erat puer.*

¹³ *Quando congruentius quam ad consecrandum sacrificium corporis Christi sancta Ecclesia (quæ corpus est Christi) Spiritus sancti deposcat adventum, quæ ipsum caput suum secundum carnem de Spiritu sancto noverit natum? (S. Fulgent., Ad Monim., II, chap. 10).*

mysteries, being works of divine favor and love as well as works full of infinite purity and holiness, have a special resemblance to the peculiar character of the Holy Ghost, who is personal love and sanctity.¹⁴ Therefore, although in reality all three divine persons¹⁵ accomplish the act of consecration, it is most frequently ascribed to the power of the Holy Ghost.¹⁶ As it is said in the Creed, that the Son of God "became incarnate by the Holy Ghost, of the Virgin Mary," we also acknowledge that the Holy Ghost, by His creative power as "Lord and Dispenser of life," changes the inanimate elements of bread and wine into Christ's body and blood. "How shall this be done," says the holy Virgin, "because I know not man?" The archangel Gabriel, answering, said to her: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee" (Luke 1:34 f.). "And now you ask: How shall the bread become the body of Christ, and the wine, mingled with water, become the blood of Christ? And I also answer you: The Holy Ghost shall overshadow each and shall effect that which is beyond language and conception."¹⁷

"We invoke our merciful God, that He would send down the Holy Ghost upon the gifts before us, we invoke Him that He change the bread into the body of Christ and the wine into the blood of Christ. Whatever the Holy Ghost but touches is sanctified and changed. . . . The gifts which lie on the altar are holy after they

¹⁴ Opus incarnationis manifestativum est divinae bonitatis et caritatis: sed hoc appropriatur Spiritui sancto. . . . In incarnatione fuit copiosissima divinae bonitatis effusio (S. Bonav., III, dist. 4, a. 1, q. 1). Quoniam liberalitas Spiritui Sancto appropriatur et sanctificatio Virginis, in qua peracta fuit Verbi conceptio, hinc est, quod licet opus illud sit a tota Trinitate, per appropriationem tamen dicitur Virgo concepisse de Spiritu sancto (S. Bonav., *Breviloq.*, IV, chap. 3).

¹⁵ Sanctifica, quaesumus, Domine Deus noster, per Unigeniti tui virtutem hujus oblationis hostiam, et cooperante Spiritu sancto, per eam nosmetipsos tibi perfice munus aeternum (*Sacrament. Gregor.*).

¹⁶ The golden or silver vessel for the preservation of the Holy of holies had often, in ancient Christian times, the form of a dove, and was therefore called *columba*, περιστερὰ, περιστέριον. This dovelike vessel indicated in a realistic manner that the blessed body of Christ, concealed therein, was formed by the Holy Ghost and was, at the same time, a symbol of Christ. Tu mihi, Christe, columba potens (Prudent., *Cathem.*, III, 166).

Sanctusque columbae

Spiritus in specie Christum vestivit honore.

(Sedulius)

¹⁷ S. Joan. Damasc., *De fide orthod.*, IV, chap. 13.

have received the descent of the Holy Ghost.”¹⁸ The Holy Ghost, consequently, effects the presence of the body and blood of Christ, one that is full of grace. Hence it is certainly not without a deep signification that almost all the preparatory prayers of the priest for Mass, as given in the missal and recommended by the Church, invoke the Holy Ghost.¹⁹

¹⁸ S. Cyrill. Hieros., *Catech. mystag.*, V, n. 7, 19.

¹⁹ We mean the concluding prayers of the preparation: *Aures tuae pietatis*. . . . *Ure igne S. Spiritus*, etc. In the very ancient *Oratio s. Ambrosii* that has also been inserted in the Missal among the preparatory prayers of the priest, we read: *Peto clementiam tuam, Domine, ut descendat super panem tibi sacrificandum plenitudo tuae benedictionis et sanctificatio tuae divinitatis. Descendat etiam, Domine, illa Sancti Spiritus tui invisibilis incomprehensibilisque majestas sicut quondam in patrum hostias descendebat, qui et oblationes nostras Corpus et Sanguinem tuum efficiat et me indignum sacerdotem doceat tantum tractare mysterium cum cordis puritate.* This prayer is originally from St. Anselm (*Or.* 29).

CHAPTER XXIX

THE INCENSING AND THE WASHING OF THE HANDS

THE INCENSING OF THE SACRIFICIAL GIFTS

1. In a Solemn Mass the oblation and epiklesis are symbolically followed by the incensing, which has been observed in the Roman liturgy at this part of the Mass since the eleventh or twelfth century.¹ This incensing differs somewhat from the one that took place at the Introit of the Mass, since it has a richer rite and a more significant symbolism. When more closely studied, this grand ceremony is seen to be a poetical development and extension of the preceding Offertory.

First, by virtue of the sign of the cross and an impressive prayer for its blessing, the incense is made a sacramental, something holy, which has not only a holy meaning, but also an efficacious effect. While the priest puts the grains of incense on the live coals, he says:

Per intercessionem beati Michaelis Archangeli stantis a dextris altaris incensi, et omnium electorum suorum, incensum istud dignetur Dominus benedicere, et in odorem suavitatis accipere. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Through the intercession of blessed Michael the archangel, standing at the right hand of the altar of incense, and of all His elect, may the Lord vouchsafe to bless ✠ this incense and receive it as an odor of sweetness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

¹ Romanus Ordo praecipit, ut incensum semper praecedat Evangelium, cum ad altare sive in ambonem portatur; non autem concedit, ut oblatio in altari thurificetur, quod et Amalarius in prologo libri sui de Officiis Romanos devitare fatetur, quamvis modo a pluribus, imo paene ab omnibus usurpetur (*Microlog.*, *De eccles. observat.*, chap. 9). Cf. Krazer, sect. IV, art. 1, chap. 8, § 251).

The prayers of the Church are always heard. In this instance she prays verbally and with the sign of the cross that the Lord would bless the incense and graciously accept it as a thing dedicated to His service.² To obtain a fuller answer to her petition, the Church has recourse to the intercession and mediation of the holy archangel Michael and all the elect of God. The name of St. Michael³ occurs in the Confiteor and is again mentioned in this place because he is at the head of the angelic choirs and, at the same time, the heavenly protector of the Church on earth. It certainly is proper that the Church, at the moment when there is question of a favorable reception of her offering, symbolized by the incense, should invoke her great and powerful protector in heaven, St. Michael, for his assistance and intercession. This is all the more appropriate because, by incensing the sacrificial gifts, she would emulate the celestial choirs in paying homage to the divine Lamb on the throne; for when the earthly altar of the Church is enveloped in clouds of incense, it is in the eyes of all indeed a figure of the heavenly holy of holies, which is perpetually fragrant with the prayers of the blessed. St. Michael stands at the right hand of the altar of incense, that is, he presents before the face of God in golden censers the incense of prayer and sacrifice (Apoc. 8:3 f.).

The sacrificial gifts, the bread and the wine mixed with water, are first incensed by swinging the censer over them three times in the form of a cross and then three times in the form of a circle⁴ while reciting the following prayer:

² Incense is also a material offering made to the Lord in connection with the Eucharistic sacrifice. This connection of the incensing with our sacrifice is, according to some, mentioned in Mal. 1:11, where the Hebrew word, rendered by *sacrificatur*, is properly *suffitur*.

³ On account of the addition, *stantis a dextris altaris incensi*, which in St. Luke 1:11-19 is stated literally of the archangel Gabriel, there is to be found in many of the more ancient missals the name of Gabriel instead of Michael; therefore many liturgists feel that this prayer should be thus changed. But they are mistaken. For well established reasons the Church adheres to the name of Michael and wishes to invoke here the archangel Michael. The name of Michael is, consequently, not from oversight or by mistake placed in this benediction prayer (cf. S. R. C., September 25, 1705).

⁴ *Ducitur autem thuribulum primo per modum crucis, quia fructus gratiarum hujus sacrificii incruenti a sacrificio crucis tanquam a fonte proveniunt; secundo etiam ter ducitur circumcirca a dextris et a sinistris, ut indicetur, nos usquequaque adjuvari virtute sacrificii in prosperis et adversis* (Quarti, *Comment. in Rubr. Miss.*, II, vii, 10).

Incensum istud, a te benedictum, ascendat ad te, Domine: et descendat super nos misericordia tua.

May this incense which Thou hast blessed, O Lord, ascend to Thee, and may Thy mercy descend upon us.

The rite and prayer constitute the symbolical representation of the previous offering. The separation and dedication of the sacrificial gifts consists in this, that they are enveloped in a holy atmosphere by the swinging of the censer, containing the fragrant, hallowed incense. The grains of incense, consumed in the fire and ascending heavenward as an agreeable sacrificial odor, also symbolically express the petition that the substance of the material elements, by the fire of the Holy Ghost, be changed into the divine victim, under the appearances of bread and wine.⁵ The incense, ascending in clouds and descending upon the faithful and spreading round about, indicates that the Eucharistic sacrifice may be accepted for the salvation of the faithful and of the whole world.

2. By the incensing a hallowed circle has been drawn around the sacrificial gifts; the incensing is now continued and extended to the crucifix on the altar, or the Blessed Sacrament, to the relics or images of the saints, to the altar itself, to the celebrant together with his attendants, to the clergy and the people present. This incensing rite is but the further representation and development of the oblation ideas which were just before expressed in the prayer: "May this incense which Thou hast blessed, O Lord, ascend to Thee, and may Thy mercy descend upon us."

The burning, fragrant incense, which goes up in light clouds, symbolizes the Eucharistic sacrifice and the oblation prayers connected with it, in which the celebrant's interior dispositions and those of the devout participants manifest themselves.⁶ This is clearly

⁵ *Sacrificia, Domine, tuis oblata conspectibus, ignis ille divinus absumat, qui discipulorum Christi Filii tui per Spiritum sanctum corda succendit (Orat. secret. fer. VI p. Pent.).*

⁶ *Eucharistia vocatur incensum vel thymiama. Primo, quia continet Christi corpus quasi hostiam Deo in ara crucis igne caritatis incensam, quae quasi thymiama odorem suavissimum Deo exhalavit, quo ejus iram placavit eumque hominibus reconciliavit. Secundo, quia Eucharistia conficitur et conditur sacris precibus, quae sunt thymiama Deo. . . . Denique Eucharistia vocatur incensum, quia non tantum repraesentat, sed et re ipsa continet Christum in ara crucis pro nobis incensum, i.e. dolore et amore tostum Deoque sacrificatum. . . . Thymiama sunt ignitae orationes, suspiria et vota tam sacerdotum*

evinced by the verses of the psalm which accompany the sacred ceremony of incensing. By the three swings of the censer (*ductu triplici*) Christ is honored, either in the figure of the crucifix or in the Blessed Sacrament.⁷ Relics and images are incensed,⁸ to honor the saints and, at the same time, to express thereby the desire that our sacrifice and prayers, supported by their powerful intercession, may be favorably received and made the more pleasing to God and profitable to ourselves. The words said while incensing the cross and altar are as follows (Ps. 140:2-4):

Dirigatur, Domine, oratio mea, sicut incensum, in conspectu tuo: elevatio manuum mearum sacrificium vespertinum. Pone, Domine, custodiam ori meo, et ostium circumstantiae labiis meis: ut non declinet cor meum in verba malitiae, ad excusandas excusationes in peccatis.⁹

Let my prayer, O Lord, be directed as incense in Thy sight: the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and a door round about my lips. Incline not my heart to evil words, to make excuses in sins.

quam fidelium, dum Eucharistiam vel consecrant et conficiunt, vel sumunt et manducant (Corn. a Lap., *In Malach.*, 1:11).

⁷ When the Blessed Sacrament is not exposed, the cross on the altar forms the principal visible object and is, therefore, the first to be incensed after the offerings; *coram exposito* it should not be incensed in case it should be on the altar, according to the custom of some places. The Blessed Sacrament enclosed in the tabernacle is not incensed, but it is adored before and after the incensing of the crucifix by the genuflection of the celebrant and the *ministri*.

⁸ As a distinction from the cross on the altar, they are incensed only *ductu duplici* (first those on the Gospel side, then those on the Epistle side); the inclinations of the head which precede are not made to them, but to the cross. Pictures painted on the wall of the altar are not incensed, but only pictures or statues placed on the altar (even though no relics are enclosed in them). If, besides the pictures of saints, relics are on the altar, the relics only, and not the pictures, are incensed. If at Christmastide the image of the divine Infant, and at Eastertide that of the risen Saviour, is exposed for public veneration in a prominent place on the altar (*principi loco super altari*), then it must likewise be incensed after the cross, *triplici ductu* (cf. S. R. C., February 15, 1873).

⁹ *Dirigatur, Domine, oratio mea* = ascendat, coelos penetret, tibi perfecte complaceat; *sicut incensum in Lege* dirigebatur ad te et fumando ascendit ac tibi prae ceteris sacrificiis placuit, non propter seipsum, sed ex devotione offerentis; *in conspectu tuo* referri potest ad utrumque horum, videl. ut oratio dirigatur in conspectu Dei sicut incensum; dicebatur autem incensum oblatio quae tota incendebatur et comburebatur ad Dei honorem, per quod designatur obsequium perfectorum, qui se totos mancipant Deo seque totaliter abnegant et relinquunt. *Elevatio manuum mearum* = exaltatio desideriorum

David, an exile in the wilderness and therefore far removed from the sanctuary in Jerusalem, begs the Lord to receive his prayerful pleading, made with uplifted hands, with the same favor as He received the evening incense and food-offering which terminated the daily sacrificial service. But well aware that God willingly answers man's prayer only when it proceeds from clean lips and a pure heart, he utters the additional petition: Guard and protect my mouth, close my lips, that I sin not with my tongue, and if through weakness I have sinned in the past, grant by Thy powerful grace that at least my heart may not swerve from the straight path, and that it may not, for the purpose of self-justification, still add, through excessive pride, excuse to excuse for sin. Incomparably more profound is the meaning which these words of the psalm have in the mouth of the incensing priest. While fragrant clouds of incense envelop the altar and ascend on high, the celebrant implores most fervently that his sacrificial prayers and those of the faithful may, in union with Christ's most holy sacrifice, ascend direct to the throne of God as an odor equally agreeable and precious, and that they may draw down the divine good pleasure upon those who are praying and sacrificing.¹⁰ To this petition the following one is also

meorum ad superna, directio operum meorum ad divina, erectio manuum mearum corporalium ex cordis elevatione procedens seu ordinata ad illam virtualiter sit coram te, Domine, *sacrificium vespertinum*, quatenus ita placeat tibi, sicut placebat sacrificium vespertinum seu ultimum quolibet die, quoniam videlicet offerebatur agnus ad vesperam, cujus immolatio erat figura immolationis Agni Dei sive Christi in cruce. Unde Christus in cruce pendens dicere poterat: "Elevatio manuum mearum sacrificium vespertinum." *Pone, Domine, custodiam ori meo* = da mihi gratiam custodiendi os meum, ne loquar vel taceam inordinate, sed, dum tempus est loquendi, prudenter atque utiliter loquar; dum vero tempus tacendi affuerit, moderate ac laudabiliter taceam. *Pone quoque ostium circumstantiae* = clausuram discretam *labiis meis* = ut tum et taliter labia mea ad loquendum aperiatur et ad tacendum recludam, quando, quo loco et qualiter oportet aut expedit, ut sim in utroque discretus et fructuosus. *Non declines* [Missale: *ut non declinet*] = non inclinari seu moveri permittas *cor meum in verba malitiae* = ut verba maligna effundat, videl. *ad excusandas* = excusatorie proferendas *excusationes in peccatis* = mihi objectis et a me perpetratis (Dion. Carthus., *Comment. in Ps.*, 140).

¹⁰ Declinante jam die in vespere Dominus in cruce animam deposuit recepturus, non amisit invitus. . . . Illud ergo est sacrificium vespertinum, passio Domini, crux Domini, oblatio victimae salutaris, holocaustum acceptum Deo. Illud sacrificium vespertinum fecit in resurrectione munus matutinum. Oratio ergo pure directa de corde fidei tanquam de ara sancta surgit incensum. Nihil est delectabilius odore Domini: sic oleant omnes qui credunt (S. August., *Enarrat. in Ps.*, 140:5).

appropriately joined, that the Lord would Himself, by His grace, assist those present to attain and preserve the interior disposition which is necessary to render prayer acceptable to God. If prayer is to ascend in a manner agreeable to God as a spiritual odor of sacrifice, then it should proceed from a heart and from lips that are not profaned by worldly and sinful conversation, or that have, at least, by a sincere, humble, and contrite confession of sins been purified anew. He who has sinned must beware of alleging all kinds of pretexts and plausible reasons excusing his evil conduct. It is very difficult to govern and control perfectly the unruly tongue, which sins easily and in many ways; hence the priest prays for the assistance of God's grace, to which, however, must be added one's energetic cooperation.

If, in the previous act of incensing, the petition for a gracious acceptance of the sacrifice was symbolized by the smoking incense, then the act of incensing the celebrant, clergy, and people is principally a symbolic expression of the desire that the divine mercy may sweetly and plentifully descend on all assisting at Mass. Inasmuch as the fragrant clouds of incense penetrate everywhere and from the altar spread throughout the entire house of God, they symbolize the sweet fruit of the sacrifice and of prayer: divine mercy and grace. Grace is dispensed from the sacrifice, first to the priest, then through his ministrations to the faithful. This idea is conveyed in the ceremony of incensing, first the celebrant, then the clergy, and finally the faithful.¹¹ At the same time the incensing of persons cooperating in and assisting at the sacrifice contains a lesson and an admonition to them ever to be mindful of their priestly dignity, of their nobility as members of Christ and temples of the Holy Ghost, that by their conduct they may spread everywhere the good odor of piety and godliness. That this incensing is also to be understood as a mark of honor, as a religious distinction in favor of all those who are incensed, is self-evident from what has been said of the signification and use of incense in general.

¹¹ Ritus incensandi eos, qui Missae assistunt in choro et in ecclesia, laudabilis et conveniens est: tum quia laudabile est, moderatum honorem exhibere iis, qui Missae deserviunt et assistunt, tanquam Christi fidelibus; tum ob significationem, quia pie exprimitur, virtutum odorem a Christo derivari ad fideles officio ministrorum secundum illud (II Cor. 2:14): "Odorem notitiae suae spargit per nos in omni loco." Et ideo, ut docet S. Thom. (IIIa, q. 83, a. 5 ad 2), undique thurificato altari, per quod Christus designatur, thurificantur omnes per ordinem (Quarti, *De bened.*, IV, sect. 1, dub. 3).

When the priest returns the censer to the deacon, he says: *Ascendat in nobis Dominus ignem sui amoris, et flammam aeternae caritatis. Amen.* ("May the Lord enkindle within us the fire of His love and the flame of eternal charity. Amen.") With these words the celebrant finally expresses the desire that Christ the Lord would, by the grace of His sacrifice, enkindle in everyone that inflamed and ardent love which is the real and deepest source whence rises aloft the offering of prayer.¹² And this wish the Lord will assuredly fulfill, since He Himself came to bring this pure, heavenly fire upon the earth; and He desires nothing more than that it be kindled in all hearts and that it continue to burn without ever being extinguished (Luke 12:49).

THE WASHING OF THE HANDS

1. Before the priest puts on the sacred vestments, he should wash his hands in the sacristy: profound reverence for the divine mysteries, which should be celebrated with perfectly clean hands, dictates this regulation. Already at this washing, which is based mainly on propriety and practical reasons, the priest prays for a higher purification, that is, for purity of soul as well as of body, that he be found fit worthily to serve the Lord.¹³ After the offering, or the incensing, of the sacrificial gifts, there is prescribed another washing of the hands, or rather, of the consecrated fingers. This washing dates from the earliest centuries, and its origin is traceable, not merely to reasons of necessity and propriety, but mainly to motives of higher consideration. After receiving in his hands the offerings of the people, the celebrant found it necessary to cleanse his hands again by washing them, especially the fingers which were to touch the Blessed Sacrament;¹⁴ nevertheless, the symbolical

¹² *Mystica sunt vas, thus, ignis, quia vase notatur: mens pia, thure preces, igne supernus amor.*

¹³ *Da, Domine, virtutem (strength of grace) manibus meis (to me at the washing of the hands) ad abstergendam omnem maculam: ut sine pollutione mentis et corporis valeam tibi servire (Missal. Roman.).* Prior Gerhoch of Reichersberg (d. 1169), explaining psalm 25, remarks that at the washing of the hands *in praeparatione divinae servitutis*, the following prayer should be recited: *Largire sensibus nostris, omnipotens Pater, ut sicut exterius abluuntur inquinamenta manuum, sic a te mundentur interius pollutiones mentium et crescat in nobis augmentum omnium sanctarum virtutum.*

¹⁴ *Consummata oblatione sacerdos lavat manus, et tergit cum mundissimo linteolo, quod sibi soli ad hoc est deputatum, cavens postea ne aliud quid*

signification of this action has ever been taken into consideration.¹⁵

The mystical sense of this rite of washing the hands is easy to comprehend. The hand has ever been considered the principal instrument, the privileged member, in which the power and activity of man are concentrated and by which, in a certain manner, the whole man is represented.¹⁶ The outward washing of the hands, or rather, of the fingertips, consequently symbolizes the interior purification and cleansing of the whole man from all that sullies the soul and body; the circumstance of washing in reality only the tips of the consecrated fingers (both thumbs and both forefingers), is usually supposed to signify that the officiating priest should cleanse his heart and preserve it undefiled from even the slightest faults, even from the shadow of sin.¹⁷ The Apostolic Constitutions (VIII, chap. 11) already present this washing of the hands as "a symbol of the purity of souls dedicated to God." St. Cyril of Jerusalem says that the washing of the hands evidently "designates the purity and blamelessness of our actions."¹⁸ But "who can say: My heart is clean, I am pure from sin?" (Prov. 20:9.) For in the sight of God no man living shall be justified (Ps. 142:2). And yet the priest should appear at the altar for the Holy Sacrifice holy and spotless, pure and blameless, and without blemish in soul or body. Now, the further the holy action proceeds, the nearer the most holy moment

tangat cum digitis, quibus Domini corpus tangendum est (*Constit. Hirsaug. s. Gengenbac.* [eleventh century], I, chap. 84). Aliqua pretiosa tractare non consuevimus nisi manibus ablutis; unde indecens videtur quod ad tantum sacramentum aliquis accedat manibus etiam corporaliter inquinatis (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 5 ad 1).

¹⁵ Profound reverence for the holy mysteries made the washing of the hands a necessity at this place so long as the people were accustomed to bring offerings. Lavat sacerdos manus suas more priorum sacerdotum, ut extersae sint a tactu communium rerum atque terreno pane. Quae lavatio manus munditiam cordis significat per lacrymas et compunctiones (*Amalar., De eccles. off.*, III, chap. 19). Quod ideo ab antiquis Patribus decretum fertur, ut pontifex, qui coelestem panem accepturus est, a terreno pane, quem jam a laicis accepit, manus lavando expurget (*Ordo Rom. IV*, n. 9).

¹⁶ Ablutio manuum sufficit ad significandam perfectam mundationem; cum enim manus sit organum organorum, omnia opera attribuuntur manibus (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 5 ad 1).

¹⁷ Cum sacerdos manus suas alias [i.e. ante Missam] laverit (ut intelligatur, quod sit a gravioribus mundus), nunc solum lavat digitorum extremitates, significans desiderium se purificandi etiam a culpis levioribus, praecipue si in aliquas esset lapsus post Missam inchoatam, et hoc spiritu lotio haec adhibetur (*De Ponte, De christ. hom. perfect.*, IV, tr. II, chap. 12, § 1).

¹⁸ *Catech. mystag.*, V, n. 2.

of consecration approaches, the more intensely does the priest feel his unworthiness, the more his desire for greater purity is increased. As an expression of this sentiment and disposition, he now washes his hands just as at the beginning of Mass, at the foot of the altar, he cleansed and prepared his soul by a contrite acknowledgment of his guilt.

2. The verses of the psalm that he recites in the meantime, express clearly the more profound meaning of the liturgical washing: the priest openly avows his purpose of celebrating the holy sacrifice with the utmost purity and devotion of heart (Ps. 25:6-12).

Lavabo inter innocentes manus meas: et circumdabo altare tuum, Domine.

Ut audiam vocem laudis: et enarrem universa mirabilia tua.

Domine, dilexi decorem domus tue: et locum habitationis gloriæ tuæ.

Ne perdas cum impiis, Deus, animam meam: et cum viris sanguinum vitam meam.

In quorum manibus iniquitates sunt: dextera eorum repleta est muneribus.

Ego autem in innocentia mea ingressus sum: redime me et miserere mei.

Pes meus stetit in directo: in ecclesiis benedicam te, Domine.

Gloria Patri.

I will wash my hands among the innocent: and I will compass Thy altar, O Lord.

That I may hear the voice of Thy praise, and tell of all Thy wondrous works.

I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth.

Take not away my soul, O God, with the wicked, nor my life with bloody men.

In whose hands are iniquities: their right hand is filled with gifts.

But as for me, I have walked in my innocence: redeem me, and have mercy on me.

My foot hath stood in the direct way: in the churches I will bless Thee, O Lord.

Glory be to the Father.

Among the innocent I will wash my hands. How can the priest pray thus? Does he not live in the midst of the world, where by reason of human frailty, carelessness, and attachment to earthly things, the luster of the soul's purity is in a greater or less degree most easily tarnished? Such is, in truth, the case, and a good priest feels convinced of it; but he is also daily intent on destroying within his heart the love of the world, sensuality, and all selfishness, in

order that his soul may be purified more and more in the fountain of the precious blood of Jesus and by tears of penance and sorrow. Hence he may well protest that in his innocence he would wash his hands,¹⁹ and thus with pure hands advance to the altar. Yes, it behooves those hands to be clean which he is to raise in supplication and prayer to God; clean must be the hands that are to touch, offer, and dispense the most holy, spotless victim.²⁰

He loves the pomp and grandeur of the house of God; his heart clings to the place where the Lord dwells in His Eucharistic glory. He is consumed with zeal for the house of the Lord; he adorns it as worthily and as splendidly as possible, since the King of Glory does not disdain to dwell so silently near us and among us. The place where the Saviour has built His throne of grace is, in this wide, dreary world, the garden and favorite resort of the priest; thither does he flee to find consolation for his soul, peace and refreshment amid the woes, miseries, and turmoil of life. At the foot of the altar there flows for him a bright and clear stream of pure joys; he there spends the most delightful hours; he gathers there the most precious graces.

It is his care to lead a faultless and godly life; he seeks and cultivates an interior and familiar intercourse with the Lord "in the privacy of His tabernacle of grace"; he has nothing in common with a world forgetful of God, and he shuns its ways. Hence, abounding in confidence in God, he may beg of the Lord to preserve his soul and his life from the perdition which befalls all the godless, who through deceit and violence practice all manner of wickedness, trampling upon justice and the rights of their fellow men. Blameless and without stain he endeavors to live; hence he hopes that "deliverance and mercy" may be his share.

¹⁹ Dicat devotus ac dignus Christi sacerdos: *Lavabo*, quando at celebrationem accessurus sum, *inter innocentes*, i.e. cum sanctis ac veris sacerdotibus N. L., quorum est nulli nocere, sed verbis et exemplis cunctis prodesse, *manus meas*, non solum corporales, quibus Christi sacramenta tractabo, sed etiam affectus, cogitationes et opera: istas lavabo in confessione, quoniam teste Scriptura omnia in confessione lavantur (Dion. Carthus., *In Ps.*, 25).

²⁰ Quodsi patena et calix non solum esse debent pretiosa, ex auro scilicet vel argento, sed etiam mundissima a quocunque pulvere et macula, eo quod sanctissimum corpus et sanguinem Salvatoris contingant, quanto erit magis rationi consentaneum, sacerdotes habere manus mundas a pravis operibus, linguam a verbis ineptis, et pectus suum a malis desideriis et cogitationibus, et sese purificare ab omni immunditia, etiam valde parva (De Ponte, *loc. cit.*, chap. 6, § 1).

Confident in God and assured of being heard, the priest, full of gratitude, exclaims: "My foot hath stood in the direct way," that is, snatched from the abyss of danger and sufferings, I stand on a firm and safe plain, or I dwell in the direct paths of grace and virtue leading to God. Both are gifts of the Lord; hence he promises to extol His favors and goodness in union with the pious all the days of his life.²¹

²¹ Ecce ex psalmo isto sententioso et splendido audivimus, quid ad christianum perfectum pertineat. Si igitur aliquid horum in nobis invenimus, Deo gratias referamus et ad perfectionem feramur. Si autem praedictae perfectiones viri perfecti longe a nobis sunt, ingemiscamus, emendemus atque juxta verbum gloriosi Apostoli cum timore et tremore nostram operemur salutem (Dion. Carthus. [d. 1471], *In Ps.*, 25).

CHAPTER XXX

THE CONCLUDING PRAYERS OF THE OFFERTORY

Suscipe, Sancta Trinitas

AFTER the washing of the hands, which is performed at the Epistle side of the altar ¹ the priest returns to the middle of the altar; full of confidence he raises his eyes to the crucifix, then lowers them again; he then bows with humility and reverence, places his joined hands on the altar, and recites in his suppliant posture ² the following short oblation prayer:

Suscipe, santa Trinitas, hanc oblationem, quam tibi offerimus ob memoriam passionis, resurrectionis et ascensionis Jesu Christi Domini nostri: et in honorem beatae Mariae semper Virginis, et beati Joannis Baptistae, et sanctorum Apostolorum Petri et Pauli, et istorum, et omnium sanctorum: ut illis proficiat ad honorem, nobis autem ad salutem: et illi pro nobis intercedere dignentur in coelis, quorum memoriam agimus in terris. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Receive, O Holy Trinity, this oblation, which we offer unto Thee, in memory of the passion, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in honor of the blessed Mary ever Virgin, of blessed John the Baptist, of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, of these and of all the saints, that it may be to their honor and to our salvation; and may they vouchsafe to intercede for us in heaven, whose memory we celebrate on earth. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

¹ On this side, during the Middle Ages, there was often attached to the altar the sacrarium (*piscina, lavacrum, lavatorium, perfusorium*), which served not only to receive the remains of holy objects become useless, for instance, ashes, and to secure them against desecration, but, at the same time, answered for the washing of the hands of the priest at the Offertory and after Holy Communion.

² Quod sacerdos manus interdum jungit et se inclinatur, est suppliciter et

In this prayer³ the previous oblation of the host and chalice is not simply repeated or continued, but developed and perfected by the incorporation of new aspects. While the first two oblation prayers were directed to the Father, and the invocation was made to the Holy Ghost, the Church now turns to the Holy Trinity and offers to it the sacrifice prepared on the altar. Host and chalice are here jointly offered, and that under a new aspect: it contains a short allusion to the relation which the Eucharistic sacrifice bears to the mysteries of the life of Christ, as well as to the saints of heaven.

The Mass is celebrated in memory of the entire work of the redemption, the principal parts of which are here expressly set forth, as they are immediately after the Elevation. In His passion⁴ the immaculate victim was immolated; in His resurrection He was glorified, and in His ascension He was raised to the throne of God, in order to effect our redemption and to perfect our salvation. On the altar not only the sorrowful, but also the glorious mysteries of the life of Christ are represented and renewed. There Christ, who was dead and now lives eternally in heaven (Apoc. 1:18), offers Himself.

It is self-evident that the Sacrifice of the Mass can be offered only to the triune God,⁵ not to the saints; the offering of it, however, not only serves to render supreme adoration and glory to God, but it also serves as an honorable commemoration (*in honorem*)⁶ of

humiliter orantis, et designat humilitatem et obedientiam Christi, ex qua passus est (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 5 ad 5).

³ During the Middle Ages these prayers were often somewhat differently expressed, and were recited neither in all the churches nor at all Masses. In the eleventh century they were said, according to Micrologus, *non ex aliquo Ordine sed ex ecclesiastica consuetudine* (*De eccles. observ.*, chap. 11).

⁴ Quoties celebratio corporis et sanguinis Domini agitur, non equidem Christum iterum occidimus, sed mortem ejus in ipsa et per ipsam celebrationem memoramus, estque ipsa celebratio passionis Christi quaedam commemoratio. Commemoratio autem passionis Christi ipsam passionem significat. Celebratio igitur corporis et sanguinis Domini passionis Christi est signum (*Guitmund, De corp. et sang. Dom. verit.*, II).

⁵ Omne cujuslibet honorificentiae et sacrificii salutaris obsequium et Patri et Filio et Spiritui sancto, h. e. sanctae Trinitati ab Ecclesia catholica pariter exhibetur (S. Fulgent., *Ad Monim.*, II, chap. 5).

⁶ The latest edition of the missal, approved by S. R. C., correctly gives the following reading: *in honorem*. According to the sense and form these words constitute a parallel clause to the preceding *ob memoriam* and are afterward paraphrased by the formula: *quorum memoriam agimus. In honorem*, there-

the saints, whose memory we celebrate at the altar. By an ecclesiastical ordinance, which dates back even to apostolic times, frequent mention is made of the saints during the celebration of Mass; by this, great honor and distinction are evidently shown them, since they are remembered at the altar and their names are honorably mentioned at the sacrifice. This we intend to express by saying that we offer this sacrifice "in their honor" (*in honorem*). But this prayer further says that the sacrifice is offered "to their honor." These words, indeed, signify the fruit accruing to the saints in heaven through the Holy Sacrifice; the Mass is also offered to obtain for the saints the spread of their veneration on earth. We therefore offer the sacrifice and pray that the saints may be ever more and more honored and glorified on earth.⁷ This means that we offer sacrifice and pray, not so much in behalf of the saints, as for ourselves; for it is to our own benefit and advantage if greater honor be shown to the saints. Inasmuch as we honor and glorify the saints during and through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we advance thereby our own welfare (*nobis ad salutem*), since in this way we obtain for ourselves the powerful intercession of the saints (*illi pro*

fore, = *memoriam venerantes*, as in the Canon, and is not tautological with the following: *ut illis proficiat ad honorem*, as is asserted by many following Lebrun, who gives the preference to the other reading, *in honore*, and would have it restored. We remark, on the contrary, that both formulas, *in honorem* and *in honore*, in vulgar Latin can have and often do have the same meaning. But in this prayer the reading *in honorem* is to be preferred, because it harmonizes more beautifully with the parallel *ob memoriam*. The sense of this expression, *in honorem*, is clearly paraphrased in the Postcommunion of the vigil of All Saints: *Sacramentis, Domine, et gaudiis optatae celebratis expletis: quaesumus, ut eorum precibus adjuvemur, quorum recordationibus exhibentur*. This controversy has been settled by a decree of the S. R. C. (dub. III): In Ordine Missae post Lavabo in Oratione "Suscipe sancta Trinitas" plures recentiores Rubricistae graves dicunt loco "in honorem B. M. semper V." esse legendum "in honore B. M." etc. Estne horum sententia sequenda et correctio hoc in loco Missalis facienda? R. Ad III. Legendum: in honorem (May 25, 1877).

⁷ Sancti orationibus nostris non indigent, pro eo quod cum sint perfecte beati, omnia eis ad vota succedunt, sed nos potius eorum orationibus indigemus, quos, cum miseri simus, undique mala multa perturbant. Unde quod in plerisque orationibus continetur, prosit videl. vel proficiat huic sancto vel tali talis oblatio ad gloriam vel honorem, ita sane debet intelligi, ut ad hoc prosit, quod magis ac magis a fidelibus glorificetur in terris aut etiam honoretur, licet plerique reputent non indignum, Sanctorum gloriam (sc. accidentalem) usque ad iudicium augmentari ac Ecclesiam interim sane posse augmentum glorificationis eorum optare (Innocent. III, *Regest.*, V, ep. 121).

nobis intercedere dignentur in coelis). For, since we celebrate upon earth the memory of the citizens of heaven, we would thereby incline them to be more favorably disposed to interest themselves in our behalf with God. Moreover, the blessed rejoice when we offer Mass to God as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving in their name, that is, when we offer it to God to praise and thank Him for all the benefits, for the grace and the glory, they have received from Him.

The saints mentioned by name are the same as those mentioned in the Confiteor, with the exception of the archangel Michael, who, however, in Solemn Mass is named immediately before the blessing of the incense. Then is said: *et istorum et omnium Sanctorum* ("and of these and of all the saints"). Who are to be understood by "these" (saints)? According to the present context of the prayer, the most simple and natural meaning is to refer the demonstrative pronoun (*isti*) to the previously mentioned saints, that is, to regard it as comprising them all, so that the translation should be: "of the saints just mentioned and of all the saints." Formerly it may have been a word of the rubrics and may have signified that in this place still other saints may or should be mentioned, for example, those whose relics repose in the altar or are exposed upon it, or whose feast was celebrated, or who were honored as special patrons. But the purpose of this Eucharistic veneration "to their honor and our salvation," is accomplished "through Christ our Lord," the one Mediator, who crowns the blessed in glory and leads us to felicity.⁸

THE *Orate Fratres* AND THE SECRETA

1. The purer and the more perfect the disposition, recollection, and fervor of the priest and of the faithful present, so much the more acceptable does the sacrifice rise from their hands to the throne of God. In order to support and inflame each other mutually, the celebrant and the people uniting with him in the sacrifice keep up an active and lively intercourse with each other; hence the priest frequently salutes the people and invites them to pray with him, and the people join in through their representative, the acolyte or choir, in the priest's prayer. After the *Suscipe sancta Trinitas* has been concluded, the priest again summons all the faithful to unite

⁸ *Quidquid Sanctorum tuorum meritis adhibemus, ad tuam laudem recurrit et gloriam, qui in eorum semper es virtute mirabilis (Sacrament. Leon.).*

with him in common prayer, in order that their common sacrifice may be so much the more favorably received by God. The priest kisses the altar, rises, and with downcast eyes turns toward the people, extending his hands and again joining them, and says, *Orate fratres* ("Brethren pray"), in a somewhat audible voice (*voce aliquantulum elata*), so as to be heard by the acolyte and those standing near by; then, while again turning to the altar, he continues in silence: *ut meum ac vestrum sacrificium acceptabile fiat apud Deum Patrem omnipotentem* ("that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty").⁹

The priest here addresses all the faithful as "brethren,"¹⁰ regardless of their state or sex. By their regeneration in baptism all Christians are children of God and of the Church; they form one great holy family of God, and they are all brethren one of another, to whom it is granted to say: "Our Father, who art in heaven." "All you are brethren" and "one is your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 23:8 f.), says our Saviour. As brethren, all Christians should, above all at the Eucharistic sacrifice and communion, have but one heart and one soul, and pray for and with one another.

⁹ *Sacerdos versus ad populum orare moneat, conversusque ad altare secretam orationem dicat* (Joann. Abrincens., *Lib. de offic. eccles.*). Erectus presbyter populum hortatur ad orandum, et ipse post finitam Secretam, Praefationem orditur in Canonem (Microl., *De eccles. observat.*, chap. 11). Accordingly, in the eleventh century this invitation to prayer was in general use; the oldest *Ordines Romani* have for it only the short formula, *Orate* (*Ordo II*, n. 9) or *Orate pro me* (*Ordo VI*, n. 10), while in *Ordo XIV* it runs thus: *Orate fratres*, and so forth. Since the words *ut meum ac vestrum . . .* form only an explanatory clause, that is, assign more minutely the purpose and object of the prayer (*Orate*), they were formerly not recited at all (as is still the case among the Dominicans and Carthusians), and later on only in silence.

¹⁰ This mode of expression is genuinely Christian. *Fratres*, ἀδελφοί, *viri fratres*, *brethren*, *fraternitas*, ἀδελφότης, brotherhood; in the mouth of the apostles and Fathers these terms frequently designate the members of the Church, who were regenerated by the same sacrament (baptism) and are nourished at the same table (the Eucharist), and are united with one another by the bond of the same faith, hope, and charity (cf. Justin. Mart., *Apolog.*, I, chap. 65). *Omnes qui jam de hoc mundo recesserunt sive qui adhuc versantur in mundo sive qui futuri sunt usque ad finem saeculi credentes in Christo fratres esse veraciter constat, utpote una baptismatis regeneratione in Christo renatos, unius matris Ecclesiae uberibus educatos, unius fidei vinculo tanquam dulcissimae fraternitatis affinitate connexos, ad unam eandemque coelestis regni haereditatem ab eodem piissimo Patre Deo pia adoptione vocatos. Debemus itaque omnia quae nobis accidunt fraterno affectu invicem communicare, i.e. in adversis pariter contristari et in prosperis communiter congratulari* (Pseudo-Alcuin, chap. 18).

In addressing the faithful the priest says: "my sacrifice and yours." The Eucharist is the sacrifice of the whole Church; it is not exclusively the priest's sacrifice, but the property of the faithful also.¹¹ In different ways and in different degrees they participate in the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice, while the priest alone, in their name and for their benefit, completes the sacrificial action itself.¹² Thus priest and people are at the altar bound together in a communion of sacrifice; and they offer not only the host and chalice, but themselves also.

In compliance with the invitation of the priest, the acolyte¹³ answers in the name of the faithful:

Suscipiat Dominus sacrificium
de manibus tuis ad laudem et
gloriam nominis sui, ad utilitatem
quoque nostram totiusque Eccle-
siae suae sanctae.

May the Lord receive the
sacrifice from thy hands, to the
praise and glory of His name, to
our benefit, and to that of all
His holy Church.

The priest answers in a low voice: *Amen* ("So be it"), whereby he expresses his assent to the devout desires of the faithful.

Although the faithful unite in offering the Holy Sacrifice, still they make mention here only of the act of the celebrant, inasmuch as they pray that the Lord would favorably receive this sacrifice from his hands. This is proper, for it indicates that the priest, as the servant and organ of Christ, alone performs the sacrificial act itself; for only his hands are anointed and consecrated to offer sacrifice.

¹¹ This idea is often expressed in the *Secreta*, for example: *Suscipe munera populorum tuorum, munera exsultantis Ecclesiae; accepta tibi sit sacratae plebis oblatio*. The expressions *munera, dona, oblationes, fidelium preces cum oblationibus hostiarum*, etc., in the original and actual sense referred to the material oblations of the people; they are still entirely true, although their signification has changed.

¹² *Merito sacerdos ad populum dicit: meum ac vestrum sacrificium. Et laudandus esses, mi sacerdos, qui facta reflexione super ejusmodi verba, ex vera humilitate cogitares, esse complures e laicis praesentes, qui majori pietate ac puritate animi Deo offerunt hoc ss. sacrificium, quam tu, minister ordinarius et insignitus caractere sacerdotali. Sed haec in aurem (Sporer, *Theolog. sacrament.*, II, chap. 5, sect. 2, § 4, n. 3).*

¹³ As the rubrics give no precise rule, many rubricists insist that the server should answer at once; others, on the contrary, maintain that he should not do so until the priest has turned to the altar and finished his formula. The *Suscipiat* is of later origin and is not recited on Good Friday. Before the revision of the missal, in the sixteenth century, various formulas were in use (cf. Martene, *De antiq. Eccles. ritibus*, I, iv, 7).

Only from priestly hands, which exhale the mystical perfume of the chalice and the host, does the sacrifice ascend agreeably before God's holy face.¹⁴ This prayer expresses the object and purpose of the Sacrifice of the Mass. On the one hand, the sacrifice is offered for the honor and praise of God, to adore and glorify His infinite majesty; on the other, it is offered to be for us and the whole Church an inexhaustible source of all goods and gifts.¹⁵

2. The *Orate fratres* here takes the place of the customary *Oremus* and introduces us to the prayer called the *Secreta*. As this was, in ancient times, the only oblation prayer in the Roman rite, the *Oremus* at the beginning of the Offertory answered as an introductory formula.¹⁶ The prayer received the name, *Secreta*, from the manner of its recitation: from time immemorial¹⁷ it has been

¹⁴ Ut sacerdos pro causa, pro qua celebrat, exaudiri mereatur, taliter vivere sicque Deo dignissimo familiaris et carus esse conetur, ut mediator idoneus inter Deum et populum esse possit. Est nempe sacerdos inter Deum et populum medius, quoniam ea, quae populi sunt, scil. preces, vota et dona, repraesentat et immolat Deo. Ea quoque, quae Dei sunt, ut puta gratiam et sacramenta, impetrat, dispensat seu tribuit populo. Debet ergo sacerdos populo in omnibus esse exemplaris et Deo dilectus ac familiaris (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 4).

¹⁵ Sicut gloriam divinae potentiae munera pro Sanctis oblata testantur: sic nobis effectum, Domine, tuae salvationis impendant (*Secr. in festo ss. Mart. Viti, Modesti atque Cresc.*, June 15). Simul Christus semel se in cruce visibiliter obtulit Deo Patri pro nostra reconciliatione, gratia et salute, ita instituit se quotidie in hoc sacramento invisibiliter pro eisdem causis usque in finem saeculi immolandum, consecrandum, tractandum, sumendum, edendum ad maximum et excellentissimum Dei honorem, laudem et gloriam, totiusque suae ad nos dilectionis, pietatis, munificentiae commemorationem et regratiationem, ob multiplices quoque animarum nostrarum profectus, opes et gratias, ineffabiliter grandes et copiosas (Dion. Carthus., *Elementat. theolog.*, prop. 135).

¹⁶ "Before the *Secreta* some priests say: *Dominus vobiscum*, *Oremus*, others do not, after saying it before the Offertory, and from then on the prayer is continued without interruption" (Berthold *Tewtsch Rational*, chap. 8, § 6).

¹⁷ The former customary designation (for example, in the *Gregorian Sacramentary*), *Oratio super oblata* (sc. *panem et vinum*), only makes its oblation feature more striking, and does not make it apparent whether this prayer was originally (up to the ninth century) recited aloud or in a low tone. In the Ambrosian Ritual it is always said aloud. Beletth writes: *Secreta dicitur, quia secretae pronuntiatur, cum tamen olim alta voce diceretur* (*Ration.*, chap. 44). *Compositio sacrificio sacerdos orationem sub silentio recitat* (Honor. Augustod., chap. 40). "While the Offertory is sung, the priest reads the little Canon, called the silent Mass or the secret of the Mass, which is recited in a low tone until the Preface, especially the prayer *Secreta*. The great Canon is likewise considered a low Mass, before the words of consecration, which are said in perfect silence and with marked secrecy" (Berthold, *op. cit.*, chap. 8, § 2).

said in an inaudible voice (*secreto*). Justly, therefore, is *Secreta* translated "silent prayer" or "silent dedicatory prayer."¹⁸

In regard to their construction, number, succession, and concluding form, the *Secreta* harmonize perfectly with the Collects which are said before the Epistle, but as to their contents the *Secreta* are entirely distinct from them. The Collects and *Secreta* are both prayers of petition, but the object prayed for is usually different.

The sacrifice is not referred to in the prayers of the Collects, which but ask some special grace connected with the mystery of the day; the *Secreta*, on the contrary, are oblation prayers, prayers that contain almost the same thoughts as those expressed in the *Offertorium*. Throughout the whole oblation rite, and hence in the *Secreta* also, are two closely connected petitions: the petition that the sacrificial gifts prepared on the altar be accepted, blessed, dedicated, sanctified, and consecrated;¹⁹ then the petition that the abundant and manifold graces of the Sacrifice be bestowed.²⁰ Sometimes both petitions are united, sometimes each is separately presented; frequently God is implored for reconciliation, so that the propitiatory feature holds a prominent place. But this does not sufficiently characterize the contents of the *Secreta*. They belong to the changeable parts of the liturgy of the Mass; they are in intimate connection with the day's celebration, which has an influence on their form. The petitions contained in the *Secreta* are inspired by the day's special sacrificial celebration and in various ways are influenced, suggested, and supported by it. Hence in the *Secreta* the spirit of the mysteries of the ecclesiastical year are found incorporated and

¹⁸ *Secreta* ideo nominatur, quia secreto (*silently*) dicitur. . . . Quod omnibus licet simul agere, i.e. gratias referre Deo, hoc acclamatur; quod ad solum sacerdotem pertinet, i.e. immolatio panis et vini, secreto agitur (Amarlar., *De eccles. offic.*, III, chap. 20). This signification of the name is found throughout the Middle Ages. Utterly without foundation is the assertion that the prayers in question are called *Secretae eo quod super materiam ex fidelium oblationibus separatam et secretam recitantur*. The name *Arcana* also indicates the low tone.

¹⁹ *Secreta* dicitur, eo quod secretam orationem dat episcopus super oblationem, ut velit respicere Deus super oblationem propositam, et deputare eam futurae consecrationi. Notum est enim, ideo secretam orationem facere super oblatam, ut possit ex ea fieri corpus Domini (*idem.*, *Ecloga in Ord. Rom.*, n. 24).

²⁰ Sacerdos orat voce submissa, petens a Deo effectum et fructum acceptationemque oblationis exhibitae, benedictionem quoque oblatae materiae, sicut patere potest consideranti diversas *Secretas* (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 14).

blended in the most beautiful harmony and variety with oblation petitions, which generally concern the same object. In spite of their great similarity in general, the *Secreta* are not uniform, but present in their arrangement and contents the most attractive and agreeable variety. The fruitful and inexhaustible eloquence of the heavenly wisdom of the Church is herein clearly manifested.

The *Secreta* for Pentecost is as follows:

Munera, quaesumus Domine, oblata sanctifica: et corda nostra sancti Spiritus illustratione emunda.

Sanctify, we beseech Thee, O Lord, these oblations, and purify our hearts by the light of the Holy Ghost.

The *Secreta* for the feast of Corpus Christi:

Ecclesiae tuae, quaesumus Domine, unitatis et pacis propitius dona concede: quae sub oblatiis muneribus mystice designantur.

Mercifully grant Thy Church, O Lord, we beseech Thee, the gifts of unity and peace, which are mystically represented in these offerings.

The *Secreta* for the feast of St. Philip Neri:

Sacrificiis praesentibus, quaesumus Domine, intende placatus: et praesta, ut illo nos igne Spiritus sanctus inflammet, quo beati Philippi cor mirabiliter penetravit.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, to look favorably on this present sacrifice and to grant that the Holy Ghost may inflame us with that fire, wherewith in a wonderful manner He filled the heart of the blessed Philip.

After the priest has recited the *Secreta* reverently in silence, in ending the last prayer he raises his voice, saying aloud or singing: *per omnia saecula saeculorum* ("world without end"). To this majestic conclusion the acolyte or choir answers in the name of the people, *Amen*, that is, may what the priest has implored in secret of God be granted and fulfilled in every respect.²¹

²¹ *Officium, quod nos dicimus Offerenda, ab illo loco inchoatur, ubi sacerdos dicit Dominus vobiscum, et finitur, ubi excelsa voce dicit Per omnia saecula saeculorum. Ideo excelsa novissimum profertur, ut audiatur a populo et populi responsione (sc. Amen) confirmetur oratio (Amalarius, De eccles. offic., III, chap. 19). Sacerdos excitat attentionem populi dicendo: Dominus vobiscum et exspectat assensum dicentium: Amen. Et ideo etiam in his quae secrete dicuntur, publice praemittit: Dominus vobiscum et subjungit: Per omnia saecula saeculorum (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 4 ad 6).*

When the priest sings, the faithful can assuredly do nothing better than to assent to the priest's words, even if they do not understand them, than to pray for what the priest prays, even if they do not exactly know what it is. This was done by the first Christians, especially at the time when the liturgy was handed down only by mere vocal tradition, and even for a long time after; they restricted themselves to answering "so be it" after the priest had prayed in silence, thus making an act of faith, really sublime in its simplicity; as if they said: we know not what is best for us, but God knows it; now the Church has prayed, for in her name and by her commission the priest has prayed; the Church has placed on his lips the prayers which he has recited, we assent thereto, whatsoever they may contain. We can desire nothing better than what the Church desires, we can say nothing better than what the Church utters, hence "so be it."

SECTION III

The Consecration

CHAPTER XXXI

THE PREFACE

THE Eucharistic celebration advances: we are drawing nigh to the most important part, the sacrificial action proper. The rite thus far explained was already exceedingly grand, holy, full of mystery; yet incomparably more sublime, more glorious, and more venerable are the prayers and actions that constitute the Consecration, the golden center of the whole liturgy of the Mass. First comes the Preface, which by its animated and grand soaring forms a worthy transition and introduction to the Canon, the innermost and mysterious sanctuary of the liturgical sacrificial celebration.

Holy Scripture informs us that Jesus Christ “gave thanks” to His heavenly Father before consecrating the bread and wine, before changing them into His body and blood. Who could fail to understand, even at the first glance, that the Church here also follows the example of her divine Lord and Master, in that she places before the act of consecration the Preface, an incomparably elevated chant of praise and thanksgiving to God? For the Preface bears the closest relation to the Consecration, with which liturgically it forms a whole.¹ As its position indicates and its name signifies,² the Preface

¹ The *Sacrament. Gelas.* has the inscription, *Incipit Canon actionis*, not after, but already before the Preface. The pronouncing of the words of consecration, the *εὐχαριστεῖν* in an eminent sense, forms the crown and conclusion of the *εὐχαριστία*, that is, of the liturgical thanksgiving contained in the Preface.

² Haec pars Missae vulgato nomine *Praefatio* dicitur, i.e. praelocutio ante

is the prologue, or the introduction, to the Canon, the prelude to and preparation for the accomplishment of the mystical action of sacrifice.

To trace the origin of the Preface³ and its introduction into the sacrificial rite, one must go back to the days of the apostles; this apostolic origin of the Preface is evident from the testimony of the Fathers, and especially from the most ancient liturgies, not a single one of which can be found without a Preface. The oriental liturgies have had from the beginning until the present time but a single Preface. In the West, on the contrary, the number of Prefaces, even at an early date, increased to such a degree that before the time of St. Gregory the Great almost every formula of Mass contained a separate Preface.⁴ It is probable that St. Gregory himself reduced this large number to ten. Under Urban II (1088 to 1099) the Preface for feasts of the Blessed Virgin was added.⁵ Four prefaces

praecipuam orationem, sacrorum mysteriorum consummativam et in Canone contentam. Ut enim in principio operis ipsorum auctorum praefationes ponuntur, introductoriae ad totam operis materiam intelligendam, et in orationibus oratorum prooemia sunt et exordia ante causae narrationem, quibus captetur auditorum benevolentia reddanturque attentis ad ea, quae dicturus est orator: ita, si magna licet componere parvis, in hoc divinissimo celebrando sacrificio haec oratio quasi prologus quidam est et praelocutio sequentis Canonis, captans ipsius Dei in nos benevolentiam. In ea enim prae loquitur sacerdos gratias et laudes Deo, ut praeparatus hujusmodi laudatione aptius possit ac melius ad consecrandum Christi corpus pervenire (Clichtov., *Eucidator. ecclesiast.*, III).

³ In the Mozarabic Missal it is called *inlatio* (*illatio*), either *ob donorum illationem seu hostiae oblationem* (Du Cange), or *quia ex verbis fidelium infert sacerdos, vere dignum et justum esse, Deo omnipotenti gratias agere, ipsumque laudare et praedicare* (Bona). In the old Gallican rite it is inscribed *Contestatio* or *Immolatio*, *quia in ea sacerdos audita voce populi vel cleri sive ministri asserentis dignum et justum esse Deo gratias agere, contestatur veram esse hanc populi assertionem; tum solemnem gratiarum actionem se et fideles disponit ad tremenda mysteria, quibus Christi corpus immolatur* (Bona, *Rer. liturg.*, II, x, 1). *Inlatio* and *Immolatio*, in all probability, were originally designations (titles) for the entire central portion of the Mass, which commences with the Preface and includes the sacrificial action.

⁴ The *Sacrament. Leon.* contains 267 Prefaces, although those from January to April are wanting; of the *Gelasian.* only 56 still remain. Also from the time of St. Gregory the Great until the thirteenth century, it was customary to add to the missal numerous Prefaces, but usually only in the Appendix. Albinus (Alcuinus) *Praefationes etsi non Gregorianas, ecclesiasticae tamen celebritati idoneas, collegit* (Microl., chap. 60).

⁵ According to the statement of a contemporary writer, it was sung for the first time at a Solemn Pontifical Mass by Pope Urban, during a synod held

have been added recently. Thus the Roman Missal now has fifteen prefaces.

According to their text and melody, the Prefaces belong to the most solemn, sublime, and touching chants of the Church; they are the purest poetry, flowing from the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The Church is the divinely enlightened proclaimer of the Eternal, she is the bride of Christ ever in communication with Him, and this communication is a never-ending nuptial celebration in sacrifice and prayer. Therefore speech becomes on her lips a poem, a canticle, having throughout a poetical feature; her sacred poetry is also a sacred chant. In explaining the Preface, we distinguish three parts: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. While the introduction always remains the same, the main part or body of the Preface changes according to the feasts and times of the ecclesiastical year.

1. The introduction of the Preface. The introduction consists of three versicles with corresponding responses.

V. Dominus vobiscum.	V. The Lord be with you.
R. Et cum spiritu tuo.	R. And with thy spirit.
V. Sursum corda.	V. Lift up your hearts.
R. Habemus ad Dominum.	R. We lift them up unto the Lord.
V. Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro.	V. Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God.
R. Dignum et justum est.	R. It is meet and just.

The usual salutation and invocation of blessing, *Dominus vobiscum*, also introduces the Preface. Probably nowhere is this invocation more opportune than here, when the accomplishment of the holy mysteries is so near at hand. Priest and faithful at this moment greatly require the help of the Lord and assistance from on high.⁶ Only when the heavenly breath of grace pervades the soul sweetly and powerfully, is the soul enabled to rid itself of earthly defilement, to raise itself above the baseness of earth and soar upward, in order to join in the chant of praise of the blessed spirits. Who will give

at Guastalla (1094). Its composition is sometimes attributed to Pope Urban II himself, sometimes to St. Bruno, founder of the Carthusians.

⁶ *Dominus vobiscum*: tunc enim praesentia Dei et illuminatio gratiae ejus tanto amplius necessaria est, quanto ea, quae restant, magis ardua sunt (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 14).

me the wing of the dove, that I may fly and be at rest (Ps. 54:7) in undisturbed contemplation of the sacrificial mysteries enacted on the altar? God only, from whom every good gift cometh. Recollection of mind and fervor of devotion are gifts of the Lord. Why does not the priest now turn toward the people when saluting them? After the *Orate fratres* he has, like Moses on Mount Sinai, entered into the holy cloud,⁷ and therefore he henceforth communes "face to face" with the Lord; henceforth he has eyes and mind directed only to the altar, and the faithful will behold his countenance again only after the marvels of Consecration and Communion have been consummated.⁸

At the salutation, *Dominus vobiscum*, the priest reminds the people to raise their hearts,⁹ and from the faithful comes the answer and assurance to the priest that it has been done.¹⁰ At the words *Sursum corda* the priest raises his hands, in order by this gesture to manifest and accentuate the inward soaring of the mind and his desire to give himself wholly to the Lord. By this movement of the hands is expressed the longing for that which is above us, that which is heavenly and eternal. Thus the Church complies with the invitation of the Prophet: "Let us raise our hearts together with our hands to the Lord in the heavens" (Lam. 3:41). The hymn of the Church contains a like sentiment: *Mentes manusque tollimus* ("Minds and hands we raise to the Lord"). To the Saviour, who has preceded us to heaven and who is awaiting us on the heavenly throne, we cry

⁷ Moses was beloved of God and men; . . . [the Lord] brought him into a cloud (Ecclus. 45:1, 5).

⁸ Quando dicimus *Pax vobiscum* sive *Dominus vobiscum*, quod est saluatio, ad populum sumus versi. Quos salutamus, eis faciem praesentamus, excepto in uno, quod est in praeparatione hymni ante *Te igitur*. Ibi jam occupati circa altare, ita ut congruentius sit uno modo versos nos esse, quam retro adspicere, ad insinuandam intentionem devotissimam, quam habemus in offerendo sacrificio (Amalar., *De eccles. offic.*, III, chap. 9).

⁹ In hoc sacramento et major devotio requiritur quam in aliis sacramentis propter hoc quod in hoc sacramento totus Christus continetur, et etiam communior, quia in hoc sacramento requiritur devotio totius populi, pro quo sacrificium offertur et non solum percipientium sacramentum, sicut in aliis sacramentis (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 4 ad 5).

¹⁰ Sicut sacerdos jussit eos sursum corda tenere, sic se habere profitentur (Raban. Maur., *De sacr. ordin.*, chap. 19). Audis quotidie, homo fidelis: "Sursum cor," et quasi contrarium audias, tu mergis in terram cor tuum (S. August., *Serm.*, CCCXI, chap. 15). Quotidie per universum orbem humanum genus una paene voce respondet, sursum corda se habere ad Dominum (*Idem*, *De vera relig.*, chap. 3).

out with holy enthusiasm: Be Thou, O Jesus, the desire of our hearts, and the object of our longing and striving.

Sursum corda ("Lift up your hearts").¹¹ The meaning of these words is most comprehensive: they signify that we should withdraw all the faculties of our soul from what is earthly and consecrate them exclusively to intercourse with God and divine things. We should turn our mind and spirit from worldly objects and close them to distracting thoughts, so as to be immersed with all our might and attention in holy meditations.¹² If the mind is penetrated with a higher light from above, then the will also will be incited to devotion. The heart becomes aglow with holy love of God and disengages itself from the bonds of worldly inclinations and desires that enchain it in the dust; it rouses itself from its sluggish indolence and tepidity that it may with holy ardor soar heavenward with all its powers.¹³ However, serious effort on our part is required to raise

¹¹ Audi: "Sursum cor," sed *ad* Dominum, non *contra* Dominum. Omnes superbi sursum cor habent, sed *contra* Dominum. Si autem vis tu vere sursum cor habere, ad Dominum habe. Si enim ad Dominum habueris cor sursum, ipse tenet cor tuum, ne cadat in terram (S. August., *Serm.*, XXV, chap. 2). Nemo potest cogitare nisi de thesauro suo et quodam cordis itinere divitias suas sequi. Si ergo in terra obruuntur, ima petit cor; si autem in coelo reseruantur, sursum erit cor. Si ergo volunt facere christiani, quod norunt se etiam profiteri (neque enim hoc omnes qui audiunt noverunt atque utinam non frustra noverint qui noverunt): qui ergo vult cor sursum habere, ibi, ibi ponat quod amat, et in terra positus carne, cum Christo habitet corde, et sicut ecclesiam praecessit caput ejus, sic christianum praecedat cor ejus. Quomodo membra itura sunt quo praecessit caput Christus, sic iterum resurgens iturus est quo nunc praecesserit cor hominis. Eamus ergo hinc ex qua parte possumus; sequetur totum nostrum, quo praecesserit aliquid nostrum. Domus terrena ruinosa est; domus coelestis aeterna est. Quo venire disponimus, ante migremus (*ibid.*, LXXXVI, chap. 1).

¹² Volens sacerdos populum ad divina mysteria praeparare, excitando eum ad laudem divinam, invitat eundem ad laudandum Altissimum; ideo addit: *Sursum corda*. Non enim laudare valemus Deum sincere ac digne, nisi contemplando divina, ad quod necesse est inferiora et sensibilia ista relinquere, mentisque oculum divinorum considerationi infigere, et hoc in praesenti officio summe requiritur, maxime in hoc loco, quoniam sacramentum istud totaliter divinum et spirituale ac abditum est (Dion. Carthus., *loc. cit.*).

¹³ Quaedam corda sursum sunt, quaedam semetipsa deorsum demerserunt. Deorsum sunt illa corda, quae configurantur huic saeculo; sursum vero sunt illa, quae conversationem suam habent in coelo. Deorsum sunt, quae terrena sapiunt; sursum sunt, quae jugiter meditantur coelestia; secundum id ergo, cui per amorem conjungitur, cor hominis sursum ac deorsum esse judicatur. Et recte extra semetipsum esse dicitur, quando ad exteriora et transitoria haec expetenda dilabitur. Tunc autem ad semetipsum revertitur, quando ea quae ad suam salutem pertinent meditatur. Sunt ergo quaedam, quae amando

mind and spirit on high and keep them recollected and disengaged from what is earthly and perishable; human frailty and the inconstancy of man is so very great ¹⁴ that to persevere in undisturbed recollection and communion with God is possible only to a soul that daily endeavors to divest itself of all earthly dross and bonds, and labors to attain a permanent direction upward. Hence the words of the Apostle: "Our conversation is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20). What does this imply? That we should not grovel like worms in the dust, but like the birds in the air we ought to soar in spirit heavenward; we should not burden and oppress our hearts with the thoughts and desires, cares and pleasures of this life, but we should so divest ourselves of earthly things and of the love of perishable goods that our soul may aspire with ease to heaven, with lively hope and ardent desire. "Seek the things that are above; . . . mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth" (Col. 3:1 f.)—that is the wisdom of Christian life. The *Sursum corda*, therefore, admonishes us, especially at the Sacrifice of the Mass, to have our mind occupied with heavenly things only and to be intent upon them. "No one should be present in such a manner, that, although he may say with the lips: 'We have lifted our hearts to the Lord,' his thoughts are directed to the cares of this life. We should indeed think of God at all times; but if this be impossible on account of human frailty, we should take it to heart most especially at least during the Holy Sacrifice."¹⁵

St. Martin is a striking example in this respect. The Church says of him in his office: "With eyes and hands raised toward heaven, he never let his mighty spirit slacken in prayer." His life of constant prayer and attention to the presence of God reached its highest degree of perfection during the celebration of Holy Mass. In a sacristy intended especially for his use, he carefully prepared himself for the divine service; when he afterward approached the altar, he appeared as an angel of the Lord, rapt in devotion and inflamed with love. Once when raising his hands during the Holy Sacrifice, they shone

et cogitando cor hominis deorsum premitur, scissumque per varia dissipatur, et sunt iterum quaedam, quae amando et meditando sursum elevatur et ad semetipsum colligitur (Hugo de s. Vict., *De vanitate mundi*, II).

¹⁴ Quantis conatibus corda levare necesse est, quae quidem (ut miserabiliter satis in libro propriae experientiae legimus) et corruptio corporis aggravat et terrena inhabitatio deprimit (S. Bernard., *In Ascens. Dom. serm.*, V, n. 2).

¹⁵ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystag. Catech.*, n. 4.

with crimsoned light and appeared adorned with precious jewels. At another time his head was environed with bright rays, as though his spirit had soared heavenward.¹⁶

The more estranged the soul becomes from frivolity and the distractions of the world, and the more she rises above all created things, the more clearly and profoundly also will she perceive that God is the eternal love and the source of all that is good: she thereby becomes penetrated with a lively sense of grateful praise to Him. To this sentiment the priest gives expression in the words: "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God." At the same time he joins his hands before his breast, and, when saying "our God" (*Deo nostro*), he raises his eyes and bows his head reverently toward the crucifix. The faithful reply in the person of the acolyte: "It is meet and just."¹⁷ Countless are the benefits with which the Lord has overwhelmed us and for which we owe Him a debt of gratitude. If the heart is deeply moved with grateful love toward God, it breaks forth spontaneously into an exultant hymn of praise: the most solemn thanksgiving resounds in the jubilant strains of the *Te Deum*. The whole Preface is, consequently, but a magnificent rendition of the words: *Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro!*

2. **The body of the Preface.** The priest, standing in a reverential posture with uplifted hands and elevated heart, continues (on ordinary days) to say or sing the following hymn of praise and thanksgiving.¹⁸ This *Praefatio communis* is used for all Masses to which no special Preface is assigned.

¹⁶ Cf. Sulpicius Severus, *Third Dialogue*, chap. 10, and *Second Dialogue*, chap. 2.

¹⁷ The versicles of the introductory formula just explained date from apostolic times; proof of this is found in all the ancient liturgies and in the Fathers; for in these we meet the above introductory formula, and with a considerable degree of agreement in the words employed. St. Cyprian was already acquainted with the name Preface. Quando stamus ad orationem, vigilare et incumbere ad preces toto corde debemus. Cogitatio omnis carnalis et saecularis abscedat nec quidquam tunc animus quam id solum cogitet quod precatur. Ideo et sacerdos ante Orationem (*before the Canon*) Praefatione praemissa parat fratrum mentes dicendo: *Sursum corda*, ut dum respondet plebs: *Habemus ad Dominum*, admoneatur, nihil aliud se quam Dominum cogitare debere (S. Cypr., *De Orat. dom.*, chap. 31).

¹⁸ Postea (*after the Oblation*) cantatur Missa a sacerdote, qui postquam loquitur ad populum de elevatione cordis ad Deum exhortaturque eos ad gratias agendas Domino, laudibus os implet rogatque ut ipse omnipotens Deus Pater, cui deserviunt coelestes potestates, sua gratia illorum vocibus jubeat humanas associari confessiones, quam deprecationem mox subsequitur

Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutare, nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere: Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, æternæ Deus: per Christum Dominum nostrum. Per quem majestatem tuam laudant Angeli, adorant Dominationes, tremunt Potestates, Coeli coelorumque Virtutes, ac beata Seraphim, socia exultatione concelebrant. Cum quibus et nostras voces, ut admitti jubeas deprecamur, supplici confessione dicentes:

It is truly meet and just, right and salutary, that we should always and in all places give thanks to Thee, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, eternal God, through Christ our Lord: through whom the angels praise Thy majesty, the dominations adore it, the powers tremble before it, the heavens and the heavenly virtues, and the blessed seraphim, exultingly celebrate it in common. Together with whom we beseech Thee that we may be admitted to join our voices in suppliant confession, saying:

The priest resumes the words of the people, confirms and develops them, inasmuch as he calls special attention to the great importance and obligation of returning thanks to God: "It is truly meet and just, right and salutary, that we should always and in all places give thanks" to God the Lord. Four reasons are cited which clearly manifest the importance and necessity of gratitude.

a) That we give thanks is meet (*dignum*) with respect to God and ourselves: the practice of giving thanks acknowledges and glorifies the dignity of God, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, it enhances at the same time the dignity of man. For, when we return thanks to God, we acknowledge Him as the source of all good, we glorify His majesty and fatherly love, we magnify His greatness and goodness—we give to God what His dignity demands of us. This manifestation of our gratitude also contributes to our moral dignity, revealing the beauty and nobility of the soul. Gratitude is the sign of a noble heart, while ingratitude is the mark of a mean soul. Fervent thanksgiving belongs to Christian perfection. The more perfect and devout, the more humble and pure the soul, the more will it be filled with the spirit of gratitude. The saints, when

laus ex angelicis et humanis cantibus confecta (Raban. Maur., *De clericor. institut.*, I, chap. 33). Oratione secreta completa, sacerdos *Vere dignum* devota mente dulcique voce proferat (Joann. Abrinc., *De offic. eccles.*).

upon earth, never wearied thanking God, and unceasing thanksgiving is their blessed occupation in eternity.

b) To thank God is but just (*justum*): a claim and a duty of justice (in a wide sense). Gratitude is allied with justice: for it is the will and the endeavor to return and repay, as far as possible, the benefits received. He who possesses strict justice, will also entertain grateful sentiments: he will strive to reward the benefactor. God expressly exacts gratitude from us as a tribute which we owe to Him; frequently and strongly does Holy Writ inculcate this duty of proving ourselves grateful to the Lord our God. "In all things give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus" (I Thess. 5:18). "Giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God and the Father" (Eph. 5:20).

c) To thank God is right (*aequum*): it is becoming and proper from reasons of propriety. After considering our relations to God, gratitude appears in the highest degree an act of equity, which performs more than what is required according to strict justice and law. Reflect on the excessive goodness of God toward you and the riches of His mercy wherewith He daily visits you; is it then requiring too much that your heart should be inflamed with an ardent, strong, and grateful love, that your lips should overflow with the praises of the divine goodness which accompanies you in all your ways? What is more proper and right than that, by a grateful return of love and fervent thanksgiving, you repay, as far as you are able, the favors you receive of God, who has no need of your gifts?

d) To thank God is, finally, salutary (*salutare*): it promotes the temporal and eternal welfare inasmuch as it enriches the soul with great blessings and precious graces.¹⁹ Gratitude opens to us the treasures of the divine liberality. In so far as we sincerely thank God for benefits received, we draw down new and more special graces upon ourselves. God takes complacency in a grateful heart; nothing shall be wanting to it. Hence gratitude is salutary, profitable, and rich in blessings; while ingratitude is a scorching wind that dries up the spring of divine goodness, the dew of heavenly mercy, and the streams of grace. "The gifts of grace cannot abound or flow in

¹⁹ Optima ratio impetrandi a Deo donum perseverantiae et pertingendi ad salutem et beatitudinem, est jugis gratiarum actio. Haec enim est inchoatio vitae coelestis, haec est stimulus ad iter hoc in coelum usque jugiter prosequendum; haec est tacita invocatio Dei, quae novam et continuam ab eo gratiam elicit et provocat (Corn. a Lap., *Comment. in Apoc.*, 7:12).

us, because we are ungrateful to the Giver; and because we do not return them all to the fountainhead. For grace will ever be given him who dutifully returns thanks. Be grateful, then, for the least, and thou shalt be worthy to receive greater things.”²⁰

To cultivate a spirit of gratitude toward God is, therefore, a practice “truly meet and just, right and salutary”; but how far must we go? what is the extent of this thanksgiving? This is made known by the words that we “should always and in all places” give thanks. There is no time or place in which we should not from the fullness of our heart say: *Deo gratias*. Even in the hour of tribulation and in the night of adversity, even when on the couch of suffering and in a home of direst poverty, gratitude towards God should never be silent on our lips or in our heart.²¹ When St. Elizabeth on a cold winter’s night wandered about, an outcast and forsaken, she entered a Franciscan church and had the *Te Deum* sung, to thank the Lord for the tribulations wherewith He had in His mercy visited her. Hence do you also repeat with the Psalmist: “I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall be always in my mouth” (Ps. 33:2).

The words “O holy Lord, Father Almighty, eternal God” refer to the First Person of the Deity: they express the majesty and glory of the Father, and should likewise incite us to fervent thanksgiving. But are we, poor, frail creatures, able appropriately and adequately to thank the holy, almighty, and eternal God? “Through Christ our Lord,” answers the Church. Christ is our mediator: through Him do all gifts and graces descend upon us “from the Father of lights,” and through Him must our gratitude and praise ascend to God.²² This should be done especially during the celebration of Mass: we should place all our grateful sentiments and prayers in the Eucharistic chalice, by means of which we can present to God a

²⁰ *Imitation of Christ*, II, 10.

²¹ Christiani non sumus nisi propter futurum saeculum: nemo praesentia bona speret, nemo sibi promittat felicitatem mundi, quia christianus est, sed utatur felicitate praesenti, ut potest, quomodo potest, quando potest, quantum potest. Cum adest, consolationi Dei gratias agat; cum deest, justitiae Dei gratias agat: Ubique sit gratus, numquam ingratus: et Patri consolanti et blandienti gratus sit; et Patri emendanti et flagellanti et disciplinam danti gratus sit; amat enim ille semper, sive blandiatur sive minetur (S. August., *Enarrat in Ps.*, 91:1).

²² Eodem ordine debet gratiarum actio in Deum recurrere, quo gratiae a Deo in nos deveniunt, quod quidem est per Jesum Christum (S. Thom., *In Epist. ad Rom.*, chap. 1, lect. 5).

thanksgiving worthy and meritorious because it is infinitely perfect.

The Saviour enthroned at the right hand of God is as man the head also of all the angelic choirs. They constitute a part of the eternal kingdom of God, whose glorious King is Jesus Christ. The risen Saviour is exalted above every creature and placed "above . . . every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and He hath subjected all things under His feet and He . . . hath made Him head over all the Church" (Eph. 1:21 f.). To Him "the angels and powers and virtues are made subject" (I Pet. 3:22).

According to the common teaching (founded upon Scripture and tradition), the angels are divided into nine distinct choirs.²³ Revelation gives no further particulars as to the peculiar nature or the special offices of the different orders of angels. We can, therefore, entertain only more or less probable opinions or conjectures concerning them.²⁴ To penetrate more deeply into the wonderful mysteries of the angelic world is reserved for the beatific vision in heaven. Yet already here below, how beautiful and attractive to the eye of faith is that grand, brilliant, angelic world! Like shining stars the angels surround the throne of the Most High; they bask in the rays of the divine glory and contemplate the abyss of the divine essence. Those sublime spirits overflow with light, love, and happiness; jubilation, praise, and thanksgiving ascend unceasingly from their midst up to the throne of God. The Preface reveals to us but a glimpse of that jubilant kingdom of the angels, for it declares:

²³ The gradations of the angelic world are principally based on natural perfections, but especially in the varied gifts of grace and offices of the angels. That among the angels generally there are higher and lower orders, is de fide; that there are but nine choirs of angels, no more and no less, is not so certain, still it is the teaching of tradition. Holy Scripture mentions nine choirs of angels, and since the ninth century we meet with the enumeration of them in the most ancient liturgies and in the Fathers. According to St. Gregory the Great (*Hom. in Evangel.*, XXIV) their order is: (1) angels; (2) archangels; (3) virtues; (4) powers; (5) principalities; (6) dominations; (7) thrones; (8) cherubim; (9) seraphim. The two lowest and the three highest are enumerated in the same order by all, while the four middle ones are differently grouped by others. In the Prefaces, all the choirs, with the exception of the principalities, are mentioned by name. In the *Ordo commendat. animae*, eight choirs are likewise mentioned, in which, however, the virtues are passed over. (Cf. Petavius, *De Angelis*, II, chaps. 3-5.)

²⁴ Quid inter se distent . . . dicant qui possunt, si tamen possunt probare, quod dicunt; ego me ista ignorare confiteor (S. August., *Enchirid.*, chap. 58).

“through whom the angels praise Thy majesty.” The blessed spirits also present their homages to God “through Jesus Christ,” their head.²⁵ Here “angels” does not refer to all the angelic spirits in general, as is otherwise frequently the case when angels are mentioned, but only to those angels who belong to the lowest choir.²⁶ As is evident from what follows, several choirs are to be mentioned by name. The dominations adore the majesty of the Creator (*adorant Dominationes*) as no mortal is capable of doing. The powers, those mighty spirits of heaven, tremble in profound humility and reverential awe (*tremunt Potestates*) before the grandeur of the divine majesty.²⁷ It is a joyous, blissful reverence that penetrates these glorious heavenly spirits.²⁸

Moreover, “the heavens and the heavenly virtues and the blessed seraphim exultingly celebrate in common” the majesty of God. All

²⁵ Et “ipsum (Christum) dedit (Deus Pater) caput supra omnem Ecclesiam,” scilicet tam militantem, quae est hominum in praesenti viventium, quam triumphantem, quae est ex hominibus et Angelis in patria (S. Thom., *In Epist. ad Ephes.*, chap. 1, lect. 8).

²⁶ The generic name *angelus* (ἄγγελος, *nuntius*) is employed in other Prefaces also to designate the lowest choir.

²⁷ Tremor autem nihil poenae, sed reverentiae castique timoris plurimum significat; constat enim, timorem castum et reverentialem haerere in coelitis et “permanere in saeculum saeculi” (Ps. 18:10) et “tremere Potestates,” in curia angelica non postremas, dum in luce atque oculis divinae majestatis humillime stratae et abjectae contremiscunt et pavent ad nutum ejus (Corder., *Comm. in libr. Job*, 26:11). Cum igitur in coelestibus tanta sit devotio laudantium, veneratio adorantium, tremor admirantium, consideret haec homo, cui dictum est: Quid superbit terra? (Flor. Diac., *De actione Miss.*, n. 27). Contemplare majestatem et item justitiam Dei altissimi, quatenus timorate in cunctis te habeas. Si enim columnae coeli pavent in conspectu ejus et si angelici spiritus cum reverentia tremore Deo assistunt, intendunt, deserviunt, cum quanta sollicitudine atque custodia cordis, timoreque mentis nos pauperes Deo adstare et sacrificare oportet? (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 4.)

²⁸ Divinam majestatem non solum Angeli, Dominationes et Potestates laudant, adorant, tremunt, sed etiam coeli et coelorum Virtutes et Seraphim concelebrant, i.e. in commune celebrant, concordia devotione et commune gaudio laudant (Flor. Diacon., *op. cit.*, n. 28). The expression *coeli* is often used to designate the angelic choir of the thrones, or it also means the heavenly abode, in which case by *virtutes caelorum* the heavenly spirits in general are understood (*hoc nomine omnes coelestes spiritus nonnunquam generaliter appellari solent [ibid., n. 30]*). Here five, or perhaps six, choirs of angels are mentioned; in other Prefaces *Angeli et Archangeli, Throni et Dominationes*, or *Angeli et Archangeli, Cherubim quoque ac Seraphim* are mentioned; and once (on Pentecost) all the angels are comprised in the words *supernae Virtutes atque angelicae Potestates*.

the choirs of angels are not specifically mentioned, but they are included in the word heaven (*coeli*),²⁹ for this word does not here denote the visible heaven, but the blessed citizens and princes of the invisible heaven in general. Then there are yet two choirs of angels expressly mentioned: the powers (*Virtutes*) and the seraphim (*Seraphim*). The latter constitute the highest choir of the angelic kingdom and are emphatically called blessed,³⁰ because they burn and glow with an incomparable love of God.

Thus the blessed hosts of heavenly spirits are eternally immersed in loving and praising the glory of God; they are never weary of celebrating and blessing the glory of their Creator. Now, in the sacred hour of the sacrifice, we rise and ascend in spirit above the lowliness of the earth and soar to the heights of the heavenly Jerusalem, there to join our voices in the angels' glorious hymn of praise. Of such an honor we are totally unworthy, our adoration being so very lowly and contemptible. But penetrated with this sentiment of our total unworthiness, we implore God that He would suffer us to join our feeble voices with the angelic choirs,³¹ and in all humility we praise the glory of the triune God and the glory of the Redeemer in the *Sanctus*.³²

3. The conclusion of the Preface.

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.

Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria
tua.

Hosanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit in
nomine Domini.

Hosanna in excelsis.

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!

²⁹ In the majority of Prefaces the choirs of angels not expressly mentioned are designated by the words *omnis militia coelestis exercitus*. Instead of *socia* (= allied) *exultatione* (properly = exulting, rejoicing) *concelebrant* (= extol, glorify), once is given *una voce dicentes*. *Omnes ordines majestatem Dei Patris per Christum juncta exultatione aequaliter concelebrant* (Raban. Maur., *De sacr. ord.*, chap. 19). *Concentus in coelo angelicus totus est unisonus, totus consonus, quia projectus est inde antiquus ille disturbator coelestis harmoniae* (Gerhoh. Reichersp., *In Ps.*, 25).

³⁰ They are called *beata Seraphim*, because, according to a general rule, indeclinable substantives are regarded as neuter.

³¹ *Haec est supplicatio nostra, ut ipse coelestis Pater per Christum Filium suum, per quem nos ei gratias de omnibus agimus, dignetur admittere voces nostras et jungere vocibus ordinum Angelorum* (Raban. Maur., *loc. cit.*).

³² Humility, which accompanies our chant of praise (*supplex confessio*),

This exceedingly sublime hymn of praise³³ is made up of words taken from Holy Scripture and consists of two parts. The first half contains the glorification of the Holy Trinity by the angels of heaven; the second half consists of the welcoming of the Saviour by the mouth of the faithful on earth.³⁴ With regard to the first part, this magnifying of the Lord God of hosts is termed the Thrice Holy (Trisagion)³⁵ or hymn of the seraphim, or of the angels (*Hymnus seraphicus* or *angelicus*);³⁶ and the second part of the hymn is designated the Triumphal Chant (*Hymnus triumphalis*). The Trisagion is found at least in part in all the liturgies; in ancient times it was sung also by the congregation.³⁷

The first part of the hymn, with some slight alterations, is taken

is also manifested in the moderate inclination of the body when reciting the Thrice Holy. Cf. the original concluding stanza of the Saturday Vesper Hymn (of St. Ambrose), in which we read:

Te nostra *supplex gloria*
Per cuncta laudet saecula.

³³ The Second Council of Vaison (529) deemed it proper to renew the ordinance that this hymn must be sung at all Masses. Ut in omnibus Missis sive matutinis sive quadragesimalibus vel quae in defunctorum commemorationibus fiunt, semper *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus* eo ordine, quo ad Missas publicas dici debeat: quia tam dulcis et desiderabilis vox, etiamsi diu noctuque posset dici, fastidium non potest generare (can. 111).

³⁴ Vox angelorum Trinitatis et unitatis in Deo commendat arcanum; vox hominum divinitatis et humanitatis in Christo personat sacramentum (Innocent. III, II, chap. 61). Circa consecrationem, quae supernaturali virtute agitur, excitatur populus ad devotionem in praefatione; unde et monetur *sursum habere corda ad Dominum*, et ideo, finita praefatione, populus devote laudat divinitatem Christi cum angelis dicens: *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus*, et humanitatem cum pueris dicens: *Benedictus qui venit* (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 4).

³⁵ Trisagion is also the name given to the enlarged biblical Thrice Holy: *Sanctus Deus, sanctus Fortis, sanctus Immortalis, miserere nobis* ("Holy God, holy Strong One, holy Immortal One, have mercy on us"). It is modeled after the psalm verse (41:3): *Sitivit anima mea ad Deum, fortem, vivum* ("My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God": God all-powerful and immortal) and it is only a paraphrase for Holy Father, Holy Son, and Holy Ghost. This Trisagion is recited in the ferial prayers of Prime and is sung in Latin and Greek in the liturgy of Good Friday. (Cf. S. Joann. Damasc., *Epistola de Hymno Trisagio*.)

³⁶ The designation, "Hymn of the Cherubim," also occurs; for they and all the other angels sing the Trisagion, although Isaias mentions only the Seraphim. (Cf. the *Te Deum*.)

³⁷ In the Pontifical this ordinance is ascribed to Pope Sixtus I (119-28): "when the priest begins the Canon (*actionem*) of the Mass, the congregation should sing the hymn: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth." In the Mozarabic liturgy we read that the Thrice Holy is that *aeterna laudatio, quae in coelestibus sine defectu psallitur ab Angelis et hic solemmniter decan-*

from the grand description of a vision of the prophet Isaias (6:3): "And they [the seraphim] cried one to another, and said: Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts, all the earth is full of Thy glory."³⁸ St. John the apostle also heard the celestial canticle: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty" (Apoc. 4:8). As is evident from the universal doctrine of the Fathers and from several passages of Holy Scripture itself, the thrice repeating of the word "holy" is intended, not merely to proclaim emphatically the holiness of God, but rather to indicate the threefold personality of God: it is a hymn of praise to the adorable Trinity.³⁹ Since in God's sanctity, His infinite perfection, beauty, and glory shine forth most resplendently, He is in the language of revelation and of the Church very often praised as "the Holy One." The divine holiness is uncreated, immense, unchangeable: the infinitely pure, luminous, spiritual being of God is holiness itself. God is the "only Holy One," and from God the supernal splendor of holiness is reflected over all the world of angels and of men: His is the type and the source of all created holiness.

In the holiness of the triune God is celebrated His interior and eternal glory, which of itself is invisible to us. This uncreated glory of the Lord of hosts is unveiled in the works of creation and redemption; for "heaven and earth," the sum of all creation, the visible and the invisible world, bear witness to the glory of God. "Heaven and earth are full of" His "glory," full of proofs of the power and greatness, of the goodness and mercy of God: hence they announce and proclaim His greatness, His unspeakably great glory.⁴⁰

tatur a populis. Ubi expedita contestatione omnis populus Sanctus in Dei laudem proclamavit (S. Gregor. Turon., De mirac. S. Martini, II, chap. 14). The choir also sang with the people, and in many places the priest also, who in the Frankish capitularies of the eighth and ninth centuries was often forbidden to begin the Canon before the close of the hymn, for example: "Te igitur" non inchoent sacerdotes, nisi post angelicum hymnum finitum; and: Ut secreta presbyteri non inchoent antequam "Sanctus" finiatur, sed cum populo "Sanctus" cantent. (Cf. Martene., De antiq. Eccl. ritibus, I, iv, 7.)

³⁸ The liturgical text is an address to God; according to the ancient biblical translation, it has, instead of *exercituum*, the Hebrew word *sabaot*, which has been retained only in three passages in our Vulgate, and instead of the biblical *omnis terra*, it gives *coeli et terra*.

³⁹ Domine Deus dulcissime, sanctitas tua ineffabilis est: de qua quodammodo magis quam de aliis perfectionibus gloriaris. Seraphim ut te collaudent, ter sanctum vocant, non tantum ut personarum Trinitatem indicent, sed ut te omnino sanctum et pelagus sanctitatis insinuent (Alvar. de Paz, *De studio orationis*, Bk. III, Part III, dec. 6, contempl. 53).

⁴⁰ Tria laudant: personarum trinitatem, unitatis majestatem et provisionis

After the praise of the triune God follows the jubilant salutation of the Redeemer, who will soon appear mystically on the altar "in the fullness of mercy."⁴¹ The hymn concludes with the triumphal chant with which the Saviour was welcomed by the multitudes as Prince of Peace and conqueror of death at His solemn entrance into Jerusalem, and with which He is now again saluted at His coming on the altar: "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!" The original verse of the psalm from which this acclamation is taken, is somewhat different: "O Lord, save me! O Lord, give good success! Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Ps. 117:25 f.).⁴² The first verse, which expresses the petition for salvation and success, was sung by the congregation at the procession on the Feast of Tabernacles; the other verse, which took up and continued the salutation or blessing of those who were entering the Temple, was said by the priests' choir. These words, however, are prophetically Messianic, for according to their highest purpose and meaning, they refer to Jesus Christ, who was announced by the prophets as "the one that was to come,"⁴³ and who came in the fullness of time "in

liberalitatem (quia usque ad ultimas creaturas, quae per terram intelliguntur, extendit diffusionem suae bonitatis). (S. Thom., *In Isa.*, chap. 6, n. 1.) Non perperam hunc locum intelliget, qui per coelos spiritus angelicos et per terram homines hic acceperit . . . nam et coelestes spiritus et homines Dei gloria implentur: illi quidem praesenti glorificatione, hi vero in spe et praevia dispositione (Clichtov., III).

⁴¹ Since the first *Hosanna in excelsis* is, like the triple *Sanctus*, said with a moderate bow of the body, and is sung with it already before the Consecration, and not after it with the *Benedictus*, some consider it as an acclamation of homage and glorification to the triune God in the highest heavens. At the words *Benedictus qui venit*, the celebrant stands erect, not merely because he exults in going to meet the Redeemer about to descend on the altar at the Consecration, but also that he may make the prescribed sign of the cross more conveniently. The wording of other liturgies, however, undeniably excludes the aforesaid reference of the first *Hosanna* to the Blessed Trinity. *Osanna Filio David, osanna in excelsis: benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini, osanna in excelsis* (*Liturg. Mozarab.*).

⁴² In the Hebrew, "me" is wanting, and *salvum fac* there is *Hoschianna*, whence the Greek expression *ὠσαννά* and the Latin *hosanna* originated (= to help). The designation *in nomine Domini* can be referred by the Psalmist to *qui venit* or to *benedictus*, but in the evangelical and liturgical text it must be combined with *qui venit*; for here it forms the clearer explanation and necessary supplement to the coming, upon which rests the emphasis. The Messiah is glorified as the ambassador of God. (Cf. John 5:43.)

⁴³ Cf. the question of the disciples of John to Christ: *Tu es qui venturus*

the name of the Lord," that is, sent by the heavenly Father to redeem the world. The petition and the salutation found their application in the Messiah in the mouth of the people who, enlightened from above, exultingly and in a loud voice saluted the Saviour entering Jerusalem with the words: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.⁴⁴ Hosanna in the highest!" In this text of the New Testament, "hosanna" is, according to its original signification, understood as a cry of supplication (help and blessing to the Son of David), and again as an acclamation of reverence and of exultation (hail to Him).⁴⁵ In comparing the passage of the psalm with the Gospel text, we find a difference in the wording, as well as a partly different meaning, which results from the application and reference of the biblical text in the Gospel.

The liturgical text departs somewhat from the biblical: "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!" It is not taken directly from the psalm, but from the Gospel: hence it follows that it refers to the Saviour and His coming on the altar.⁴⁶ How profoundly significant is this formula of worship, this grateful and joyful praise of the Saviour, inserted at this part of the Mass, when He is about to reappear in our midst as a victim, as formerly He entered into Jerusalem to accomplish on the cross the bloody sacrifice!⁴⁷ What is at this moment

es, an alium expectamus? (Matt. 11:3.) *Veniens, venturus, expectatus, & ἐρχόμενος*, were well known designations of the Messias.

⁴⁴ Jesus Christ, who by the commission of God as well as for His glorification, came into the world, is in the fullest sense *benedictus* (blessed), because He is the source of all blessing and salvation for us and, therefore, infinitely worthy of all praise and glory. Hoc canticum consona voce resonabant, utique ex instructione et motione Spiritus sancti (Dion. Carthus., *In Matt.*, 21:9). Cf. Ps. 3:9.

⁴⁵ Expressing more than *vivat* (may he live), the *hosanna* corresponds to the Italian *evviva*.

⁴⁶ The liturgical text in the Apostolic Constitutions excludes every other signification: "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord; God the Lord, He hath appeared to us. Hosanna in the highest!" (VIII, chap. 13.) That the words *Benedictus qui venit* cannot be understood as a blessing for those who assist at Mass, but are to be referred to the Eucharistic advent of the Saviour, is also evident from their rubrical destination, that they are to be sung by the choir only after the Consecration and Elevation (cf. *Cerem. Episc.*, II, viii, 70 f.).

⁴⁷ Ex Scriptura prophetica et evangelica completur plena laudatio, cum post laudem et gloriam sanctae Trinitatis adjungitur etiam gratiarum actio

more natural for us than exultingly to cry out: Highly praised be Christ, who, in obedience to the will of His heavenly Father, mystically descends upon the altar, daily to sacrifice Himself anew for the salvation of the whole world. This grateful praise is introduced and concluded by the acclamation of hosanna. What does the foreign Hebrew word *hosanna* here signify? In the language of the Church its original meaning (= help, save, redeem) was soon lost and is no longer clearly felt; for hosanna is a joyous, jubilant acclamation: Hail, glory, praise be to Him.⁴⁸ The grand liturgy of Palm Sunday illustrates and confirms this explanation. A few passages follow:

When the people heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, they took branches of palms and went out to meet Him, and the children cried out, saying: This is He that is to come for the salvation of the people. He is our salvation and the redemption of Israel. How great is He whom thrones and dominations go forth to welcome! . . . Hail, O King, Creator of the world, who comest to redeem us!

The multitude go out to meet the Redeemer with flowers and palms, and as to a conqueror entering on his triumph, they render worthy homage to Him: With their mouth the nations praise the Son of God, and through the clouds of heaven voices resound to the praise of Christ: Hosanna in the highest!

Like the angels and the children will we also sing of the conqueror of death: Hosanna in the highest!

Praise, honor, and glory be to Thee, our King, Christ and Redeemer, unto whom the sweet and charming company of children poured forth their hosanna, their devout hymn of praise (*cui puerile decus prompsit Hosanna pium*). Thou art the King of Israel, Thou art the glorious Son of David. All praise be to Thee, O King, Thou that comest in the name of the Lord. The multitude on high exalt Thee, the whole heavenly host, mortal man and all created things join in praising Thee. The Hebrew people went forth to meet Thee with palms: behold we also appear before Thee with petitions, prayers, and hymns. For Thy passion they

de adventu Salvatoris, qui unus in ipsa et ex ipsa Trinitate pro salute nostra homo factus in mundum venit et eandem salutem moriendo et resurgendo perfecit . . . unde rite illi gratias agentes dicimus *Hosanna*, i.e. salus in excelsis (Florus. Diacon., *op. cit.*, n. 41).

⁴⁸ In the votive Mass *de Passione Domini* the Church cries out to the Saviour: Tibi gloria, hosanna: tibi triumphus et victoria: tibi summae laudis et honoris corona. Alleluja. As *vox laetantis* (the expression of animated, exultant sentiment), hosanna was not translated into either Greek or Latin (cf. S. August., *De doctr. christ.*, II, xi, 16). In the Middle Ages even the verb *hosannare* (= to praise) was used.

brought Thee sacrifices of praise: behold we sing to Thee our canticle for Thy victorious dominion. These gave Thee pleasure, may our devotions also be agreeable to Thee, O good and gentle King, to whom good works are always pleasing.

The Trisagion is not sung by the priest (as is the Preface), but is recited in a half audible voice (*voce mediocri*).⁴⁹ When he joins in the angelic hymn of praise to glorify the Most Holy Trinity, he lowers his voice and with joined hands bows with humble reverence. At the joyful praise of the approaching Saviour, he again stands erect and signs himself with the cross,⁵⁰ not merely to conclude the hymn in due form, but also to indicate that Christ came as a victorious conqueror and Prince of Peace to establish His kingdom by means of the cross, and that He now comes down on the altar to renew mystically the sacrifice of the cross.

The wonderful hymn of the Preface is grand and its sublimity beggars description. As all "the angels and archangels, also the cherubim and seraphim do not cease to cry out as with one voice, saying: Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory": in the same manner "does the Church throughout the earth acknowledge and praise Him, the Father of boundless majesty, His adorable, true, and only-begotten Son, as well as the Holy Ghost, the Comforter." St. Chrysostom exclaims:

O marvellous gifts of Christ! On high the angelic choirs sing glory to the Lord; on earth, after their example, men sing in church the same canticle in choirs. In heaven the seraphim sing aloud their Thrice Holy; on earth the same canticle resounds from the mouth of the assembled congregation.⁵¹ Thus heaven and earth unite in a festive celebration;

⁴⁹ In Rome at an early period this hymn was no longer sung by the people, but by subdeacons (*Ordo Rom. I, n. 16; II, n. 10*), and later on (as is still the case) it was sung by the choir (*basilicarii; Ordo Rom. XI, n. 20*). While it was being sung, everyone bowed. *Qui dum expleverint, surgit Pontifex solus et intrat in Canonem (Ordo Rom. I, n. 16)*.

⁵⁰ The liturgists of the Middle Ages often mention the rule of accompanying the recitation of the evangelical words with the sign of the cross. In omnibus verbis evangelicis signum crucis fieri oportet (Beleth., chap. 40). Hence Sicardus remarks, in reference to the concluding words of the Sanctus: Hoc sumptum est de Evangelio, unde cum cantatur, nobis signaculum crucis imprimimus (III, chap. 6).

⁵¹ The same holy doctor of the Church says in a eulogy of the martyrs: "Because the martyrs showed the utmost love for the Lord, He kindly extends His hand to them; now they should rejoice at the heavenly glory and join the choirs of angels and unite in their mysterious hymns (Isa. 6:3). Among

it is a hymnal celebration of thanksgiving, of praise; it is a choir of common joy, which the unspeakable goodness of the Lord, in His great condescension to us, organized, and which the Holy Ghost assembled; on its harmony the heavenly Father dwells with complacency. Its melody is borrowed from heaven, being led by the hand of the Holy Trinity, to the end that those sweet and blessed notes, those chants of the angels, those canticles of praise, may never cease to resound.

4. **The proper Prefaces.** In addition to the ordinary Preface, the Roman Missal contains fourteen others which have a specific festal character, since various mysteries of the ecclesiastical year are therein prominently set forth as special motives of praise and thanksgiving.

The liturgy of the Church conspicuously sets forth our gratitude toward God; the sentiment of fervent thanksgiving for the salvation given us by Christ, for the grace of faith, the glory of the redemption, and the blessed hope of heaven, day after day finds its touching expression, as beautiful as it is joyful, in the Preface of the Mass. But when on the great feasts of the ecclesiastical year, the mysteries of sacred history, the great deeds and benefits of divine love seem to reveal themselves more vividly and brightly to the soul and to move the heart in the fullness of their beauty and glory; then it is that the hymn of thanksgiving and praise rises to the greatest heights of enthusiasm and jubilation.

The Church has proper Prefaces for the feasts of Christmas, the Epiphany, Easter, the Ascension, Pentecost, the Holy Trinity, the Sacred Heart, Christ the King, the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, and the apostles (and popes), for the seasons of Lent and Passiontide, and for the Requiem Mass. The Christmas Preface is used until Epiphany and for the feast of Corpus Christi and its octave.⁵² The

these choirs they were counted already during their earthly life as often as they participated in the holy mysteries, in that they, with the cherubim, sang the Thrice Holy in praising the Lord. You, who belong to the consecrated, know the reason of this; so much the less should it surprise you, now that they have found their companions in heaven, that with greater confidence they take part in this hymn of praise."

⁵² By a special exception from the general rule, during the octave of Christmas this Preface is to be taken also in such Masses as have a *Praefatio propria* (for example, on the feast of the apostle John, but not on his octave day, and in any votive Masses that may be said). Candlemas Day (*Purificatio B. M. V.*) has the Christmas Preface, inasmuch as this day, even in the West, is also a feast of the Lord; in the Greek rite it is even more prominently so, hence the name, *occursus, obviatio: quia venerabiles personae Simeon et Anna eo*

Easter Preface is used throughout the Easter season, except on feasts that have a proper Preface. The Preface for the Holy Trinity, which is one of the most recent, was prescribed by Clement XIII (1759) for all Sundays that have no special Preface; this Preface lacks poetic sentiment and bears the stamp of scholastic theology.⁵³ The Preface for Passiontide is a magnificent praise of the instrument of our salvation, and is therefore used in votive Masses or on feasts of the cross.⁵⁴ All the other Prefaces are used on the respective feasts and their octaves (if they have one) and in votive Masses commemorating the mystery or saint.

All of these Prefaces follow a certain pattern. All, except the Preface for feasts of the apostles and popes, are addressed to the Father; ⁵⁵ all except the latter and the Easter Preface begin with the words: "It is truly meet and just, right and salutary, that we

die obviaverunt Domino, dum praesentaretur in templo (Microl., chap. 48). The feast of Corpus Christi, as well as the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus and the Transfiguration, have also the Christmas Preface.

⁵³ This Preface contains a majestic and sublime rendering of those words of the Athanasian Symbol: "This is Catholic faith, that we revere the one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity." The mystery of the Holy Trinity is the most profound and sublime mystery of our faith: to all created and finite minds the Trinity is absolutely unattainable and unfathomable. It was left to divine revelation alone to unveil the sublime truth, which we, with childlike and simple faith must accept and adhere to. Therefore Clement XIII prescribed for all Sundays that have no special Preface, the *Praefatio de Trinitate ad majorem splendidiorumque tanti mysterii gloriam, ut fideles quoque, qui die Dominica Missae interesse debent, latius atque apertius ejusdem mysterii praeconia audientes, debitum et ipsi servitutis obsequium supremae impendant majestati*.

⁵⁴ In this Preface is appropriately expressed the antithetical relation between the tree (*lignum*, wood) of knowledge, by the fruit of which was perpetrated the fall of man, and the wood (tree, *lignum*) of the cross, on which the redemption was accomplished. The former tree, planted in the center of the Garden of Paradise, was intended for the blessing of humanity, and it became its curse. The latter tree, erected in the center of the globe, the gibbet of the curse ("for he is accursed of God that hangeth on a tree" [Deut. 21:23]), has become a blessing for all that believe in it. Cf. the beautiful Preface in the *Gregorian Sacramentary*: *Christus per passionem crucis mundum redemit et antiquae arboris amarissimum gustum crucis medicamine indulcavit, mortemque quae per lignum vetitum venerat, per ligni trophaeum devicit, ut mirabili suae pietatis dispensatione qui per ligni gustum a florifera sede discesseramus, per crucis lignum ad paradisi gaudia redeamus*.

⁵⁵ This is the only Preface whose words are addressed to Jesus Christ. The celebration of the feast of the apostles and their successors leads the Church to invoke the "eternal Shepherd" for the protection and defense of His faithful flock.

should always and in all places give thanks to Thee, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, eternal God." Then is mentioned the mystery for which we are particularly grateful. The Prefaces conclude with a joyful, heavenly praise of God's glory, in which we join ourselves to the angelic choirs. This inspiring conclusion, which forms an introduction to the glorious Sanctus, takes, with but two exceptions, one of the following forms:

Through whom [Christ] the angels praise Thy majesty, the dominations adore it, the powers tremble before it, the heavens and the heavenly virtues, and the blessed seraphim, exultingly celebrate it in common. Together with whom we beseech Thee that we may be admitted to join our voices in suppliant confession, saying:

And therefore with the angels and archangels, with the thrones and dominations, and with all the heavenly hosts, we sing a hymn ⁵⁶ to Thy glory, saying without ceasing: ⁵⁷

Thus in union with the heavenly choirs of angels we exultingly sing that sublime hymn of praise, the Sanctus, and enter into the holy of holies, the Canon of the Mass.

⁵⁶ Already Walafrid Strabo distinguishes metrical and rhythmic hymns on the one hand (real hymns), and, on the other, hymns in a general (improper) sense. Among the latter he reckons the Preface with the Trisagion. *Notandum hymnos dici non tantum qui metris vel rithmis decurrunt . . . verum etiam ceteras laudationes, quae verbis convenientibus et sonis dulcibus proferuntur. . . . Et quamvis in quibusdam ecclesiis hymni metrici non cantentur, tamen in omnibus generales hymni, i.e. laudes dicuntur (De exord. et increm., chap. 26).*

⁵⁷ *Sine fine* = sine cessatione, sine requie, sine intermissione, per quod significatur jugis et assidua illius excellentissimi hymni *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus* . . . a nobis decantatio facienda. Quod cum in hac mortali vita perfecte a nobis expleri non possit, hoc verbo tacite et per subinsinuationem quandam expetitur aeternae beatitudinis consortium nobis demum concedi, in qua angelicis conjuncti choris sacra laudatione possimus hunc hymnum sine fine ac perpetuo decantare, quemadmodum et ipsae supernae virtutes atque angelicae potestates hymnum hunc gloriae Domini sine fine concinunt secundum illud verbum (Ps. 83): "Beati qui habitant in domo tua, Domine: in saecula saeculorum laudabunt te" (Clichtov., *Elucid. eccles.*, III, 3).

CHAPTER XXXII

THE CANON OF THE MASS

THE jubilant hosanna has now ceased.¹ Holy silence succeeds, for the Canon begins.² Cardinal Wiseman says of the Prefaces: "There could not be a more splendid introduction, with the hymn which closes them, to the divine rite that follows. Here we must pause; because the subject becomes too sacred for our pen; the ground upon which we are about to tread is holy, and the shoes must be loosed from the feet of him who will venture upon it."³ These words of the devout prelate are a serious admonition to pray with all humility and love that the Lord "may lift the veil from our eyes," and that in some degree we may be enabled to behold and understand the mysteries concealed in the Canon: for the Lord giveth "wisdom to little ones" (Ps. 118:8).⁴

¹ According to a rubric (*Rubr. gener. Miss.*, tit. 20; *Ritus celebr. Miss.*, tit. 8, n. 6), that probably has no preceptive, but only a directive, character, the so-called Sanctus or Consecration candle is to be lighted on the Epistle side and to continue burning until after the Communion. This candle denotes the Eucharistic presence of the Lord and incites the faithful to devotion, love, and adoration. (Cf. S. R. C., December 30, 1881.)

² Post laudes et gratiarum actiones pro tanta gratia redemptionis nostrae, quae in illo divino mysterio agitur et commendatur, facto totius Ecclesiae silentio, in quo cessante omni strepitu verborum, sola ad Deum dirigitur intentio et devotio cordium, sociatis sibi omnium votis et desideriiis, incipit sacerdos orationem fundere, qua ipsum mysterium dominici corporis et sanguinis consecratur. Sic enim oportet, ut in illa hora tam sacrae ac divinae actionis tota per Dei gratiam a terrenis cogitationibus mente separata et ecclesia cum sacerdote et sacerdos cum ecclesia spirituali desiderio intret in sanctuarium Dei aeternum et supernum. . . . Idcirco, ut ferunt, consuetudo venit in ecclesia, ut tacite ista obsecratio atque consecratio a sacerdote cantetur (*recited*), ne verba tam sacra et ad tantum mysterium pertinentia vilescerent (Pseudo-Alcuin., chap. 40).

³ "On Prayer and Prayer-Books," *Essays*, II, 201.

⁴ Blessed Otto of Cambrai (d. 1113) writes in the Preface to his *Expositio in Canonem Missae*: Praesumptionis argui timeo, quod ausus sum rem difficilem

1. The name, origin, and antiquity of the Canon.⁵ The word canon (*Κανών*)⁶ in ecclesiastical language has many different meanings; but here, where it serves to designate the principal portion of the liturgy of the Mass, it signifies the standard formula, the fixed, invariable rule for the accomplishment of the essential act of the sacrifice. The Canon of the Mass, which begins after the *Sanctus* and ends before the *Pater noster*,⁷ includes the consecration, or sacrificial act, and also those prayers and ceremonies that introduce the consecration and are most closely connected with it. It there-

contingere et extendere conatus in alta profunditate, scil. exponere Canonem altaris et probare tanta mysteria.

⁵ The position of the Canon underwent many a change in the course of time. Until the ninth century it was in connection with the *Missa quotidiana* placed at the end of the cycle of the year's feasts. After this time it was placed at the beginning of the Sacramentary, being preceded by only a heading and a very short *Ordo Missae*. From the eleventh century it is more frequently found in the middle of the book, between Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday. Through the *Missale secundum consuetudinem curiae Romanae* it permanently retained that place after the thirteenth century. Since the Canon is the part of the missal the most used, it has been properly placed where it is most convenient for use, that is, in the middle of the missal. This practical feature decided its position. Moreover, the position between Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday may also indicate that the accomplishment of the Eucharistic sacrifice forms the vivifying center of the ecclesiastical year.

⁶ *Κανών* originally denoted a straight staff and, therefore, the Mass rod or rule; metaphorically, then, any law, regulation or ordinance (*lex, regula, norma*). In ecclesiastical language the word *canon* (as also the adjective *canonicus*) has a manifold application. Thus, for example, it designates the entire collection of inspired revelation records, in so far as they constitute an authoritative or standard rule for the faith and morals of man; then divine tradition, which likewise forms a *regula fidei*; also the laws of the Church and the definitions of the Councils are called *κανόνες*. Furthermore, *canon* signifies the register of saints (hence *canonizatio*, the reception into it), also the list of the clerics who, belonging to a certain church (*οἱ ἐν κανόνι* = the clerics, hence the denomination *Canonici*), for the most part lived in common according to a determined rule. *Actio dicitur ipse Canon, quia in eo sacramenta conficiuntur dominica. Canon vero eadem actio nominatur, quia ea est legitima et regularis sacramentorum confectio* (Walafrid. Strabo, chap. 23). Moreover, other designations are, for example, *regula, legitimum, agenda, secretum Missae, prex, mystica prex, textus canonicae precis*.

⁷ The Canon is limited in the *Rubr. generales* (tit. 12 et 13) and in the *Ritus celebr. Missam* (tit. 8 et 9); but in consequence of the continued superscription in the *Ordo Missae*, the Canon would extend from the *Sanctus* to the end of the Communion, that is, there would be question not only of a Canon of the Consecration, but also of a Canon of Communion; but this has never been customary. The word Canon, as a rule, is used without addition to designate the Canon of Consecration. (Cf. Cavalieri, V, xvi, 1.)

fore covers the divine sacrificial act with a mystical veil and encloses it in a most precious case. As the sacrifice which the eternal high priest offers on the altar to the end of ages, ever remains the same, in like manner the Canon, the ecclesiastical sacrificial prayer, in its sublime simplicity and venerable majesty, ever remains the same; only on the greatest feasts are a few additions made in order to harmonize with the changing spirit of the ecclesiastical year.⁸

The Church itself explains the origin of the Canon:

And since it is becoming that holy things be administered in a holy manner, and of all things this sacrifice is the most holy, the Catholic Church, to the end that it might be worthily and reverently offered and received, instituted many centuries ago the holy Canon, which is so free from error that it contains nothing that does not in the highest degree savor of a certain holiness and piety and raise up to God the minds of those who offer. For it consists partly of the very words of the Lord, partly of the traditions of the apostles, and also of pious regulations of holy pontiffs.⁹

On account of the want of reliable historical testimony, we are not able to state more accurately and minutely what parts of the Canon are of apostolic tradition and what are the later additions of holy popes.¹⁰ Yet it is rather certain and generally admitted that Pope

⁸ These changes are made in the *Communicantes* and *Hanc igitur*. The *Communicantes* receives a small addition on Holy Thursday, in the Masses of the octaves of Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost, as well as in votive Masses of these feasts; the *Hanc igitur* on Holy Thursday (as well as the *Qui pridie*) and during the octaves of Easter and Pentecost also receives an addition of a few words. *Ordinem precum in celebritate Missarum nullo nos tempore, nulla festivitate significamus habere diversum, sed semper eodem tenore oblata Deo munera consecrare. Quoties vero paschalis aut Ascensionis Domini vel Pentecostes aut Epiphaniae Sanctorumque Dei fuerit agenda festivitas, singula capitula diebus apta subjungimus, quibus commemorationem sanctae solemnitatis aut eorum facimus, quorum natalitia celebramus, cetera vero ordine consueto prosequimur. Quapropter et ipsius canonicae precis textum (the Canon) direximus subter adjectum, quem (Deo propitio) ex apostolica traditione suscepimus (Vigiliis Papae [d. 555], *Epist. ad Profuturum episc. Bracarens.*).*

⁹ Trid., Sess. XXII, cap. 4.

¹⁰ Praefationem actionis, qua populi affectus ad gratiarum actiones incitatur ac deinde humanae devotionis supplicatio coelestium virtutum laudibus admitti deprecatur vel ipsam actionem, qua conficitur sacrosanctum corporis et sanguinis dominici mysterium, quamque Romani canonem, ut in pontificalibus saepius invenitur, quis primus ordinaverit nobis ignotum est. . . . Actio sive Canon ex eo cognoscitur maxime per partes compositus, quod nomina sanctorum, quorum ibi communio et societas flagitatur, duobus in locis posita

St. Gregory I (590–604) completed the formula of the text of the Canon as we now have it.

“It is correct and a matter of fact to state that the text of the Canon of the present Roman Missal corresponds, in all that is essential, with that form in which it probably proceeded from the hands of Gregory I and in which it was handed down in the ancient manuscripts of the Roman Sacramentary. This fact, however, does not exclude the view that the development of the liturgy during the Middle Ages, which gradually encompassed the monumental edifice of the Gregorian-Roman rite of the Mass with the exuberant growth of numerous prayers, chants, and customs, did not stop entirely at the sanctuary of the Canon, but also here gave expression to the overflowing feelings by many well-meant, but not always appropriate, additions. The Roman Church has always cut down to right proportions at the proper time all the superfluous accessories produced by the piety of ages, and also, while preserving whatever possessed any durable value, to reform the liturgy in accordance with its ancient forms. Thus amid a wealth of prayers and rites she yet preserved that strictly logical clearness and preciseness which non-Catholics so greatly admire in the Roman liturgy. Hence the many changes and additions in the text of the Canon which were produced during the Middle Ages, have disappeared partly already since the thirteenth century, and wholly since the reform of St. Pius V in 1570.”¹¹

The Canon is, therefore, through its origin, antiquity, and use, venerable, inviolable, and sacred. If ever a prayer of the Church came into existence under the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, it is assuredly the prayer of the Canon. It is permeated throughout by the spirit of faith and with the sweet odor of devotion; it is a holy work, full of force and unction. Its simple language, by its pithiness and its antique and Scriptural stamp, produces a touching effect on the mind of him who prays and offers the sacrifice; it charms the soul, just like the dimly lit, ancient, venerable basilicas of the Eternal City. It is a pleasure and a joy to the heart to still

reperiuntur. . . . Primam partem canonis praedicti ex eo vel maxime antiquam esse cognoscimus, quia in ea ordo apostolorum non ita est positus, sicut in emendatioribus evangelii invenitur; quod ideo fortasse evenit, quia pars illa prius composita est, quam evangelia ad eam veritatem, quae nunc habetur apud Latinos, corrigentur (Walafrid Strabo, chap. 23).

¹¹ Ebner, *Quellen und Forschungen*, p. 394.

utter the very same words at the altar which so many devout and holy priests throughout the entire Church and in all ages have always used in praying and offering the sacrifice. Already in the times of the martyrs and in the chapels of the catacombs these prayers of the Canon of the Mass were recited and sanctified.

2. **The silent recitation of the Canon.** The manner in which the Canon is to be recited deserves special notice and explanation. It is a strict ordinance of the Church that the Canon be said silently (*secreto*): in a voice so subdued that the celebrant may hear himself, but not be heard by those around him.¹² Historical testimonies and reasons drawn from the nature of the thing justify the most general assumption that it has been a custom from the earliest times¹³ to pronounce in silence the words of consecration, as well as the whole Canon (excepting, of course, in the case of concelebration, which formerly was of more frequent occurrence). Still it is not merely the Church's scrupulous solicitude with which she preserves

¹² At the ordination of a priest, all the silent prayers of Mass are pronounced somewhat aloud (*aliquantum alte*) by the ordaining bishop and the newly ordained co-celebrants. *Ordinandi circa altare in genua provoluti disponuntur, et Episcopus quasi eos doceat Missam celebrare, lente ac paululum elata voce Secretas profert, non eas ut populus audiat, sed ut sacerdotes novissime initiati cum eo possint eas recitare, et verba consecrationis uno eodemque tempore cum Episcopo pronuntiare, ad exemplum Christi, qui voce, quae ab Apostolis audiri potuit, in ultima coena panem et vinum consecravit, ut eos, quos tunc sacerdotio initiabat, doceret consecrandi modum legitimumque ritum ad consummationem usque saeculi duraturum (Bened. XIV, De ss. Missae sacrif., II, xxiii, 7).*

¹³ In the Greek and Oriental liturgies the words of consecration are said in a loud and high tone of voice, whereupon the people each time by Amen (= so be it) express their faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Cardinal Bona was of the opinion that formerly in the Western Church also all heard the *sanctissima et efficacissima verba, quibus Christi corpus conficitur (Rer. liturg., II, xiii, 1)*, and he presumes that it is only since the tenth century that the silent recitation of the words of the institution has been prescribed. But the arguments he adduces are unreliable. The very ancient *Ordo Rom. II* (which probably dates from the seventh or eighth century), explained by Amalarius in his *Ecloga*, has the following rubric: *Quae [sc. Praefationem et Trisagium] dum expleverint, surgit solus Pontifex et tacite intrat in Canonem.* According to Mabillon it is prescribed in the oldest Roman *Ordines*: *ut Pontifice Canonem recitante summum in choro teneatur silentium, et ministri perstent inclinati et silentes per totum Canonem. Canonem non incipiebat sacerdos nisi absoluto Trisagii cantu, ut scil. clerus et populus, sacerdote Canonem submissa voce recitante, in admiratione tanti mysterii quasi stupens sileret (In Ord. Rom. comment., chap. 21).*

the original traditions in performing the sacred mysteries, but there are other weighty reasons that move her to adhere so earnestly to the precept that the Canon be said in silence and that the Eucharistic sacrifice be accomplished without audible words. We will here cite the chief reason that demonstrates, not indeed the necessity, but the expediency and appropriateness of the recitation of the Canon in silence.

a) The silent recitation of the Canon betokens the consecration and sacrificial act to be an exclusively priestly function.¹⁴ The prayers of the Canon, being liturgical, are therefore to be recited not merely mentally, but also vocally (*vocaliter*), that is, the words must be pronounced with the mouth. But this recitation of the Canon must be made softly, so as to be inaudible to those who are around, and yet audible to the priest himself. This last circumstance is to be noticed, since there is a difference in the recitation of the Canon and the Divine Office, for in the recitation of the latter it is not necessary that he who prays should hear himself. The silent recitation of the Canon is in contrast to the loud recitation of the preceding prayers.¹⁵ Whereas the loud tone of voice invites those present to join with the priest, and reminds them that the prayers are said in common, the silent recitation appropriately indicates that here is a mystery, which the consecrated priest alone can accomplish, not the people.¹⁶ To consecrate the material elements, to offer the body and blood of Christ, is a priestly privilege: the congregation present can contribute nothing to the accomplish-

¹⁴ Canon secreto agitur, eo quod haec immolatio ad solum pertinet sacerdotem (Sicard., III, chap. 8).

¹⁵ The rubrics distinguish a twofold or threefold tone of voice: *vox secreta* and *vox clara, alta, intelligibilis*; in the middle between the two (the silent and loud pronunciation) is the *vox paululum elevata, vox parum elata, vox aliquantum elevata* (half aloud). The expression *vox submissa* (= falling, lowered, low) often designates moderately loud, sometimes silent pronunciation. In the Middle Ages the Canon was often called *Secretum vel Secreta Missae*, because it was recited *secreto* or *secrete* (= in silence). The word *secretus* (selected, set apart, separated) signifies, at the same time, that the priest recites the sacrificial prayer in silence and secrecy, because in it he in a special manner takes the part of mediator, raised above the people and separated from sinners.

¹⁶ Sacerdos quaedam dicit publice, sc. quae pertinent et ad sacerdotem et ad populum, sicut sunt orationes communes; quaedam vero pertinent ad solum sacerdotem, sicut oblatio et consecratio, et ideo, quae circa haec sunt dicenda, occulte a sacerdote dicuntur (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 4 ad 6).

ment of the sacrificial act. This is symbolically indicated by the silent recitation of the Canon. The priest does not here, as in the other portions of the Mass, commune with the people; he has entered into the holy of holies, there to commune with God alone and to pray and sacrifice for the whole Church. Moses was alone on the top of the mountain; he conversed with God and God answered him. Thus does the priest stand alone at the altar, when, as the representative and minister of Christ, the eternal high priest, he accomplishes and offers up the Holy Sacrifice for the entire Church.

b) The silent recitation of the Canon harmonizes very beautifully with the accomplishment and the essence of the mystery of the Eucharistic sacrifice. The material elements are changed into Christ's body and blood without either the senses perceiving it or the created mind being able to comprehend it; the real presence and sacrificial life of the Saviour under the sacramental species is concealed beyond all discernment. In every host there are miracles, as numerous as stars in the firmament, yet not the slightest trace of the wonders appears externally. With all this the ecclesiastical rite harmonizes perfectly. The holy silence is quite suited to indicate and to recall the concealment and depth, the incomprehensibility and ineffableness of the wonderful mysteries that are enacted on the altar.¹⁷

c) Silent prayer is related to religious silence, and therefore expresses the humility, reverence, admiration, and awe with which the Church administers and adores the mystery of the altar. "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him" (Hab. 2: 20). The sight of the priest at the altar, communing in profound stillness with God alone, is, therefore, also an excellent means to arouse and promote in those who are present the proper dispositions with which they should admire, adore, and offer along with the priest, so grand and sublime a sacrifice. "How terrible is this hour!" Thus does the deacon cry out to the people in the Syrian liturgy. While the tremendous sacrifice is being accomplished on the altar, all present should be immersed in silent and devout contemplation of the divine mysteries. Now, precisely this mute silence that reigns at the altar during the most sacred moments of the sacrifice and directs attention to the mysteriousness of the sacrificial

¹⁷ The Canon is recited *secreta voce ad significandum quod humana ratio nequaquam tantum mysterium plenarie capere potest* (Sicard., III, chap. 6).

act, forms the loudest summons to enter silently into ourselves, to be recollected in mind, and to stir our hearts to devotion.¹⁸ The silent recitation of the Canon disposes the faithful to interior adoration and reverent celebration of the heavenly mysteries¹⁹ by which God so graciously favors and blesses us poor mortals.

d) In addition to the principal reasons already mentioned, it must be remarked that the foreign language and the silent recitation serve to withdraw the sacred words of the Canon from ordinary intercourse and to protect them against every desecration.

e) Finally, a mystical reason may be alleged. The priest at the altar is the representative and image of the praying and sacrificing Saviour. Now, as on the Mount of Olives and on the cross Jesus prayed not only in loud tones, but also in a low voice and in the silence of His heart to His Father, so it is proper that the priest should also pray in a loud voice and in silent whisper when he renews on the altar the sacrifice of the cross.²⁰ The altar becomes not merely the cross, but also the crib; for at the moment of consecration the marvels of Bethlehem as well as those of Golgotha are renewed. While deep silence pervaded all things and the night was in the midst of its course, the almighty Word of God descended from His royal throne in heaven to the crib of Bethlehem; in like manner the King of Glory at the consecration comes down upon the altar amid the most profound silence.

3. **The meaning of the prayers of the Canon.** Prayer forms the liturgical accompaniment of the sacrifice. The Canon contains those prayers which most closely relate to the Eucharistic sacrifice. They are oblation prayers, which refer to the Consecration; for they contain in part petitions for the blessing and consecration of the

¹⁸ Silentium laus est quaedam, tum interna animi Deum venerantis, tum externa, quia alios excitat ad Dei laudem, dum in sacris vident tantam modestiam et religionem (Corn. a Lap., *In Levit.*, 1:17).

¹⁹ Secretis verbis Canon pronuntiatur etiam alio respectu, videl. ut habito circumquaque silentio ministri et circumstantes seipsos infra ipsum Canonem recolligant vimque et rationem tanti sacramenti advertant, quatenus eis proficiat (Hildeb. Turon., *Expositio Missae*). Silentium hoc compluribus altiori voce recitatis precibus interruptum nescio quid majestatis ac mysterii prae se fert, quod majorem venerationem conciliat, quod sacrum quendam horrorem excitat, quod devotam cordis compunctionem inspirat quodque vivo pietatis sensu adstantium animos penetrat (Languet, *De vero Eccl. sensu circa sacr. cerem. usum*, chap. 41).

²⁰ Oratio secreta sacerdotis commemoratio quaedam est secretae orationis Christi vel in horto vel in cruce (Suarez, disp. LXXXIII, sect. 1, n. 25).

sacrificial elements, in part an offering of the sacrificial body and blood of Christ, and in part supplications to obtain and to apply the fruits of the sacrifice. As to their contents, they harmonize with the foregoing prayers of the Offertory, and we behold in them a copy of the prayers of our divine Saviour. During His life and at His death He prayed continually. The longest and most solemn, fervent, and touching prayer of the Lord is the one which He uttered when He was about to accomplish His sacrifice on the cross; His prayer as high priest.²¹ In it He makes known to whom, for whom, and for what purpose He would offer His sacrificial death; He supplicates for His disciples and for all who would believe in Him: for the entire Church militant. He besought the Father to fill all the faithful in time and in eternity with His saving gifts: to preserve them here below in unity, keep them in truth, and sanctify them by grace, that hereafter they might be transformed in beatitude and behold His glory.²² Does not this prayer of the high priest resound throughout the Canon of the Mass, wherein the Church expresses what gifts of grace she would draw for herself and for all her children from the Holy Sacrifice? How powerful and effective do these petitions and intercessions of the Church become, as they ascend to the throne of mercy in union with the voice of the blood of Christ, which more loudly and more strongly cries to heaven than did the blood of Abel!

The Canon ushers in the holiest and most sacred moments of the sacrificial celebration; this part of the Mass, still more than any of the other portions, claims attention, devotion, and reverence.²³ The

²¹ It is the most sublime prayer that ever proceeded from human lips: gentle emotion, mournful gravity, and a kind of devout melancholy are diffused throughout its composition in such a degree that it brings our high priest in an incomparable manner before the soul in the greatness of His divine liberality, as well as in the purity of a truly human affection: a high priest "who can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err, because He Himself also is compassed with infirmity" (Heb. 5:2).

²² Hoc ut tempore sacrificii postulemus, saluberrimum habemus nostri Salvatoris exemplum, qui hoc nos in commemoratione mortis ejus poscere voluit, quod nobis ipse, verus Pontifex, morti proximus postulavit . . . hoc ergo nobis poscimus, cum corpus et sanguinem Christi offerimus, quod nobis poposcit, quando se pro nobis offerre dignatus est Christus (S. Fulgent., *Contra Fabian.*, fragm. 28).

²³ Quamvis in toto officio Missae debeat celebrans omnibus viribus suis esse attentus atque sollicitus, tamen ab exordio Canonis debet *omnino relectus* consistere et mente ad divina suspensus, in quantum humana fragilitas

heart should be occupied only with the divine function and be to all extraneous thoughts and cares as "a garden enclosed" and "a fountain sealed up" (Cant. 4:12). Above all, the passion and death of Christ should be devoutly meditated upon.²⁴ We are exhorted to this by the image of the Crucified, which is placed before the Canon in order that the painful and bloody death of Christ may be presented to our view in a striking manner. Some persons also recognize from the circumstance that the Canon commences with the letter T a certain special and divine intercession.²⁵ For the Tau (T) bears a resemblance to the cross,²⁶ and already in the prophets it is the seal of the elect who are spared the chastisements of God, or the sign of deliverance, life, and salvation, which the predestined bear on their foreheads. "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem," thus says the Lord, "and mark Tau upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and mourn for all the abominations that are committed in the midst thereof" (Ezech. 9:4; cf. Apoc. 7:3).

fieri sustinet et Spiritus sancti clementia conferre dignatur, et ut talem gratiam a Deo in hac parte Missae mereatur recipere, sic tenetur ante celebrationem et postmodum vivere gratusque esse, quatenus tunc visitari atque illuminari sit dignus, nec est melior praeparatio ad celebrandum, quam ut sacerdos in omni vita sua sic conversari conetur, ut sit hujus Sacramenti condignus minister (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 19).

²⁴ Notandum per totum Canonem Dominicae passionis commemorationem potissimum actitari. . . . Unde et ipse sacerdos per totum Canonem in expansione manuum non tam mentis devotionem quam Christi extensionem in cruce designat . . . congruum est ut manus expandamus infra Canonem, hoc tamen observato, ne quid digitis tangamus praeter Domini corpus (Micol., chap. 16). The *Ordo Rom. XIV*, chap. 71, also has after the Consecration the rubric: *Hic [Pontifex] ampliet manus et brachia*. According to our *Roman Missal*, on the contrary, the celebrant says most of the prayers of the Canon before and after the Consecration *extensis manibus ante pectus*. (Cf. Quarti, *In Rubr. Missal.*, II, tit. 9, sect. 1, dub. 1.)

²⁵ Inter Praefationem et Canonem in plerisque sacramentariis imago Christi depingitur, ut non solum intellectus litterae, verum etiam adspetus picturae memoriam dominicae passionis inspiret. Et forte divina factum est providentia, licet humana non sit industria procuratum, ut ab ea littera T Canon inciperet, quae sui forma signum crucis ostendit et exprimit in figura (Innocent. III, III, chap. 2).

²⁶ There are three kinds of crosses: (1) the *crux decussata*, that is, the transverse cross \times ; (2) the *crux immissa* $+$; and the *crux commissa* T. The last form is similar to the T and is, therefore, also called the T cross. Cf. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, IV, 517-38.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE FIRST PRAYER OF THE CANON

Te igitur, clementissime Pater, per Jesum Christum Filium tuum Dominum nostrum, supplices rogamus ac petimus, uti accepta habeas, et benedicas, haec ✠ dona, haec ✠ munera, haec ✠ sancta sacrificia illibata; in primis quae tibi offerimus pro Ecclesia tua sancta catholica: quam pacificare, custodire, adunare, et regere digneris toto orbe terrarum: una cum famulo tuo Papa nostro N., et Antistite nostro N., et omnibus orthodoxis atque catholicae et apostolicae fidei cultoribus.

Commemoratio pro Vivis

Memento, Domine, famulorum famularumque tuarum N. et N. et omnium circumstantium, quorum tibi fides cognita est et nota devotio: pro quibus tibi offerimus, vel qui tibi offerunt hoc sacrificium laudis, pro se suisque omnibus: pro redemptione animarum suarum, pro spe

We therefore humbly pray and beseech Thee, most merciful Father, through Jesus Christ Thy Son, our Lord, that Thou wouldst accept and bless these ✠ gifts, these ✠ presents, these ✠ holy unspotted sacrifices, which, in the first place, we offer Thee for Thy holy Catholic Church, which Thou mayest vouchsafe to pacify, protect, unite, and govern throughout the world: together with Thy servant N. our pope, N. our bishop, as also all orthodox believers and promoters of the catholic and apostolic faith.

The Commemoration of the Living

Remember, O Lord, Thy servants and handmaids, N. and N., and all here present, whose faith and devotion are known to Thee; for whom we offer, or who offer up to Thee this sacrifice of praise for themselves and all pertaining to them, for the redemption of their souls, for the

salutis et incolumitatis suae: tibi que reddunt vota sua aeterno Deo, vivo et vero.

Infra Actionem

Communicantes et memoriam venerantes, in primis gloriosae semper Virginis Mariae, genitricis Dei et Domini nostri Jesu Christi: sed et beatorum Apostolorum ac Martyrum tuorum, Petri et Pauli, Andreae, Jacobi, Joannis, Thomae, Jacobi, Philippi, Bartholomaei, Matthaei, Simonis et Thaddaei: Lini, Cleti, Clementis, Xysti, Cornelii, Cypriani, Laurentii, Chrysogoni, Joannis et Pauli, Cosmae et Damiani: et omnium Sanctorum tuorum, quorum meritis precibusque concedas, ut in omnibus protectionis tuae muniamur auxilio. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

hope of their salvation and safety, and who pay their vows to Thee, the eternal God, living and true.

Within the Canon

In communion with and honoring the memory, first, of the glorious ever Virgin Mary, Mother of God and our Lord Jesus Christ; and also of Thy blessed apostles and martyrs, Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Thaddeus, Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian, and all Thy saints; by whose merits and prayers grant that we may be defended in all things by the aid of Thy protection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

The above formula of prayer consists of three parts; all three parts are united and form a whole, one complete prayer, as is evident from the context and the single concluding formula, *Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum*.¹

1. a) The beginning of the prayer is introduced, or accompanied, by several ceremonies which serve to emphasize its contents in an impressive manner. Before presenting his petition to God, the priest raises his hands and eyes to express the elevation of his soul and to indicate that he is addressing the Father in heaven

¹ The prayers of the Canon have only the short concluding formula (three times *per eundem Chr. Dom. nostr.*, who shortly before is mentioned in the last member of the prayer, and twice *per Christ. Dom. nostr.*). In ipsa quinaria conclusione non incongrue quinaria Domini vulneratio intimatur (Microlog., *De eccles. observat.*, chap. 16).

and seeking help from God on high. But presently he lowers his eyes and hands, bows profoundly, and places his joined hands on the altar; in this posture he begins the Canon.² What posture of the body could be more appropriate for the priest at this moment, when with all humility and reverence he suppliantly addresses the Lord, who "is high above all nations . . . and looketh down on the low things in heaven and in earth" (Ps. 112:4, 6)? Before the words "that Thou wouldst accept and bless," the priest kisses the altar,³ and while he is saying, "these gifts, these presents, these holy unspotted sacrifices," with his hand he makes the sign of the cross three times over the oblation. As at the blessing at the end of Mass, the kissing of the altar and the sign of the cross have a close relationship with one another: both constitute a ritual whole in themselves, the symbolical significance of which is to be inferred from the prayer that is recited at the same time. The priest prays with great fervor for the blessing of the Eucharistic elements, and as they are designated by three different names, he makes at the same time the sign of the cross over the elements three times, that word and action may harmonize perfectly. The text, therefore, in this instance requires that the sign of the cross be conceived as a sign of blessing.⁴ If now the making of the sign of the cross over the sacrificial gifts is a true blessing, then the kissing of the altar that preceded should be conceived as an introduction to it. The priest indeed kisses the altar to evince his sentiments of reverence, homage, and subjection;

² The opinion of Quarti and Merati, that the words *Te igitur* are not to be said until after the inclination, is better founded than that of Gavanti and Cavalieri, that the Canon prayers are to be commenced at the same time as the elevation of the hands and eyes. (Cf. Bouvry, *Expositio Rubric.*, II, Part III, sect. 3, tit. 8.)

³ Hic osculatur sacerdos altare (Sicard. [d. 1215], *Mitral.*, III, chap. 6). Ancient writers do not mention this kissing of the altar. However, it was formerly (in some places even until the end of the fifteenth century) the custom, before beginning the Canon, to kiss the image of the Crucified (the cross) in the missal. The *Ordo Rom. XIV* (of the beginning of the fourteenth century) has the following rubric (chap. 53): Capellano praesentante sibi librum missalem, Pontifex osculetur imagines, quae debent esse depictae in eodem libro ante Canonem Missae. Subsequenter manibus junctis inclinatus ante incipiat submissa voce *Te igitur* etc. et cum dicet *uti accepta habeas*, erigat se et osculetur altare in parte sinistra prope hostiam.

⁴ Terna crucis signa sunt verae benedictiones, quibus Dei invocatur omnipotentia, ut oblata in corpus et sanguinem Christi convertat. Ternarius autem signorum crucis numerus hocce mysterium a S. Trinitate perfici indicat (Cavalieri, V, xvi, 4).

but here by this kiss he would mainly renew and represent symbolically the union of love with Christ, because he draws from his relation with Christ all the power of blessing, which he then by the three signs of the cross⁵ pours out, as it were, over the elements of sacrifice.

b) The opening words of the prayer, *Te igitur*, join what follows to what precedes and show how intimately the Canon is connected with the Preface, and also with the Offertory: because we have presented to Thee, O most merciful Father, thanksgivings, praises, and homages, we now again address ourselves to Thee with a petition. According to the example and admonition of the Saviour, the Church addresses this prayer to the Father; at the same time presenting her supplication in such a manner as to deserve to be answered. For she calls upon God as the "most merciful Father," she implores Him "through Jesus Christ," she supplicates with humility and earnestness.⁶ God is addressed as the "most merciful Father" because, on account of His exceedingly great love and goodness, He

⁵ At least since the eleventh century in the Canon, as at present, the sign of the cross is made over the oblations in seven places (altogether twenty-five times). (Cf. Innocent. III, *De sacr. alt. myst.*, V, chap. 14.) With the exception of the two signs of the Cross at the words *sacrosanctum Filii tui corpus et sanguinem* (*Supplices te rogamus*), all the others are mentioned already during the ninth century. (Cf. *Ordo Rom. II*, n. 10: In Canone sex ordines crucium observantur; Amalar. [d. about 847], *Eclog. in Ord. Roman. II*, n. 22.) Micrologus declares: Imparem numerum semper in dispensatione signorum super oblationem observamus, videl. unam crucem vel tres vel quinque faciendo, et hoc utique non sine certi causa mysterii. Nam in una et tribus unum et trinum Deum intimamus. In quinque autem quinquepartitam Domini passionem significamus (*De ecclesiast. observat.*, chap. 14). Attende quod fere in quolibet ordine per *imparem* numerum signacula disponuntur, quia corpus Christi unum permanens non scinditur (Sicard., *Mitral.*, III, chap. 6).

⁶ Praeinducta verba Canonis igne divini amoris redundant ac igniunt, unde cum ardentissimo mentis affectu promenda sunt. Porro oratio *ardens* et *humilis* esse debet; nam desiderium pauperum, i.e. ardentem affectum humilium exaudivit Dominus: qui enim ardentem orat, valde cavere debet, ne propriis meritis innitatur vel confidat. Rursus, qui suis meritis non confidit, sed humiliter orat, omnino vitare habet, ne in orando pusillanimis efficiatur aut segnis. Ut ergo Spiritus Sanctus, qui utique *principaliter est auctor Canonis*, ad talem orationem nos incitaret, idcirco in ipso exordio Canonis duo verba praemisit, quorum alterum dilectionem inflamat, videlicet "*Pater*," alterum fiduciam exauditionis praestat propter bonitatem ejus, qui petitur, scilicet "*clementissime*," et ad designandam atque augendam interiorum cordis humiliationem inclinatur se sacerdos ante altare praedicta verba dicendo (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 19).

is ever inclined, not to judge and punish according to the full rigor of the law, but to have mercy and to spare, inasmuch as He remits in part or entirely the merited punishments.⁷ "In God's works and judgments," St. Leo remarks, "all is full of true justice and merciful sweetness."⁸ It is with filial confidence, therefore, that we pray to the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort" (II Cor. 1:3), whose indulgent and forgiving love here below is without measure or limit; He is sweet and mild and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon Him (Ps. 85:5), and consequently ever attentive to the voice of our supplication. But all the more attentive will He be because we have offered our petitions "through Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord." In His Son, Jesus Christ, God has had compassion upon us and given us the spirit of adoption, by which we call Him "Father" and in prayer may address Him as "our Father." Through His Son, "our Lord, Jesus Christ," the Father hears our petitions and bestows upon us all benefits.

As we draw near to the infinite majesty and holiness of the Eucharistic sacrifice, conscious of our wretchedness and sinfulness, we pray with humble dispositions and sentiments of heart (*supplices*⁹); for prayer penetrates more powerfully through the clouds to the throne of God, the more profoundly the one that prays abases himself interiorly and exteriorly. Finally, we present our petitions with fervor, with devout importunity and a holy vehemence; for the accumulated expressions *rogamus ac petimus* ("we pray and beseech") proceed from the greatness and earnestness of our desires.¹⁰

We beseech so persistently and imploringly because the object

⁷ Ad *clementiam* pertinet, quod sit *diminutiva poenarum*; in hoc, quod diminuit poenas, clementia maxime videtur accedere ad caritatem, quae est potissima virtutum, per quam bona operamur ad proximos et eorum mala impedimus (S. Thom., II, IIae, q. 157, a. 1-4).

⁸ *Serm.*, I (*de jejuniis*), 10. mens.

⁹ *Supplex* (from *sub* and *plico*, hence, strictly, bending the knee, kneeling down, hence) = to humble one's self, humbly imploring.

¹⁰ Vehemens petendi affectus geminatione verbi deprecatorii exprimitur, scil. *rogamus ac petimus*. Accumulantur verba petitionem explicantia ad significandam ipsius affectus nostri magnitudinem (Clichtov., *Elucid. eccl.*, III, n. 4). Some writers endeavor to distinguish the signification of these two words. Rogatio ostendit humilitatem, petitio confidentiam; qui aliquid implorat, humilitatem debet ostendere et de impetratione confidere. Itaque *supplices rogamus, confidenter petimus* (B. Odo Camerac., *Exposit. in Canon.*, dist. 1).

of our ardent desire is so sublime and holy: the gracious acceptance and the blessing of the sacrificial elements of bread and wine prepared on the altar.¹¹ The purpose for which God is to "accept" the material gifts is expressed by the word "bless." By the blessing here implored is to be understood: first, the preparatory dedication of the bread and the wine to God, then the real consecration of these material gifts, and finally, the fullness of grace concealed under the consecrated elements and diffusing itself throughout the Church.¹² Now the Father is invoked, as was previously the Holy Ghost, "to bless" the elements of bread and wine, that is, to sanctify them beforehand for their exalted destiny, then to change them into the body and blood of Christ, and thus to make them for us the source of grace. For this copious blessing we must pray because it is a gift of the condescending love and a work of the almighty power of the triune God.¹³

The Eucharistic elements are designated and distinguished by three names,¹⁴ inasmuch as we pray that God may accept and bless "these presents, these gifts, these holy unspotted sacrifices." Elsewhere, notably in the *Secreta*, each of these three words alone is often used to signify the sacrificial elements. They all indeed designate one and the same thing: the host and the chalice containing the

¹¹ Oblationem nostram, quaesumus, Domine, misericorditer acceptare et sanctificare digneris, ut ejus sanctificatione nobis salus proveniat et defensio sempiterna (*Sacrament. Gregor.*). *Acceptus* (graciously received) = welcome, agreeable, pleasing; *acceptum habere* = *acceptare*, to receive, to be contented with. *Acceptabis* (εὐδοκῆσεως) sacrificium, oblationes et holocausta (Ps. 50: 21). Sacerdotum est offerre et majestatem Dei invocare; Dei est autem dignanter suscipere et ea quae offeruntur benedicere (Florus Diac., *De actione Miss.*, n. 43).

¹² Petimus, ut Deus Pater benedicat haec dona, h. e. ut benedictionem suae virtutis et gratiae illis infundat, ut idonea sint tam digno sacramenta (Clichtov. *loc. cit.*, n. 5). Uti . . . benedicas, i.e. gratia et virtute coelesti perfundas atque sanctifices convertendo ea in corpus et sanguinem Christi (Dion. Carthus. *Exposit. Miss.*, art. 18). Petimus, ut Deus acceptet et benedicat haec dona ad totius Ecclesiae fructum et utilitatem (Suarez, disp. LXXXIII, sect. 2, n. 6).

¹³ Efficacia verborum sacramentalium impediri potest per intentionem sacerdotis. Nec tamen est inconueniens quod a Deo petamus id quod certissime scimus ipsum facturum, sicut Christus (Joan., chap. 17) petit suam clarificationem (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 4 ad 7).

¹⁴ Quod subjungitur: haec dona, haec munera, haec sancta sacrificia illibata, non aliud atque aliud dicitur; sed res una pro sua magnitudine diversa appellatione laudatur et laudando commendatur. Ipsa sermonum repetitio tanti sacramenti est commendatio et piaev devotionis excitatio (Flor. Diacon., *op. cit.*, n. 44).

wine. The elements of bread and wine are called "presents" (*dona*) and "gifts" (*munera*) in so far as they are simply regarded in the light of religious offerings, which we dedicate and present to our Lord; they are called "sacrifices" (*sacrificia*) even before the Consecration, in so far as they are prepared and destined soon to be consecrated into the true body and blood of Christ.¹⁵ In consideration of their sublime destiny, the Eucharistic elements are not called simply "sacrifices," but "holy unspotted sacrifices" (*sancta sacrificia illibata*);¹⁶ for it is the "Holy of holies," the Lamb without stain or blemish, that is offered under the appearances of bread and wine. Yet the matter itself of the sacrifice can be called "holy," inasmuch as it has previously been separated from profane use and dedicated to the service of God; it can likewise be designated as "unspotted" because in its selection and preparation religious care was taken that the sacrificial bread and wine should be faultless and without any foreign admixture.¹⁷

The sacrificial gifts designated are offered up to God for the

¹⁵ Bread and wine vocantur sacrificia per anticipationem, quia sunt materia, ex qua conficiendum est sacrificium, et dicuntur sacrificia initiative, quia praeparantur in sacrificium (Quarti, II, tit. 9, sect. 2, dub. 1).

¹⁶ The sacrificial gifts on the altar (*sacrificia*) are called *illibata*, inasmuch as in their natural state they are inviolable, uninjured, sound (that is, *sine defectibus*, as they are cited in the missal); *sancta*, inasmuch as, by a supernatural dedication, they are consecrated to God, they belong to God, and, therefore, as the property of God, they are holy, venerable, inviolate and not to be touched. Ex hoc verbo (sc. *illibata*) admonemur, ut appositus panis integer sit et nulla fractione vel laesura violatus (B. Odo Camerac., *Exposit. in Canon.*, dist. 1).

¹⁷ Donum est, quod a superiore datur, munus, quod ab inferiore. Unde panis et vinum sunt *dona* a Deo nobis donata, *munera* a nobis Deo oblata; solemus enim illos munerare, a quibus aliquid volumus obtinere. Eadem sunt sacrificia *sancta*, scil. Deo dicata et ad sacrificium sanctum praeparata. *Illibata* sunt nec corporali gustu nec aliqua fractione vitiata, sed integra et intacta (Stephan. Augustod., *De sacram. altar.*, chap. 13). *Dona illibata*, quia ad litteram pura et integra esse debent propter significationem et reverentiam tanti sacramenti: non enim debet panis maculosus esse vel vinum permixtum, nisi cum modica aqua (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 18). Dicuntur pluralitatis numero *dona*, *munera* et *sacrificia*, quoniam panis et vini, antequam consecrantur, alia et alia est substantia et una ab altera re ipsa discrepans, quae substantiarum diversitas numero multitudinis apte exprimitur: nam hoc loco ipsa demonstrantur ante factam consecrationem. Ea vero consummata, interdum etiam adhuc nomine consimili et multitudinem indicante explicantur, et *sacramenta* aut *sacrificia* dicuntur, non quidem ob substantiarum (quae jam conversae sunt) varietatem, sed ob *specierum*, sub quibus tam sancta continentur mysteria *diversitatem* (Clichtov., *Elucid. eccl.*, III, n. 6).

welfare of the Church and her members. But since not the natural matter of bread and wine, but the body and blood of Christ alone are the real sacrifice of the Church and her fountains of grace, it is evident that this offering cannot exclusively have for its object the gifts of bread and wine, but must also be referred principally to that which they are soon to become, the sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.¹⁸ The full meaning of our prayer may thus be expressed: We beseech Thee, O Father, that Thou wouldst accept and bless these material gifts, which we present to Thee, in order that, by the blessing of consecration, they may become a heavenly, healing fountain for the Church.¹⁹ It is, therefore, the sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ which we have especially in view when offering the bread and wine, and through which we implore and expect all the gifts of salvation.

Principally and "in the first place" (*in primis*) the Eucharistic sacrifice is offered for the "holy Catholic Church" of God;²⁰ hence from every Mass there flow to her abundant fruits and blessings. The heavenly Father is the Lord of the Church, and the Church is His property. He has purchased her with the precious blood of His Son; hence she belongs to Him, and she is bound to serve Him. As the Church of the "living God," she is "holy"; and the sacrifice of

¹⁸ Per haec dona, ut nunc coram Deo proponuntur, nihil postulatur, sed per sacrificium, ad quod destinantur, et per Christum offerendum in eodem sacrificio (Quarti, *loc. cit.*).

¹⁹ Non offerimus panem et vinum pro Ecclesia simpliciter et absolute, vel tanquam sacrificium principaliter finaliterque intentum, sed tali respectu et intentione, ut convertantur divina virtute in corpus et sanguinem Christi, sicque offeramus Patri coelesti sacrificium perfectum et sanctum, videlicet corpus et sanguinem Filii sui carissimi (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 19). Cum dicimus, nos offerre panem Deo pro Ecclesia, sensus est, nos offerre Deo panem consecrandum et ex quo per consecrationem verum sacrificium Deo immolandum est pro ecclesia. (Bellarm., *De Missa*, II, chap. 21.)

²⁰ Intende *cur* celebres celebrareque debeas. Nempe *propter easdem causas, ob quas Christus se obtulit in cruce Deo Patri*, tu quoque eum offerre debes eidem in altari: h. e. primo et principaliter pro tota Ecclesia, pro infidelium conversione, pro fidelium reformatione, pro universorum salute, pro occurrentibus causis et necessitatibus quibuscunque, pro propinquis, commissis et benefactoribus tuis fidelibusque defunctis, et pro quibus ex speciali causa vis exorare, atque pro tui ipsius condigna emendatione in omnibus. Ut ergo utcunque pro viribus tuis existas idoneus deprecari et offerre pro tantis ac talibus causis, satage et indefesse conare teipsum Deo placitum exhibere, ei familiariter adhaerere, ipsum intra te amore complecti, sinceriter contemplari omnique die magis ferventer diligere (Dion. Carthus., *De sacram. Euchar. serm.*, III).

the Mass is precisely that inexhaustible fountain of holiness, in the splendor of which the Church shines always more or less brightly. The holy Church of God is also "catholic," that is, universal, since she extends over the whole earth and continues to live and work throughout all ages, until time shall merge into eternity. She is that stately, majestic tree of life which affords shelter to the whole world, and under whose branches all nations have always been gathered.

Four graces are here implored for the Church by virtue of the Eucharistic sacrifice; we beg the Lord to grant to her and preserve her peace (*pacificare*), to protect and to shelter her (*custodire*), to give her unity and confirm her therein (*adunare*), to guide and to direct her (*regere*), and this "throughout the world," from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof.

a) We pray that the Lord may grant peace to His Church, complete interior and exterior peace. This peace, rich in blessings, facilitates the exercise of her great mission, which consists principally in imparting to mankind the treasures of divine truth and grace; it assists the Church to save souls, to consecrate and sanctify the temporal life in all its forms and relations. Peace is "the tranquillity of order" (St. Augustine) and enables us to "lead a quiet and peaceable life in all piety and chastity" (I Tim. 2:2). Hence the Church so often and so fervently prays: "Grant, O Lord, peace in our days; for there is no other that combats for us, than Thou our Lord and God." She ardently desires "to overcome all error and opposition in order to be enabled to serve the Lord with perfect freedom." But how can the Church be able to live long in peace in a world filled with unbelief and immorality? Her journey throughout the ages has always been a warlike pilgrimage. She is here below at all times the Church militant; she must strive and combat until she reaches the heavenly Jerusalem. Thus the Church must at all times be ready as "an army in battle array," and must persevere in combating the deceit and power of her numberless enemies, who are unceasingly intent on harassing and enslaving her, perverting and destroying her.²¹ To whom then should she have recourse but to God, who is her safeguard and her helper?

²¹ *Ecclesia Dei, semper in procinctu posita, incessabili pugna contra inimicos dimicat (Pontif. Roman., De ordinat. diaconi).*

b) Hence we implore that God may be pleased, amid all assaults and oppressions, to protect and defend His Church as the apple of His eye; that He vouchsafe to shelter her under the shadow of His wings, until the wicked shall have passed away (Ps. 16:8). We beseech the Lord to save the shepherd and the sheepfold from the rage of ravenous wolves, from the bite of venomous serpents. He has promised His Church protection and victory over all her adversaries. If God protects His people, His kingdom, His Church, what then can the gates of hell avail against them? We may, therefore, in time of persecution and tribulation cry out confidently: "Our God is our refuge and strength, a helper in troubles which have found us exceedingly. Therefore we will not fear when the earth shall be troubled and the mountains shall be removed into the heart of the sea. . . . Nations were troubled and kingdoms were bowed down; He uttered His voice, the earth trembled. The Lord of armies is with us, the God of Jacob is our protector" (Ps. 45:2 f., 7 f.).

c) The Church is strong and invincible in combat only through the union and harmony of her members; therefore we pray that God may unite His Church, that is, constantly preserve and confirm her in that grand unity, wrought through the firm cement of faith and love, which shows forth conspicuously the Church's supernatural majesty and glory, her inexhaustible fullness of life and power of victory. No earthly power is able to divide and split the marvelous unity of the Church, that supernatural communion of life and love binding together the children of the Catholic family; for this bond of union between the shepherd and the fold, and likewise between Catholics of all nations, has only the more closely and indissolubly been secured by the blood of martyrs and the sufferings of confessors. Before His passion the Saviour prayed especially for this very union of all the faithful among themselves and with God: Holy Father, "sanctify them in truth. Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for them do I sanctify Myself: that they also may be sanctified in truth. And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me: that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee: that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast

sent Me" (John 17:17-21). He that separates himself from this living unity, is like a branch cut off and withered; he will go to destruction.

d) Finally we petition God that He would govern, guide, and direct His Church.²² This He does through the pope, the bishops, and the priests. The increase, splendor, and beauty of the Church depend principally on the worthiness, fervor, and fidelity of her rulers and teachers. Therefore we pray God that He would give to His Church pastors prepared to sacrifice their ease and comfort, their liberty and their life for the sheep of Christ; shepherds who in word and act, in charity, faith, and chastity, show themselves an example to the faithful (I Tim. 4:12); shepherds who with humility, meekness, courage, and self-devotedness lead the flock confided to them in the ways of salvation and pasture them in the meadows of grace, at the fountains of the waters of life. Such shepherds are a joy to heaven and earth. But it behooves us to beseech God to send such laborers into His vineyard.

Thus do we, in the first place, offer our prayers and the sacrifice for the Church, for she is, indeed, our spiritual mother. The Lord shed His heart's blood for the Church, that He might present to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish, immaculate. Should we not, then, with filial devotedness love and reverence her, be zealous and make sacrifices for her cause, pray and labor for her, combat and suffer for her, live and die for her? In these points is revealed that sincere and devoted affection which blooms from a lively faith. Sacrifice and prayer offered principally for the Church, indirectly benefit the whole world; for in proportion as the Church is exalted and propagated, the wider and the more abundantly can she pour forth the gifts of salvation, the treasures of grace and truth, over all mankind.

The general fruit of the sacrifice falls the more copiously to the share of the individual members of the mystical body of Christ in proportion as they contribute to the common welfare of the Church; hence we have now a special offering and prayer for the pope and

²² Ut in suis consiliis, dispositionibus, judiciis, decretis, institutis, actionibus nullo decipiatur errore et in omnibus tuo ducatur moderamine (B. Odo Camerac., *loc. cit.*).

for the chief pastor of the diocese in which the Mass is celebrated.²³ Then is added a general intercession for all those persons who not only preserve the true faith in their heart and confess it with their lips, but who, moreover, according to their ability defend and propagate it.

It is proper that throughout the entire Church the pope should be prayed for and the sacrifice be offered for him, for he is the vicar of Jesus Christ, the infallible teacher and supreme pastor of all the faithful, the head and father of all Christendom. The rays of the sun are not more intimately united to the sun itself, nor the branch to the trunk of the tree, nor the rivulet to its source, than are the pastors of the Church with their flocks connected with the pope. He has in his keeping all the treasures of salvation, and through him only are they accessible to us. "He gives admission to the pastures and to the sacred fountains of life" sings the Church. "Where Peter is, there is the Church," resounds throughout all ages.²⁴ The more noble the blessings for which we are indebted to the pope, the more, as head and support of the Church, he is persecuted and oppressed by the children of darkness, and the more childlike, faithful, and loyal should be our devotedness and attachment to him, the more fervent and persevering should be our prayers for him.

As all pastors with their flocks follow the pope, so should all the priests and the faithful of a diocese be attached to their bishop,²⁵ whom the Holy Ghost has appointed to feed them. Next to the pope, therefore, it is right and proper that in all the churches of a

²³ From the most ancient times it has been customary to name the pope and the bishop of the diocese in the prayers of the Canon. Until the eleventh century the prayer for the bishop was wanting in some manuscripts. Besides the pope and bishop, the name of the king or emperor was often added. Towards the end of the Middle Ages the names of temporal rulers were effaced from the manuscripts. With the exception of the never omitted prayer for the pope, the naming of the spiritual and temporal superiors was subject to continual changes during the Middle Ages. In Austria, by virtue of a papal privilege, the emperor was prayed for by name.

²⁴ Ubi Petrus, ibi ecclesia: ubi Ecclesia, ibi nulla mors, sed vita aeterna (S. Ambr., *Enarr. in Ps.*, 40:30).

²⁵ Antistes (*προεστώς*) from *antisto*, to stand in front, to have the preference, prominent = the head, especially the first and chief priest; hence the ancient Christian designation of a bishop. Antistes dicitur a verbo antesto (= emineo, excello), eo quod universum populum dignitate et honore superemineat (Pseudo-Alcuin., chap. 36).

diocese the ruling bishop should be commemorated by name,²⁶ that he may obtain strength and wisdom to exercise his sacred and difficult office according to God's will.

Finally, "all orthodox believers and promoters of the Catholic and apostolic faith" are prayed for. According to the definition of the word, such persons are here designated who not only are "orthodox believers" (*orthodoxi*),²⁷ that is, who not only confess the pure, genuine, unadulterated faith (in word and deed), but who, at the same time, are called and exert themselves to plant, nurture, and propagate the true faith, which is "catholic and apostolic" (*cultores fidei*).²⁸ Among them must be reckoned, first of all, the bishops and priests, because they are the pastors and teachers appointed by Christ for the edification of His mystical body and for the administration of divine service. Moreover, it corresponds to the context that, after mentioning by name the pope and the bishop of the diocese, the remaining hierarchical rulers and leaders of the Church of God should be remembered, in order that they may worthily exercise their pastorate for the honor of God and the salvation of

²⁶ The name of the bishop of the diocese in which a priest celebrates, is, in contradistinction from the pope, mentioned without an inclination; if his name is unknown, merely *antistite nostro* is said, by which the bishop in question is understood. However, in order that the name of the antistes be mentioned, he must really hold the episcopal chair, that is, he must have been named (chosen) and confirmed, and also have undertaken the government of the diocese; it is not requisite that he should be consecrated. An episcopally consecrated Vicar Capitular or Vicar Apostolic must not be named. The name of the Catholic ruler of the country may be inserted only in virtue of a special indult of the Holy See (S. R. C., March 20, 1862). If the papal or episcopal see is vacant, then the respective words (*una cum famulo . . . or et antistite nostro*) are omitted.

²⁷ *Orthodoxus*, having true faith, *qui de fide recte sentit* (from *ὀρθός*, *rectus*, and *δόξα*, *sententia*). *Orthodoxi*, i.e. *rectae gloriae dicuntur, eo quod nullo errore depravati rectae fidei confessione Deum glorificant* (Pseudo-Alcuin., c. 40). *Orthodoxi*, i.e. *vita et doctrina gloriosi* (B. Odo Camerac., *Exposit. in Canon.*, dist. 1).

²⁸ *Cultor* = *qui colit*, the worker, cultivator, nurse, worshipper. *Rogamus pro his etiam, qui fidem excolunt vomere praedicationis et semine boni operis* (Steph. Augustod., *De sacram. altar.*, chap. 13). *Cultores fidei dicuntur, qui sarculo correctionis et sanctis documentis eam excolunt* (Rob. Paulul., *De offic. eccl.*, II, chap. 29). *Fidei cultoribus*, non fidem tantum habentibus. *Aliud est enim fidem habere et aliud fidem colere; fidem colit, qui studet et intendit secundum fidem vivere, cum multi fidem habeant, qui hoc non faciunt* (B. Odo Camerac., *loc. cit.*). The expression *dei cultores* is found also in St. Fulgentius (*Pro fide catholica*, n. 2).

souls. But since the words "orthodox promoters of the catholic and apostolic faith" have a general meaning, there is nothing to prevent their reference and application also to all those of the faithful who, although not by the office of the apostolate and by preaching, but still in other ways contribute according to their ability to the propagation of the faith.²⁹ All Christians have in a wider sense a priestly and apostolic vocation; they can and should exercise the apostolate of prayer and alms, of labor and suffering, that the kingdom of faith in the world may be spread more and more and may flourish everywhere. Thus all the faithful should be actively employed in the extension and exaltation of the kingdom of God, and should labor for the salvation of souls, by striving to procure for others also the grace of the true and life-giving faith.

2. The second part of the first prayer of the Canon begins: "Remember, O Lord, Thy servants and handmaids, N. and N.":³⁰ have regard to their necessities with loving care, grant them Thy favor and mercy, give them grace and happiness, bless them. In this sense the word remember,³¹ especially in connection with the

²⁹ Quamvis pro tota plebe christiana sit in Missa generaliter et primo orandum, tamen pro Summo Pontifice et proprio Pastore praecipue exorare oportet, deinde pro his, qui in populo christiano excellentius clarent et pluribus prosunt fidemque per suam sapientiam defendunt atque exponunt (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, art. 18).

³⁰ Tot famuli famulaeque Christi (S. August., *Epist.*, 36, n. 4). Elsewhere (for example, *Orate fratres*) mention is made of the stronger sex in the liturgy, when the feminine sex is included. Non est masculus neque femina: omnes enim vos unum estis in Christo Jesu (Gal. 3:28). Prius oblationes sunt commendandae (*in the Offertory*) et tunc eorum nomina quorum sunt (*the names of those who offer*) edicenda, ut inter sacra mysteria (*in the Canon*) nominentur (Innocent I [d. 417], *Ad Decentium*, n. 5). Quia in quibusdam codicibus invenitur N. littera, aliquorum fieri memoriam nominatim significatur. Unde quidam usu tenent hoc in loco memorandi quos cariores habent, subjugentes: "et omnium circumadstantium," ut facta memoria carorum absentium, fiat et adstantium (B. Odo Camerac., dist. 2).

³¹ *Memento*, i.e. recordare, non quod in Deum cadat oblivio, sed ut per modum recordantis se habeat, reminiscendo misericordiae suae et subveniendo in omni tribulatione et necessitate ettribuendo dona gratiarum, quae postulantur ab ipso. Sed cum in Canone debeat intellectus sacerdotis maxime esse divinis infixus atque sensibilia deserens, mirum videtur, quod in hoc fit memoria hominum in carne viventium, cum talis memoria contemplationem impedire et evagationem inducere soleat. Et respondendum, quod hic fit rationabiliter vivorum memoria, sed ne talis memoria devotionem impediatur vel distractionem inducat, caute agenda est, non nimis immorando considerationi personarum vel circumstantiarum et rerum, quae eas concernunt, sed potius in principio hujus memoriae debet sacerdos oculum cordis sui con-

term visit, is often said of God in Holy Scripture. "What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him?" exclaims David (Ps. 8:5). Elsewhere he prays: "Remember us, O Lord, in the favor of Thy people, visit us with Thy salvation" (Ps. 105:4).

According to the direction of the rubrics, the letters N. and N.³² admonish the priest to mention in this place some persons by name and specially to include them in the sacrifice; the names themselves he can either mention in silence or merely think of and have present to his mind. The choice is left free to the celebrant: of the living he can here mention whomever he wishes.³³ Since the prayer of the

templationi Dei vehementer infigere, cogitando de Deo ea, quae devotionem atque fervorem caritatis magis accendunt, et tunc in tali mentis fervore Deum ardentem orando, ut se exaudire dignetur pro his, quos nominabit, ipsas vero personas cursorie meditando, sed bona, quae eis petit, intente et amore rogando (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 20).

³² *Diptychum* (from *δύς*, twice, and *πύσσειν*, to fold, *διπτυχος*, folded in two or placed together) = *tabula duplicata vel duplex*, a writing tablet, consisting of two tablets or leaflets joined together by a hinge. By the liturgical diptychs, that were more or less large and precious, is generally understood the index of persons, whose names were publicly read at the Holy Sacrifice. There is a distinction made between the diptychs of the living (*δ. ζώντων*, *liber viventium*) and the diptychs of the dead (*δ. νεκρών*, *liber mortuorum*). In these diptychs were inscribed, among others, principally ecclesiastical and secular dignitaries, other persons of merit and distinction, signal benefactors of the Church, certain persons presenting Eucharistic offerings, and others. Regarding the time and place of the reading, and also the reader, the practice greatly varied in countries and epochs. In the Roman Church, from time immemorial, the names of the living were read at the above place in the beginning of the Canon, and those of the departed after the Consecration. The liturgical diptychs probably originated already in the second century, as in the third century they were already universally introduced; their use in the West continued until the twelfth century, and among the Greeks until the fifteenth. Adverte, diptycha sacra distinguenda esse a precibus, quae pro vivis et defunctis inter sacrorum solemnities fiunt. Finis et usus praecipuus diptychorum erat, ut retineretur catholica communio tum vivorum inter se, tum vivorum et mortuorum (Lesley, p. 1).

³³ Liturgists usually say that the priest may include in the Memento, not only members of the Church, but also unbelievers, heretics, schismatics, those who are excommunicated, and they state in proof of this assertion, that it is only a private prayer of the celebrant (thus write Gavanti, Merati, Cavaliere, De Herdt and others). But such a statement is vague and partly incorrect. As was formerly the public reading of the names from the diptychs, so also is now the silent commemoration that replaces it, a liturgical prayer of the Church, which as such possesses special impetratory power: the priest says this Memento by commission of the Church and, on his side, has only the choice of naming such or such persons whom the intercession of the

Church, especially in connection with the sacrifice, is exceedingly powerful and efficacious, the zealous priest will not omit to render it profitable especially to all those to whom he is most closely bound, and to whom he is under obligations of justice, charity, or gratitude. This memento should not be too hastily ended, nor too much prolonged; hence it is advisable to make the memento more in detail before Mass so that at this part of the Mass it may be again renewed in general, briefly and fervently.

Then the priest proceeds in the name of the Church to beg God to be mindful of "all here present" (*omnium circumstantium*), that is, of all those who are present and are hearing the Mass. For this reason also the time spent in a devout manner at the foot of the altar during the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, is a time of grace and salvation.⁸⁴ The words, God "knoweth the faith and devotion" of those who are recommended to His favor and mercy, confirm the petition offered, and designate the interior disposition which all, especially those who hear Mass, should have in order to share largely in the fruit of the sacrifice. The more perfectly the faithful present are penetrated with faith and devotion, the more susceptible will be their souls for receiving the blessings of the Holy Sacrifice, and the

Church should profit, and this, in like manner, is the case with regard to some prayers for the departed. Independently of other reasons, the public character of the Memento is evident from the full context. The words *Memento, Domine, famulorum . . .* contain an intercession which is offered likewise for "all present" (*et omnium circumstantium*), as well as for those named by the priest, and that by the Church herself by the mouth of the celebrant. The following relative clauses, *pro quibus tibi offerimus vel qui tibi offerunt*, also may be referred, not merely to the circumstances, but moreover to the persons whom the priest commemorates by name. In addition to this public intercession, that the priest makes as a minister of the Church, he may here, as a private person, pray for others, and that too for those who are excluded from the suffrages of the Church, or for whom the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass may not be applied, that is, for *excommunicati vitandi*; but these persons may not be included in the liturgical Memento. The priest may, therefore, in this place be satisfied with the public Memento or at the same time add private prayers. (Cf. Suarez, *De Censuris*, disp. IX, sect. 5, n. 4 f.; Coninck, *De Sacram. ac Censuris*, disp. XIV, dub. 6.) Licet sacerdos celebret totam Missam ut publica persona ac nomine Ecclesiae, atque etiam "Memento," adhuc tamen potest interserere privatam supplicationem. Potest concipere affectum supplicationis apud Deum concomitantem actionem illam publicam in favorem vitandorum (Pasqualigo, *De sacrificio N. L.*, I, q. 145).

⁸⁴ Hinc evidenter apparet, quam sanctum sit ac salubre Missarum interesse mysteriis, cum sacrificium Eucharistiae pro circumstantibus offeratur specialiter (Innoc. III, *De sacr. altar. myster.*, III, chap. 6).

more bountifully will God pour into their souls heavenly graces. These sentiments of faith and devotion are awakened and nourished in proportion to the lively interest taken by the faithful assisting at the Mass in the celebration at the altar, and in proportion as they unite more closely in spirit with the celebrant.

Those who assist at divine worship, that is, the servants and handmaids of God mentioned,³⁵ are by the words, *pro quibus tibi offerimus vel qui tibi offerunt*,³⁶ represented under two aspects: first, as the ones "for whom we offer," and then as the ones who themselves also join in the sacrifice. Under both aspects the sacrifice is more salutary and beneficial to those present than to others who are not in such intimate connection with its offering; and the devout participation in the sacrifice by assisting at Mass and by being included therein, draws on the faithful present abundant blessings of grace. The words, "for whom we offer or who offer to Thee"³⁷ refer, therefore, to the same persons, but designate them in two different ways.

The priest and the faithful offer to the Lord the sacrifice of praise now prepared on the altar (*hoc sacrificium laudis*). The Mass is the infinitely perfect sacrifice of praise and adoration, which we offer to the glory of the Most High. When the wise man exhorts us: "Glorify the Lord as much as ever you can, for He will yet far ex-

³⁵ *Pro quibus tibi offerimus vel qui tibi offerunt*: pro quibus, inquam, famulis et famulabus tuis et omnibus circumstantibus fidelibus et devotis, tibi offerimus ut ministri et immediate, vel qui famuli tui et famulae, omnesque circumstantes fideles et devoti offerunt tibi spiritualiter et mediate (Clichtov., *Elucidat. eccles.*, III, n. 14).

³⁶ *Vel* here = *et*, and also. Micrologus remarks (chap. 13) that in *antiquioribus et veracioribus Sacramentariis*, the (later) addition, *pro quibus tibi offerimus*, is wanting and only the (original) words, *qui tibi offerunt*, are found. The cessation of the ancient custom of offerings appears to have occasioned the gradual reception of the words *pro quibus tibi offerimus*, which are by no means superfluous, as Micrologus holds. In a prayer of the Mozarabic Missal a distinction is made between the *offerentes*, that is, they who present the sacrificial gifts and have communicated, and the *adstantes*, that is, those who have merely assisted at the holy sacrifice. *Deferatur in ista solemnia Spiritus Sanctus tuus, qui tam adstantis quam offerentis populi et oblata pariter et vota sanctificet (fer. II Pasch.)*.

³⁷ In quibus verbis patenter ostenditur, quod a cunctis fidelibus, non solum viris, sed et mulieribus sacrificium illud laudis offertur, licet ab uno specialiter offerri sacerdote videatur: quia quod ille Deo offerendo manibus tractat, hoc multitudo fidelium intenta mentium devotione commendat (S. Petr. Damian., "*Dominus vobiscum*," chap. 8).

ceed, and His magnificence is wonderful. Blessing the Lord, exalt Him as much as you can; for He is above all praise" (Ecclus. 43: 32 f.), we may boldly and cheerfully answer: here on the altar there is offered to God a praise worthy of His greatness, because it is infinite and divine, since it is the sacrifice of His only-begotten Son. When the Lord laid "the foundations of the earth," the morning stars praised Him, "and all the sons of God [the angels] made a joyful melody" (Job 38:4, 7); but the chant of praise of the heavenly hosts is not to be compared with the adoration, homage, and glorification that ascend from the altar to heaven. By the Eucharistic sacrifice of praise the name of the Lord is magnified "from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same" (Ps. 112: 2 f.).

On the other hand, this sacrifice is at the same time the source whence flow forth all grace and mercy, salvation and blessing, peace and benefits of all kinds upon our poor earth; hence it is said, the faithful offer the sacrifice of the altar "for themselves and all pertaining to them." (*pro se suisque omnibus*).³⁸ Those present may, moreover, offer the Holy Sacrifice, not only for themselves, but also for others; the Church herself supports and recommends, as it were, the special intentions, inasmuch as she is here mindful even of those for whom the assistants on their part offer the sacrifice. It is an exercise of charity most pleasing to God to thus include in the Holy Sacrifice our own family, relatives, friends, and other persons, in order to draw down grace upon them. It is also to be expected of the goodness of God, that they who assist devoutly at Mass lose nothing of their own share in the fruit of the sacrifice when they make such intentions for the interests and wants of others.

In union with the priest, the faithful offer the Mass for themselves and for all those who are dear to them, as an atoning sacrifice "for the redemption of their souls" (*pro redemptione animarum suarum*)³⁹ and as a sacrifice of petition "for the hope of their salvation and safety" (*pro spe salutis et incolumitatis suae*).

The Eucharistic sacrifice effects the redemption of souls, inasmuch as it conveys and applies to them the graces of redemption

³⁸ *Pro* = for: in favor of, to the advantage and profit of.

³⁹ *Pro* = for; here expresses the object of the oblation, that is, the sacrificial fruit to be obtained. This is an exegesis, i.e., *expositio* (Sicard.), of the preceding words, *pro se suisque omnibus*.

acquired by the sacrifice of the cross, that they may be made perfectly pure and worthy "to enter the temple of eternal glory." The actual redemption of the individual man begins with regeneration in baptism; it is developed and completed under the influence of the grace of Christ during his whole earthly pilgrimage, and finally obtains its consummation at the glorious return of the Lord, when not only the soul, but also the body shall be delivered from all the misery of sin, snatched from temporal and eternal destruction, and transformed in glory. The expression, redemption of souls, is to be understood in the same sense as that of, salvation of the soul; the redemption and salvation of the body is herein included. This mode of speech is used to designate the soul as the essential object of redemption and as the actual subject of salvation; but through the soul and for the sake of the soul, sanctification and a state of glory will be imparted to the body also.⁴⁰ The soul will enjoy perfect happiness only when clothed with the glorified body. Although redemption in its full sense comprises not only deliverance from all evil, but also the bestowal of all that is good, yet here only the former is meant; the faithful offer the sacrifice "for the redemption of their souls," that is, to propitiate the irritated justice of God, and to be freed from every evil of guilt and punishment. That the Eucharistic sacrifice does also open to us the treasury of the divine goodness and liberality and procure us every good, is contained in the words: "for the hope of their salvation and safety," that is, for the obtaining of redemption and prosperity.⁴¹ The word "salvation" (*salus*) here comprises all spiritual, supernatural gifts: grace in time and for eternity; the word "safety" (*incolumitas*) designates not merely health of body, but generally success and happiness in temporal things, in the goods (immaterial and material) belonging to the natural order. They too may be obtained by sacrifice and prayer, in so far as they serve for the attainment of eternal happiness.

The concluding clause: "and who pay their vows to Thee,"

⁴⁰ Licet corpus non sit *inmediatum* subjectum gratiae, ex anima tamen redundat effectus gratiae ad corpus, dum in praesenti membra nostra exhibemus arma justitiae Deo (Rom., chap. 6), et in futuro corpus nostrum sortietur incorruptionem et gloriam animae (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 79, a. 1 ad 3).

⁴¹ Hoc sacrosanctum sacrificium non solum liberat nos a malis, sed etiam accumulatur nos bonis; non solum nos eripit a poenis, sed etiam auget gaudia salutis et incolumitatis. Salutis, inquam, aeternae animarum; incolumitatis, i.e., incorruptionis perpetuae corporum, et hoc est, pro quo offerimus tam pretiosum munus (B. Odo Camerac., *Expos. in Canon. Miss.*, dist. 2).

is a continuation of and a supplement to the preceding words: "who offer to Thee this sacrifice of praise." It accords with this verse of the psalm: "Offer to God the sacrifice of praise and pay thy vows to the Most High" (49:14). *Votum* does not always in the strict sense of the word signify a vow, but it has in the liturgical language a far more comprehensive meaning. It frequently occurs therein and at one time denotes the oblations on the altar, at other times, petition, supplication, resolutions—in brief, interior and exterior acts of religion.⁴² Already at baptism we received precious gifts and glorious promises, and in return we solemnly vowed to die to the world and to sin, to live only for God and heaven. These holy vows⁴³ we pay at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, inasmuch as we offer not only the Eucharistic victim, but in union with it we offer ourselves also, our body and our soul, our prayers and our homage, our labors and trials, our sufferings and our joys, as gifts due to the Lord.⁴⁴ But by so doing we give "to the eternal, living, and true God" that only which we have previously received from Him; we but return to God that which He bestowed on us.

3. The concluding part of the first prayer of the Canon contains a list of saints and bears the heading *Infra actionem*:⁴⁵ during the sacrificial action or during the Canon; for *actio* here is a designation for sacrifice, or canon. Sacrifice in general is essentially an action,⁴⁶

⁴² Cf. the *Secreta in Dedicat. Ecclesiae*, in which we read: *dum haec vota praesentia reddimus*. In ancient missals is often found the expression *oblationum vota* as a designation of the sacrificial gifts. *Voventur omnia, quae offeruntur Deo, maxime sancti altaris oblatio, quo sacramento praedicatur nostrum aliud votum maximum, quo nos vovimus in Christo esse mansuros, utique in compage corporis Christi* (S. August, *Epist.*, 149, n. 16, *ad Paulin.*).

⁴³ *Haec vota sunt desideria et sancta proposita colendi Deum, quae implemus et Deo reddimus praecipue hac oblatione sacrificii incruenti. Dicimur autem ea potius reddere quam donare Deo, quia per divinam gratiam illa concipimus et a Deo accipimus, et postmodum Deo ipsi offerimus et reddimus, quae accipimus* (Quarti, II, tit. 9, sect. 2, dub. 2). In the *Sacrament. Gregor.* we read in a *Benedictio virginis*: *Respice super hanc famulam tuam, quae tibi devotionem suam offert, a quo et ipsa idem votum assumpsit*.

⁴⁴ *Deo dona ejus in nobis nosque ipsos vovemus et reddimus* (S. August, *De civit. Dei*, X, chap. 3 [al. 4]). *Quisquis bene cogitat, quid voveat Domino et quae vota reddat, seipsum voveat, seipsum reddat: hoc exigitur, hoc debetur* (*idem.*, *Enarrat. in Ps.*, 115:8).

⁴⁵ This expression with the same signification is also in the *Ordo Rom. V*, n. 9. The *Ordo Rom. XIV*, chap. 71, has the inscription *Alia infra Actionem* also for the following prayer, *Hanc igitur oblationem*, because this, too, at times receives a special addition.

⁴⁶ In Greek *δρᾶν*, in Latin *agere, facere, operari*, are often used in the sense of

and the Eucharistic sacrifice in particular is the repetition of that which Christ did at the Last Supper and, consequently, the greatest, most sublime, and holiest action: *the action* in the highest sense of the word. The Mass is the unbloody representation and the mystical renewal of the sacrifice and redeeming act of Christ on the cross. The Eucharistic sacrifice is, therefore, a holy drama (*actio*), and from the sacrifice this same name, *actio* (action), had been transferred to the sacrificial prayer.⁴⁷ The superscription, *Infra actionem*, is, therefore, called "within the Canon."⁴⁸ But why is this title placed precisely above the *Communicantes*? On Holy Thursday and on five of the greatest feasts⁴⁹ the *Communicantes* is somewhat different, because it has an addition referring to the day celebrated; in this altered form it is placed immediately after the Preface and bears the superscription, *Infra actionem*, which there means that this formula of prayer is later on to be inserted and recited in the Canon. It seems that originally this superscription was placed only over those special *Communicantes* which were printed outside the Canon, and then later transferred to the ordinary *Communicantes* in the Canon.⁵⁰ In the latter place, at any rate, it is intended to refer to the special formula of prayer printed after the Preface, and to recall to our mind that on certain feasts this special formula is to be used instead of the general one in the Canon. These insertions have been customary since the beginning of the sixth century.

Communicantes et memoriam venerantes, thus begins the ordinary formula. These words, as a continuation of the preceding part of the Canon and its supplement, stand in the closest relation to the

offering (*sacrificare*) and are thus characterized as a special religious action. Thus Pope St. Leo wrote in the year 445 to Bishop Dioscorus of Alexandria, that it would be proper to repeat the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, as the newly collected crowd filled the basilica in which the sacrifice was celebrated (*in qua agitur*).

⁴⁷ *Actio, actio sacri mysterii, mysterium sanctissimae actionis* = Canon. *Infra actionem*, i.e. inter verba ipsius Canonis, qui actio etiam nominatur a sacris auctoribus, quod in eo divina aguntur consecranturque et conficiuntur mysteria (Clichtov., *Elucid. eccl.*, III).

⁴⁸ Ancient missals have often the words *Infra Canonem*. The *infra* is here used in the sense of *intra*, as we say also *infra octavam* instead of *intra octavam*. (Cf. Lebrun, *Explication de la Messe*, IV, art. 4, § 1).

⁴⁹ Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost.

⁵⁰ In the *Sacrament. Gelasian.* we find the superscription *Infra Actionem* not within the Canon, but only above the special *Communicantes* of the special Mass formulas.

preceding words: ⁵¹ Those present offer up to Thee, O Lord, this sacrifice of praise and pay their vows unto Thee as members of Christ's mystical body and of the communion of saints (*communicantes*), who recognize their communion with the inhabitants of heaven by venerating their memory.⁵²

The word *communicantes*, therefore, denotes that we are children of the Church, subjects of the kingdom of Christ, members of the great family of God—in a word, that we belong “to the communion of saints.” This membership with the mystical body of Christ is here appropriately brought out because we would honor the memory of the blessed with the intention of rendering ourselves worthy of their intercession at the offering of the Holy Sacrifice. This fuller and deeper meaning ⁵³ accommodates itself also to the context of the special formulas, in which the word *communicantes* is separated from the expression *memoriam venerantes* by an insertion; for example, at Easter the prayer begins thus: *Communicantes, et diem sacratissimum celebrantes Resurrectionis Domini nostri Jesu Christi secundum carnem: sed et memoriam venerantes*: that is, in spiritual communion with one another we celebrate the great day of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh, and at the same time venerate the memory of the saints.

All the redeemed together constitute the kingdom of Jesus Christ;

⁵¹ Dubitare potest de sensu illius verbi “Communicantes” et connexione ejus cum reliquis. Respondetur, totam hanc orationem esse unam unoque contextu legendam, ita ut sensus sit: tibi reddunt vota sua aeterno Deo, vivo et vero, communicantes vel inter se vel cum Sanctis tuis per societatem et conjunctionem, quam cum illis habent; quorum propterea memoriam venerantes per eorum intercessionem exaudiri petent (Suarez, disp. LXXXIII, sec. 2, n.7).

⁵² Sequitur: *Communicantes et memoriam venerantes*. Ubi licet scriptores quasi capituli initium faciunt, eo quod in quibusdam solemnitatibus hic diversitas quaedam invenitur, jungitur tamen praemissis hoc modo: Offerunt pro se quisque, ipsi dico communicantes, in Ecclesiae communiione per fidem manentes (Robert. Paululus, *De offic. eccl.*, II, chap. 29).

⁵³ The signification of the word *communicantes* is often grasped in a manner too one-sided and limited. For instance, some say, that it merely signifies the relation of the faithful on earth with the saints of heaven, as is evident from what immediately follows, *memoriam venerantes*; others, on the contrary, are of opinion that this idea is excluded by the insertion made on certain days between *communicantes* and *memoriam venerantes*, so that *communicantes* is to be referred merely to the union of the faithful on earth, and particularly to those assembled at the divine service. (Cf. Bellarmin., *De Missa*, II, chap. 21).

among all these citizens, whether they have already happily reached their goal or are still combating on earth or making atonement in the place of purification, there is a living communication, a reciprocal interchange; good deeds and sufferings, merits and satisfactions, in short, all the fruits of grace are common property from which each draws and to which each contributes. It is precisely at the celebration of Mass that we are reminded of the privilege and happiness of belonging to so glorious a community, of being "fellow citizens with the saints and domestics of God" (Eph. 2:19). For after the priest has interceded for the Church militant and her members, he endeavors to add greater weight and efficacy to his supplications by invoking the saints. His mental vision is enlarged and directed to the heavenly Jerusalem. In happy consciousness of the intimate relationship he enjoys with the glorified saints, he celebrates their memory, as though to invite them, as kings and priests (Apoc. 5:10), to offer the sacrifice along with us, and by their powerful intercession and abundant merits to support our weak prayers, so that by the strength of their mediation we may experience God's help and protection in all situations and necessities (*ut in omnibus protectionis tuae muniamur auxilio*).

By name are mentioned: the Blessed Virgin Mary, the twelve apostles, and twelve martyrs; ⁵⁴ finally, all the saints are mentioned in general.

a) First of all (*in primis*) we honor the memory of the "glorious ever Virgin Mary, Mother of God and our Lord Jesus Christ." As always, Mary is here rightly named in the first place; she is queen not merely of the apostles and martyrs, but of all the saints. Her name is not simply mentioned, but to it are added honorable qualifications that proclaim her grandeur, power, and dignity. She is called glorious, for as queen of heaven and of earth she is elevated above all the choirs of angels and saints in eternal bliss and glory. She was taken up to heaven, body and soul, and transfigured in glory; there she wears the most beautiful crown of honor and power. As on earth she excelled all creatures by the fullness of grace, so in the next life she surpasses all the citizens of heaven by the splendor and magnificence of her glory. Because she was on earth the most

⁵⁴ The order of names of the saints in the Canon shows an arrangement by pairs. Already in the enumeration of the apostles, and still more clearly in that of the martyrs, this division of names two by two is easily distinguishable.

humble, pure, devout, and loving, she is now in heaven the most glorious and the most happy. Then she is called "always a virgin" (*semper virgo*). This privilege is often commented upon. Mary is the Virgin of all virgins; she is the most venerable, glorious, and wonderful virgin; she is the model, guide, protectress of all virginal souls. By the virginity which she vowed to God, she was prepared to become the "Mother of our God and Lord Jesus Christ"; for assuredly it behooved the Mother of God to be and ever remain a virgin. The divine maternity was only the complete consecration and sealing of her incomparable virginity. Through the sole miracle of its kind she united "the joys of maternity with the honor of virginity." The divine maternity itself is of infinite dignity; for Mary gave birth to the Son of the Most High. This maternal dignity of hers is the intrinsic reason why Mary above all other creatures was endowed with the plenitude of grace and holiness, of glory and power. As the Mother of God she is the queen of heaven and earth, she reigns as mistress, with maternal power and love. Hence so frequently we cry to her: *Monstra te esse matrem* ("Show thyself a mother"); that is, show that thou art not merely our Mother who loves us so tenderly, but that thou art also and still more the Mother of God, all-powerful by thy intercession.

The victim of the sacrifice of the cross and of the sacrifice of the altar was given to us through the Virgin Mother, Mary; He is the fruit of her most noble body by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. She "stood by the cross of Jesus," and while her maternal tears were mingled with His blood and the sword of sorrow pierced her soul, she offered her crucified Son for the salvation of the world. She is justly called "the Queen of Martyrs." Her name, therefore, is inseparable from the sacrifice of Christ; the remembrance of Mary must always be united with that of Christ at His sacrificial celebration. Christ's holy flesh and blood offered in sacrifice on the altar come to us from the flesh and heart of Mary; from Mary, moreover, we should learn, with priestly disposition and self-devotedness, to offer the Lamb of God and ourselves at the foot of the altar.

b) After the Virgin Mother of God, twelve apostles are named in the Canon; the succession differs somewhat from the records of the apostles in Holy Scripture.⁵⁵ The apostles are those chosen mes-

⁵⁵ This enumeration probably originates from tradition, not from the Itala

sengers to whom the Lord imparted full powers as teachers, priests, and pastors, that as His representatives they might continue the work of the redemption. As the salt of the earth and light of the world, they were to establish in all places the kingdom of God, to extend and strengthen the Church. To prepare them for this mission, He was present with them more than with others, and He made them the immediate witnesses of His life, miracles, and doctrine, of His passion and resurrection; He promised them His assistance and sent them the Holy Ghost from on high. In obedience to the commission of their divine Master, the apostles went out into the whole world to teach and baptize all nations, to bring to them the blessings of religion and together with it true earthly happiness. "Their sound has gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Ps. 18:5). Self-sacrifice was their office and calling, their life and their death. "For Thy sake we are put to death all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (Rom. 8:36); but they rejoiced to endure shame and sorrow for the name of Jesus, and, after they had fought the good fight and finished the course (II Tim. 4:7), they gave up their life by the bloody death of martyrdom, and thus planted the Church in their blood. The apostles not only scattered the seed of the divine word, but they labored to bring it to maturity by watering it with the sweat of their brow and fructifying it by shedding their hearts' blood. Built and resting on the chief cornerstone, Christ, the apostles have thus become the foundation of the Church, which consequently is called apostolic. Of the life and death of most of the apostles we know very little.

c) Martyrdom of blood is the characteristic trait of the saints of the first four centuries; therefore twelve martyrs of these ancient times are now mentioned in the Canon. Among them are five popes, a bishop, a deacon, and five lay persons. Even at a very early period these saints were held in high esteem in Rome, and therefore were inserted in the Canon. First, five popes are mentioned: SS. Linus,⁵⁶

version. St. Paul (in the liturgy the inseparable companion of St. Peter) is included in the list, and St. Matthias is here omitted, although he is mentioned in the commemoration of martyrs after the Consecration; thus the sacred number of twelve is retained.

⁵⁶ St. Linus, the first successor of St. Peter in the See of Rome, and therefore the second pope, is the same from whom St. Paul sends a salutation to Timothy. He was converted to Christianity by St. Peter, and, as a distinguished assistant of the Prince of the Apostles, he may frequently have supplied his place when the latter was obliged to leave Rome for a time in order

Cletus,⁵⁷ and Clement,⁵⁸ the first three successors of St. Peter, and SS. Sixtus⁵⁹ and Cornelius.⁶⁰ Then is mentioned, St. Cyp-

to preach the Gospel elsewhere. He ruled the Church from 67 to 76 (?). He was decapitated and buried in the Vatican by the side of St. Peter. Under Pope Urban VIII a tomb was discovered there bearing the simple inscription: *Linus*. His feast occurs on September 23.

⁵⁷ St. Cletus (76-88?) succeeded St. Linus. It is believed that he erected a tombstone to St. Peter, who had ordained him priest. His feast falls on April 26.

⁵⁸ St. Clement is reckoned among the apostolic Fathers; he sat in the chair of Peter from 88 to 97 (?). St. Irenaeus writes of him: "In the third place after the apostles the Roman episcopate received Clement, who had seen the Princes of the Apostles, had associated with them, had listened to their sermons, and had the apostolic tradition before his eyes." St. Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians mentions him among his "fellow laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life" (4:2). According to the testimony of ancient writers, St. Clement was endowed with all the qualities of mind and heart that were requisite for the highest ecclesiastical dignities. The legend relates that the emperor Trajan banished him to the Taurian Chersonesus (Crimea), where he found two thousand Christians condemned to work in the marble quarries, who suffered greatly for want of water. Clement prayed, and on an adjacent hill appeared a lamb, from beneath whose right foot a spring of fresh water issued forth. This miracle brought about the conversion of many of the inhabitants. Then Trajan commanded St. Clement to be cast into the sea with an anchor fastened to his neck. The Christians on the shore fell upon their knees and prayed; and behold! the sea receded three thousand paces, and there appeared, built by the hands of angels, a marble temple in which the body of the saint together with the anchor was found. The mortal remains of the martyr are said to have been brought to Rome by the Greek missionaries, SS. Cyril and Methodius, during the pontificate of Pope Hadrian II, and placed in the very ancient basilica of St. Clement near the Coliseum, of which mention is already made by St. Jerome. His feast is celebrated on November 23.

⁵⁹ During the first three centuries there were two popes by this name. Sixtus I (115-25?) governed the Church during the reign of the emperor Hadrian, when the lot of the Christians was a hard and painful one; he suffered martyrdom and was buried in the Vatican near St. Peter. His feast occurs on April 6. Far better known is Sixtus II, a Greek by birth. His pontificate (257-58) fell during the stormy period of the Valerian persecution of the Christians. In spite of the Emperor's prohibition, he ventured to hold divine service in the catacombs. Discovered by the heathen soldiers and apprehended, he was dragged into the city before the tribunal and condemned; afterward he was again led back to the Catacomb of Praetextatus, in which he had previously celebrated the Holy Sacrifice, and was beheaded on or near his episcopal throne. The crown of martyrdom was granted to him on August 6, 258. His body now rests in the very ancient church situated on the Appian Way, *S. Sisto vecchio*. Scholars do not agree as to which pope is commemorated in the Canon.

⁶⁰ St. Cornelius, who had distinguished himself in all the grades of the Church service, ascended the Chair of Peter in the year 251; he accepted the

rian,⁶¹ distinguished bishop of Carthage, and the celebrated deacon martyr, St. Lawrence.⁶² Lastly, five laymen are commemo-

supreme dignity only by constraint. Under the tyrant, emperor Decius, St. Cornelius was in constant expectation of death. Under the emperor Gallus, in the year 252, a violent storm arose against the Christians in Rome; but they, with the Pope at their head, maintained the faith with such unanimity, fortitude, and strength as to excite universal joy and jubilation, and St. Cyprian could not sufficiently praise and admire them. St. Cornelius was banished to Centum Cellae (*Civitavecchia*), and there died a martyr on September 14, 252. On the same day six years later (258), St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, was martyred, hence both names are usually mentioned together. Their joint feast is celebrated on September 16.

⁶¹ St. Cyprian was born in the beginning of the third century at Carthage. He was of distinguished rank, rich, very talented, and had received an excellent education. Only in a more mature age was he won over to the Catholic faith; his baptism took place about the year 246. He distributed his great wealth among the poor, made a vow of perpetual chastity, and spent his time in prayer and the study of the sacred sciences. From the very beginning of his conversion he was adorned with brilliant virtues. St. Cyprian was raised to the priesthood and was soon promoted to the episcopal See of Carthage (248). The ten years' episcopacy of the saint (248-58) fell during a time of most violent persecution and other external misfortunes. St. Cyprian fulfilled with indefatigable zeal his pastoral duties for the salvation of the faithful confided to his care and for the welfare of the whole Church. He combated for the unity and discipline of the Church against heretics and schismatics, and animated all to cheerful endurance of martyrdom. He himself was put to death by the sword in the public place of Carthage on September 14, 258.

⁶² St. Lawrence is highly extolled by the Fathers and held in great veneration by all Christian nations. "As Jerusalem was glorified by Stephen, so is Rome renowned by its Lawrence from the rising to the setting of the sun," exclaims Pope St. Leo in a sermon on the feast of this saint. Spain is regarded as his native country; but he was brought up and educated in Rome. Sixtus II ordained him deacon and made him the first of the seven deacons of the Roman Church, wherefore he is also called the archdeacon of the pope. This was a most important office; for it included the administration of the treasures of the Church. Exceedingly glorious is the martyrdom of the young Levite. When Pope Sixtus II was being dragged to the catacombs for execution, Lawrence cried out to him: "Whither goest thou, Father, without thy son? Where art thou hastening, holy priest, without thy deacon? Never wert thou accustomed to offer the Holy Sacrifice without thy minister." And how singularly consoling are the words of the high priest to his deacon: "I am not forsaking thee, my son, greater combats await thee. Cease to weep, after three days thou wilt follow me." During those three days the deacon hastened through the city, distributed the goods of the Church to the needy, and in so doing he wrought several miracles. To the prefect of the city, who ordered him to deliver up the treasures of the Church, he presented the poor of Christ as the treasures of the Church. On this account the heathen became enraged, and subjected the young hero to many torments. St. Lawrence was scourged, struck with leaden balls, stretched on the rack, burned with red-

rated: SS. Chrysogonus,⁶³ John and Paul,⁶⁴ Cosmas and Damian.⁶⁵

In the Roman Canon only martyrs are named before and after the Consecration.⁶⁶ They have merited this distinction by the bloody sacrifice of their life; they appear as the ripest and most glorious fruit of the sacrifice of Christ. They resembled the Saviour not only in life, but also in death. For Christ they lived, for Him they died; in return for the sacrifice of His love, they offered the sacrifice of the world and of themselves, amid untold torments and sufferings. The virtues of fortitude and patience, of faith and love, which they practised in an heroic degree, shone resplendent in them.

hot metallic plates. Afterward he was laid on a burning gridiron, whence he addressed the tyrant: "Behold, wretch, the power of my God; your heat for me is refreshing coolness, but it will end for you in inextinguishable fire." The illustrious deacon and martyr passed to the glory of God on August 10, 258. In the magnificent basilica of St. Lawrence erected above his grave by Constantine outside the walls, the relics of the two martyr deacons, Lawrence and Stephen, repose together in a marble sarcophagus beneath the high altar.

⁶³ St. Chrysogonus converted many heathens in Rome to Christianity; he was also the teacher of St. Anastasia and her counsel and consoler when on account of her faith she suffered many persecutions. He was arrested in Rome under Diocletian, and after a long imprisonment he was sent to Aquileja, where he was beheaded about the year 304. His feast occurs on November 24.

⁶⁴ John and Paul were brothers. As distinguished Romans, they were entrusted with high positions of honor at the court of St. Constantia, a daughter of Constantine the Great. The apostate emperor, Julian, tried to compel them to sacrifice to the idols and to enter his service; but such an order they rejected with contempt. For this reason Julian had them secretly decapitated in their own palace on June 26, 362.

⁶⁵ Cosmas and Damian were also brothers, descended from a distinguished race in Arabia; they practiced medicine in Roman territory without remuneration. Their learning, skill in healing, and devout mode of life won for them universal confidence and high esteem. Their acts of benevolence gained for the Christian religion many adherents. After enduring many torments, they were at last decapitated at Egæa, in Cilicia, probably in 297. Pope Felix IV (526-29) built at Rome the church of SS. Cosmas and Damian and brought to it the relics of the martyred brothers. Both are honored as patrons of physicians and of the science of medicine; their feast occurs on September 27.

⁶⁶ About the middle of the fourth century the period of martyrs came to an end. The latest of the martyrs here mentioned, SS. John and Paul (d. 362), were placed in the Roman Canon probably towards the end of the fourth century or in the beginning of the fifth century, and from that time the list of the saints mentioned in the Canon has been closed. Elsewhere since the sixth century many names were added to the *Communicantes*, particularly of saints that are specially honored in certain dioceses and convents.

CHAPTER XXXIV

SECOND AND THIRD PRAYERS OF THE CANON

THE SECOND PRAYER OF THE CANON ¹

Hanc igitur oblationem servitutis nostrae, sed et cunctae familiae tuae, quaesumus Domine, ut placatus accipias: diesque nostros in tua pace disponas, atque ab aeterna damnatione nos eripi, et in electorum tuorum jubeas grege numerari. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

This oblation, therefore, of our service, and that of Thy whole family, we beseech Thee, O Lord, graciously to accept, and to dispose our days in Thy peace and to command us to be delivered from eternal damnation, and to be numbered in the flock of Thine elect. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

1. As in the beginning of the Canon, so here also we meet with the little word *igitur* (= therefore, consequently, accordingly, hence); it unites the second prayer to the first and designates it as a consequence or continuation of the first.² The same petitions are again

¹ This prayer now has an addition in four Mass formulas, which indicate the special intention for which the sacrifice is offered: on Holy Thursday, in commemoration of the institution of the Eucharistic mysteries; in Easter and Pentecost weeks, for the newly baptized; and at the consecration of a bishop, for the newly consecrated. Before the time of St. Gregory the Great, the *Hanc igitur* was a variable oblation and intercessory prayer, changing according to the character of the Mass formula. Hence in the Gelasian Sacramentary there are thirty-eight special formulas of the *Hanc igitur*, which do not, like the additions to the *Communicantes*, set off the thought of the feast, but contain petitions for the application of the fruits of the sacrifice to various events of this life.

² The recommendation of the sacrificial gifts and of those offering, or of those for whom the sacrifice is offered, which was interrupted by the *Communicantes*, is here resumed and is connected by the *igitur* with the petitions contained in this second prayer.

presented, but now with heightened confidence and intensified expression. We no longer stand there alone, alone in our poverty and wretchedness; for we have renewed our connection with the communion of saints, and in this communion we are enriched by the merits and prayers of our heavenly brethren. Hence, we venture with still greater confidence to turn to the Lord with the petition previously implored, that He would show Himself favorable, gracious (*placatus*), and with kind indulgence "accept" these sacrificial gifts from our hands.³ Until now the same oblation is always meant: bread and wine, in so far as they are destined to be changed into the body and blood of Christ. The petition for the acceptance of the sacrificial elements, therefore, includes the petition for their transubstantiation: ⁴ the purpose for which they are to be accepted is the consecration. The Eucharistic oblation is here more minutely characterized as "this oblation of our service and that of Thy whole family." Unquestionably these words express the truth that the Eucharist is the offering of the whole Church,⁵ that it is offered by all her members and for all her members.⁶ The expression, "oblation of our service," may be applied to those who are present: to those who most intimately take part in the celebration of Mass; the addi-

³ Quia hoc sacrificium tibi offerimus in corpore Ecclesiae communicando et memoriam Sanctorum venerando, hanc igitur oblationem, precamur, ut placatus accipias: ut scil., si peccatis nostris praepedimur, communione saltem sanctae Ecclesiae et Sanctorum tuorum veneratione placeris ad accipiendum, quod tibi offerimus, sacrificium (B. Odo Camerac., *Expos. in Canon. Miss.*, dist. 2).

⁴ Sacerdos orat Deum, ut ipsam oblationem panis et vini accipiat ut materiam sacrificii futuri et eam videlicet benedicat et sanctificet (Bellarm., *De Missa*, II, chap. 22).

⁵ In his verbis unitas Ecclesiae ostenditur, quando in illa oblatione communis servitus exhibetur Deo tam a sacerdotibus quam a cuncta familia domus Dei. Oratur itaque Deus, ut hanc oblationem, quam illi soli debita servitute defert Ecclesia, placatus accipiat et sic dies nostros, quibus inter diversa pericula vivimus, in sua pace disponat, finitoque hujus mortalitatis cursu, ab aeterna damnatione ereptos in electorum suorum grege annumerare dignetur (Pseudo-Alcuin., chap. 40).

⁶ Hanc igitur oblationem servitutis nostrae, i.e. quam offerimus nos sacerdotes qui speciatim servi tui sumus, tuo cultui et obsequiis mancipati et hoc offerimus sacrificium, ut servitutis nostrae et subjectionis aliquod testimonium demus; nec tantum est oblatio nostra, qui tamquam ministri eam offerimus, sed et cunctae familiae tuae, i.e. totius Ecclesiae catholicae omniumque fidelium, qui per manus nostras et ministerium hanc offerunt, et quorum nomine eandem tibi offerimus (Antonius de Molina, *Instructio sacerdotum*, III, chap. 3).

tion, "and that of Thy whole family," to all the others, who are absent. Or we may consider the first clause as especially designating the consecrated ministers of the altar, in which case the family of God would refer to all the faithful, but in particular to those who by actual participation unite in the celebration of the Mass.

However, "the oblation of our service" may have a deeper meaning, which would signify more than the offering which "we Thy servants (*nos servi tui*) . . . offer unto" God, which is the expression used immediately after the Elevation. The Mass is called "the oblation of our service," that is, the offering that we and all the members of the Church make in order to acknowledge the absolute dominion of God over all that is created, and to express our profound submission to it.⁷ As creatures we stand in a special relation of dependence toward God our Creator; the Mass now has principally for its object the giving to God of that veneration, homage, and acknowledgement—that religious worship—which is due to Him alone.⁸ Sacrifice is the chief act of religion (divine worship).⁹ Hence in this prayer we explicitly state that we offer "this oblation of our service," this divine sacrifice, to adore God and acknowledge His absolute dominion over us.

By virtue of the Eucharistic sacrifice we implore mercies and blessings for time and for eternity.¹⁰ Earthly, temporal welfare con-

⁷ This more profound meaning of the expression *oblatio servitutis nostrae* is evident also from other almost similar designations of the Eucharistic sacrifice, as they are found especially in the Secretae; for example, *nostrae servitutis munus; debitum nostrae servitutis; nostrae humilitatis oblatio*.

⁸ Deo nos servitutem, quae *λατρεια* graece dicitur, sive in quibusque sacramentis sive in nobis ipsis debemus (S. Aug., *De civit. Dei*, X, chap. 3 [4]). Ipsa servitus graece *λατρεια* dicitur, quae soli vero Deo jure ac legitime non a perfidis, sed a catholicis fidelibus exhibetur . . . illa cultura quae *λατρεια* dicitur, maxime in sacrificiis invenitur (S. Fulgent., *Contra Fabian.*, frag. 12).

⁹ *Cultus ac servitus Dei* reipsa non sunt actus religionis distincti: siquidem eodem actu religionis homo servit Deo et colit ipsum. Nam cultus respicit Dei excellentiam, cui reverentia debetur; servitus autem subjectionem hominis, qui ex sua conditione obligatur ad exhibendam reverentiam Deo, cum interim in omni actu religionis et excellentiam Dei et nostram erga Deum subjectionem protestemur, adeo ut ad haec duo pertineant omnes actus religionis, quia per omnes homo protestatur divinam excellentiam et subjectionem sui ad Deum (Tanner, *De relig.*, q. 1, dub. 2).

¹⁰ Tria bona postulatur a Deo. Primum temporale; secundum perpetui mali devitatio; tertium perpetui boni adeptio. In horum trium bonorum postulatione profitetur Ecclesia, Deum esse universorum dominum et in triplicem mundi machinam extendi supremum ejus principatum. Per primum enim

sists in this, that God orders and directs our days in peace.¹¹ "*Dies-que nostros in tua pace disponas,*" do we pray, for we desire good and peaceful days that are not clouded by sufferings, combats, and persecutions, but always cheered and blessed with "the peace of God," "that, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, we may serve Him without fear in holiness and justice" (Luke 1:74 f.). We pray for temporal prosperity, in so far as it may be serviceable to the attainment of the one thing necessary and for possession of that "better part, which shall not be taken away from" us (Luke 10:42).

Our heavenly, eternal well-being includes our preservation from the greatest of all evils, eternal death (*ab aeterna damnatione nos eripi*), and the attainment to the supreme good, eternal life (*in electorum tuorum grege numerari*).¹² The number of those who are chosen for heavenly glory has been eternally and irrevocably determined by God, so that the number can be neither increased nor diminished; therefore the above petition can only refer to the execution of this divine decree and signify that God may be pleased to grant us the grace of final perseverance and admit us to heavenly bliss. This meaning is clearly expressed in a petition of almost the same import in the *Te Deum: Aeterna fac cum sanctis tuis in gloria numerari* ("May [Thy servants] be numbered among Thy saints in eternal glory").

As fruit to be derived from the sacrifice, therefore, we implore in the above prayer the peace of God for the days of our earthly life that we may attain the heavenly life; but we pray especially for the consummation of our redemption and eternal salvation. Full redemption consists in this, that we be forever snatched from eternal

profiteur, ipsum esse dominum in terris; per secundum in inferis; per tertium in coelis—et ubique omnia ipsius nutu disponi (Clichtov., *Elucid. eccl.*, III, n. 23). The three petitions, *pro pace temporum et ereptione ab aeternis suppliciis et consortio Sanctorum obtinendo*, were added by St. Gregory the Great (cf. Walafrid. Strab., chap. 23). Since in even earlier sacramentaries similar thoughts and expressions occur in this place, St. Gregory probably only made permanent the wording which until then had been changeable.

¹¹ Propter triplicem pacem ter oramus in Missa: "dies nostros in tua pace disponas," "da propitius pacem in diebus nostris," "dona nobis pacem," ut de *pace temporis per pacem pectoris transeamus ad pacem aeternitatis* (Innocent. III, chap. 11).

¹² *Numerari* = *numero aggregari*, received into the number. Consider the following prayer for a departed soul: Omnipotens sempiternae Deus . . . propitiare animae famuli tui, ut qui de hac vita in tui nominis confessione decessit, Sanctorum tuorum numero facias adgregari (*Sacrament. Gelasian.*).

ruin, to which the godless are doomed, and that we may for all eternity be possessed of that glory and happiness which God has prepared for those who love Him.

2. During this prayer the priest extends his two hands horizontally over the chalice and the host in such a manner that the right thumb is placed over the left one in the form of a cross. This imposing, or extending, of hands first appears in some missals toward the close of the fifteenth century; ¹³ it was afterwards universally prescribed by Pius V. This ceremony not only harmonizes with the tenor of the text, *hanc oblationem*, indicating the sacrificial elements in a just and reverential manner, but in addition contains a mystical meaning. The ritual laying on of hands frequently occurs in both the Old and the New Testaments, as well as in the liturgy. According to its fundamental signification, it is always a symbol of the transferring of one thing to another; for example, in the Mosaic worship the laying on of hands was a symbolical representation of the transferring of sin and guilt to the animal that was to be sacrificed, which vicariously had to suffer death instead of man. Here in the Mass the laying on of hands has a similar object; for it shows that Christ offers Himself on the altar, in our place, for our sake, and on account of our sins, thus fixing deeply in our mind the sacrificial character of the Eucharist. Moreover, it indicates that we should unite ourselves with this sacrifice, offering ourselves along with it.

THE THIRD PRAYER OF THE CANON

Quam oblationem tu Deus in omnibus, quaesumus, bene✠dic-tam, adscrip✠tam, ra✠tam, rationabilem, acceptabilemque facere digneris: ut nobis Cor✠pus et San✠guis fiat dilectissimi Filii tui Domini nostri Jesu Christi.

Which oblation do Thou, O God, we beseech Thee, vouchsafe to make in all things blessed ✠, approved ✠, ratified ✠, reasonable, and acceptable: that it may become for us the body ✠ and blood ✠ of Thy most beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹³ Formerly it was often the custom, as it is now with the Dominicans and Carmelites, to bow profoundly at the recitation of this prayer. *Hic inclinatur se usque ad altare dicens: Hanc igitur . . .* (Amalar., *Eclog.*, n. 29). *Presbyter humiliationem Domini usque ad crucem nos indicat, cum se usque ad altare inclinatur dicendo* (Microl., chap. 16). *Hanc igitur oblationem dicendo sacerdos*

1. This prayer is closely connected with the preceding one and forms the immediate transition and introduction to the act of consecration. In general its meaning is clear, but the meaning of the several designations given to the offering is obscure and difficult to understand. Since the foregoing preparation for the act of consecration ends with this prayer, it expresses for the last time in a simple, grand way the already oft-repeated petition to God for the blessing, or the changing of the bread and wine into the body and the blood of Christ.¹⁴ Therefore we implore God that the elements lying on the altar and dedicated to Him be changed into heavenly sacrificial gifts. The Eucharistic Saviour is the perfectly "blessed, approved, ratified, reasonable, and acceptable" oblation which, by the power of God, is to replace the substance of bread and wine.¹⁵

Christ is the *oblatio in omnibus benedicta*, that is, the offering blessed in every respect, thoroughly and perfectly. The blessing here meant and to be imparted to the material elements is the very highest and the most sublime conceivable: the consecration, the changing of the elements into the glorious body and the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁶ We therefore beg God to bless the oblation of bread and wine, that is, to consecrate it and thereby

in quibusdam ecclesiis profunde se inclinatur (Durand, VI, xxxix, 2). Christian antiquity and the Middle Ages make no mention of the stretching out of the hands in this place.

¹⁴ Haec tertia periodus, quam ingredimur, maxime occupatur circa sacrificium, ut fiat perfectum et in aliam mutetur substantiam immortalem et incorruptam. . . . Transit ad partes a toto, ut universalis benedictionis partes imprecetur hostiae, cui universam benedictionem fuerat imprecatus, ut cum prius posuerit *in omnibus benedictam*, particulariter subjungat *adscriptam*, et *ratam*, et *rationabilem*, et *acceptabilem*, quae sunt partes omnimodae benedictionis (B. Odo Camerac., *Expos. in Can. Missae*, dist. 3).

¹⁵ Praeinducta sacratissima verba exponuntur de eo, quod est res et sacramentum, videlicet de corpore Christi vel de ipso Christo, qui est hostia benedicta, adscripta, rata, rationabilis et acceptabilis (Dion. Cathus., *Expos. Miss.*, a.23). Solum Christi corpus et sanguis est hostia in omnibus benedicta, adscripta, rata, rationabilis acceptabilisque (B. Odo Camerac., *loc. cit.*).

¹⁶ Oratio haec potest exponi, ut tota petitio referatur ad ipsius materiae consecrationem, nihilque aliud in summa petatur, quam ut ex pane corpus et ex vino fiat sanguis Christi, ut hoc modo ac per talem transmutationem oblatio ipsa panis et vini fiat *benedicta*; illa enim est summa benedictio et sanctificatio, quae in illam materiam supervenire potest, unde ipsamet consecratio benedictio solet a Patribus appellari (Suarez, LXXXII, ii, 10). Digneris hanc oblationem facere *benedictam*, i.e. convertere in carnem et sanguinem Christi, quae sunt hostia benedicta, h. e. omni carens macula culpae atque omni gratia adornata (Dion. Cathus., *loc. cit.*).

make it for us an inexhaustible source of every grace and blessing.

Christ is the *oblatio adscripta*.¹⁷ This extremely obscure word can only with difficulty, or perhaps not at all, be explained in a perfectly satisfactory manner, as is evident from the different attempts at interpretation. Frequently *adscripta* is defined in the sense of acceptable, agreeable; but opposed to this meaning is the circumstance that then *adscripta* would have entirely the same signification as the following *acceptabilis*, which in so concise a prayer is by no means probable. Others understand *adscripta* as meaning consecrated or belonging to God. We translate *adscripta* by the word approved and thereby give our preference for an explanation according to which this word seems to coincide better with the whole context. Accordingly the oblation becomes *adscripta* when it corresponds to the ordinance and institution of Christ at the Last Supper.¹⁸ In this manner, therefore, the same petition would be presented that frequently occurs elsewhere in different liturgies: that the elements of bread and wine may become *eucharistia legitima*, that is, legitimate Eucharist.¹⁹

If the oblation is so constituted as to be conformable to Holy Scripture, to the will and command of Christ (*Hoc facite*), then necessarily it is also an "*oblatio rata*,"²⁰ that is, a true or valid sacrifice; for with this presupposition all the features and elements are at hand requisite for the existence and essence of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

The contents of the above three words (*benedicta, adscripta, rata*) are now stated more correctly and emphatically: the sacri-

¹⁷ *Adscribere* = to ascribe or to attribute; to institute, to determine, to establish.

¹⁸ Potest referri hoc verbum [*adscripta*] ad ea, quae de hac consecratione scripta sunt, ita ut postuletur, ut haec oblatio talis fiat, qualis scripta est et promissa illis verbis Christi: "*Hoc facite*"; *adscriptum* enim dici potest, quod est scripto conforme (Suarez, *loc. cit.*).

¹⁹ Cf. also the prayer in the Pontifical for the consecration of a portable altar: Quaesumus omnipotens Deus, . . . qui inter ceteras creaturarum formas lapideum metallum ad obsequium tui sacrificii condidisti, ut legitimae libationi praeparetur altare, annue dignanter.

²⁰ *Ratus* (from *reor*) = intended; transferred to = determined, valid, true, legal. Quod nostro geritur ministerio, ratum habeas, ac si sine nobis manibus tuis idem ageretur (Robert. Paulul., *De offic. eccles.*, II, chap. 31). Praeterea postulatur, ut per consecrationem fiat *rata*, i.e. vera; non enim est haec vera sacrificialis oblatio, nisi consecratio valida sit et efficax; quomodo dicere solemus, sacramentum esse ratum, quando vere factum (Suarez, *loc. cit.*).

fice is called a spiritual or "reasonable oblation" (*oblatio rationalis*).²¹ In the various liturgies the Eucharist is often designated as "a spiritual sacrifice" or as "a reasonable and unbloody worship of God." This expression is borrowed from Holy Scripture (Rom. 12:1); in its liturgical use it refers as well to the manner of offering as to the sacrificial gift, and characterizes it as endowed with life, spirit, and reason, in contrast with the Old Testament offerings of irrational animals and inanimate things.²² The Eucharist is, therefore, a "reasonable oblation," because on the altar is sacrificed the living Lamb of God, the God-man Jesus Christ, He who is indeed the eternal reason, the uncreated and personal wisdom of God.

If the Eucharistic sacrifice has these four qualities, it is then infallibly and in the highest degree also pleasing to God, dear, precious, and acceptable to Him (*oblatio acceptabilis*).²³

The explanation of the obscure antecedent clause follows in the concluding words, "that it may become for us the body and blood of . . . Christ" (*fiat = transeat in*), which denote and implore quite unequivocally the change of substance of the matter of sacrifice.²⁴ In this respect this prayer is a kind of Epiklesis, since it also contains a petition for the consecration; however, there is no invoca-

²¹ *Rationalis* = endowed with reason, reasonable; according to reason. The word has reference to the divine Logos, who in and with His human nature is in the highest degree a spiritual and reasonable sacrificial gift: Christ's sacrificial body and blood are on the altar, not merely animated with a spiritual and reasonable soul, but, moreover, hypostatically united to the divine Word (*Logos*). *Munus populi tui, Domine, placatus intende, quo non altari-bus tuis ignis alienus nec irrationabilium cruor effunditur animantium, sed sancti Spiritus operante virtute sacrificium jam nostrum corpus et sanguis est ipsius sacerdotis (Sacrament. Leonian.).*

²² *Petitur etiam, ut fiat rationalis, i.e. rationalis hostia, quia per illam consecrationem fit, ut jam non simplex panis et vinum, nec sanguis hircorum aut vitulorum, sed Christus ipse, qui non solum rationalis est, sed aeterna sapientia et ratio, offeratur (Suarez, loc. cit.).*

²³ *Denique per eandem mutationem fit maxime acceptabilis haec oblatio, quia jam, non ex dignitate offerentium, sed ex re ipsa oblata, gratissima Deo est et accepta: nam per illam mutationem panis fit corpus illud, quod Deus adaptavit, ut veteribus repudiatis sacrificiis, eo placari posset (Suarez, loc. cit.).*

²⁴ *Posuerat in omnibus benedictam, subjungit quattuor species: adscriptam, ratam, rationabilem, acceptabilem. Sed haec omnia clausa erant, minus intellegebantur, minus patebant; aperuit ostium, patefecit totum, scil. ut nobis fiat corpus et sanguis Christi. Hic totum completur, hic totum perficitur, ut fiat corpus et sanguis Christi (B. Odo Camerac., dist. 3). Munera, Domine, oblata sanctifica, ut tui nobis Unigeniti corpus et sanguis fiant (Sacrament. Gregor.).*

tion of the Holy Ghost, so the *Quam oblationem* must be considered a substitute for the Epiklesis, which is found in the Eastern liturgies, but not a true Epiklesis. The little word *nobis* ("for us")²⁵ adds a new idea; for it proves that the body and blood of Christ take the place of the bread and wine for our sake, for our salvation and blessing and advantage.²⁶ For us the Saviour offers Himself on the altar, to us He gives Himself in Holy Communion. *Totus mihi datus [Dominus] et totus in meos usus expensus est.*²⁷

2. The above prayer is accompanied with five signs of the cross, three of which are first made over both sacrificial elements at one and the same time (at the words *benedictam, adscriptam, ratam*);²⁸ then one sign of the cross is made over each of the elements (at the words *Corpus et Sanguis*). These holy signs strengthen and visibly elucidate the text of the prayer spoken vocally; they symbolically express what the accompanying words signify. The signs of the cross are here symbols and means of blessing; they call down the divine blessing of consecration upon the bread and wine that they may be changed: that the bread may be changed into the same sacrificial body which hung on the cross, and the wine into the same sacrificial blood which was shed on the cross. The first three signs of the cross

²⁵ *Fiat nobis*, i.e., ad nostram salutem, ad nostrum cotidianum profectum, atque ad vitiorum nostrorum expurgationem omniumque spiritualium donorum multiplicationem (Dion. Carth., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 23).

²⁶ Sub hac oblatione non solum panis et vinum, sed Ecclesia ipsa in his significata intellegitur. Hinc 1. sacerdos nomine Ecclesiae orat, ut panis et vinum convertantur in corpus et sanguinem Christi; qua transsubstantiatione oblatio fit *benedicta*, quia Christus est victima a Patre sanctificata et benedicta, *adscripta*, quia Christus est victima divinae majestati penitus devota et addicta, *rata*, quia ipse est victima a Patre tamquam perfecta adprobata, *rationabilis et acceptabilis*, quia ipse est aeterna ratio et Deo Patri infinite placens, ad differentiam victimarum irrationalium, per se Deo non placentium, quae in antiqua lege offerebantur. 2. Sacerdos orat, ut nos ipsi in omnibus simus *benedicti* gratis divinis, *adscripti* numero electorum in libro vitae (Apoc. 13:8; 17:8), *rati*, firmi et stabiles in Dei servitio, *rationabiles*, corpus et passiones rationi, rationem Deo subdendo (Rom. 12:1), et *acceptabiles*, digni, ut in vitam aeternam acceptemur; *ut nobis corpus et sanguis fiat D. N. J. Ch.*, scil. ut consecratio et oblatio nobis fiat fructuosa (Müller, *Theol. moral.*, III, tit. 1, § 16).

²⁷ S. Bernard., *In circumcis. Dom. serm.*, III, n. 4.

²⁸ Haec tria verba dicendo, super duo oblata simul ter signum crucis facimus, quod in omnibus consecrationibus familiare est et domesticum. Per virtutem enim crucis Domini multa credimus operari. Ideo ter, qui per virtutem crucis pariter Trinitas operatur (Robert. Paulul., *De offic. eccles.*, II, chap. 31).

by themselves symbolize the adorable Trinity, from whom proceeds the blessing of consecration, who sanctify the material elements and change them into the Eucharistic sacrifice.²⁹

We can also see in the five signs of the cross that immediately precede and immediately follow the Consecration a symbol of the five sacred wounds,³⁰ which were particularly prominent on the body of Christ, and which, consequently, are also in the most intimate relation with the redeeming passion and death of the Lord. Precisely at the moment in which the altar, by the presence of the divine victim, becomes a mystical Mount Calvary, the sublime and sacred scene of the passion of the Saviour, crucified and covered with painful wounds, should present itself before the eyes and mind of priest and people in the most striking manner. "Christ, pierced on the cross, wounded in five different places, come, let us adore!"

²⁹ Fiunt tres cruces super oblatam materiam, dum dicit "benedictam, adscriptam, ratam" ad honorem supersanctae et adorandae Trinitatis et ad insinuandum, quod effectus orationis istius a tota beatissima Trinitate nobis donetur. Nam ipsa hanc ineffabilem conversionem panis in corpus et vini in sanguinem Christi facit (Dion. Carthus., *loc. cit.*).

³⁰ Nonnulli quinque signa referunt ad quinque Christi vulnera (Robert. Paulul., *loc. cit.*).

CHAPTER XXXV

THE CONSECRATION

ENGAGED in devout meditation and contemplation we have come through the vestibule and the sanctuary of the mystically constructed liturgy of the Mass; we have entered into the holy of holies and now stand in the very presence of God. Breathless silence prevails all around; ¹ the Consecration, to which all that preceded served as a preparation, is approaching. The moment of consecration ² is the most important and solemn moment, the most sublime and holy and fruitful of the whole sacrificial celebration; for at that moment is accomplished that glorious and unfathomably profound work, the Eucharistic sacrifice, in which all the marvels of God's

¹ Ad elevationem ss. Sacramenti pulsatur organum graviori et dulciori sono (*Cer. episc.*, I, xxviii, 9).

² Acutius intueri, o homo, qui sacerdotio fungeris: qua utique reverentia et devotione, qua humilitate ac dilectione te Dominum tuum in ipsa sacra hostia suscipere et amplecti, tractare contemplarique oporteat. Ipse equidem est, ante cujus te tribunal mox necesse est adstare, qui judicaturus est vivos et mortuos et saeculum per ignem. In manu illius universa tua salus sita est, eum Cherubim Seraphimque adorant, Throni ei sedes sunt. Sed jam, o metuende Dei Fili, o adorande Christe, o virtus et sapientia Patris, fac me in te sapientem et fortem, stabiliterque conversum: praesertim autem tunc me, o beate Salvator, tunc cor meum munias mentemque in te afficias, erigas atque convertas, dum ipsa tua divina sacerrimaque mysteria celebros, sacramenta contingo ac dilectionis tuae pignus passionisque memoriale accipio: tunc, o omnipotens Dominator, prae majestatis tuae contemplatione reverentia timore concutiar, caritatis tuae contuitu inextinguibiliter accendar totusque in te resolver et configar: tunc te, Deus meus, splendida fide contempler, tunc te sapiam affectuosissimeque complectar; anima mea tua ex praesentia excitetur ac liquefiat. Utinam te, Deus meus, amator auctorque salutis meae, qui te mihi tam multipliciter praestitisti: qui ex ipso tuae benignissimae mentis ardore sic nobis ubilibet conjungi dignaris, anima mea semper coram se et item se coram te constituat; utinam tibi grata, utinam in te sic custodita consistat, ut ad tui participationem celebrationemque tuorum mysteriorum magis incessanter idonea, purior ardentiorque reddatur (*Dion. Carthus., De munificentia et beneficiis Dei*, a. 25).

love are concentrated as in a focus of heat and light. The change of the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood can proceed only from Him who "alone effects what is wonderful": it is an act of creative omnipotence. But for this act of almighty power there is required a human act, human cooperation on the part of an ordained priest.

At his ordination the priest received the supernatural power to effect, by pronouncing the words, "This is My body, . . . This is My blood," Eucharistic consecration; that is, these words, recited by the priest with the proper intention, change the prepared elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. At the Last Supper, Christ was the sole priest offering sacrifice; at the altar He is the principal sacrificer. Whereas in the Cenaculum He offered Himself without the assistance of others,³ He now offers Himself on the altar by the hands and mouth of the visible priest. The priest is His organ and minister. "The priest acts as the representative of Christ when he pronounces those words; but it is the power and grace of God. 'This is My body,' he says. These words transform the gifts placed before him."⁴ These words clearly manifest the manner in which the priest performs the act of consecration; all he does indicates plainly that he takes the place of Christ, speaks and acts in the person of Christ in accomplishing the Eucharistic sacrifice. That this may be manifest, he is directed by the Church to imitate as faithfully as possible by word and deed Christ's model act of consecration. The Church's liturgical act of consecration is nothing else than the repetition and re-enactment of the first celebration of the Lord's Supper in the Cenaculum at Jerusalem. The priest narrates the first offering and institution of the unbloody sacrifice by Jesus Christ, and while relating this, he performs the corresponding actions: he imitates the Lord as far as possible, and does the same

³ When we impartially read the biblical accounts regarding the first celebration and the institution of the Eucharist, we cannot but marvel that already in ancient times and again quite recently it could be asserted that our divine Saviour did not change the bread and wine by the words of the institution ("This is My body; This is My blood"), but that He had by the preceding benediction, or merely by an interior act of the will, changed them into His body and blood. The only well-grounded and tenable thesis in the Bible and in tradition is that the Lord performed the first Eucharistic consecration *ritu sacramentali* by the words of the institution, and thus by His example left the norm for all succeeding consecrations.

⁴ S. Chrysost., *De prodit. Judae hom.*, I, n. 6.

as Christ did. He pronounces over the bread and wine the effective words of consecration in the person of Christ (*quasi ex persona ipsius Christi loquentis*)⁵ with the intention of changing the gifts at present lying on the altar and thereby of offering up in sacrifice the body and blood of Christ.⁶ Plain and simple are the words of the liturgical text, as is best suited for a thing that is ineffably sublime and divine.

1. The Consecration of the host.

Qui pridie quam pateretur accepit panem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas, et elevatis oculis in coelum ad te Deum Patrem suum omnipotentem, tibi gratias agens, bene✠dixit, fregit, deditque discipulis suis, dicens: Accipite, et manducate ex hoc omnes:

Hoc est enim Corpus meum.

Who, the day before He suffered, took bread into His holy and venerable hands, and with eyes lifted up toward heaven, unto Thee, O God, His almighty Father, giving thanks to Thee, did bless, ✠ break, and give to His disciples, saying: Take and eat ye all of this:

For this is My body.

Three evangelists (Matt. 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19 f.) and the Apostle of the Gentiles, Paul (I Cor. 11:23-26), have informed us of the act of consecration. These four holy authors, though not in perfect accord as to the very words, yet agree perfectly as to the matter itself: all relate what the Saviour did at that

⁵ Verba consecrationis dicuntur et recitative et formaliter seu significative. Sacerdos enim et commemorat, quae verba Christus in ultima coena dixerit et, intendens ea applicare materiae praesenti, ac facere, quod significant, simul exercet actum suae potestatis. Atque hinc est, quod propriissime dicatur conficere in persona Christi, quia non tantum utitur potestate a Christo accepta, sed eam exercet ejus personam repraesentans, et loquens ejus verbis, quasi esset ipsemet Christus (Sylvius, III, q. 78, a. 1, q. 3).

⁶ Hoc sacramentum directe repraesentativum est dominicae passionis, qua Christus ut sacerdos et hostia Deo se obtulit in ara crucis. Hostia autem quam sacerdos offert, est una cum illa quam Christus obtulit secundum rem, quia Christum realiter continet; minister autem offerens non est idem realiter, unde oportet, quod sit idem repraesentatione, et ideo sacerdos consecrans prout gerit personam Christi, profert verba consecrationis recitative ex persona Christi, ne hostia alia videatur. Et quia per ea quae gerit respectu exterioris materiae, Christi personam repraesentat, ideo verba illa simul et recitative et significative tenentur respectu praesentis materiae, quae est figura illius, quam Christus praesentem habuit, et propter hoc dicitur convenientius: "hoc est corpus meum," quam: "hoc est corpus Christi" (S. Thom., IV, dist. 8, q. 2, a. 1, sol. 4 ad 4).

solemn moment and what priests were to do in His name and in commemoration of Him unto the end of the world. Not one of them has omitted anything essentially necessary for the accomplishment of the consecration and of the sacrifice; but with regard to accessories, the statements of the evangelists are not equally complete. Let us compare the liturgical formula at the consecration of the host and of the chalice with the biblical text, and we shall find that the Canon contains several words (*in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas, et elevatis oculis in coelum ad te Deum Patrem suum omnipotentem . . . aeterni testamenti . . . mysterium fidei*) that are wanting in Holy Scripture. These additions of the liturgy have emanated from a divine and apostolic tradition and are, therefore, as incontestably true and certain as are the words of the inspired authors.⁷

*Qui pridie quam pateretur.*⁸ How touching and solemnly impressive is that scene which these words recall to our mind! The Lord chose the eve of His bitter passion and death, the night on which He was betrayed (I Cor. 11:23), to give us by the institution of the Eucharist the most wonderful proof of His love.⁹ With desire He had longed for this hour. Before shedding His blood in torrents on the painful way of the cross, He would pour out for us ungrateful creatures the abundance of His grace, all the treasures of His love in the sacrament of the altar, that we might never forget what He has done and suffered for us.¹⁰

⁷ Quod additur "aeterni" et iterum "mysterium fidei," ex traditione Domini habetur (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 78, a. 3 ad 9).

⁸ On Holy Thursday the insertion is here made: *Qui pridie, quam pro nostra omniumque salute pateretur, hoc est, hodie.*

⁹ Venit Jesus ministrare Apostolis et praecipue hodie dilexit. Sciens enim quia transiret de mundo ad Patrem et quod ituri essent post eum . . . recedens ab eis et iter sequendi (sc. humilitatem in ablutione pedum) ostendit eis et cibum quo vescerentur in itinere, reliquit, i.e. viam dedit et viaticum. Sub forma enim panis et vini corpus suum et sanguinem ad edendum dedit et conficiendum reliquit. . . . Christus in cruce fuit pretium, in deserto est viaticum, in coelo erit praemium. Hic est cibus grandium, qui munit contra adversa et confert bona, servat collata (Hildeb. Turon., *Serm.*, XXXIX).

¹⁰ Christo non suffecit semel pro nobis immolari in cruce per mortis perpeccationem, sed hanc quotidianam et perennem sui immolationem in mysterio (sc. in Missae officio) ejus infinita sapientia adinvenit, ejus immensa clementia ordinavit, ejus caritas summa praefixit, qua et Dei Patris honorem generisque humani procuravit opem, gratiam ac salutem, quod totum sic fieri decentissimum exstitisse ratio dictat desuper illustrata: quae quanto plus illustratur, tanto limpidius intuetur, quam rationabile seu potius superrationabile, miseri-

“He took bread into His holy and venerable hands”: saying these words, the priest also takes the host into his hands. Holy and sanctifying, venerable and adorable beyond all expression are the hands of Christ. How often has He raised them in prayer to His Father, and extended them over men to bless them! How these hands were transpierced on the cross with the most intolerable heat of pain! How are thy hands constituted, O priest of the Lord? They are indeed holy and venerable by the consecration thou hast received; but are they also holy and venerable by the abundance of virtuous actions, by the odor of a devout life, and by exemplary conduct? With holy oil¹¹ were thy hands anointed and consecrated to the service of God and the salvation of souls; day and night shouldst thou elevate them to heaven, to praise thy Lord, to call down upon men His mercies and blessings. Are thy hands innocent and pure? Are they worthy to touch, to offer, and to distribute to others the immaculate Lamb of God?

“And with His eyes lifted up toward heaven, unto Thee, O God, His almighty Father, giving thanks to Thee, did bless” the bread. While the priest pronounces these words, he performs the corresponding ceremonies, so as to imitate as far as possible what the Saviour did at the institution of the Eucharist. For a moment the priest looks up at the crucifix on the altar, and then bows his head, thereby to signify and to express Christ’s thanksgiving; he makes over the host the sign of the cross, thus appropriately to represent the blessing of the Saviour, since we do not know after what manner it was imparted.¹²

Christ’s looking up to His almighty Father, as also the giving of thanks and the blessing of the bread, not only indicates the great-

cordissimum, sapientissimum, amosissimum fuerit istud, ut et quotidie dominicae passionis quasi recenter memores simus, caritatisque Dei ac pietatis suae et liberalitatis ad nos assidue recordemur recordandoque inflammemur et meritum Christi abundantius participemus, consequendo effectus sacramenti istius (Dion. Carthus., *De sacram. aliar. serm.*, II).

¹¹ Unctio sancta in manibus sacerdotum infunditur, ut S. Spiritus, qui per oleum designatur, in operibus consecrationis eorum descendat (Hildeb. Turon., *Serm.*, CXXXII). Manus sacratae et sacrantes tremenda mysteria (S. Bernard., *Tract. de mor. et offic. episcop.*, chap. 2, n. 4).

¹² When it is said that the Saviour blessed the little ones or the bread and the chalice, we may conceive that the Lord Himself preceded His Church in using the sign of the cross for liturgical purposes (Oswald, *Eschatologie* [ed. 2], p. 238).

ness and sublimity of the mystery He was about to accomplish, but served at the same time as a fitting preparation for the consecration. Not Holy Scripture, but tradition, informs us that the Saviour looked up to heaven, as He had done in the desert when He miraculously multiplied a few loaves. Thanksgiving and blessing¹³ are here to be distinguished from the consecration, as well as from each other, even though they may have been performed by Christ with the same prayer. For thanksgiving refers to God, the author of all good; but the blessing, to the gifts to be changed. This thanksgiving and this blessing were not the ones customary at the paschal supper, but were far more significant.

Christ did indeed adhere to the Old Testament paschal rite as to the selection of time for the institution and the matter of the Eucharist, as also to its breaking and distribution and the thanksgiving and blessing, but He gave to this thanksgiving a more sublime meaning and to the blessing a more exalted end, inasmuch as He thanked His heavenly Father for the benefits bestowed on His holy humanity and on the entire human race in general, and in particular for the great grace of the holy Sacrament, decreed from eternity and now about to be instituted by Him. By blessing bread and wine, He prepared both for the sacramental consecration at hand; as Man and high priest He prayed for this wonderful consecration which He as God, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, was about to perform.¹⁴

“He broke and gave to His disciples, saying: Take and eat ye all of this.” The Church in the celebration of the sacrifice follows her divine Lord and Master step by step; however, the breaking of the sacramental species and the distribution of the Eucharistic bread cannot take place until after the Consecration, while the majestic thanksgiving prayer of the Preface and the manifold blessing of the sacrificial matter have already an appropriate place before the Consecration. The priest, in the midst of a solemn silence that shuts out from him all the noise of the world, humbly bowing down at the altar, pronounces “in the person of Christ,” with the deepest atten-

¹³ Haec benedictio fuit bona super panem precatio, et divinae beneficentiae super illum invocatio, qua Christus elevatis oculis in coelum petebat ejus sanctificationem et transmutationem mox futuram; unde, quamvis Evangelistae nunc benedictionem, nunc gratiarum actionem nominent, quia Christus eas conjunxit, diversae tamen sunt, et inter se et a consecratione. Benedictio enim ad symbola refertur, gratiarum actio autem ad Deum (Sylvius, III, q. 78, art. 1, quaer. 2).

¹⁴ Franz, *Die Eucharistische Wandlung*, I, 37.

tion, devotion, and reverence, the mighty words: ¹⁵ *Hoc est enim Corpus meum* ("For this is My body"). With reverential awe at the power given him, the priest pronounces these divine words, which bear along with them the power of changing the substance of the bread. And now there is no longer bread on the altar, but under the appearances that remain of bread, Christ's body is truly present. In a moment the power of God has wrought a series of miracles, more magnificent and glorious than all the wonders of creation. The tiny host now contains in itself infinitely more treasures, riches, and glory than are to be found on the vast expanse of the globe.¹⁶ By virtue of the words of consecration, Christ's body becomes present, veiled under the appearance of bread. Here indeed is His glorified

¹⁵ *Haec verba cum summa attentione, reverentia et veneratione integre distincteque sunt proferenda, quoniam illa sacerdos quasi ore Christi (ut ita dixerim) eloquitur et illa loquens Christi fungitur officio. Quocirca in illis recte et decenter enuntiandis summa adhibenda est cura et animadversio (Clichtov., III, n. 29). The enim (= for, namely), elucidating and consolidating the preceding invitation (*accipite et manducate*), is found only in St. Matthew in the formula of the consecration of the chalice, but it was appropriately placed also in the formula of the consecration of the bread. Ipse summus ac generalis vicarius Christi, beatissimus Petrus, ex familiari et secreto Spiritus sancti instinctu addidit verbum "enim" et hoc ex rationabili causa ad designandam continuationem et ordinem ad praecedentia verba et gesta (Dion. Carthus., *De sacram. altar.*, a. 32).*

¹⁶ *Crede firmiter debes et nullatenus dubitare, secundum quod docet et praedicat catholica fides, quod in hora expressionis verborum Christi panis materialis atque visibilis adveniendi vivifico et coelesti pani, velut vero Creatori honorem deferens, locum suum, scil. visibilem speciem accidentium, pro ministerio et sacramentali servitio relinquit, quo desinente esse, miro et ineffabili modo in eodem instanti ista sub illis accidentibus veraciter existunt: primo, illa purissima Christi caro et sacrum corpus, quod fabricante Spiritu Sancto, tractum fuit de utero gloriosae Virginis Mariae, appensum in cruce, positum in sepulcro, glorificatum in coelo. Secundo, quia caro non vivit sine sanguine, ideo necessario est ibi sanguis ille pretiosus, qui feliciter manavit pro mundi salute in cruce. Tertio, cum non sit verus homo absque anima rationali, propterea est ibi illa anima gloriosa Christi, excedens in gratia et gloria omnem virtutem et gloriam et potestatem, in qua repositi sunt omnes thesauri divinae sapientiae (Col. 2:3). Quarto, quia Christus est verus homo et verus Deus, ibi consequenter est Deus in sua majestate gloriosus. Haec omnia quatuor simul et singula, tota simul sub speciebus panis et vini perfecte continentur, non minus in calice quam in hostia nec minus in hostia quam in calice, nec in uno suppletur defectus alterius, sed in ambobus invenitur integrum propter mysterium, de quo est grandis sermo (Heb. 5:11). Sufficit credere, Deum verum et hominem sub utraque contineri specie, cui assistunt Angelorum frequentia et Sanctorum praesentia (S. Bonav., *Tr. de praepar. ad Miss.*, chap. I, § 3, n. 1).*

body, which shines in the glory of heaven: a body immortal, impassible, with the precious blood flowing through it, vivified by the most holy soul, united to the eternal Godhead; therefore in the host Christ is present, whole and entire, with His divinity and humanity. The same God-man who lives and reigns in heaven in inconceivable majesty and beauty, is now mysteriously present in our very midst under foreign, sacramental appearances. The gates of heaven open and in the company of invisible choirs of angels the King of heaven descends upon the altar. The earth becomes a paradise; the priest holds his Creator, Redeemer, and Judge in his hands. What then is more natural than that we should fall down on our knees before Him in holy fear and rapturous joy? ¹⁷

The bread has been changed into the sacrificial body of Christ; the wine has now still to become the sacrificial blood of Christ.

2. The Consecration of the chalice.

Simili modo postquam coenatum est, accipiens et hunc praeclarum Calicem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas: item tibi gratias agens bene✠dixit, deditque discipulis suis dicens: Accipite et bibite ex eo omnes:

Hic est enim Calix Sanguinis Mei, novi et aeterni testamenti: mysterium fidei: qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum.

Haec quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis.

In like manner, after He had supped, taking also this excellent chalice into His holy and venerable hands, and giving thanks to Thee, He blessed ✠ and gave to His disciples, saying: Take, and drink ye all of it:

For this is the chalice of My blood, of the new and eternal testament: the mystery of faith: which shall be shed for you and for many for the remission of sins.

As often as you do these things, you shall do them in remembrance of Me.

¹⁷ Quando sacerdos sacram Hostiam manu tenens genua flectit, Dominum hunc adorare debet adeo profunda reverentia, ut cor suum usque ad ipsam abyssum humiliet, quasi desiderans in terrae profundum descendere ob tantae majestatis reverentiam. Et memor, quod Angeli descendant e coelo, et huic Domino in sacrificio adsint, cogitare debet, in eo momento se circumdari Angelorum exercitu, et simul cum illis adorare et laudare communem omnium Dominum et Creatorem. Et quando ipsam Hostiam sacram sursum elevat, id faciet, nunc cum sensu doloris et lacrymis, memor, Dominum eundem propter ipsius peccata fuisse in cruce elevatum et ab omnibus contemptum;

“In like manner, after He had supped, taking also this excellent chalice into His holy and venerable hands.” At these words the priest takes up the chalice in his hands and slightly elevates it, following the example of Christ. After the Old Testament paschal supper was over, the Lord consecrated the bread, and immediately afterward followed the consecration of the chalice. The Saviour took into His hands “this excellent chalice”: ¹⁸ evidently not the very chalice of the celebrant, but a chalice of like contents and of similar destination as the chalice which is before the eyes of the priest and which he holds in his hands. The identity existing between the chalice used at the Last Supper and the chalice on the altar, therefore, principally refers to the sacrificial matter therein contained, which is and must be everywhere essentially the same. This identity is perfect only after the Consecration; then there is present in the chalice on the altar the very same blood that was present in the chalice at the Last Supper. “This is the chalice of My blood,” said the Redeemer in the supper room; in the person of Christ the priest repeats these same words at the altar.

The Saviour also blessed the chalice with thanksgiving, as He had previously blessed the bread. He then pronounced over the blessed wine those holy words which the priest now in His stead pronounces over the chalice to change the material element into the divine blood of Christ: *Hic est enim Calix Sanguinis mei* (“For this is the chalice of My blood”); that is, this is My blood which is contained in the chalice. The expression, “chalice of My blood,” indi-

nunc idem faciet affectu quodam gaudii et gratitudinis, quod ipsam Hostiam elevet, ut honos ipsi Domino deferatur, et ab omnibus adoretur, quasi in compensationem praeteritorum contemptuum. Alias potest etiam in memoriam revocare, quod idem Dominus dixit: “Ego si exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad meipsum” (Joan. 12:32), et eundem Dominum orabit, ut dignetur ipsius cor ad coelum elevare, ubi ipse ad dextram Patris sedet (De Ponte, *De christ. hom. perfect.*, IV, tr. II, chap. 12. § 3).

¹⁸ *Hunc* autem calicem dicens sacerdos, qui celebrat, non eum demonstrat calicem secundum numerum, quem manibus tenet, . . . sed ad intellectum demonstrat similem secundum speciem, non quidem secundum speciem substantiae aut figurae, . . . sed similem quantum ad usum et liquoris continentiam. Sicut enim in hoc calice, quo sacerdos consecrationem vini perficit, continetur vinum aqua mixtum, ita et in eo calice, quem Christus accepit, continebatur vinum aquae permixtum, ut uno animo sentiunt omnes. Quare nomine calicis non intellegendum est hic solum vas potorium, sed id ipsum cum vino contento in eo (Clichtov., *Elucid. eccl.*, III, n. 30). *Idem* calix est in mysterio, quem Christus in manibus tenuit, quamvis in materia metalli alius sit (Honor. Augustod., *Gemm. anim.*, I, chap. 106).

cates that Christ's blood becomes truly present on the altar, the heavenly drink of the soul. According to the common opinion, these words alone constitute the essential formula for the consecration of the chalice; for they signify and effect the presence of the blood of Christ under the appearances of wine.¹⁹ The remaining words: the blood "of the new and eternal testament, the mystery of faith, which [blood] shall be shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins," are appropriately added. It is generally accepted that they were once spoken by the Lord Himself; moreover, they explain the dignity and effects of this sacrifice.²⁰

In the chalice is the blood of the "new and eternal testament." At the foot of Sinai the Old Covenant, whose promises were only earthly and which was to continue but for a time, was concluded with the blood of animals. But by Christ's sacrificial blood, which is in the chalice, the New Covenant of grace was established and sealed, one that is to be eternal: first, because the gifts and blessings appertaining to it are heavenly and imperishable; secondly, because the new covenant will ever remain in force and its validity will endure to the consummation of the world. The Eucharistic blood of the Lord is at the same time the most precious treasure of this new and eternal covenant of grace.

The concluding words, "which shall be shed for you and for

¹⁹ Haec forma: *Hic est calix sanguinis mei, est forma certa, forma congrua; sed utrum sit tota, an quod sequitur sit de integritate (essential), dubium est; creditur tamen, quod est tota. Tamen quod sequitur non est frustra additum, nec debet aliquid resecuri. Quod autem ista sit forma certa, patet per hoc, quod ipsam tenet Romana Ecclesia, quae fuit ab Apostolorum principibus edocta. . . . Est etiam congrua, quia in hoc sacramento significatur sanguis Christi ut effusus in pretium et ut administratus in potum; sanguis autem neutrum dicit de se expresse, sed per conjunctionem cum calice, quia sanguis in calice ut effusus et potandus proponitur. Ideo calix in Scriptura significat aliquando passionem (Matt. 20:22); significat et potus refectionem (Ps. 22:5). Propter hunc duplicem tropum melius dicitur calix sanguinis quam sanguis per se. . . . Est etiam tota et perfecta; sufficiens enim est ad significandum transsubstantiationem vini in sanguinem Christi. Unde quod additur est de bene esse, quia in sequentibus describuntur effectus sanguinis in hoc sacramento significati et in passione effusi (S. Bonav., IV, dist. 8, p. 2, a. 1, q. 2).*

²⁰ Dicendum est, omnia illa verba esse prolata a Christo. Haec est communis sententia et mihi certa (Suarez, disp. LX, sect. 3, n. 2). Licet haec verba non spectent ad essentiam formae, tamen pertinent ad ejus integritatem, estque hic sensus communis totius Ecclesiae Latinae, quae in Missa et forma consecrationis calicis ea quasi a Christo dicta et ab Apostolis praecepta, eodem tenore ac modo quo cetera, scribit et pronuntiat (Corn. a Lap., *In Matt.*, 26:28).

many for the remission of sins,"²¹ characterize the sacrificial blood of Christ as the very source of atonement, pouring forth its floods of grace for the remission of sin for all mankind. The exclamatory phrase in the middle, *mysterium fidei* ("the mystery of faith"), indicates the unsearchable depth of the Eucharistic sacrifice. That the God-man did shed His blood for us on the cross, and that He again sheds it for us in a mystical manner on the altar, is a divine achievement which includes in itself the sum of the most unheard-of wonders, all of which can be acknowledged and believed as true only in the light and power of faith. Christ's sacrificial blood in the chalice is a mystery of faith in the fullest sense of the term.²²

After the priest has pronounced the words of consecration, he again genuflects to venerate the infinitely precious and adorable blood of Christ in the chalice. At the same time²³ he pronounces the words: "As often as you do these things, you shall do them in remembrance of Me." With these words the Saviour instituted the Christian priesthood and the perpetual sacrifice of the New Law as a commemorative celebration of His redeeming passion and death.²⁴

²¹ Qui pro vobis, sumentibus scilicet, et pro multis = aliis. Illi multi vel intelleguntur omnes electi vel omnes omnino; nam pro omnibus sufficienter effusus est sanguis Christi, pro electis vero etiam efficaciter (Sylvius, III, q. 78, art. 3).

²² Per prima verba cum dicitur: "Hic est calix sanguinis mei," significatur ipsa conversio vini in sanguinem; per verba autem sequentia designatur virtus sanguinis effusi in passione, quae operatur in hoc sacramento, quae quidem ad tria ordinatur: Primo quidem et principaliter ad adipiscendam aeternam hereditatem (Heb. 10:19), et ad hoc designandum dicitur: "novi et aeterni testamenti." Secundo ad justitiam gratiae quae est per fidem (Rom. 3:23), et quantum ad hoc subditur: "mysterium fidei." Tertio autem ad removendum impedimenta utriusque praedictorum, sc. peccatum (Heb. 9:14), et quantum ad hoc subditur: "qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum" (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 78, a. 3).

²³ In the Middle Ages they were frequently said only *post elevationem calicis*. Deponendo calicem dicat haec verba: *Haec quotiescumque etc.* (*Ordo Rom. XIV*, chap. 53).

²⁴ Verba praetacta, videlicet *Haec quotiescumque . . .*, ut ait Bernardus, omni affectu plenissima sunt, et fidelem ac vere christianum animum vehementer inflammant, suntque a sacerdote celebrante cum ingenti devotione ac mentis sapore promenda, et proh dolor! miserabilem sacerdotem, qui haec verba sine memoria ineffabilis atque eximiae dilectionis atque acerbissimae mortis Christi pronuntiat atque sine cordiali affectu effundit: imo veraciter haec verba non solum tempore celebrationis, sed frequentissime nobis sunt cogitanda, revolvenda et amplectenda. His quippe verbis jubemur a Christo, non sine actuali devotione celebrare, sed cum diligenti divinatorum beneficiorum recordatione (Dion. Carth., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 29).

By the separate consecration of the host and of the chalice, Christ's body and blood are rendered present under the appearances of bread and wine. The twofold consecration is a mystical shedding of blood and places before our eyes in a most lively manner the bloody death of Christ on the cross.²⁵ The sacrifice on the altar is, indeed, painless; for the Saviour is no longer passible and can no longer suffer death. But His divinely human heart is here inflamed with the same love of sacrifice and is moved by the same obedience to His Father as when He was on the cross. This love and this obedience urged Him to sacrifice Himself mystically on the altar under the twofold sacramental appearances. It is at the moment of consecration that the sacrifice is accomplished, offered to God, and placed in the hands of us poor mortals. This entire act of consecration is performed so quietly and so mysteriously, that no one perceives anything of the wonderful transformation wrought by the priest's words in the host and in the chalice. The priest pronounces a few inaudible words, and the essence of the bread and wine has disappeared: their place is taken by Christ's body and blood, the whole Christ, the victim of Golgotha. For the senses alone nothing has happened, nothing is changed; for the appearances of bread and wine, upheld by the power of God, have remained to serve as veil and covering for the bright majesty of the King of Glory, who with us and for us is present as victim on the altar.²⁶ To fathom the height and the depth of the Eucharistic consecration is beyond even the wisdom of the cherubim; worthily to praise the miracles of mercy contained in this same Eucharistic consecration, even the love of the seraphim of heaven is wholly insufficient. Truly, no moment commands greater reverence, no moment is more holy or more beneficial than that in which the Eucharistic sacrifice is accom-

²⁵ Sanguis seorsum consecratus a corpore expressius repræsentat passionem Christi, et ideo potius in consecratione sanguinis fit mentio de passione Christi et fructu ipsius, quam in consecratione corporis (S. Thom., *loc. cit.*, ad 7).

²⁶ There He is, indeed; He is present; the word has had its effect; there Jesus is as truly present as He was when on the cross, where He appeared for us by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 9:26); as truly present as He is in heaven, where He again appears for us before the face of God (Heb. 9:24). This consecration, this holy ceremony, this worship full of blood, and yet unbloody, where death is everywhere, and where, nevertheless, the victim is alive, is the true worship of Christians; falling under the senses and spiritual, simple and august, humble and magnificent at the same time (Bossuet, *Médit. sur l'Évang.*, I, 63e jour).

plished and the altar becomes a mystical Mount Calvary surrounded by adoring angels.²⁷

3. The Consecration, especially in the more or less solemn rite of the elevation and adoration of Christ's body and blood, appears as the sublime center and pinnacle of the whole Mass.²⁸ Immediately

²⁷ Saint Hildegard, that great seer of the twelfth century, writes (*Scivias*, II, 6): "I saw also, when the priest, robed in the sacred vestments, advanced to the altar to celebrate the divine mysteries, that suddenly a great radiance and a retinue of angels came down from heaven, encircling the entire altar, and remaining there until the mystery was accomplished and the priest had retired from the altar. But when the Gospel of peace had been read, and the sacrificial gifts, which were to be consecrated, had been placed on the altar, and the priest sang the praise of almighty God, which is as follows: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord, God of Sabaoth,' and thus began the unspeakable mysteries: then descended suddenly a fiery lightning of indescribable brilliancy from the open heavens down upon the sacrificial gift, flooding it entirely with its brightness, as the light of the sun lights up every thing which it penetrates with its rays. And while the fiery lightning illumined in this manner the oblations, it carried them in an invisible way upward into the privacy of heaven, and brought them down again upon the altar; as a man draws his breath inwardly and then exhales it outwardly, thus did that sacrificial gift, after it had become the true body and the true blood of Christ, although to the eyes of men they appeared as bread and wine. And as I saw that, there appeared at the same time the signs of the birth, passion, and burial, as well as the resurrection and ascension of our Saviour, the incarnate God, as in a mirror, as they took place in the Son of God when upon earth," that is, Christ becomes present on the earthly altar as high priest, together with the whole work of redemption. (Cf. Schmelzeis, *Das Leben und Wirken der hl. Hildegardis*, pp. 371 ff.)

²⁸ The adoration of the Eucharistic body and blood of Christ during the sacrificial celebration was always customary in the Church (cf. Muratori, *Dissertat. de reb. liturg.*, chap. 19). *Carnem Christi in mysteriis adoramus* (S. Ambr., *De Spir. sancto*, III, xi, 79; cf. S. Aug., *Enarr. in Ps.*, 98:9). This adoration in the course of time differed ritually. According to the Roman *Ordines* and the writers of the Middle Ages, up to the twelfth century mainly the bowing (*inclinatio*) of the head, or of the body, was prescribed as the expression of adoration. *Inclinato capite pontifex vel diaconus salutatur Sancta* (*Ordo Rom. I*, n. 8). *Pontifex inclinatus capite ad altare primo adoratur Sancta* (*Ordo Rom. II*, n. 4). During the entire Canon the clerics maintained an adoring posture: *inclinati* (*Ordo Rom. I*, n. 16; *II*, n. 10; *III*, n. 15). *Acclines manent orationi intenti* (*Consuet. Cluniac.*, II, chap. 30). *Post finitum hymnum: Sanctus . . . inclinant se circumstantes, venerando divinam majestatem cum angelis et Domini incarnationem cum turba et inclinati perseverant, usque dum finiatur omnis praesens Oratio* (*the Canon*) (Hildeb. Turon., *De expos. Missae*). Not until the end of the Canon were the host and chalice elevated by the priest and the deacon and shown to the people for adoration. *Cum dicimus: "Per omnia saecula saeculorum," corpus cum calice levamus et statim in altari deposita cooperimus* (*Microl.*, chap. 17). The heresy of Berengarius

after pronouncing the words of consecration, the priest in all reverence elevates the host and then the chalice in order to hold up to the view of the assembled congregation the divine sacrificial victim for their adoration, while he himself keeps his eyes riveted on the body and blood of Christ. The principal object of the elevation is adoration; as the celebrant genuflects before and after the elevation, adoring with faith and humility, thus also all who assist at the Mass should be moved at the sight of the Blessed Sacrament to render to the God and Saviour therein concealed due adoration through their humble and reverent deportment, as well as by the interior oblation of themselves to Him. After the birth of Christ, heaven and earth sent adorers to the crib at Bethlehem; after the consecration heavenly adorers again surround the Eucharistic Saviour on the

(d. 1088) may have been the external occasion for the introduction of the rite of the elevation immediately after the consecration. It first appeared after the twelfth century in France; in the thirteenth century the practice was widespread, because it was well calculated publicly and solemnly to confess the faith in transubstantiation and in the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. In many churches for a long time the host alone was raised; in others the chalice was also elevated (in some places veiled with the pall, in others uncovered). The *Ceremoniale Roman.* (*Ordo Rom. XIII*) published under Gregory X (d. 1276) has the rubric: In elevatione corporis Christi . . . prosternant se ad terram et adorent reverenter in facies cadendo et sic prostrati stent usque ad "per omnia . . ." ante "Agnus Dei" (n. 19). The *Ordo Romanus XIV* (chap. 53) describes the rite more accurately. After the priest has said the words of consecration over the bread: ipse primo adoret inclinato capite sacrum divinum corpus; deinde reverenter et attente ipsum elevet in altum adorandum a populo . . . inclinato paululum capite adoret sacrum Domini sanguinem et elevet adorandum a populo . . . nec oportet, quod vel corpus vel sanguinem diu teneat elevatum, sed post brevem moram deponat, ita tamen quod elevationes et depositiones faciat cum debita reverentia et maturitate. Accordingly, in the fourteenth century the celebrant did not genuflect at or after the consecration.

With the elevation, the practice of ringing a small bell for those present and the large bell for those absent was also introduced. In elevatione utriusque [sc. hostiae et calicis] squilla pulsatur (Durand., IV, lxi, 53). Ivo of Chartres says that we ring the bell: quando illa singularis hostia pro nobis redimendis in ara crucis oblata per novi sacerdotii ministros in Domini mensa quotidie consecratur (*Epist.*, 142). Campanula in Missis pulsanda est etiam in Oratorii privatis (S. R. C., July 18, 1885). The Elevation rite is rendered more impressive in *Missa solemni* by the use of lights and incense. Several acolytes appear with torches, and the thurifer incenses the host and chalice while they are being elevated. The burning of the light as well as the consuming of the incense is a token and expression of devout adoration and worship rising heavenward. The incensing at this place occurs already at the close of the fourteenth century.

altar: "Heaven opens at the words of the priest, and the choirs of angels surround the altar,"²⁹ to admire and to adore the divine mysteries. What then is more proper than that man also should, in unison with the celestial spirits, render to the divine victim present their most profound testimonies of homage and worship?

This elevation of the body and blood of Christ is truly the commemoration of the death of the Lord (I Cor. 11:26): it places before our eyes the raising up of Christ on the cross upon Golgotha. As once on Mount Calvary, so Christ here on the altar, as the great mediator, as the true victim, and as the eternal high priest, is elevated between heaven and earth to reconcile God and man, inasmuch as He moves the heavenly Father to mercy and forgiveness, and moves sinful man to love and compunction.

²⁹ S. Greg., *Dial.*, IV, chap. 58.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE FIRST PRAYER AFTER THE CONSECRATION

BY the consecration, the Eucharistic sacrifice is essentially accomplished. But as the sacrificial action, as simple as it is sublime, was appropriately introduced and prepared by various rites, it must also be properly developed and worthily concluded; hence appropriate prayers and ceremonies follow the sublime moment of the Eucharistic consecration, when an immense treasury of graces was thrown open to us on the altar. First there follows an oblation prayer in three parts.

Unde et memores, Domine, nos servi tui, sed et plebs tua sancta, ejusdem Christi Filii tui Domini nostri tam beatae passionis, necnon et ab inferis resurrectionis, sed et in coelos gloriosae ascensionis: offerimus praeclarae majestati tuae de tuis donis ac datis hostiam ✠ puram, hostiam ✠ sanctam, hostiam ✠ immaculatum: panem ✠ sanctum vitae aeternae, et calicem ✠ salutis perpetuae.

Supra quae propitio ac sereno vultu respicere digneris: et accepta habere, sicuti accepta habere dignatus es munera pueri tui justi Abel, et sacrificium

Wherefore, O Lord, we Thy servants, and likewise Thy holy people, calling to mind the blessed passion of the same Christ Thy Son, our Lord, together with His resurrection from the grave and also His glorious ascension into heaven, offer unto Thy excellent majesty, of Thy gifts and presents, a pure ✠ victim, a holy ✠ victim, an immaculate ✠ victim: the holy ✠ bread of eternal life and the chalice ✠ of everlasting salvation.

Upon which do Thou vouchsafe to look with favorable and gracious countenance, and accept them as Thou didst vouchsafe to accept the gifts of Thy

Patriarchae nostri Abrahae: et quod tibi obtulit summus sacerdos tuus Melchisedech, sanctum sacrificium, immaculatam hostiam.

Supplices te rogamus, omnipotens Deus: jube haec perferri per manus sancti Angeli tui in sublime altare tuum, in conspectu divinae majestatis tuae: ut quotquot ex hac altaris participatione sacrosanctum Filii tui cor⁺pus et san⁺guinem sumpserimus, omni benedictione caelesti et gratia repleamur. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

just servant Abel and the sacrifice of our patriarch Abraham and that which Thy high priest, Melchisedech, offered unto Thee, a holy sacrifice, an unspotted victim.

We humbly beseech Thee, almighty God, command these things to be carried by the hands of Thy holy angel to Thine altar on high, in the presence of Thy divine Majesty, that as many of us as shall, by partaking at this altar, receive the most sacred body ⁺ and blood ⁺ of Thy Son, may be filled with every heavenly blessing and grace. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

These three parts of the Canon constitute but a single prayer, which has the customary conclusion; the intimate relation of the parts of the prayer and the gradual development of the whole cannot be mistaken. In general it contains the presentation to God of our sacrificial gifts and the supplication that He graciously accept them; it terminates with the wish that the most abundant benedictions of grace may be poured out from the altar upon all who participate in the sacrificial banquet.

THE *Unde et memores*

After the consecration, the Lamb of God is on the altar in a state of sacrifice, immolated by the two-edged sword of the mighty words of consecration. Assuredly the Lord dieth no more, nor can He die; He is exalted above death and the pangs of death; but nevertheless He here submits, under the sacramental species, to a mystical death, inasmuch as He renders present His separated body and His blood and conceals them under the cover of inanimate things. While He places Himself by the separate consecration in this state on the altar, He consecrates Himself to His Heavenly Father

as a sacrifice of praise, of propitiation, of thanksgiving, and of petition. His Eucharistic heart burns with the same fire of sacrificial love which at one time consumed Him as a holocaust on Calvary.

But on the altar He is also *our* sacrifice, He is in *our* hands: we are to offer Him. This is done already at the consecration; for the sacrificial act essentially includes the oblation of the gift.¹ The offering already contained in the sacrificial action itself may still be more clearly expressed and made repeatedly under different aspects and for different purposes through words and ceremonies. The Offertory prayers previous to the consecration do not refer to the Eucharistic elements exclusively, but also refer to the victim about to be present. Immediately after the consecration similar oblation petitions again occur; they do not belong to the essence of the sacrifice, yet in a certain sense they add to its greater perfection.² The immolated, sacrificed Lamb of God, His body and blood, lie before us on the altar; these infinitely precious gifts we now present to the divine majesty, principally to commemorate the Redeemer and His work, as well as to gain the fruits of the sacrifice.³

1. This offering is made, chiefly by consecrated priests, then by the rest of the faithful united with them: "We, Thy servants, as

¹ Adverte duplicem esse oblationem. Una est intrinseca sacrificio. Omne enim sacrificium est oblatio, et haec quidem oblatio non est alia actio ab ipsa, quae dicitur sacrificium, sed eadem ut in Deum ordinatur. Altera est, quae ab ipso sacrificio disjungitur; et haec est, qua expressius et distinctius sacrificium ipsum factum aut faciendum in Deum ordinamus et mente et voce. Et haec est, quae fit post consecrationem illis verbis: *Unde et memores . . .* et ante consecrationem illis: *Suscipe, sancta Trinitas . . .* (Tolet., *In Summ. s. Thom. De sacrif. Missae*, controvers. 5).

² Deposito Calice et adorato, prosequitur sacerdos sacram actionem Canonis, et facta *reali* et *substantiali* oblatione victimae per consecrationem, eandem confirmat et perficit repetita oblatione *verbali*, nempe oratione, quae incipit: "Unde et memores . . ." et aliis subsequentibus, additis etiam sacris ritibus in eundem finem: quae omnia accidentalem addunt perfectionem et majorem ornatum sacrificio, qualis tum maxime decet, dum in altari jam praesens est victima seu hostia vivens, sancta et Deo placens, videlicet ipse Christus sub accidentibus panis et vini (Quarti, II, ix, 1).

³ Quod sacerdos etiam tunc (sc. post consecrationem) orat, ut Deus acceptum habeat sacrificium, non est quia essentialis oblatio sacrificii non sit jam peracta, sed quia adhuc habemus praesentem rem oblatam, et per illam possumus plura semper beneficia impetrare, et iterum atque iterum Deum deprecari, ut et majorem in ipsum reverentiam ostendamus, et ut ad plura beneficia nobis conferenda sacrificium nostrum acceptet ac denique, ut effectus sacrificii propter demeritum nostrum non impediatur (Suarez, disp. LXXV, sect. 5, n. 15).

also Thy holy people." The plural, "Thy servants," recalls the time when priests still concelebrated Mass ⁴ with the bishop, and accordingly proves the antiquity of the prayer.⁵ Priests are in a special manner "servants of God"; but as they are to serve Him through love and with joy, they are also called "friends of God." In His farewell discourse the Lord spoke to His disciples these words, which the bishop, after the ordination, addresses to the newly ordained: "I not now call you servants; . . . but I have called you friends" (John 15:15).⁶ Thus does the Lord by an unmerited favor elevate priests to the rank of bosom friends and intimate associates, but priests will ever remain "His servants." This service is in itself a very great honor and distinction, to which the Lord freely chose

⁴ For many centuries priests celebrated the Eucharistic sacrifice in common with the bishop, especially on great feasts. *Mos est Romanae Ecclesiae, ut in confectione immolationis Christi adsint Presbyteri et simul cum Pontifice verbis et manibus conficiant* (Amalar., *De eccles. offic.*, I, chap. 12). *Consueverunt presbyteri Cardinales Romanum circumstare Pontificem et cum eo pariter celebrare, cumque consummatum est sacrificium, de manu ejus communionem recipere* (Innoc. III, *De sacro altar. myster.*, IV, chap. 25). In the Roman liturgy this rite of concelebration is now limited to the Masses at which takes place the ordination of priests and the consecration of bishops; in the Greek liturgy it still frequently occurs. (Cf. Bona, *Rerum liturg.*, I, xviii, 9.)

⁵ *Primum de praelatis; alterum de subjectis agere non dubitatur* (Microlog. c. 13). The expression *servi* is not to be confined to priests alone, but according to circumstances it is also to be referred to those in lesser orders. As in the prayer *Hanc igitur*, we have here also a grouping together of clerics and the laity; the former (the officials of the house of God) constitute the hierarchical, the latter the laical, priesthood. As members of the congregation and of the house of God, all Christians have, in a wider sense, a priestly character (I Pet. 2:5), and they exercise it chiefly at the Eucharistic celebration, in which by closest adherence to the liturgy they in common offer the sacrificial body and sacrificial blood of Christ, as well as their own subjective sacrifice. *Non solum sacerdotes et clerus (qui secundum diversos gradus divinis occupantur officiis) offerunt, sed etiam audientes, qui votis et orationibus assistant cooperantes* (B. Odo Camerac., dist. 2).

⁶ *Nonne per charismata gratiarum, per sapientiae claritatem, per virtutum decorem, per puritatem internam, per custoditam, fructuosam et contemplativam coram Deo conversationem, per odium vitiorum, per ardentem Deitatis amorem efficeris non solum servus Dei, imo et filius adoptivus, secretus amicus, heres regni coelestis, increatae Sapientiae sponsus, amantissimus Dei et tamquam consiliarius ac secretarius Creatoris? Intuere, quam deificum et praeclarum consistat, cum Deo assidue miscere colloquia in orationibus ac laudibus ejus, ipsum quoque tibi loquentem audire in lectionibus Scripturarum, in inspiratione occulta, in manifestationibus abditorum* (Dion. Carthus., *De laude vitae solitariae*, a. 12).

them and called them through His grace. Priests should administer and dispense the mysteries of God like good and faithful servants, leading a life befitting their vocation and office. The ministers of the Church are indeed, by their ordination, dignity, and power, exalted above the laity; but they are thereby none the less obliged to serve in love and humility, with devotedness and self-sacrifice, the flock that has been entrusted to them, they must labor, suffer, and care for the salvation and temporal welfare of their flock, after the example of "the Son of Man, [who] is not come to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many" (Matt. 20:28).

The words, "Thy holy people," denote the high dignity of the faithful regenerated by the sacrament of baptism; they are a people of God (*plebs tua*), and as such a "holy people" (*plebs sancta*).⁷ The faithful are a people belonging to God; for God has purchased them and acquired them with the great price of Christ's blood. They form a community which, in a very special manner, is dedicated to God as His peculiar property. The members of the Church are designated as a "holy people" inasmuch as God has singularly favored them and abundantly poured out on them the spirit of sanctification, whereby they are enabled to lead a virtuous and holy life. Then indeed shall the children of the Church truly be the holy people of God if, by word and deed, by their whole conduct, they endeavor to serve God and to glorify Him, since for this has He called and transplanted them out of the darkness of the world into the wonderful light of His heavenly truth and grace. God gave us His Son, and He gives Him again daily on the altar, that "He might redeem us from all iniquity, and might cleanse to Himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works" (Tit. 2:14).

At this offering, priest and people are mindful also of "the blessed passion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ," because the Lord Himself commanded it. To these preceding words of Christ uttered by the priest, *in mei memoriam facietis*, the words *Unde et memores* ("wherefore also calling to mind") refer.⁸ The Eucha-

⁷ In like manner Christians are called: *gens sancta, populus acquisitionis* (I Pet. 2:9); frequently in the liturgy: *sacrata plebs; plebs Domino dicata; populus sanctus Dei*.

⁸ *Peracta consecratione in omnibus Liturgiis Christi mandatum commemoratur praecipientis, ut ipsum sacrificium in ejus memoriam peragamus: "Haec quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis." Quis enim auderet ad*

ristic sacrifice is the living commemoration and mystical accomplishment of the entire work of redemption; Christ as high priest and as victim is present on the altar with all the fruits and merits of the redemption. In the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, not only His passion and death,⁹ but also the life of His glory is mystically represented and renewed. Three great mysteries are here made prominent: before all, the sufferings of Christ in His sacrifice and death on the cross, as the essence and center of the work of redemption; then the joyful resurrection and glorious ascension, which constitute the conclusion and crown of the work of redemption.¹⁰ The passion, so full of pain and torment for the Saviour, is here designated as "blessed" (*tam beata passio*),¹¹ by reason of the blessed effects and sweet fruits which it produced for us men. Thus the Church in a passion hymn also calls the hard wood of the cross and the cruel nails "sweet" (*dulce lignum, dulces clavi*). Since the merci-

altare Dei accedere et augustissimum mysterium celebrare, nisi Dominus tanti sacramenti institutor praecipisset? Propterea Ecclesia Domini mandato obsequens sequentia verba recitari constituit: *Unde et memores, Domine, nos servi tui, sed et plebs tua sancta, fidelis scilicet et in Ecclesiae gremio consistens; sancta, non quidem actu, cum non omnes sancti sint, sed vocatione, debito et professione; quae vel praesens adest sacrificio vel in unitate Ecclesiae ubique degens particeps est sacrificii* (Bona, *Rer. liturg.*, II, xii, 3).

⁹ Illius ergo panis et calicis oblatio mortis Christi est commemoratio et annuntiatio, quae *non tam verbis quam mysteriis ipsis* agitur, per quae nostris mentibus mors illa pretiosa altius et fortius commendatur (Florus Lugdun., *De actione Missar.*, n. 89). Cf. Algerus, *De sacram. corp. et sang. Domin.*, I, chap. 16.

¹⁰ Nominantur potius hic ista tria Christi opera: passio, resurrectio, ascensio, quam alia in dispensatione carnis assumptae ab eo facta, quoniam plus ceteris faciunt ad complementum redemptionis et glorificationis humanae. Passio namque Christi pretium nostrae redemptionis exsolvit et mortem destruxit. Resurrectio ejusdem perditam reparavit vitam nobisque resurgendi spem et fiduciam suggessit. Ascensio vero in coelum paradisi patefecit introitum quantum ad ejus ingressum et nobis eandem ingrediendi viam monstravit (Clichtov., *Elucidat. eccles.*, III, n. 35).

¹¹ Nulla nobis sit de Christi cruce confusio, quia habemus de ejus passione victoriam: sicut enim sempiternus Dei Filius non sibi, sed nobis est natus, ita immaculatus Dei Agnus non sibi, sed nobis est passus (Maxim. Taurin., *Homil.*, LXXXIII). Haec dominicae dispensationis arcana (*the mysteries of the redemption*) et semper nos animo decet retinere et intentius solito ubi beatissimae passionis sacramenta conficiuntur, ubi mors Salvatoris nostri, quam citissimae resurrectionis virtute in aeternum conculcavit, mysticis in altari renovatur officiis (Bed. Venerab., II, hom. 4). Tam beatæ, h. e. tam excellenter beatificantis [passionis], quia mortuos a vinculis mortis absolvit (Albert. M., *Summa de offic. Missae*, tract. III, chap. 13).

ful Saviour has left us on the altar such a wonderful memorial of His redeeming life and death, we should during the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice most fervently meditate upon and venerate these great mysteries.¹²

At the institution of the Eucharist, the Lord Himself said to the apostles: "Do this in remembrance of Me!" so that this sublime and venerable Sacrament might be to us an excellent and singular memorial of the immense love wherewith He loved us. This is the sweetest memorial, the most salutary memorial, by means of which we renew the joyful remembrance of our redemption. This is the glorious commemoration that fills the souls of the faithful with a salutary joy, infuses into our hearts felicity, at the same time sweetly moving to tears. For we rejoice in the remembrance of our deliverance; but inasmuch as we renew the passion of Jesus Christ, through which we received our deliverance, we can scarcely restrain our tears.¹³

We offer the sacrifice to the most exalted and glorious majesty of the heavenly Father: *offerimus praeclarae majestati tuae*. But where shall we find the offering for the God of majesty? Since every good and perfect gift comes from above, from the Giver of all that is good, we cannot offer anything to God but from His "presents and gifts" which He had previously imparted to us.¹⁴ "Thine, O Lord, is magnificence and power and glory and victory: and to Thee is praise. For all that is in heaven and in earth is Thine: Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art above all princes. All things are Thine, and we have given Thee what we received of Thy hand" (I Par. 29: 11, 14). The "presents and gifts" (*dona et data*) here men-

¹² Commemorantur tria opera Christi, videlicet passio ejus, cujus memoria caritatem inflammat; resurrectio, quae fidem confortat; ascensio, quae spem nostram corroborat. Quod enim in Christo capite nostro factum credimus, in nobis perficiendum speramus. Dum vero sacerdos haec verba dicit, debet quidem celeriter, non tamen superficialiter, imo cordialiter recordari passionis Christi, non sine compassionis affectu, resurrectionis quoque et ascensionis cum exultatione mentali, contemplando mentaliter, quomodo ex clauso sepulcro surrexit, anima ex limbo inferni ad corpus redeunte, et qualiter nubes in ascensione accepit eum ab oculis discipulorum (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 32).

¹³ Cf. the Bull of the Institution of the feast of Corpus Christi by Urban IV, August 11, 1264.

¹⁴ Deus, qui cum muneribus nullis indigeas ipse nobis munera cuncta largiris, accipe propitius, quae de tuis donis tibi nos offerre voluisti, non solum nostrae reputans devotioni quae tua sunt, sed etiam per haec nos ad coelestia regna perducens (*Sacrament. Leon.*, XXIV).

tioned, by means of which we offer a sacrifice to God, are the natural elements of bread and wine, taken from the noblest fruits and productions of God's creation.¹⁵ For these earthly "presents and gifts" of God are changed by the consecration into the gift of the Eucharistic sacrifice, into the bread of life and the chalice of salvation, which we likewise received from God, and which we again offer to the divine Majesty.

Our sacrifice is worthy of the greatness and goodness of God; it is an infinitely precious and perfect sacrifice. For indeed we present the "clean oblation" predicted by the prophet Malachias (1:11), on which there cannot possibly fall the least shadow of blemish. Jesus Christ is in Himself the unspeakably pure, holy, and unspotted victim (*hostiam puram, hostiam sanctam, hostiam immaculatam*), and consequently the inexhaustible source whence purity, holiness, and spotlessness are poured forth into every susceptible human heart.¹⁶ The Eucharistic victim is, moreover, partaken of; His sacrificial body is a sacrificial food, and His sacrificial blood is a sacrificial drink; both together form a holy sacrificial repast. Hence we offer the bread of heaven, which nourishes unto eternal life, and the precious chalice, whence issues everlasting salvation.¹⁷

2. Even after the consecration the sign of the cross is made over the sacrificial gifts.¹⁸ These signs of the cross after the consecration

¹⁵ Among the "God-given gifts and presents" we may also at the same time understand the Eucharistic victim. Sensus est: offerimus tibi hostiam puram, panem sanctum et calicem salutis, quae ex creaturis tuis a te datis et donatis, ex pane scil. et vino per consecrationem habemus. Sic exponit Innocentius. Possunt etiam referrī omnia ad ipsam Eucharistiam sive ad Christum ut in Eucharistia existentem; rectissime enim dicitur Christus Dei datum et donum (Bellarm., *De Missa*, II, chap. 24). Dicitur haec hostia offerri ex Dei donis et datis, vel quia ex pane et vino effecta est, vel certe, quia Christum ipsum continet, qui nobis a Deo datus est (Suarez, disp. LXXXIII, sect. 2).

¹⁶ Christus est hostia pura, electos suos purificans; hostia sancta, dilectos suos sanctificans; hostia immaculata, maculas nostras purgans; panis vitae aeternae, angelos et homines reficiens, et calice sui praeclari sanguinis inebrians et perfundens (S. Bonav., *Expos. Miss.*, chap. 4).

¹⁷ In the Mozarabic liturgy the Eucharist is also frequently designated as *panis* (sc. *quem lignum crucis coxit*) and as *calix*, or *vinum* (sc. *quod torcular passionis expressit*). It has a similar designation in a prayer of the old Gallican rite: *immolatus panis et sanguis*.

¹⁸ In three places (in all ten times) it is made with the hand over the sacrificial gifts, and in two places (in all eight times) with the host (six times over the chalice and twice outside the chalice).

have always been regarded as difficult to explain; hence various interpretations have been given.

The use of the sign of the cross in ecclesiastical worship is very extensive; it is employed, not merely as a holy symbol to express various mysteries and truths, but even as a means to produce supernatural effects and to impart blessings; it is a sign efficacious as well as profoundly significant. Since the sign of the cross, on account of its profound contents, is so extensively employed for liturgical purposes, it is self-evident that it is not always and everywhere used in the same sense; and often in the same place it may even have several purposes.¹⁹ First, the distinction between the sign of the cross made before the consecration and that made after the consecration can be shown. Very often the cross is a sign of blessing; such is the case before the consecration, where it is a significant and at the same time an effective sign of blessing: it consecrates the material elements of bread and wine to their high destiny, and at the same time indicates and implores their perfect sanctification through the consecration. But evidently this object cannot be ascribed to the sign of the cross after the Elevation: there are no longer present on the altar material elements susceptible or in need of blessing, but only Christ's body and blood under the appearances of bread and wine. Jesus Christ, the source of all blessings, cannot be blessed by the priest; therefore the signs of the cross made over the oblation after the consecration can in nowise have the signification and power of effective signs for blessing Christ, who is present.²⁰ The signs of the cross after the consecration again have different meanings and ends, which will be best shown by explaining the prayers and acts connected with them.

In our present prayer the Eucharistic sacrifice is named five

¹⁹ We must always follow the fundamental rule that text and ceremony are to be explained in harmony with each other; for word and act constitute a ritual whole, since they belong to each other, mutually complete one another, and reciprocally cast light on one another. This is the case in the rite of the Mass, in which frequently occurs the sign of the cross.

²⁰ In sacramento altaris benedictio sacerdotis fertur super terminum a quo, i.e. super panem, non super terminum ad quem, i.e. corpus Christi (S. Thom., *In I ad Cor.*, chap. 10, n. 4). Notandum quod consignatio facta super panem et calicem ante consecrationem quasi oratio est, ut consecratio compleatur; post consecrationem vero iterata consignatio consecrationis jam adimpletae quaedam est testificatio (Robert. Paulul., *De offic. eccles.*, II, chap. 32).

times, and at each mention of it a cross is made over the consecrated elements. The sign of the cross is indeed but a passing action, yet it possesses the form and expression of a holy image: it is like the crucifix, and like it, it ever reminds us of Christ's passion and death. The cross, therefore, has always and everywhere this reminding feature, especially at the celebration of Mass, which is the renewal of the sacrifice of the cross.²¹ When the gifts of the Eucharistic sacrifice are named, the symbol of the cross appropriately accompanies the words to represent also to the eye that on the altar the same body and the same blood are offered which were once sacrificed on the Cross. This symbolical interpretation does not exclude other meanings. The essence of our prayer is the offering (*offerimus*); now, if the signs of the cross figuratively express what the words signify, then they can also rightly be conceived as a symbolical dedication and surrendering up to God of the Eucharistic victim. Yet these crosses in a certain respect can here be understood as signs of blessing.²² They may be regarded as a symbol of that plenitude of grace and blessing which gushes forth from the sacrificed body and blood of Christ over His mystical body, that is, the Church. This thought is warranted because the Church is united to Christ and offered together with Him on the altar, and consequently she is blessed to a certain extent by these signs of the cross. Finally, the five signs of the cross may be considered a symbol of the five wounds of our crucified Saviour.²³

²¹ Mentio mortis adest, ubicumque perennibus escis
Imprimit uncta manus mystica signa crucis.

(Hildeb. Turon., *Vers. de myster. Missae.*)

Quid est inter ipsa mysteria rebus sacratis vel sacrandis signum crucis superponere, nisi mortem Domini commemorare? Unde et Dominus formam consecrandi corporis et sanguinis sui tradens, ait inter cetera: "Hoc facite in meam commemorationem" (Ivonis Carnotens., *Serm.*, V).

²² "The blessings made over the body of Jesus Christ with the sign of the cross, do not regard that divine body, but those who are to receive it; or if they regard it, it is to indicate the blessings and graces with which it is filled and which He desires to impart to us liberally, if our want of fidelity does not prevent Him; or, in fine, if we wish to consider it in that light, Jesus Christ is blessed in all His members, who are offered in this sacrifice as forming but one and the same body with the Saviour, in order that the grace of the Head be abundantly bestowed upon them" (Bossuet, *loc. cit.*).

²³ Quinaria cruce signamus, non ut eum, a quo omnis sanctificatio, sanctificemus, sed ut vulnera pendentis in cruce—duo manuum, duo pedum, quin-

THE *Supra quae*

Immediately after the above offering very appropriately follows the petition that God would vouchsafe to look with a propitious and gracious countenance upon our sacrificial gifts and vouchsafe to accept them, as formerly He received the typical offerings of Abel, Abraham, and Melchisedech. But must not such a petition appear strange? Does not the eye of the heavenly Father rest with eternal love and infinite complacency on Jesus Christ, the pure, holy, and unspotted victim of our altars? How then can the oblation of the body and blood of Christ be placed on the same level with the figurative offerings of ancient times? To solve this difficulty, we must examine more closely the aspect under which the Eucharistic sacrifice is here regarded.

In so far as Christ on the altar offers Himself, the Eucharistic sacrifice is ever absolutely pleasing to God; to beg for a favorable acceptance of the sacrifice of Christ from this standpoint, or even to place it on the same plane with the ancient sacrifices, is out of question, and consequently such cannot be the meaning of our prayer. Here the Eucharistic oblation is considered under another aspect. At the moment of consecration, Jesus Christ as high priest offers Himself up through the Holy Ghost and the ministry of the visible priest to the honor of His heavenly Father and for our salvation, and at the same time He places His sacrificial body and blood in the hands of the Church. The Church now presents to the majesty of the Father, as her sacrifice, the divine victim mystically immolated, while including the sacrifice of her own self as a gift in union with the infinitely meritorious sacrificial body and blood of Christ. The petition for the favorable reception refers, therefore, to the Eucharistic oblation in so far as the Church comes to the foreground as offering it together with herself. For the value of an offering depends not alone on the quality of the gift, but also and principally on the dignity and holiness of the person who offers it. The more pure and perfect his intention in sacrificing is, the more agreeable is his homage in the sight of God. "The Lord had respect to Abel and to his offerings" (Gen. 4:4), that is, the first was the cause of the second: the gift of Abel was pleasing to God because Abel him-

tum lateris—flebilter et devote recolamus (Stephan. Augustod., *De sacram. altar.*, chap. 17).

self was pleasing to Him.²⁴ This principle is applicable also to the offering at the altar, in so far as the Church, the priest, and the faithful are regarded as those who offer. Naturally this is not to be understood as though our disposition could impart a higher value to the sacrificial gift infinitely precious in itself, but it means only that God ever prefers to receive it from hands that possess the greater purity and holiness. Since we are often wanting in the proper dispositions, in piety, purity of heart, fervor of devotion, let us make humble supplications to the Most High, that He be not offended on account of our sinfulness, and reject not the Eucharistic gifts from our unworthy hands, but that He look upon and graciously accept them presented by us, that they may, not only as the sacrifice of Christ but also as our sacrifice, bring down upon us bountiful blessings and a superabundance of grace.²⁵

For the clearer understanding of such petitions, we must further consider that the Church participates still in another way in the sacrifice of the altar: together with her head, Jesus Christ, she offers herself as a gift dedicated to God; the real body of Christ and the mystical body of Christ are thus combined in one sacrifice. This mystery is symbolized at the Offertory by the pouring of some water into the wine in the chalice; accordingly, the priest already then prayed "in a spirit of humility and with a contrite heart," that we be received by God as a sacrifice well pleasing to Him; he then summoned the faithful to pray that his sacrifice and theirs "may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty." Therefore, since we place ourselves with all our works and prayers, desires and concerns, as a

²⁴ With respect to the sacrifices offered by Abel and Cain, St. Cyprian writes: *Non munera eorum Deus, sed corda intuebatur, ut ille placeret in munere, qui placebat in corde (De Orat. domin., chap. 24).*

²⁵ *Clarum est, quod sacerdos novae legis non orat sacrificium seu sacramentum altaris sic Deo placere, quemadmodum ei placuerunt sacrificia horum trium virorum [Abel, Abrahae, Melchisedech], quoniam illa sacrificia nec gratiam continebant nec placita Deo erant nisi ex devotione offerentium meritisque eorum, sed sacrificium novae legis, videlicet sacramentum corporis et sanguinis Christi, gratiarum plenitudinem continet et per seipsum Deo acceptum est, ejusque oblatio fructuosa est non solum ex meritis offerentis, sed propter dignitatem oblatis. Orat ergo sacerdos oblationem suam seu sacramentum altaris Deo placere non quantum ad seipsum seu rem oblatam, quae per se sancta ac Deo placita existit, sed quantum ad offerentem, quatenus sacerdotis actio atque devotio Deo sic placeat, sicut placuit antiquorum patrum devotio, sicque effectum et gratiam hujus sacramenti consequi mereatur (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 33).*

sacrificial gift upon the altar, the reason is easily understood why, with lively sentiments of our worthlessness and unworthiness, we implore that God would deign to look with mercy on us and on our sacrifice. Such petitions frequently occur in the liturgy of the Mass, and we shall meet them again at the conclusion of the sacrifice. They are perfectly justifiable, inasmuch as we offer the Eucharistic sacrifice and ourselves in union with it. To do this worthily, we should possess perfect sanctity, but as this is wanting to us, we recommend our sacrifice to the favor and indulgence of God, that it may be more agreeable to Him and more salutary to us. When, therefore, we are assembled around the altar, may God never look down upon us with reproach and resentment, but may He always regard us and our gifts "with a favorable and gracious countenance."²⁶

The next petition, that the heavenly Father would favorably accept this our sacrifice as He accepted the sacrifices of Abel, Abraham, and Melchisedech, is explained from the same point of view.²⁷ Here these sacrifices are by no means compared with the Eucharistic sacrifice as far as Christ is its priest and gift; there is an infinite distance between them. The comparison is made between us and those devout patriarchs. We pray that our oblation may be agreeable and pleasing to the eyes of God as were the sacrifices of those saints of ancient times.²⁸ Now this is nothing else than praying for the fulfillment of that which the prophet Malachias (3:3 f.) at one time predicted: "He shall purify the sons of Levi [the priests], and shall refine them as gold and as silver, and they shall offer sacrifices [the Eucharistic oblation] to the Lord in justice. And the sacrifice of Juda and of Jerusalem [that is, of the Christian Church] shall please the Lord, as in the days of old and in the ancient years," when

²⁶ *Vultus* = glance, mien, feature, inasmuch as it is the indication of the interior sentiment of the mind; often emphatic = angry, threatening countenance, look of anger (cf. Ps. 33:17); *propitius* = inclined, disposed, favorable, graciously inclined; *serenus* = serene, bright, clear, brilliant, radiant. We also pray God not to be angry, dark, severe, but favorable, mild, graciously to look down on our oblation. Cf. Ps. 30:17; 66:2.

²⁷ Licet hoc sacramentum ex se ipso praeferatur omnibus antiquis sacrificiis, tamen sacrificia antiquorum fuerunt Deo acceptissima ex eorum devotione. Petit ergo sacerdos, ut sic hoc sacrificium acceptetur a Deo ex devotione offerentium, sicut illa accepta fuerunt Deo (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 4 ad 8).

²⁸ Fit in canone Missae mentio de oblatione Abrahae et Abel magis propter devotionem offerentium, quam propter figuram rei oblatae (S. Thom., IV, dist. 8, q. 1, a. sol. 2 ad 6).

holy men, as Abel, Abraham, and Melchisedech, offered sacrifices pleasing to God. The Lord was pleased to accept their gifts because they were presented to Him with perfect dispositions, and because they at the same time prefigured the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.²⁹

There is no doubt regarding the typical character of the sacrifices mentioned. If the sacrifices of Abel and Abraham are principally figures of the bloody sacrifice of the cross, they must, indeed, in this connection with Melchisedech's sacrifice, be also considered as figures of the unbloody sacrifice of the altar. Such a conception corresponds to the view of Christian antiquity, as it is often expressed by the Fathers and in the various liturgies.³⁰

The devout and faithful Abel offered to God the firstlings of his flock. In all probability God manifested His special pleasure by sending fire from heaven to consume Abel's sacrifice. According to the expression of the Lord Himself (Matt. 23:35), Abel is designated as the just (*justus*) and as the servant (*puer*) of God. Full of faith and humble simplicity, he offered a lamb to the Lord, and this sacrifice is intended to prefigure the sacrifice of that true and immaculate Lamb daily immolated on the altar.³¹ Inasmuch as Abel was infamously slain by his brother Cain, he was, by suffering death innocently, one of the principal figures of the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Heb. 12:24). "In him," St. Ambrose says, "the redemption of the world and the sacrifice of Christ are announced."³²

²⁹ Post consecrationem rogamus Patrem, ut super dona praedicta respiciat et accepta habeat. Sed cum Patri Filio nihil sit acceptius, quem propitio et sereno vultu semper sibi Deum aequalem intuetur: quid aliud oramus, nisi ut mediante et interpellante Filio nobis Deus fiat placabilis, et propitius et per eum, qui sibi placet, ei placeamus? Itaque oramus eum per haec sacrificia nobis miserendo placatum fieri, sicut misertus est patribus nostris propitiando eorum sacrificiis. Unde attendenda est haec comparatio in sola similitudine, non in quantitate, nec est referenda ad sacrificia, sed ad offerentium vota. Plus valet res, quam figura. Omnibus sacrificiis praecellit Eucharistia; est autem talis similitudo, ut recte offerendo similes simus patribus nostris, qui recte obtulerunt (Steph. Augustod., *De sacr. altar.*, chap. 17).

³⁰ Tuae laudis hostiam jugiter immolamus, cujus figuram Abel justus instituit, celebravit Abraham, Melchisedech sacerdos exhibuit, sed verus Agnus et aeternus Pontifex Christus implevit (*Sacrament. Leonian.*, IV).

³¹ Deus, qui legalium differentiam hostiarum, unius sacrificii perfectione sanxisti: accipe sacrificium a devotis tibi famulis, et pari benedictione, sicut munera Abel, sanctifica; ut quod singuli obtulerunt ad majestatis tuae honorem, cunctis proficiat ad salutem (*Secret. Dom. VII p. Pent.*).

³² In isto [Abel] mundi redemptio annuntiatur, ab illo [Cain] mundi ruina.

Abraham, "our patriarch"³³ since he was chosen by God as the first father of all the faithful, stands forth prominent as an example of heroic obedience and faith. God commanded him "to immolate his son Isaac in sacrifice, and already had Abraham bound his long-desired child of promise, placed him on the pile of wood, and had raised the sword above him; but at the decisive moment the Almighty restrained the father's arm and instead of the son allowed him to sacrifice a ram to Him" (Laurent). This sacrifice of Abraham is often represented in the catacombs, together with other biblical events symbolizing the priesthood and the sacrifice of the New Law, as a figure of the Eucharistic sacrifice. Abraham did indeed sacrifice his son, but Isaac's blood in reality was not shed; Abraham received him from death for a parable (Heb. 11:19), that is, as a figure of the risen Saviour, who as a Lamb "as it were slain" (Apoc. 5:6) offers Himself on the altar in an unbloody manner. The Sequence of Corpus Christi places the sacrifice of Abraham on a par with the manna and the paschal lamb; for it declares that the Eucharist "was prefigured when Isaac was sacrificed."³⁴

The offering of food, the sacrifice of bread and wine, which the faithful and royal priest Melchisedech presented to the Most High, is the most luminous and most striking figure of the Eucharistic sacrifice;³⁵ for this reason it is justly styled holy and spotless (*sanctum sacrificium, immaculatam hostiam*).³⁶ Melchisedech himself is

In hoc Christi sacrificium, in illo diaboli parricidium (*Exhortat. virgin.*, n. 36, chap. 6).

³³ Dicitur Abraham Patriarcha, i.e. princeps patrum, non quia non habuerit patrem, sed quia sibi facta est promissio de paternitate gentium (S. Thom., *In ep. ad Heb.*, chap. 7, lect. 2).

³⁴ Est et sine cruore sacrificium. Norunt hoc, quod dico, quicumque initiati sunt, ac propterea sine sanguine transactum est illud (*the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham*), quoniam istius (*the unbloody sacrifice*) figura esse debebat (S. Chrysost., *Oratio in S. Eustathium*). Cf. Petav., *De Incarnat.*, XII, xiii, 7.

³⁵ Melchisedech obtulit sacrificium in pane et vino, et in eisdem speciebus modo offertur et celebratur sacramentum altaris: ergo cum non possit expressius figurari quam in simili secundum speciem, videtur, quod tunc praecessit figura expressissima (S. Bonav., IV, dist. 8, p. 1, a. 1, q. 3).

³⁶ The addition, *sanctum sacrificium, immaculatam hostiam*, ascribed to Leo the Great, grammatically cannot be conceived as in apposition with *Supra quae* and be referred to the Eucharistic sacrifice; it belongs to *quod obtulit summus sacerdos tuus Melchisedech*. Vocat hic littera Canonis sacrificium ipsius Melchisedech *sanctum sacrificium et immaculatam hostiam*, non quidem quantum ad se absolute, sed collatione facta ad sacrificium novi testamenti, quod significat et cujus expressior erat figura quam ceterae

a figure of the eternal high priest, Jesus Christ; his priesthood as to dignity and importance is not inferior to that of Aaron, but rather superior to it, hence he is called the high priest of God (*summus sacerdos tuus*).⁸⁷ "It is Jesus Christ whom the high priest Melchisedech prefigured, who did not offer to God the sacrifices of the Jews, but the sacrifice of that mystery which our Saviour consecrated in His body and blood."⁸⁸

These patriarchs offered their merely figurative, imperfect sacrificial gifts with sentiments so devout and pure that God regarded them with favor and grace. We pray that we may now offer the perfect sacrifice of the New Law with far greater piety and devotion, to the end that the Most High may also regard it with pleasure and graciously accept the gift from our hands.

THE *Supplices te rogamus*

The third part of the first prayer after the consecration, beginning with the words, *Supplices te rogamus*, contains the concluding petition, by which we beseech God to command our sacrificial gifts to be carried by the hands of the angels to His altar on high, in the presence of His divine Majesty, that, by partaking of the sacrificial food, we may be filled with all heavenly blessing and grace. This petition is clothed in words full of mystery, for it is manifest that there can be no question of a local transfer of the body of Christ from the altar to heaven. The text of this prayer recalls a celestial vision of St. John (Apoc. 8:3 f.): "And another angel came and stood before the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God, from the hand of the angel."⁸⁹

oblaciones, et idcirco nostri sacrificii conditiones illi attribuuntur tanquam imagini (Clichtov., *Elucidat. eccl.*, III, n. 39).

⁸⁷ Melchisedech sacerdos *summus* dicitur, qui inter sacerdotes illius temporis habebatur (B. Odonis Camer., *Expos. in Canon.*, dist. 3).

⁸⁸ S. Leo, *Serm.*, IV [vel V] *in annivers. assumpt. suae*. A similar petition is also found in the Pontifical: Sicut Melchisedech sacerdotis praecipui oblationem dignatione mirabili suscepisti, ita imposita huic novo altari munera semper accepta ferre digneris (*De eccl. dedicat.*).

⁸⁹ Ex hoc loco Apocalypsis et similibus colligunt viri docti, peculiarem esse Angelum, qui sacerdoti celebranti assistat, eum juvet et dirigat, ejus preces

First we humbly beseech God to “command these [sacrificial gifts] to be carried” to His altar on high. To these sacrificial gifts (*haec*), which are to be carried up from the earthly to the heavenly altar, belongs not only the mystical body of Christ, that is, the faithful with all they are and have (their prayers, labors, sufferings, and combats), but, moreover, the Eucharistic sacrificial body and blood of our Lord in so far as we offer them.

These sacrificial gifts are to be borne into “the presence of the divine Majesty”⁴⁰ and presented in such a manner that He may not reject them, but may regard and accept them with pleasure. But this will be the case only if the eye of God detects nothing displeasing in those who offer them, but beholds them so pure and so holy as to deserve to be united and presented with the most holy sacrifice of Christ.

Yet our life is not so blameless, nor our heart so pure, nor our dispositions so perfect. Glancing at the consecrated host and chalice so near to us, the thought of the unspeakable holiness of the gift which becomes ours at the moment of consecration, arouses us to a consciousness of our own unworthiness. Penetrated with such humble sentiments, therefore, most ardently do we implore almighty God that He would “by the hands of His holy angel” carry from this earthly altar the present sacrificial gifts into the presence of His divine Majesty. When thus offered by the hands of angels, they cannot be otherwise than most highly pleasing to Him in every respect.

It is not strange that we should implore the ministry and assistance of an angel to present our oblation for the purpose of making it more acceptable to God and salutary to us. It is a tradition originating in ancient Christian times and frequently expressed by the Church, that the angels who participated in the work of redemption from beginning to end are also present at and take part in the celebration of the holy sacrificial mysteries.⁴¹ As St. Chrysostom says: “The

et hostias Deo offerat, sive is Angelus sit custos celebrantis, sive custos altaris et templi, ad hanc custodiam et sacrificiorum oblationem peculiariter a Deo deputatus (Corn. a Lap., *In Apoc.*, 8:3).

⁴⁰ “To bring our offerings up to God, to raise them up to heaven, where He may receive them, or to cause them to reach His throne, means in the ordinary language of Scripture, to present them to Him in such a manner and with so pure a conscience, that they may be pleasing to Him” (Bossuet, *Explication de quelques difficultés sur les prières de la Messe*).

⁴¹ Semper angelus credendus est adesse immolationi corporis Christi (Joann. Abrinc., n. 22).

priest is himself at that solemn moment surrounded by angels, and the choir of the heavenly powers unite with him; they occupy the entire space around the altar, to honor Him who lies there as a sacrifice.”⁴² Then the Saint describes a vision in which was seen a multitude of angels, who, robed in dazzling white garments and with head deeply bowed, surrounded the altar as warriors standing in the presence of their king. The blessed vocation of the heavenly spirits consists in glorifying God by praise and in assisting man to attain salvation. Where could this twofold object be better fulfilled than during the Holy Sacrifice? Hence hosts of angels collect about the altar to procure for God honor on high and for man peace on earth. Between the angels and the Holy Eucharist there exist, undoubtedly, intimate relations which to our weak vision here below remain always shrouded in a mysterious obscurity.

Christian tradition not only speaks of the presence of many angels at the celebration of the holy mysteries, but also often mentions a certain angel specially commissioned to carry our prayers and sacrifices before the throne of God.⁴³ Tertullian says that it is highly irreverent to sit in church “before the face of the living God while the angel of prayer is still standing there.”⁴⁴ St. Ambrose tells us that we cannot doubt that “an angel assists” when Christ is sacrificed on the altar.⁴⁵ Thus the text of the Canon also mentions but one angel. Does it not appear that the Church herself would thereby indicate that God entrusts an angel with the special mission of bringing the oblation of the priest and people into His presence? More detailed and accurate information relative to this angel of the Sacrifice of the Mass is not granted to us.⁴⁶ Many saints and servants of God had a particular devotion to the angel here mentioned, without being able or willing to decide as to his name. Some believe him to be

⁴² *On the Priesthood*, VI, 4.

⁴³ *Sicut Angeli intelliguntur Deo offerre orationes nostras et petitiones, similiter et desideria, non propter ignorantiam Dei, sed propter commoditatem nostram; quia suis sanctis affectibus puris nos adjuvant et merita nostra in conspectu Dei replicant, ut ex eorum puritate sancta et affectione ferventi ratione dignitatis nuntii sint acceptabilia—sic intellegendum est offerre sacrificia, quia sacris mysteriis assistentes una nobiscum precantur, ut nostra munera sint accepta, et una nobiscum reverentur sanctissimum corpus Christi, sicut in coelo* (S. Bonav., IV, dist. 11, p. 1, dub. 4).

⁴⁴ *On Prayer*, chap. 16.

⁴⁵ *In Luc.*, I, n. 28.

⁴⁶ *Angelus assistens divinis mysteriis* (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 4 ad 9).

the guardian angel of the church and the altar, or that of the priest, who most effectually assists, directs, and enlightens him during the celebration of the holy mysteries.⁴⁷ Others suppose—and this appears probable—that it is St. Michael, who is honored as the guardian angel of the Eucharist and of the Church militant.⁴⁸ It is not easy to correctly judge the value of such pious opinions; the majority of them have their foundation in divine things which can be more readily conjectured than explained. With the angels, multitudes of other heavenly spirits unite in humble adoration at the sacred mysteries; hence many writers perceive in this petition of the Canon a supplication to obtain the assistance of all the angels in general.⁴⁹

We therefore pray that our sacrificial gifts may, through the assistance of the angels,⁵⁰ ascend on high in the presence of the

⁴⁷ Angelus is, cujus manibus sacer ille minister
In sublime geri munus utrumque rogat,
Angelus est ejus, vel quos reverenda vetustas
Desursum missos dicit adesse sacris.

(Hildeb. Turon., *Versus de Myst. Missae.*)

⁴⁸ S. Michael ecclesiam visitat et ante ejus altare stat, habens thuribulum aureum, i.e. caritatem praecipuam ad fideles, per quam eorum spiritualia sacrificia colligit Deoque offert; cui dantur incensa multa, quando Ecclesia ejus suffragia petit suasque preces per manus illius Deo offerri precatur. Quod et ille diligenter exsequitur, offerens preces et actus fidelium super altare aureum illud coeleste in patria, super quod beati laudes et preces offerunt Domino (Dion. Carthus., *In Apoc. Enarr.*, chap. 8, art. 9).

⁴⁹ Singulare nomen "sancti angeli tui" pro plurali positum et significantiam habere pluralem, ab expositoribus censetur (Clichtov., *Elucid. eccles.*, III, n. 41). Forte singulare posuit pro plurali, angeli pro angelorum (Robert. Paulul., *De offic. eccles.*, II, chap. 34).

⁵⁰ There is no reason in this instance for departing from the ordinary signification of the word, and finding in *sanctus Angelus* anything more than a created angelic spirit. According to the ancient language of the Church, the name *Angelus* (= *nuntius*, *missus*, *legatus*) often, indeed, serves to designate the second and third persons of the Godhead; but the contents of the prayer do not require such a signification, even though it might be admissible in a certain sense. In this case there is a question not of a consecrated, but only of a mediatorial action, and only the latter might, therefore, be ascribed to the God-man or to the Holy Ghost, if we thus understood *Angelus*. Thus the expression *per manus sancti Angeli* is conceived as strengthening *per Christum Dominum*, which gives a good meaning; in the latter instance the mediatorial action of the angels rests on Christ. The liturgy of the Apostolic Constitution likewise (VIII, chap. 13) has: "Again and again let us beg of God, through His Christ and by His sacrifice, offered to God our Lord, that the good God may accept the same as an agreeable odor on His heavenly altar, through the mediation of His Christ." This prayer has also some con-

divine Majesty, and there receive a gracious acceptance. Still this does not exhaust the profound meaning of this mystical prayer. It also supplicates God that our oblation may be carried by the hands of angels from the earthly altar to His "altar on high." Since there can be no question of a real altar in heaven, the question arises, what is to be here understood by this "altar on high"? A heavenly altar is mentioned in the Old Testament (Isa. 6:6) and in the New Testament (Apoc. 8:5 f.), as well as by the Fathers. Thus writes St. Irenaeus: "In heaven there is an altar, to which our gifts and prayers are raised."⁵¹ The symbolism of the heavenly altar is not always the same. By an altar is properly understood the place destined for the offering of sacrifice, the holy place of sacrifice. Is there in heaven a place of sacrifice? Who offers there? A sacrifice in its real signification, as we have it here on earth, does not exist in heaven. But Christ appears there as high priest and mediator before the face of God, and, interceding for us, He presents to Him His wounds and His bloody death in order to apply to us the fruits of redemption. The blessed too are priests of God (Apoc. 5:10; 20:6), for they minister to Him day and night and through Christ offer without intermission the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. The altar in the holy of holies in heaven is, therefore, not a material place of sacrifice, but it symbolizes the heavenly sacrifice: the incense of praise, homage, and thanksgiving, which the glorified Church in union with her glorified head, Jesus Christ, offers eternally to the triune God. This prayer accordingly designates the union of our

nection with the oriental Epiklesis (Invocation), in as far at least as the latter in part proposes the imploring of the sacramental gifts of salvation; now if we would refer the word *Angelus* to the Holy Ghost, we would then regard Him in this place as mediator of the accomplished sacrifice, so as to make it most meritorious to us. But some have gone still further and have understood by the action here solicited of the *Angelus* (Holy Ghost) a consecrating activity (*perferri in sublime altare = transmutari in corpus et sanguinem Christi*), so that this prayer would be a real Epiklesis, that is, a petition that "God would transform the bread into the sacred body, and that which is contained in the chalice into the precious blood of His Christ, changing both through His Holy Spirit." But as this interpretation does violence to the text and brings into the Roman Canon of the Mass an almost insoluble difficulty (that is, the Epiklesis) of the Greek and Oriental liturgies without sufficient reason, and contradicts the convictions of the assembled Church at the Council of Florence (1439), as well as the traditional views of liturgists and dogmatists of all ages, we must reject it as untenable.

⁵¹ *Adv. haeres.*, IV, xviii, 6.

earthly sacrifice with the heavenly sacrifice of the Church triumphant. But as the latter is always in the presence of the divine Majesty, entirely pleasing and agreeable in the sight of God, so will our offering, supported and recommended by its union with the precious sacrifice of heaven, also be admitted into the presence of God and be favorably received by Him.⁵² But how this union of the Church militant on earth and of her sacrifice with heaven is properly to be understood, the human mind is unable to fathom: a holy obscurity remains and shall ever remain over this prayer so rich in mysteries. The liturgists of the Middle Ages give expression to this sentiment when they exclaim with the deacon Florus: "These words of mystery are so profound, so wonderful and inconceivable, . . . that we ought rather to revere them with humility and a holy awe than attempt to interpret them."⁵³

In this prayer we implore almighty God to come to the assistance of our weakness and impotence, not only by looking graciously upon us and our gifts, but even by uniting our oblation, through the ministry of the angels, with the sacrifice of heaven and, in consequence, permitting it to ascend as a pleasing odor in His presence.⁵⁴

⁵² Jube haec i.e. corpus et sanguinem Christi, preces quoque ac vota nostra, perferri i.e. portari, non substantialiter, sed repraesentative per modum commemorantis atque orantis, per manus sancti Angeli tui, i.e. per obsequium Angeli, qui divinorum celebrationi interesse credendus est: imo secundum Ambrosium adest coelestis militia et secundum Bernardum angelorum adest exercitus. Quam reverenter ergo nos ibi habere oportet! In sublime altare tuum, i.e. in ipsum coelum empyreum, in quo tu specialiter habitare, sedere, regnare et exaudire cognosceris, et dum sancti angeli illuc perveniunt, vota nostra, preces et opera bona tibi offerunt: in conspectu divinae majestatis tuae i.e. coram facie tua, ita ut tu ipse ea aspicias nec vultum tuum avertas a nobis (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 34).

⁵³ Haec verba mysterii tam profunda, tam mira et stupenda quis comprehendere sufficiat? Quis inde digne aliquid loquatur? Magis veneranda sunt et pavenda quam discutienda. . . . Sic cogitanda sunt, ut aliquid quo nihil sit melius atque sublimius illa cogitatione conemur attingere (*De actione Missae*, n. 66).

⁵⁴ Sicut videmus in causis terrenis, quod qui nescit loqui coram praetore, conducit advocatum, qui loquatur et alleget pro ipso; sic in spiritualibus intellegendum, quod cum nos nec perorare, imo quasi nec balbutire sciamus coram Deo, quod Angelus tanquam advocatus et allegator magnus in illa superna curia assumit verbum et orationem nostram proponit. Si autem quaeritur, per quem modum habeat esse, dico, quod loqui nostrum et oratio nostra est desiderium alicujus rei vel petitio formata secundum desiderium; et quando desiderium nostrum ex mera et vera et ardenti dilectione est, tunc fortiter clamamus in auribus Dei et tunc optime peroramus. Et quoniam af-

Pope St. Gregory the Great undoubtedly alludes to the mysteries contained in this petition when he writes: "What believing soul can doubt that at the hour of the sacrifice heaven opens at the word of the priest, and choirs of angels assist at this mystery of Jesus Christ; that here the highest is combined with the lowest, the earthly united with the heavenly, the visible and invisible become one?"

The concluding clause of the prayer expresses the object of the petition. For the Church implores so ardently for a gracious acceptance of her sacrifice that it may produce the greatest possible fruit in all those who communicate sacramentally or spiritually.⁵⁵ The more closely we enter into relation with the sacrifice, which is borne from the earthly to the heavenly altar, the more abundant heavenly graces and blessings flow to us as the wholesome fruit of the sacrifice. If God allows our sacrifice to ascend up in the presence of His divine Majesty, then it opens to us His heavenly treasures, so that we become rich in all things and shall be in want of no grace.⁵⁶

The accompanying ceremony is in perfect harmony with the tenor of the prayer. According to a very ancient rubric,⁵⁷ the priest

fectiones nostrae sunt tepidae, et affectiones Angelorum ferventissimae et magis elevatae ad ipsum; desiderando pro nobis quod nos desideramus, cum accedant ad Deum familiarius et proximius, dicuntur sibi offerre, et quod Deus vidit nos primo petere et approbare per os nostrum, secundo magis approbat per os et desiderium Angelorum (S. Bonav., IV, dist. 45, dub. 7).

⁵⁵ Id unum petit Ecclesia cum Daniele (3:40), "ut fiat sacrificium nostrum in conspectu Dei et placeat illi," h. e. ut ad Deum deferatur oratio, actio et oblatio nostra, atque in conspectu Dei in coelo compleatur, quod in terrestri altari peragitur, et ex praestantia coelestis victimae et ex acceptance sacrificii nostri in nos deinde omnis benedictio descendat. Hoc subsequenter verba confirmant. Vota nempe nostra ascendere ad Deum cupimus, "ut quotquot ex hac altaris participatione sacros. Filii tui corpus et sanguinem sumpserimus, omni benedictione coelesti et gratia repleamur." In altari est corpus et sanguis Christi: ex illo sumendum est nobis; sed rogandus divinus ejus Pater, ut actio hominum peccatorum tam sanctam hostiam offerentium ab eo clementer accipiatur: tunc enim omnis benedictio coelestis et gratia e coelesti isto convivio et sacrificio est nobis speranda (Muratori, *De rebus liturgicis dissertatio*, chap. 21).

⁵⁶ Tunc a Deo (hostia) quasi acceptatur, quando Deus nobis propitiatur et coelestis benedictio nobis ab eo mittitur (B. Odo Camer., *Expos. in Can. Missae*, dist. 3).

⁵⁷ Sacerdos quando dicit "Supplices te rogamus," humiliato capite inclinat se ante altare (*Ordo Rom. II*, n. 10). Cf. Amalarius, III, chap. 25; Microlog., chap. 16. In many places the hands were placed over the breast in the form of a cross at the same time. Sacerdos dicendo *Supplices* . . . stat inclinatus

pronounces the petition of the principal clause with a profound inclination of the body to indicate the humility and fervor with which he implores almighty God to grant such great things.⁵⁸ Before the words, *ex hac altaris participatione* ("by partaking at this altar"), the priest reverently kisses the altar which he mentions in the prayer, so as to unite himself with the sacrificial Lamb thereon immolated. He then stands erect, and at the words "body and blood" he makes the sign of the cross over each of them to indicate also to the eye that this same body and blood were once offered on the cross. At the words *omni benedictione coelesti* ("with every heavenly blessing"), the priest makes the sign of the cross on himself to apply the overflowing benediction of the altar to himself and to the congregation, and to show that every blessing of the Eucharist comes to us through the cross. That the sacrifice ascends from earth to heaven, and the blessing of Heaven descends upon us, we are indebted to the one fountain of all grace, to our one and perfect mediator between heaven and earth; hence the petition concludes with the words: "Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen."

cancellatis (*crossed thus: X*) manibus ante pectus (Durand., IV, xl, 4). Cum dicit *Supplices* . . . , manibus cancellatis ante pectus, ita quod dextrum brachium sit supra sinistrum, inclinet ante altare (*Ordo Rom. XIV*, chap. 53). The Carmelites, Carthusians, and Dominicans still observe this rite. Some missals of the Middle Ages have in this place a special rubric; for example, Hic orat apud se quod voluerit, deinde dicit: *Jube haec*. Hic orat apud se inclinatus quae velit. *Jube*. (Gerbert., *Vetus Liturg. alemann.*, I, 363.) Cf. Berthold, *Tewtsch Rational*, chap. 15.

⁵⁸ Supplicamus tibi, curvamus ante te, obnixius deprecamur, ostende omnipotentiam, extende manum validam, ut quae propitio ac sereno vultu respicis, etiam ad invisibilia et sublimia tua perferantur et conspectui majestatis admittas. Hic necessitas incurvationis, hic opus supplicationis, hic incumbit consummatio totius nostri laboris, ut haec hostia perferatur in sublime altare tuum (B. Odo Camerac., *Expos. in Canon. Missae*, dist. 3).

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE SECOND PRAYER AFTER THE CONSECRATION

1. Inasmuch as our sacrifice is carried by the hands of angels from the earthly to the heavenly altar and united with the homages of the blessed, and thus presented before the throne of God, it becomes in a most sublime sense a fountain of living waters that descend in a full stream (Cant. 4:15) upon the earth and into the flaming abyss of purgatory, to refresh and revive the suffering children of the Church. Hence the Church feels urged to beg specially for the application of the spiritual waters of salvation. This she does, in the first place, in the concluding petition of the previous prayer, in behalf of all who by Communion will partake of the sacrifice; but she is still mindful of her children, whether they are suffering in the abode of purification or are still pilgrims on earth. She therefore not only prays for the communicants, but also intercedes (*Memento etiam*) for the departed, that they may quickly be admitted into heaven, and she implores for all those present (*Nobis quoque*) participation in the glory of the saints.

Memento etiam, Domine, famulorum famularumque tuarum N. et N., qui nos praecesserunt cum signo fidei, et dormiunt in somno pacis. Ipsis, Domine, et omnibus in Christo quiescentibus, locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis, ut indulgeas, deprecamur. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Remember also, O Lord, Thy servants and handmaids, N. and N., who have gone before us with the sign of faith, and sleep the sleep of peace. To these, O Lord, and to all who rest in Christ, grant, we beseech Thee, a place of refreshment, light, and peace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Church's practice of offering the Holy Sacrifice for the departed and of praying for them during its celebration, dates from

apostolic times and is an apostolic ordinance,¹ as the ancient liturgies and the writings of the Fathers clearly prove. The present silent recitation of the Memento of the Dead had its origin probably in the twelfth century, when the custom was discontinued of reading publicly the names of the departed for whom a special commemoration was to be made.² The liturgical commemoration for the departed is in many respects different from that for the living. This distinction is evident even from their position in the Mass: the one is placed before and the other after the Consecration.³ As members of the Church militant on earth, the living may and ought to unite with the priest in offering the sacrifice, and offer themselves in the sacrifice. This is most fittingly done before the accomplishment of the real sacrificial action, that is, before the Consecration. The departed, however, are no longer able to unite in offering, but merely partake of the fruits of the sacrifice which we apply to them; hence it is most proper to be mindful of them when the sacrificial victim is resting on the altar. The Church neither offers nor prays for the reprobates in hell, nor for the blessed in heaven, but only for the suffering souls who, amid the pains of purgatory, await their final and complete redemption. Corresponding to this intention, the

¹ In Machabaeorum libris legimus, oblatum pro mortuis sacrificium; sed etsi nusquam in Scripturis veteribus omnino legeretur, non parva est universae Ecclesiae, quae in hac consuetudine claret, auctoritas, ubi in precibus sacerdotis, quae Domino Deo ad ejus altare funduntur, locum suum habet etiam commendatio mortuorum (S. August., *De cura pro mort. gerenda*, chap. 1, n. 1).

² This prayer (as also the *commemoratio pro vivis*) was in former times often inscribed: *Oratio super diptycha*, or *Oratio post nomina*. Post illa verba, quibus dicitur *in somno pacis*, usus fuit antiquorum, sicut etiam usque hodie romana agit Ecclesia, ut statim recitarentur ex diptychis, i.e. tabulis nomina defunctorum atque ita post lectionem nominum subjungerentur verba sequentia: *Ipsis*, videlicet quorum nomina memorantur, et ceteris *omnibus in Christo quiescentibus indulgeas locum refrigerii*, ubi non sentitur ardor poenarum (Pseudo-Alcuin., chap. 40).

³ Both Mementos received various additions, inasmuch as express mention was made of various states and classes of persons. Also their position was long subject to change; for it often happened that the Memento of the Dead was joined to the Memento of the Living before the Consecration. One writer gives as the reason for its present position: *Hic pro defunctis in Christo quiescentibus orat Ecclesia, ut iis haec prosint sacramenta, ubi notare poteris nomina quae volueris. Et quidem congrue haec interseritur memoria transientium, "qui in Domino moriuntur."* Finita est enim memoria mortis Domini et sequitur mors nostra; Christus praecessit et nos ejus vestigia sequimur (*Sicard.*, III, chap. 6).

formula ⁴ of the Church in the Memento of the Dead refers only to the souls in purgatory.

2. "Remember also, O Lord, Thy servants and handmaids, N. and N., who have gone before us with the sign of faith, and sleep the sleep of peace." Here ⁵ the priest should commemorate some of the departed by name, that is, he should recall or even mention them in order to recommend them in a special manner to the favor and mercy of God. While so doing, he must keep his eyes fixed on the Blessed Sacrament, whereas at the Memento of the Living only a slight inclination of the head (*demisso aliquantulum capite*) is prescribed, and the eyes need not be fixed on the host.⁶ The selection of the names is left to the priest, who should in this place comply with obligations of gratitude and love toward those of the dead who during life were related to him or in any manner associated with him. But since the Memento is made in the name of the Church, the celebrant must adhere to the ordinance expressed in the text itself. For the Church prays here in a special manner for those "who have gone before us with the sign of faith, and sleep the sleep of peace," that is, those who as true believers and as members of the Church have departed this earthly life in communion with the Church.⁷ Accordingly, here all are excluded from being mentioned by name who have died outside the pale of the Church, as was formerly the case when names were read out from the diptychs.⁸

⁴ A monumental commentary on these prayers and, at the same time, a proof of their great antiquity is established by the ancient Christian epitaphs, the various forms of which (acclamations, salutations, wishes, petitions) contain principally the words *refrigerium*, *lux*, *pax*, by which the bliss of heaven, under different aspects, is expressed. In the "lapidary prayers" of these tumular inscriptions the survivors wish to their departed: refreshment, light, peace, admission into paradise and the communion of saints, life in God, in Christ, and in the Holy Ghost. Entirely similar expressions are met with in the prayers of the *Sacrament. Gelasian.*; for example: *locus lucidus, locus refrigerii et quietis refrigerii sedes, quietis beatitudo, luminis claritas, lucis et pacis regio.*

⁵ That is, not at the letters N. and N., but after the words *in somno pacis*. During the first thousand years they wrote, instead of N., the letters *ill.* diagonally.

⁶ In Memento pro vivis tenentur oculi demissi vel clausi ad vitandam mentis distractionem; hic vero intenti ad Sacramentum teneri debent, quia ex Christi praesentia major devotio excitatur (Quarti, II, ix, 2).

⁷ St. Cyril of Jerusalem writes (*Catech. mystag.*, V, chap. 2): "During the Holy Sacrifice we make intercession for all collectively who among us [that is, in the bosom of the Church, as members of the Church] are departed." This has been at all times the practice of the Church.

⁸ In his private intention the priest may offer the Mass for others and here

To move the Lord to pity and to indulgence, the Church calls her suffering children in purgatory the servants and handmaids of God, and stresses that they have departed from this world with the sign of faith. By the sign of faith is here to be understood, in the first place, the indelible character imprinted on the soul in the sacrament of baptism, whereby the faithful are distinguished from unbelievers.⁹ Baptism is, indeed, called the sacrament of faith; by it men become united to Christ and incorporated into the Church. Furthermore, by the sign of faith is also to be understood the profession by word and deed, by a Christian life, by devotion to the Church, by the reception of the sacraments. Faith received in baptism must necessarily be a living faith in which one must persevere until death if it is to lead to salvation.¹⁰ All who have passed into eternity with such a faith "sleep the sleep of peace": they died in peace with the Church, united interiorly and exteriorly to it.¹¹ Death in the grace and love of God, in living communion with Christ and the Church, may be designated as a peaceful slumber, inasmuch as the weary pilgrim of earth reposes in the grave far removed from all the sufferings and labors of life, and awaits

pray for all without distinction. Facile stat, ipsum sacerdotem talem ceremoniam [sc. Memento] ut personam publicam perficere et [futurum] sacrificium ex persona Ecclesiae Deo offerre, et tamen simul ut privatum illud ipsum offerre Deumque per ipsum pro aliquo deprecari (Coninck, *De sacr. et censur.*, disp. XIV, dub. 6).

⁹ Orat pia Mater Ecclesia non solum pro vivis, sed etiam pro defunctis et eos sacrae oblationis intercessione commendat certissime credens, quod sanguis ille pretiosus, qui pro multis effusus est in remissionem peccatorum, non solum ad salutem viventium, verum etiam ad absolutionem valeat defunctorum, qui cum signo fidei praecedunt. . . . Signum fidei pro caractere christianitatis accipitur, quo fideles ab infidelibus discernuntur (Innoc. III, V, chap. 5).

¹⁰ In like manner the Church prays at the blessing of a cemetery, that the Shepherd of eternal glory may not cease "to impart to the bodies that repose in this place, continual inviolability, that all the baptized who to the end of their life persevere in the Catholic faith (*quicumque Baptismi sacramentum perceperint et in fide catholica usque ad vitae terminum perseverantes fuerint*), and after the completion of the earthly pilgrimage commit their bodies to rest in this cemetery, at the sound of the angel's trumpet, united in body and soul, may be admitted to the eternal rewards of the joys of heaven." (Cf. *Pontif. Roman.*, *De coemeterii benedictione.*)

¹¹ *In pace; vixit in pace; vitam duxit in pace; in pace morienti; decessit in pace fidei catholicae; credidit fide, dormit in pace; requiescit in pace; requiescit in somno pacis*: these and similar formulas on ancient Christian graves indicate that the departed lived in the orthodox faith and died in communion with the Church. This applies especially to places in which a heresy or schism prevailed.

a blissful awakening, a glorious resurrection of the body.¹²

The intercession for the dead continues. Not merely upon "these" (*ipsis*) who have just been mentioned, but upon "all who rest in Christ"¹³ the blessing of the redeeming blood from the altar is to flow.¹⁴ The Church forgets none of her children; she is full of maternal care and solicitude for all; in particular she ceases not to pray for her suffering children in purgatory, until they have reached their heavenly Father's house. As in this Mementó, so likewise in other liturgical formulas of prayer, the special intercession for individual departed souls is united with supplication for all the faithful departed.¹⁵

But how can the Church, for those who sleep in peace and rest in Christ, still implore for "a place of refreshment, light, and peace?"¹⁶

¹² In Holy Writ, the Fathers, and the liturgy, death (of the just) is often called *dormitio*, *somnus*, and the dead are called *dormientes*. That death is but a passing sleep, is also signified by the name *coemeterium* (*κοιμητήριον*, *dormitorium*, place of slumber), by which the Church from the most ancient times designates the (blessed) burial-place. *Cymiterium recubitorium dormitorium est mortuorum, qui et ideo ab Ecclesia dormientes dicuntur, quia resurrecturi non dubitantur* (Walafr. Strabo, *De rebus ecclesiast.*, chap. 6). Prudentius (*Cathemer.*, X, 56) calls the body of a Christian resting in the vault a *res non mortua, sed data somno*, as the Lord Himself said of the departed daughter of Jairus: *Non est mortua puella, sed dormit* (Matt. 9:24).

¹³ With reference to the Apoc. 14:13, *Amodo jam dicit Spiritus, ut requiescant a laboribus suis*, as it says of them *qui in Domino moriuntur*, the departed are often called *quiescentes (in Christo)*, but in the Mozarabic Missal they are called *pausantes*, according to the Greek appellation. We likewise meet the words: *quietoria, requietionis loca, sedes requietionis*, as designations of the Christian cemetery. In the *benedictio coemeterii* the Church prays that the consecrated place may be *dulcis requies et pausatio mortuorum*. By the words *aeternae pausationis solatium* in the Mozarabic liturgy, eternal rest is implored for the departed (on the feast of St. Eulalia of Emerita, Dec. 10). In Purgatorio etiam est requies propter certitudinem de salute, suffragia vivorum et consolationem Angelorum. Mors justo est requies, somnus, cessatio a labore et dolore, recreatio (Corn. a Lap., *In Sap.*, 4:7).

¹⁴ *Non sunt praetermittendae supplicationes pro spiritibus mortuorum, quas faciendas pro omnibus in christiana et catholica societate defunctis . . . sub generali commemoratione suscepit Ecclesia, ut quibus ad ista desunt parentes aut filii aut quicumque cognati vel amici, ab una eis exhibeatur matre communi* (S. August., *De cura pro mortuis gerenda*, chap. 4).

¹⁵ Cf., for example, the Requiem Mass, in which the Introit, Tract, Offertorium, and Communio refer to all the departed, even though the sacrifice is offered for one individual soul.

¹⁶ Apte instituta est haec oratio, ut iis solis conveniret, qui in Purgatorio degunt: hi enim et pacem ac quietem eo sensu habent, quod jam certi sint

The suffering souls indeed enjoy peace and rest, inasmuch as they are removed from the discord and turmoil of this sinful and deceitful world; but as long as they must remain at a distance from the vision of God in a place of silent suffering, their peace and rest are still imperfect; therefore, we implore for them full and eternal peace in heaven. When the just soul has reached purgatory, she sees before her but two objects, suffering and joy. The greatest bitterness is there mingled with the most serene peace. These souls are full of a pure and strong love of God, full of patient contentment and resignation to God's holy decrees. They praise purgatory as an invention of His mercy; but, at the same time, they are consumed with the flames of longing for God, with the fire of pains, and with the pains of fire. Full of quiet sorrow they linger in the place of their banishment, weeping tears at the thought of the heavenly Jerusalem, because their exile in a foreign country is prolonged. In a manner inexplicable to us, they are at one and the same time filled with a holy suffering and a holy joy. In contrast with the painful exile of purgatory, heaven is indeed a blissful place of refreshment (*refrigerii*),¹⁷ light, and peace.¹⁸

de futuro aeternae beatitudinis praemio, et liberi a tentationum ac concupiscentiae bello; est tamen, unde iis ulterius et refrigerium ac pacem deprecemur, quia et flammis torquentur et quamdiu a divino, quem toti inhiant, conspectu arcentur, omnimoda pace frui non possunt (Tournely, *De Eucharist.*, II, x, 3).

¹⁷ *Refrigerium* = refreshment; often occurs in the ancient Christian Latin and designates that which is, contains, and affords refreshment, recreation, regalement, alleviation, relief, solace, rest, comfort, joy, felicity—hence the state of the blessed after death.

Refrigerium here denotes a twofold refreshment. In the first place it signifies (from *refrigerare* = to make something cold, to cool it) the ceasing of *poena sensus*; that is, the extinguishing of the heat of purgatory. This is shown also by the following petitions from the Mozarabic Missal: *animam pietate tua refrigerii rore perfundas; animam coelestis roris perfusione refrigerata. Refrigerium* also frequently denotes refreshment by food and drink: *Inopes refrigerio isto juvamus*, writes Tertullian of the agape (*Apolog.*, chap. 39). Therefore we may here understand the remission of *poena damni*, that is, the cessation of the temporary exclusion from the beatific vision. Heavenly bliss is often represented under the figure of a nuptial celebration and a joyful banquet. Cf. the concluding formulas of the liturgical blessing at meals: *Mensae coelestis particeps faciat nos rex aeternae gloriae. Ad coenam vitae aeternae perducatur nos rex aeternae gloriae*. Many epitaphs also contain the word; for example: *in refrigerio anima tua; cuius spiritum in refrigerium suscipiat Dominus; Antonia anima dulcis tibi Deus refrigeret*.

¹⁸ The formula *in pace* is frequently met with on ancient Christian graves:

At the concluding formula, "Through the same Christ our Lord," the priest not only joins his hands, but also bows his head. The inclination of the head at these words is singular, as otherwise it is nowhere prescribed when the name "Christ" occurs without the addition of Jesus. It must, therefore, be grounded on the text of the prayer itself and have some mysterious signification.¹⁹ Christ bowed His head on the cross when He died, and then descended into the kingdom of the dead, there to console the devout who lived before His coming. According to medieval commentators, the priest would now call to mind the death of Christ by bowing his head, since he here prays and implores for all who rest in Christ that the atoning blood, flowing from the Eucharistic sacrifice as from a fountain, may flow into purgatory to alleviate and abridge the sufferings of the poor souls.

for instance: *victori in pace; vale in pace; in pace Domini dormias; tecum pax Christi; Gaudentia suscepeatur in pace; te in pace Christus faciat; semper vive in pace; cum Deo in pace; pax cum angelis; Laurinia melle dulcior quiescas in pace; Gensane pax ispirito tuo; dormit in somno pacis; pausat in pace; in pace requievit; quescit in pace aeterna; susceptus in pace; accercitus in pacem; natus in pace; mater dulcissima in pace Christi recepta; letaris in pace; in pace delictum; vivis in gloria Dei et in pace Domini nostri.*

¹⁹ This bowing cannot be occasioned by either the preceding *deprecamur* (as de Vert asserts), or by the following *Nobis quoque peccatoribus* (as Gavantius supposes); for in that case the action would be combined with the words in question. *In hoc ego magis peculiare dicerem adesse mysterium, et est, quod ibi sermo est de Christo, in quo mortui quiescunt, et omnibus in Christo quiescentibus; quare cum Christus mortem nostram moriendo destruxerit repraesentat sibi sacerdos Christum morientem, qui inclinato capite emisit spiritum. In memoriam igitur et venerationem illius gestus, quo Christus mortuus est, sacerdos inclinat caput, nisi mavis dicere, inclinationem fieri in commemorationem descensus, quem ad inferos fecit Christi spiritus pro liberandis mortuis* (Cavalieri, III, xi, 4). Cf. Quarti, III, ix, 2.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE THIRD PRAYER AFTER THE CONSECRATION

1. The Memento of the Dead is for the living a solemn and touching *Memento mori*. It reminds us of those who on this earthly pilgrimage "have gone before us" (*nos praecesserunt*)¹ and have arrived in the land of eternity. We will soon follow them. The short years pass away rapidly, and we are walking in a path by which we shall not return (Job 16:23). We are strangers and newcomers upon earth, as were all our fathers before us. "Our days upon earth are as a shadow, and there is no stay" (I Par. 29:15). Soon we shall be standing on the brink of the grave. As these thoughts come up, what is more natural than for us to desire that the Lord would receive us into the eternal dwellings of light? Therefore this petition most appropriately follows the Memento of the Dead.²

¹ These words are also found on epitaphs; for example: *quae nos praecesserunt in somno pacis; in pace precessit; precessit nos in pace; praecessit ad pacem*. In the Mozarabic Mass for the vigil of Pentecost the departed are called *nostri, qui jam a seculo praecesserunt*.

² Originally this prayer was a special supplication for the priests and clerics assisting at the altar, or for the whole clergy in general, and may now still be suitably and principally recited for this intention. The clergy are in a strict and eminent sense God's servants (*famuli*). *Sicut patet in Canone Missae, cum dicitur Nobis quoque peccatoribus, statutum est, quod sacerdos offerat etiam pro se, quod non fieret, nisi esset infirmitate peccatorum, quibus est circumdatus, non oppressus. Si enim sit in mortali peccato, non debet celebrare* (S. Thom., *In epist. ad Heb.*, chap. 5, lect. 1).

The contents and connection of the Canon prayers after the Consecration are concisely and clearly shown by St. Thomas. *Sacerdos accedit ad ipsam consecrationem, in qua* (1) *petit consecrationis effectum (Quam oblationem . . .)*; (2) *consecrationem peragit per verba Salvatoris (Qui pridie . . .)*; (3) *excusat praesumptionem per obedientiam ad mandatum Christi (Unde et memores . . .)*; (4) *petit hoc sacrificium peractum esse Deo acceptum (Supra quae . . .)*; (5) *petit hujus sacrificii et sacramenti effectum: primo quidem quantum ad ipsos sumentes (Supplices te . . .), secundo quantum ad mortuos (Memento etiam . . .), tertio specialiter quantum ad ipsos sacerdotes offerentes (Nobis quoque . . .)*. S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 4.

Nobis quoque peccatoribus famulis tuis, de multitudine miserationum tuarum sperantibus, partem aliquam et societatem donare digneris, cum tuis sanctis Apostolis et Martyribus: cum Joanne, Stephano, Matthia, Barnaba, Ignatio, Alexandro, Marcellino, Petro, Felicitate, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucia, Agnete, Caecilia, Anastasia, et omnibus sanctis tuis: intra quorum nos consortium, non aestimator meriti, sed veniae, quaesumus, largitor admitte. Per Christum Dominum nostrum.

To us also, Thy sinful servants, who hope in the multitude of Thy mercies, vouchsafe to grant some part and fellowship with Thy holy apostles and martyrs: with John, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicitas, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecilia, Anastasia, and all Thy saints: into whose company admit us, we beseech Thee, not weighing our merits but granting us pardon. Through Christ our Lord.

The first three words, *nobis quoque peccatoribus* ("To us also, Thy sinful servants"), are the only words in the Canon that are said in a slightly raised tone of voice, that is, half aloud (*elata parum voce*); the priest at the same time strikes his breast.³ Both the tone of voice and the striking of the breast indicate to the celebrant with what great sorrow and compunction he is to acknowledge his sinfulness, and admonish all the faithful present to unite with the officiating priest in these same penitential sentiments which animate him, since he recites this prayer also for them and in their name.⁴ We acknowledge and confess ourselves in all humility to be but poor sinners, for we thereby draw on ourselves God's favor and mercy.

³ Dicentes: *Nobis quoque peccatoribus*, vocem paululum elevamus, ut ex gemitu cordis in silentio procedat gemens oris confessio. . . . Cum dicitur: *Nobis quoque peccatoribus*, solet rumpi silentium, paululum expressa voce proferendo, ut veniat nobis in mentem latronis confessio et pietas Domini de cruce dicentis: "Hodie mecum eris in paradiso" (Luke, chap. 23). (Steph. Augustod., chap. 17.) Percussura pectoris poenitentiae est et luctus indicium (Amalar., III, chap. 26).

⁴ Ut facilius exaudiatur sacerdos captetque Dei benevolentiam, peccatorem se et alios vivos (quos eodem pronomine quo se signat et includit) pronuntiat, quoniam nihil aequè divinam majestatem inflectit ad impendendam hominibus misericordiam, quam humilis peccatorum recognitio atque confessio, qua quis se indignum fatetur ex se ipso divinis beneficiis, sed totam suam fiduciam collocat atque reponit in Dei misericordia (Clichtov., *Elucidat. eccles.*, III, n. 24).

To obtain admittance into the kingdom of heaven we must pray for it and place all our confidence in the greatness and abundance of the divine mercies (*de multitudine miserationum tuarum sperantibus*).⁵ Animated with this sentiment we beg God to mercifully grant us "some part and fellowship" with His holy apostles and martyrs.⁶ The imperishable inheritance of the kingdom of heaven is prepared for all the redeemed; but the individual man will share therein according to the measure of his merits and virtue. All the happiness of the citizens of heaven proceeds from God's eternal and infinite glory. Our inheritance, our share in the land of the living will be God Himself: the clear vision, the ravishing love, and the blissful enjoyment of God. "For what have I in heaven, and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? For Thee my flesh and my heart hath fainted away; Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever" (Ps. 72:25 f.). The possession of the Supreme Good will, therefore, be imparted to us in union with the other blessed; the fellowship of all the other citizens of heaven is a fresh source of the purest, sweetest joys.⁷

⁵ Cf. *Miserere mei Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam, et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum dele iniquitatem meam* (Ps. 50:1 f.). *Misericordia* = mercy, compassion as a virtue or disposition (*habitus*); on the contrary, *miseratio* = the feeling sympathy, the pardoning as actualization and proof (*actus*) of a merciful disposition (*usus sive effectus misericordiae* [S. Thom.]). Hence the Lord in the Psalms is often called *misericors et miserator: sc. misericors in affectu benignitatis intus abscondito et sibi naturaliter insito, miserator in effectu foris conspicuo* (Gerhoh. Reichersp., *In Ps. 24*). *Misericordia* prout in Deo esse censetur non est nisi bonitas ejus piissima; *miseratio* autem Dei est effectus misericordiae ejus. Multae ergo possunt esse miserationes Dei, quoniam multa sunt opera pietatis divinae, sed misericordia Dei non est nisi una, quae est divina essentia (Dion. Carthus., *In Ps. 24*). Major est multitudo Dei miserationum, quam multitudo omnium peccatorum (Gerhoh. Reichersp., *loc. cit.*). Omnipotens sempiternus Deus, qui abundantia pietatis tuae et merita supplicum excedis et vota: effunde super nos misericordiam tuam, ut dimittas quae conscientia metuit, et adjicias quod oratio non praesumit (*Dom. XI post Pent.*).

⁶ The words "God give you a portion and a share with His saints" occur already in a letter of St. Polycarp to the Philippians (chap. 12), written about the year 107, and are probably taken from the apostolic liturgy.

⁷ Quarto consistit [vita aeterna] in omnium beatorum jucunda societate, quae societas erit maxime delectabilis, quia quilibet habebit omnia bona cum omnibus beatis; nam quilibet diligit alium sicut seipsum et ideo gaudebit de bono alterius sicut de suo. Quo fit, ut tantum augeatur laetitia et gaudium unius, quantum est gaudium omnium. Ps. 86:7: Sicut laetantium omnium habitatio est in te (S. Thom., *In Symbol. Apostol. expos.*, n. 39).

2. Of the saints of heaven some apostles and martyrs are mentioned by name in the *Nobis quoque*—fifteen in all (eight male and seven female saints), who all underwent the violent death of martyrdom. At the head of the list is St. John the Baptist,⁸ as the enumeration of the male saints is regulated by the time of their martyrdom. St. John suffered a martyr's death even before Christ died on the cross; he was beheaded because he had severely censured the adulterous union of Herod with Herodias. After St. John, mention is made of St. Stephen, who leads⁹ the brilliant host of Christian martyrs that after the death of the Saviour shed their blood for divine truth. He was one of those seven wise and pious men who were ordained as the first deacons¹⁰ by the apostles; before all the others he is praised in Holy Scripture as a man "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, . . . full of grace and fortitude, [who] did great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 6:5, 8). Following St. Stephen comes St. Matthias,¹¹ who, after the ascension of the Lord, was by the will of God called to the apostolate in place of the traitor, Judas. St. Barnabas,¹² the fourth martyr mentioned in this prayer, was also

⁸ S. R. C., March 27, 1824. The opinion, very general during the Middle Ages, that the apostle and evangelist John is here named a second time, is no longer tenable.

⁹ The name *μάρτυς* (= *testis*) is given to St. Stephen for the first time by St. Paul (Acts 22:20). By the Fathers he is styled: *primitiae martyrum; vertex martyrum; martyrum princeps; triumphatorum martyrum dux; qui primus martyrii fores aperuit; qui primus choro martyrum aditum patefecit; phalangis martyrum antesignanus; πρωτομάρτυς*. Cf. Nilles, *Kalendarium manuale*, I, 232.

¹⁰ In the Greek liturgy he is called *ἀρχιδιάκονος*, and in the *Roman Pontifical*, *dux ac praeuius* of the other deacons. As deacon, with loving solicitude he exercised the charge of caring for the poor and the sick; he likewise, with great wisdom and power, preached the doctrine of Christ to the Jews. They obstinately resisted him, and in their fury they stoned to death this courageous preacher of the truth, whom they hated. In the sixth century the principal part of his body was taken to Rome and placed beside the remains of St. Lawrence in a splendid marble sarcophagus under the high altar of the Basilica of St. Lawrence outside the Walls. His feast is celebrated on December 26.

¹¹ It is said that he was beheaded with an axe, and that St. Helena brought a portion of his relics to Treves. His head is preserved in the Church of *S. Maria Maggiore* in Rome; his feast occurs on February 24 or (in leap year) 25.

¹² St. Barnabas was a Levite and came from Cyprus. He was originally called Joseph; the apostles gave him the name Barnabas (= Son of Consolation) to indicate that he consoled and encouraged others by his supernatural enthusiasm and power of speaking. St. Barnabas is regarded by many only as an assistant and companion to the apostles, as one resembling the apostles;

an apostle called to the apostolate after Christ's ascension. The Scriptures call him a "good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" (Acts 11:24).

In this catalogue of saints are mentioned martyrs from every walk of life. We have here a celebrated bishop, a pope, a priest, and an exorcist. St. Ignatius of Antioch¹³ was a pupil of the apostles and the second successor of St. Peter in the see of Antioch. St. Alexander I¹⁴ was the fifth pope after St. Peter. St. Marcellinus was a priest and St. Peter¹⁵ an exorcist of the Roman Church. Among the female saints we commemorate two young mothers, SS. Felicitas

but many more and better reasons favor the opinion that Barnabas, like St. Paul, was an apostle in the strict sense of the term. "In consequence of a supernatural revelation, Paul and Barnabas were ordained with prayer and the imposing of hands, and furnished with all authority; they were to complete the Apostolic College" (Hergenröther, *Handbuch der allgemeinen Kirchengeschichte*, I, 71). After having been consecrated bishop at Antioch, he made (44 or 45 A.D.) an extended missionary tour with St. Paul; later on he separated from him and labored chiefly in his native island, Cyprus, where his renowned apostolate was crowned with martyrdom (between 53 and 76 A.D.). Toward the end of the fifth century the body of the saint was discovered in a cave at Salamis in Cyprus. His feast occurs on June 11, the day of his death.

¹³ Under the emperor Trajan he was sentenced to death, dragged in chains to Rome, and there in the Colosseum, on December 20, 107, exposed to the wild beasts, which tore and ate his body so that only the larger and harder bones remained. This greatly celebrated bishop burned with an ardent desire for martyrdom, as is evident from the letters which on the way to Rome he wrote to different communities: "You cannot prove your tender love for me better than by allowing me to consecrate myself in sacrifice. . . . Well is it for me if I would perish to the world so that I may arise for God. Allow me to become the food of beasts, that through them I may attain to God. I am the wheat of God and must be ground by the teeth of beasts, so as to become the pure bread of Christ. Fire and cross, multitudes of wild beasts, the tearing of the body, the cutting into pieces of my limbs, the grinding of my bones—in brief, whatever of tortures the devil can invent, let all come upon me, if I but gain Jesus Christ. All the delights of earth I account as nothing, as nothing all the kingdoms of the world; better is it for me to die for Jesus Christ than to reign over all the bounds of the earth."

¹⁴ On May 3, 115 (?), this holy pope was beheaded outside Rome together with the priests Eventius and Theodulus. His body now reposes in the Church of St. Sabina at Rome. His feast occurs on May 3.

¹⁵ St. Peter, while in prison, had delivered the daughter of the jailer, Artemius, from an evil spirit, whereupon the whole family of Artemius was converted and baptized by the priest Marcellinus. SS. Peter and Marcellinus were then frightfully tortured and led outside the city for execution as far as the so-called Black Forest (*Silva nigra*), where they themselves cleared the place in the thickets and then bowed their heads under the sword. On account of

and Perpetua;¹⁶ four chaste virgins, SS. Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, and Cecilia;¹⁷ and a holy widow, St. Anastasia.¹⁸ In commemorating these virgins and holy women who suffered cruel martyrdom for Christ, the Church acknowledges and extols the divine power that "has granted even to the weaker sex the triumph of martyrdom."¹⁹ These illustrious martyrs mentioned in the Mass are but a few of that "great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues," which St. John saw "standing before the throne and in the sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands. . . . These are they who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Apoc. 7:9, 14).

3. With these and all the rest of the saints, whose number and names the all-seeing eye of God alone knows, we desire to be eternally united in heaven.²⁰ This petition is expressed at the beginning of the prayer, and is now at the conclusion repeated in different words; we implore admittance into the community of heaven, and for such a fellowship with the saints we do not rely on our own merit, but on the merciful indulgence of God.²¹ The communion

their martyrdom the place was afterward called the White Forest (*Silva candida*). Their feast is kept on June 2.

¹⁶ The two youthful heroines, Felicitas and Perpetua, suffered at Carthage in North Africa. The former was a slave, the latter of noble birth. They were confined in a dark prison filled with smoke and filth, where, amid the taunts of her jailers, Felicitas gave birth to a child. In the year 202, during the persecution of the emperor Severus, the young women were cruelly scourged and then cast before a wild cow; finally they were beheaded. Their feast occurs on March 6.

¹⁷ For these four virgins see footnote 26 at the end of this chapter.

¹⁸ St. Anastasia, according to a Roman legend, suffered from the cruelty of her pagan husband, Publius; after his death she gave herself over to practices of charity and mercy.

¹⁹ *Orat. Eccles.*

²⁰ Quidnam nobis de nostra quantacumque scientia provenire possit, quod non sit minus hac gloria, qua inter Dei filios numeramur? Parum dixi: nec respici in ejus comparatione potest orbis ipse et plenitudo ejus, etiamsi totus cedat unicuivis in possessionem. Ceterum, si nos ignorantia Dei tenet, quomodo speramus in eum quem ignoramus? Si nostri, quomodo humiles erimus, putantes nos aliquid esse cum nihil simus? Scimus autem nec superbis nec desperatis partem esse vel societatem in sorte Sanctorum (S. Bernard., *In Cantic. serm.*, XXXVII, n. 5).

²¹ Novit Ecclesia, Deum non nisi intercedentibus meritis tribuere beatitudinem; sed nec illud ignorat, ut in Sanctorum admittamur consortium, non

of life and of goods with the saints (*consortium Sanctorum*) consists in this, that we may become associates (*consortes*) in their heavenly bliss and glory and obtain some part (*sors*) of the blessed inheritance which will be granted to all who are born again of the Holy Ghost.²² Thus the Apostle writes (Col. 1:12): "Giving thanks to God the Father, who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot (*sortis*) of the saints in light." And in the Book of Wisdom (5:5) it is said of the pious: "Behold! how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot (*sors*) is among the saints." We do not ask for the glory of the saints by reason of our own merits, but we confide in the merciful and gracious bounty of the Lord.²³

The happiness of heaven is assuredly a gift of divine mercy.²⁴ It is in itself a mark of the goodness of God that we can even merit heaven, and His bounty bestows upon us a far richer reward than we

modo necessariam esse gloriam, sed etiam gratiam et veniam peccatorum, quae sine meritis nostris dantur tantummodo per Christum Dominum nostrum; ipsa nostra merita dona esse misericordiae Dei et gratiae, nobisque misericordia Dei opus esse vel in earum actionum examine, quas bonas existimamus (Bened. XIV, De Missae sacrif., II, xviii, 2).

²² Often in the liturgy, especially in the prayers for the departed, eternal bliss is designated as *consortium Dei, consortium Sanctorum; consortium perpetuae beatitudinis, consortium lucis aeternae*.

²³ *Non aestimator meriti, sed veniae largitor* = in that Thou wilt not consider, make account of, regard, what we deserve, that is, our trifling merits, or also our misdeeds, to influence Thy judgment according to them, but in abundant measure to impart to us merciful indulgence and forgiveness. The word *meritum* can be taken here as = *malum meritum, demeritum, meritum supplicii*: the guilt, the transgression, as *merere* often = an evil, to deserve or to draw on one's self punishment. *Omnipotens aeternae Deus, misericordiam tuam ostende supplicibus, ut qui de meritorum (= peccatorum) qualitate diffidimus, non iudicium tuum, sed indulgentiam sentiamus (Sacrament. Gregor., Dom. XIX post Pent.).* Cum pro nostris meritis jugiter mereamur affligi, tu tamen iudicium ad correctionem temperas, non perpetuam exerces ad poenam (*ibid., Dom. XXII post Pent.*). Quia de meritorum qualitate diffido, ad misericordiam tuam confugio, ut impetrem per tuam misericordiam, quod non merui per meam iustitiam, immo quod ex toto demeruisse convincor, si delictorum meorum fueris memor et misericordiae tuae immemor (*Gerhoh. Reichersp., In Ps. 24*). Cum praesens est veniae largitor, magis confidit exaudiri devotus peccator (*Stephan. Augustod., chap. 9*).

²⁴ *Vita aeterna non ut debitum rependitur hominibus, sed ut gratia et misericordia. "Gratia Dei vita aeterna,"* inquit Apostolus (Rom. 6:23). Haec meritis quidem nostris redditur, sed merita ipsa sunt dona gratiae et misericordiae Dei, Deusque merita nostra remunerans, remuneratur dona sua, "cumulans sua dona coronis," inquit S. Prosper, carmine de ingratis (*Pouget, Inst. cathol., II, Part III, sect. 2, chap. 7, § 22, n. 25*). Cum Deus coronat *merita nostra*, nihil aliud coronat quam munera sua (*S. August., Epist., 194, chap. 5, n. 19*).

actually deserve. If we consider the succession of all the graces from the first to the last, including the grace of final perseverance, must we not gratefully acknowledge that our life is adorned with a rich wreath of divine mercies? Yes, our rescue from eternal perdition is a free gift of God's merciful goodness and predilection; His mercy goes before us (Ps. 58:11), accompanies us (Ps. 22:25), and follows us all the days of our life (Ps. 22:6). Out of mercy God sent us His Son as a Redeemer; out of mercy He has promised us life eternal; out of mercy He has rescued us from the depths of a life of sin incurred through our own fault, and placed us in the kingdom of His light; out of mercy He has preserved us from innumerable sins and pardoned all those committed; out of mercy He knocks at our hearts, admonishes and warns us, directs our destiny in such a manner, and so grants us a chain of powerful graces as to enable us to remain faithful until death and bear off the crown of life. But action must correspond with the desire. If we wish for the glory of the saints, we must share their labors and sufferings. Through many tribulations only can we enter with all the saints into the joy of the Lord,²⁵ for if with them we suffer and die for Christ, with them also shall we be glorified.²⁶

²⁵ "I enjoy great peace, a sweet contentment. . . . The most bitter portion of the chalice of the passion our Lord has drunk. For us there remain but some drops. Let us praise His infinite love which forestalls us with so much sweetness. I have always recited with an elevated heart this wonderful prayer of our holy liturgy: 'that Thou vouchsafe to grant us some part and fellowship with Thy holy apostles and martyrs.' Well, then, our dear Lord has heard me. I, too, like His most faithful friends, have been adorned with the glorious ignominy of our Master. Hence again, let us praise God. . . . I will suffer all; but I will remain united to Pius IX, to the Apostolic See, and until my last breath will I defend the liberty of the Church." Thus wrote Don Antonio de Macedo Costa, bishop of Para in Brazil, from his captivity, 1874 (cf. *Stimmen aus Maria-Laach*, VI [1874], 380).

²⁶ Two cities of Sicily, Palermo and Catania, contest the honor of St. Agathas' birthplace. It is certain that under the emperor Decius, in 251, she bore the crown of martyrdom at Catania. This holy virgin was renowned far and wide for her nobility and wealth, as well as for her beauty and virtue. Already in her childhood she had chosen Jesus for her spouse, and she clung to Him with undivided love. Accused of being a Christian, she was dragged before the heathen judge, Quintianus. This villain endeavored by many mean artifices to overcome her chaste mind and her courage. But, like a rock in the ocean, the virgin remained unmoved and unshaken; as the dust beneath her feet she accounted all that the world could offer. In prison her tortured breasts were miraculously healed by St. Peter. Afterward the wretched tyrant gave orders that the saint be rolled on sharp potsherds and glowing coals.

Again brought back to prison, the saint prayed: "Lord, Thou who hast created me and preserved me since my childhood, who hast delivered my heart from the love of the world and protected my body from perdition, who hast made me triumph over tortures and bonds, over iron and fire, I pray Thee, receive my spirit from this earth into the bosom of Thy mercy." After her death her tomb, made glorious by God with many miracles, became the refuge of the Christians and even of the heathens. There also was kept the wonderful veil that was not burned, but only somewhat crimsoned, when the saint was thrown into the fire. Exactly one year after her death the neighboring volcano of Etna burst forth in torrents of fire, which moved toward the city of Catania and threatened its destruction; then the inhabitants ran in terror to her tomb, took the veil, and held it in the direction of the stream of lava. At that very instant the lava took another course toward the ocean and the city was saved. February 5 is her feast day.

St. Lucy suffered martyrdom about 304, in the great persecution of Diocletian against the Christians. She came from Syracuse, was of noble lineage, and at an early age vowed perpetual chastity to the Lord. According to her acts, which are not at all reliable, her mother was miraculously restored to health at the tomb of St. Agatha. Thereupon Lucy sold her ornaments and her goods in order to give the proceeds to the poor and the sick. Accused of being a Christian, she appeared before the tribunal of the heathen judge, Paschasius, but refused to offer sacrifice to the idols when commanded to do so. Because she had said: "They that live chastely and devoutly are a temple of God, and the Holy Ghost dwells in them," they wished to drag her to a brothel; but the Lord rendered her as immovable as a pillar, so that no power could move her. Then a funereal pyre was built around her and ignited; but the flames left her untouched. Finally a sword was thrust through her neck; but she lived until she had received the Viaticum from a priest and had consoled the Christians who were standing around. Her feast is kept on December 13.

St. Agnes, the child of wealthy and distinguished parents, was the most celebrated virgin martyr of Rome. Truly responding to her name, as St. Jerome writes, she passed her childhood in spotless purity and lamblike innocence (*ἀγνή* = the chaste or pure; *agnus* = lamb). A hundred years after her death St. Ambrose said: "Even at the present day many Roman maidens cherish the example of St. Agnes as though she were still dwelling and living among us, animating themselves thereby to a perpetual preservation of purity." She gained the double crown of virginity and martyrdom at the tender age of twelve. The accounts of her death do not agree, but it is certain that she was buried a short distance from the city on the Via Nomentana in the villa of her parents. Her tomb became glorious; for on the spot arises one of the loveliest and most renowned churches of Rome, *S. Agnese fuori le mura*. There annually on the anniversary of her death (January 21) two white lambs are laid on the altar and blessed during the singing of the *Agnus Dei*. They are again blessed by the pope and then entrusted to the Benedictine nuns of St. Agnes to be cared for. From their wool are made the palliums, which the Holy Father, after having placed them for one night on the tomb of the Princes of the Apostles, blesses and sends to the archbishops as a sign of their precedence over the bishops.

St. Cecilia was a maiden of noble origin; from her earliest childhood she had wholly dedicated herself to the service of God by the vow of chastity.

According to her acts, which are not reliable, she was commanded by her parents to marry a wealthy and distinguished young man named Valerian, who was a heathen. She consented only after receiving the assurance, through her guardian angel, that God would preserve her virginity even after her marriage. By prayer and penance Cecilia prepared for this worldly nuptial day, and when at the wedding feast the nuptial hymn was sung "amidst the sound of musical instruments (*cantantibus organis*), Cecilia secretly sang in her heart to the Lord: 'Keep Thou my heart and my body immaculate, that I may not be confounded' " (*Brev. Roman.*). Shortly afterward she converted her husband, Valerian, and his brother, Tiburtius. Cecilia was commanded by Almachius, the pagan prefect of the city, to be suffocated in the bathroom (*Caldarium*) of her own palace. She survived this ordeal, whereupon the tyrant sent the executioner to her, who struck her thrice without severing her head; for three days she continued to live, giving consolation and counsel to all who came to the palace. She ordered that her house should perpetually serve as a church, and finally breathed forth her angelic soul. She was laid in a coffin of cypress wood, in the same posture in which she died, and was interred in the Catacombs of St. Callistus. In the year 821 her holy body was discovered by Paschal I, who placed it under the high altar in the *S. Cecilia in Trastevere*. Almost eight hundred years later (in 1599) Cardinal Sfondrati found the body of the holy martyr still incorrupt in precisely the same posture in which she lay on the floor of her house. Thus she still reposes, enveloped in her rich attire and in a penitential garment, on which the glorious traces of her blood are still visible. She probably died about the year 230; her feast is celebrated on November 22. St. Cecilia is honored as the patroness of Church music, of poets and musicians.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE CONCLUSION OF THE CANON

THE foregoing prayer closes with the ordinary formula, "through Christ our Lord," but no Amen follows, so that the intimate connection between these concluding words and the beginning of the following prayer may be clearly shown.¹

Per quem haec omnia, Domine, semper bona creas, sanctificas, vivi-
ficis, benedicis, et praestas nobis. Per ipsum, et cum ipso, et in ipso est tibi, Deo Patri omnipotenti, in unitate Spiritus sancti, omnis honor et gloria. Per omnia saecula saeculorum. R. Amen.

By whom, O Lord, Thou dost always create, sanctify ✠, vivify ✠, bless ✠, and bestow upon 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: world without end. R. Amen.

The sacrificial prayer of the Canon thus closes with a beautiful and solemn prayer accompanied by expressive ceremonies. It is di-

¹ The concluding formulas of the preceding Canon Prayers have received the *Amen* only since the twelfth century; previously it was placed at the end of the whole Canon after the words *per omnia saecula saeculorum*, and that as a response of the people. Hic elevat Oblatam cum calice dicens: *Per omnia saecula saeculorum*. Responsio: *Amen* (Microl., chap. 22). Assensum quaerit Ecclesiae sacerdos, dicens sonora voce *Per omnia saecula saeculorum*. Supplet populus super orationem ejus locum idiotae et respondet *Amen* (I Cor., chap. 14), hac una participem voce se faciens omnium charismatum, quae sacerdos multiplici sacramentorum diversitate studuit impetrare. Jam ergo quasi mutato habitu, quo utebatur, dum sacra mysteria tractaret, mutat vocem (Ivon. Carnot., *Serm.*, V). With regard to the conclusion of the preceding prayer said in silence, Blessed Albertus Magnus makes the judicious remark: Est conclusio, ad quam nullus respondet *Amen* (sicut in aliis Secretorum conclusionibus) nisi Angeli, qui in ministerio esse dicuntur (*Tract.*, III, chap. 9).

vided into two parts sharply differing from each other. In the first we confess that the Eucharistic sacrificial gifts have been prepared and given to us by God through Jesus Christ; in the other part we declare that by the sacrifice of Christ supreme honor and glory are given to the triune God. Here at the close of the Canon the whole significance and efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Mass are again summarized, for Jesus Christ, the divine high priest, appears on the altar as mediator between God and men (I Tim. 2:5): on the one hand, to bless and enrich men with the plenitude of the gifts of salvation; on the other, most perfectly to honor and glorify the eternal majesty of God.

1. The words, "all these good things" (*haec omnia bona*), designate principally the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine which were on the altar before the Consecration and still come before the mind of the priest as if present. And this can happen since their appearances have remained after the Consecration as a sacramental covering for the body and blood of Christ. The natural elements of bread and wine are the created gifts of God, and on the altar they are changed from earthly gifts into heavenly ones, and then given to us for our enjoyment and sanctification. At the last word (*praestas*, bestow) we should, therefore, think about the consecrated elements on the altar: the sacrificial body and blood of Christ consecrated from bread and wine. By "all these good things" are to be understood partly the natural goods of bread and wine, partly the supernatural goods of the body and blood of Christ; the former He "creates, sanctifies, vivifies," but the latter, the body and blood of Christ, He bestows upon us in Communion, or as a sacrificial gift, which we should offer to Him.

Through His Son, Jesus Christ, God the Father "dost always create"—as in the beginning of the world, so also now—all the products of nature, hence the most noble nourishing plants, wheat and grapes; for year after year He causes herbs to grow for the use of man, so that He may bring forth bread out of the earth and wine that cheers the heart of man (Ps. 103: 14 f.).²

These created gifts of nature, the Almighty then changes through

² Per Christum omnipotens Deus Pater *haec bona omnia*, quae sacris altaribus consecrantur, non solum in exordio mundi creavit, condendo quod non erat . . . , sed etiam semper eadem bona creat propagando et reparando, ut per annos singulos et novae segetes et nova vina nascantur (Florus Diacon., n. 73).

the same Jesus Christ into the heavenly sacrificial gifts of the Eucharist, a change of substance, which is here apprehended and represented under a threefold aspect: it is the most perfect sanctification (*sanctificas*), vivifying (*vivificas*), as well as blessing (*benedicis*) of the material substances of bread and wine.³ By the consecration, the bread and wine are sanctified in the highest degree; for their substances vanish, and in their stead there are present the most holy body and blood of Christ in union with His soul and infinitely holy divinity, while the appearances of bread and wine still remain; but they likewise receive in this sacramental connection a sanctified character.⁴ Furthermore, by the consecration the dead, lifeless elements of bread and wine are vivified,⁵ that is, changed into the living and enlivening bread (*panis vivus et vitalis*) of the body of Christ and into the life-streaming drink of His blood. The Eucharistic Saviour is, indeed, the eternal Living One, who, as the Son of the living God, hath life in Himself (John 5:26) and is the source of all supernatural life for His creatures (John 1:4). Finally, the bread and wine are in the fullest sense of the term blessed by the consecration,⁶ that is, not merely made a blessed food, as, for example, the bread and wine blessed on certain feasts, but even changed as to their entire substances into Christ's sacrificial body and blood.⁷ The altar gifts

³ Quoniam corpus Christi est sanctum et benedictum, idcirco per hoc quod Deus Pater convertit haec omnia (sc. panem et vinum) in corpus et sanguinem Christi, dicitur ea sanctificare, vivificare et benedicere (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 36).

⁴ Panis ille quem videtis in altari, sanctificatus per verbum Dei, corpus est Christi; calix ille, imo quod habet calix, sanctificatum per verbum Dei, *sanguis est Christi* (S. August., *Serm.*, CCXXVII [*ad Infantes de Sacramentis*]).

⁵ In the Mozarabic liturgy (*in Dom. I post Octav. Epiphan.*) the substantial change of the Eucharistic elements is expressed by the following words: Coelesti benedictione creatura visibilis animatur. Again (*In Ascensione Domini*): Visitet et vivificet ea (sc. munera) Spiritus tuus sanctus, qui per vaporem incendii Heliae prophetae holocaustum adsumpsit.

⁶ In the ordination rite of priests the Church prays: In obsequium plebis tuae panem et vinum in corpus et sanguinem Filii tui immaculata benedictione transforment.—Verba, in quibus consistit vis consecrandi, dicuntur benedictio tum ratione benedictionis praecedentis, tum quia ad eorum prolationem Dominus benedicit, quia convertit in corpus, quod super omnia benedixit, ditando perfectis donis gratiarum animam, et sanctificatione et puritate carnem illam sanctissimam (S. Bonav., IV, dist. 10, p. 2, dub. 3).

⁷ The three words, *sanctificas*, *vivificas*, *benedicis*, are understood still in another way. By *sanctificatio* is meant the preparatory sanctification of the sacrificial matter through the oblation; by *vivificatio*, its change by the consecration, and by *benedictio*, the fulfillment of the sacrificial gifts with all

thus sanctified, vivified, and blessed, that is, consecrated, are bestowed upon us (*praestas nobis*) by God through Jesus Christ as a sacrifice and sacrament, as food for the soul, as our most sacred and most precious gift.

A still richer and more profound meaning of the above words may be discovered if we regard the elements which lie on the altar, bread and wine according to visible appearances, as the representatives of all the other products of nature; then God, or Jesus Christ, appears as the author and dispenser of all the collective goods of the natural and supernatural order. Such a view is quite proper if we consider that formerly at certain times and on special feasts there was a blessing immediately before this prayer,⁸ by which various objects, chiefly articles of food, for example, water, milk, honey, grapes, beans, fruit, were blessed by a special formula here inserted. When such blessed objects lay near the altar, they could, but in a somewhat different sense, be also comprised among "all these good things" that God ever creates, sanctifies, vivifies, blesses, and bestows upon us through Jesus Christ. Even now the bishop, according to a strict ordinance, annually on Holy Thursday blesses at this place in the Canon the holy oil for the sick.

The somewhat ambiguous expression, "through Him, and with Him, and in Him," may be explained in different ways; and in this singular expression regard must ever be had to the twofold nature of Jesus Christ. Through Jesus Christ (*per ipsum*) the Father and the Holy Ghost are honored and glorified in an infinitely sublime man-

heavenly blessing. Hac oratione Ecclesia profitetur, maximum Eucharistiae beneficium a Deo sibi esse collatum, a quo panis et vinum, elementa eucharistica consecranda, creantur; creata, cum altari admoventur, sanctificantur; sanctificata vivificantur, cum in corpus et sanguinem Christi transsubstantiantur; vivificata benedicuntur donisque Spiritus sui sancti affatim replentur, atque ita benedicta nobis indignis servis suis fruenda traduntur (Lesley, S. J. [Migne, LXXXV, 553]).

⁸ The Gelasian Sacramentary has here (*in Ascensa Domini*) the rubric: Inde vero modicum ante expletum Canonem benedices fruges novas, after which comes the following benediction formula: Benedic, Domine, et has fruges novas fabae, quas tu, Domine, rore coelesti et inundantia pluviarum ad maturitatem perducere dignatus es, ad percipiendum nobis cum gratiarum actione in nomine D. N. J. Ch. Per quem haec omnia. . . . This blessing of the first fruits, before the concluding prayer of the Canon, was never general, but prescribed only by individual bishops. A *Sacramentarium vetus* of the eleventh century admits the words *Per quem haec, Domine, semper bona creas, sanctificas, vivificas, benedixis et nobis servis tuis largiter praestas* even into the *benedictio palmae et olivae*. (Cf. Migne, CLI, 843.)

ner, inasmuch as the God-man offers Himself on the altar and through Him alone can all creatures render to God perfect homage and adoration. At the same time and jointly with Jesus Christ (*cum ipso*)⁹ the Father and the Holy Ghost receive all honor and praise, for Jesus Christ is true God and, therefore, "together" with the other divine persons "adored and glorified" (*simul adoratur et conglorificatur*); moreover, the Eucharistic sacrifice of praise and adoration is offered to all the persons of the Most Holy Trinity. Finally, in Jesus Christ (*in ipso*)¹⁰ the Father and the Holy Ghost also are glorified, since all three divine persons, by reason of the unity of their essence, are eternally in each other, and, consequently, the veneration of one is not to be separated from the veneration of the other two. If we consider Jesus Christ according to His human nature as our head and our mediator, then we render to the triune God all honor and glory "through Him" and "with Him," in that we are in union with Him in the offering of the sacrifice, and "in Him," in so far as we are included in His sacrifice and are jointly offered with it.

2. The accompanying ceremony harmonizes perfectly with the text of the prayer. The three signs of the cross prescribed at the words, "sanctify, vivify, bless," symbolize not the present sanctification, but the accomplished sanctification, vivifying, and blessing of the oblation which took place at the moment of consecration,¹¹ and, at the same time, also indicates the fullness of life and of blessing contained in the Eucharistic sacrificial gifts and thence flowing out over the whole Church.

Now the rite of the sign of the cross changes. The sacred sign is no longer made merely with the hand of the priest, but with the sacred body of the Lord.¹² When pronouncing the words "through

⁹ *Cum ipso*, quia Filius a Patre separari non debet, sed simul cum eo venerari. Honor enim uni personae impensus toti Trinitati adorandae saltem implicite exhibetur (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 36).

¹⁰ *In ipso*, i.e. omnis honor et gloria est tibi Patri atque Spiritui sancto seu in unitate Spiritus sancti in Filio tuo, quia omnis, qui Filium Dei vere cognoscit, ex eius cognitione Deum Patrem glorificat atque honorat (*ibid.*).

¹¹ Signa tria crucis quae hic fiunt, operatione Trinitatis per virtutem crucis ostendunt facta esse quae praemissa sunt. Signa enim facta hucusque post consecrationem non consecrationem operantur, sed ejus faciunt commemorationem sive testificationem (Robert. Paulul., *De offic. eccles.*, II, chap. 36).

¹² The rite at this point was somewhat different in the Middle Ages. The practice of forming the cross here *cum oblatiis, cum corpore dominico, cum*

Him and with Him and in Him," the sign of the cross is made three times with the sacred host over the chalice; and when mention is made of the Father Almighty and of the Holy Ghost, the holy sign is made twice between the chalice and the breast of the priest. One reason for these signs of the cross may be that here all three divine persons are mentioned separately and consecutively; the Son three times, hence a threefold sign of the cross is made with the host over the chalice, because His adorable blood is contained therein; but when mention is made of the Father and the Holy Ghost, the last two signs of the cross take place outside of the chalice. While the priest pronounces the words *omnis honor et gloria* ("all honor and glory"), he holds the host and the chalice in his hands, raising them slightly. This slight elevation (*elevatio minor*) of the sacrificial gifts is far more ancient than the greater one (*elevatio major*) at the Consecration. Originally this minor elevation was a more solemn invitation to all to render their homage of adoration to the Most Holy; ¹³ according to the rite of that age, the minor elevation can be considered an emphasis on the words, "all honor and glory," that is, as symbolically indicating the glory which day after day ascends from the altar and its sacrificial gifts to the eternal throne of the Holy Trinity. This supreme praise is rendered to the Most High, not merely as long as this world will continue to last, but "forever and ever" (*per omnia saecula saeculorum*). By this majestic conclusion, recited aloud or sung, the solemn silence of the Canon is broken in order that the people, by answering *Amen*, may make known their assent to all that the priest alone has performed. Thus the Canon terminates in an enthusiastic doxology, which is the glorious crown of the ancient sacrificial prayer.

hostia, was in all probability brought about chiefly by the circumstance, that at the Elevation, which here took place, the chalice was touched with the host. *Cum oblata tangitur calix. Novissima crux cum oblatione celebratur* (Amalar., *Eclog.*, n. 22). Cf. *Ordo Rom.* I, n. 16. *Notandum quod cum alia signa sola manu sacerdotis fiant, ista fiunt de corpore Christi. Hic enim ipsa Christi crucifixio repraesentatur, quasi Christus quem praesentem credimus sic pro nobis in ligno crucis est extensus* (Robert. Paulul., *op. cit.*, II, chap. 37).

¹³ In many places, for example, in Belgium, a threefold sign is here given with the little bell; this custom, being of ancient origin, may be tolerated. (Cf. S. R. C., May 14, 1856.)

SECTION IV

The Communion

THE Communion is the last principal part of the sacrifice of the Mass. The Eucharist is, indeed, according to its very nature and object, a food-offering and a sacrificial food. It is a food-offering, for the divine Lamb is, in the Consecration, mystically immolated and offered on the altar, that those who offer may partake of Him. The essential sacrificial act must precede its reception as food in Communion, as it consists precisely in the preparing of the sacrificial repast. Christ's body and blood are sacrificed that they may, under the separate appearances of bread and wine, be placed on the altar. Only by Communion does the Eucharistic sacrifice attain its destination as a food-offering, and as such it is thereby rendered complete. Because of this connection of the sacrifice of the altar with the Communion of the celebrant, this Communion constitutes, although not an essential, yet an integral part of the Eucharistic sacrifice; it would be incomplete if Communion were not joined to it. According to divine and ecclesiastical law, the celebrant at least must eat and drink of the sacrificial body and blood which have been previously offered by him in sacrifice to God, that by such participation he may enter into the most intimate communion of sacrifice with Christ. "The chalice of benediction, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread, which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" (I Cor. 10:16.)

Therefore the Eucharist is also sacrificial food and sacrificial drink; the Eucharistic repast is a sacrificial repast, because it is the precious fruit of the sacrifice of the altar. It is only by a sacrificial act that the sacramental food of life can be prepared. To the sacrificial act is attached the sacrificial repast; the Communion is a participation in the preceding and accomplished sacrifice. But as Christ

must Himself become previously a victim in order to become our food of grace, thus also must we previously offer ourselves to Him in worship so as to be worthy of the Eucharistic sacrificial repast.¹

The Eucharist is both a sacrifice and a sacrament; but as sacrifice and sacrament it acts in different ways and produces different effects of grace, so that the fruits of the sacrifice are to be distinguished from the fruits of Communion. As the faithful, "a holy and royal priesthood," unite in offering the Eucharistic sacrifice, they should also by sacramental Communion unite themselves with and participate in the sacrifice offered, in order thus to receive the fruits of the sacrifice in greater abundance. The Communion is the sacrificial repast, the perfect conclusion of the sacrificial action.

The Communion forms the center of the following part of the liturgy of the Mass: the prayers which precede the Communion may be regarded as a preparation; those which follow, as thanksgiving.

¹ *Ipsa participatio corporis et sanguinis Domini, cum ejus panem manducamus et calicem bibimus, hoc utique nobis insinuat, ut moriamur mundo et vitam nostram absconditam habeamus cum Christo in Deo carnemque nostram crucifigamus cum vitiis et concupiscentiis suis. Sic fit, ut omnes fideles qui Deum et proximum diligunt, etiamsi non bibant calicem corporeae passionis, bibant tamen calicem dominicae caritatis, quo inebriati membra sua, quae sunt super terram, mortificent et induti Dominum J. Chr. carnis curam non faciant in desideriis neque contemplantur quae videntur, sed quae non videntur (S. Fulgent., *Contra Fabian.*, frag. 28).*

CHAPTER XL

THE PATER NOSTER

1. The Lord's Prayer has from the time of the apostles¹ formed a constituent part of the sacrificial celebration, in the East as well as in the West. It is recited aloud, or sung, and is placed at the beginning of the Communion² in the same manner as the Preface introduces the Canon, or Consecration. The position of the Pater Noster in the liturgy of the Mass is very appropriate; for according to its contents it can be referred partly to the sacrifice, partly to the Communion, forming a beautiful transition between these two parts and connecting them with each other. In the Pater Noster we pray for the sanctification of God's divine name, for the coming of the

¹ St. Jerome dates the use of the Our Father at the sacrificial celebration to an ordinance of the Lord Himself. Sic (Christus) docuit discipulos suos, ut quotidie in corporis illius sacrificio credentes audeant loqui: Pater noster, qui es in coelis . . . (*Adv. Pelag.*, III, n. 15). The same is found in all liturgies, but it was and is not recited in all in the same manner. Among the Greeks it is said in a low tone by the priest, while the entire congregation recite it aloud. In the Mozarabic rite the people respond to the priest, who recites or sings it aloud, in the following manner: Pater noster, qui es in coelis. R. *Amen*. Sanctificetur nomen tuum. R. *Amen*. Adveniat regnum tuum. R. *Amen*. Fiat voluntas tua sicut in coelo et in terra. R. *Amen*. Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie. R. *Quia Deus es*. Et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris. R. *Amen*. Et ne nos inducas in tentationem. R. *Sed libera nos a malo*. In Christian antiquity the Our Father was regarded as really and exclusively the "prayer of the faithful"; for the baptized alone had the right to address God as their Father. Recall the so-called *traditio* (delivery) and *redditio* (return) of the *Oratio dominica* (and the symbol) in the old baptismal practice. The Our Father is also called *legitima et ordinaria oratio, prex legitima*. (Cf. Tertull., *De orat.*, chap. 10.)

² Previous to the time of St. Gregory the Great it was not recited (as is still the case in the Ambrosian and Mozarabic rites) until after the breaking of the host; this pope gave it its present position immediately after the Canon (*mox post precem*).

divine kingdom, and the fulfillment of the divine will; then the granting of our daily bread; and finally, the forgiveness of our debts, preservation from temptation, and deliverance from evil. The first three petitions are concerned with the glory of God; but the last three have for their object man's salvation. The first three petitions are connected with the last three by the fourth petition, which refers to the supernatural bread of the soul as well as to the earthly bread of the body. We obtain the honor of God and the salvation of the world principally through the Eucharistic bread of heaven, the sacred body of Christ.³

In the Roman rite the Pater Noster is introduced by the *Oremus*⁴ and an unchangeable preamble.⁵ In this prayer we express our reliance on the wholesome precepts and divine instruction (*Praeceptis salutaribus moniti et divina institutione formati*), as though we would excuse ourselves that "we make bold" (*audemus*) to call the Lord of heaven and earth "our Father" and invoke Him as "Father." But Christ himself commanded us to repeat this prayer with heart and lips, saying: "Thus therefore shall you pray" (Matt. 6:9):

³ Sequitur Oratio dominica cum appositionibus congruis. Una enim praecedens eam fiduciam praedicat, qua Dominum creatorem Patrem dicere praesumamus; altera subsequens explicat, quomodo et a quibus malis per Dominum nos liberari petamus. Quae Oratio dominica, quia prius quam cetera in consecratione sacrificiorum assumpta est, in expletione ejusdem sacratissimae actionis digne ponitur, ut per hanc purificati qui communicaturi sunt, quae sancte confecta sunt, digne ad salutem veram percipiant (Walafrid. Strabo, chap. 23).

⁴ Cur hanc solam Orationem praecedit adhortatio, cum plures in hoc Canone faciamus et ad nullam hortati sumus? Quia illae sunt inferiores et humana ratione compositae; haec perfecta et a solo Deo formata (B. Odo Camer., *In Can.*, dist. 4). Dignum profecto fuit, ut tota haec tam sacrosancta actio Dominica oratione concluderetur, et petitiones fidelium, quas vel propter futuram vel propter praesentem vitam nos Dominus docuit, per eandem passionis ejus commemorationem efficacius commendarentur. Admonetur ergo tota Ecclesia et dicitur a sacerdote *Oremus* et orat Ecclesia cum sacerdote, non voce, sed corde: labia clausa sunt, sed patet conscientia; silentium est, clamat pectus, sed auribus ille audit qui miseretur (Florus Diac., n. 75).

⁵ In all liturgies the Pater Noster is introduced by a preface; in the Mozarabic and the ancient Gallican rites it continually varies according to the course of the ecclesiastical year. The Milanese liturgy has but twice (on Holy Thursday and Easter Sunday) an introduction differing somewhat from that of the Roman liturgy. St. Cyprian already alludes to this preamble: Qui (sc. Dominus) inter cetera salutaria sua monita et praecepta divina, quibus populo suo consulit ad salutem, etiam orandi ipse formam dedit, ipse quid precaremur, *monuit et instruxit* (*De orat. Domin.*, chap. 2).

Pater noster, qui es in coelis; sanctificetur nomen tuum. Adveniat regnum tuum. Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in coelo et in terra. Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie. Et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris. Et ne nos inducas in tentationem
R. Sed libera nos a malo. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation. *R.* But deliver us from evil. Amen.

Tertullian says (*De Orat.*, chap. 1) that the Lord's Prayer is as brief and concise in words as it is full of thought, and then he designates it as "an abbreviation of the whole Gospel," which, "together with the special theme of the prayer" (the adoration of God and petitions for man), "contains almost the whole sum of the doctrine and law of Christ." This glorious prayer is so profound in its signification, so rich in mysteries, so powerful in its efficacy, and so ingenious in its arrangement, that no one is able to conceive or express it.⁶ There are innumerable explanations, more or less complete, of the Pater Noster; hence we content ourselves to give a mere sketch of its immeasurably rich contents,⁷ and in so doing we shall adhere to the masterly interpretation of the Angelic Doctor.

The introduction of the prayer awakens confidence; but this is principally brought about by contemplating that love of God which desires our every good; hence we say: "Our Father"; then, after considering His greatness and majesty, by virtue of which He can bestow on us every good, we say: "who art in heaven."⁸ The prayer

⁶ De hujus orationis expositione, laude et efficacia tanta jam a sanctis atque catholicis doctoribus dicta sunt, ut paene taedio sit ea perlegere. Verumtamen nec digna nec sufficientia dicta sunt nec usquam dicuntur. Tanta nempe est hujus gloriosae orationis profunditas in sensu, fecunditas in mysteriis, efficacia in effectu, artificialitas in processu seu ordine, ut nemo capere queat vel eloqui (Dion. Carthus., *In Matt.*, chap. 6).

⁷ In orationis dominicae expositione multa a sanctis Patribus dicta leguntur; sed quia mens orantis tot ea hora capere non potest, nos de singulis petitionibus pauca dicere volumus, ut qui orat intellegere possit quid petat et intellegens devotior fiat (Robert. Paulul., *De offic. eccles.*, II, chap. 38).

⁸ Quamvis oratio ista communiter dirigenda sit ad totam Trinitatem, quae est unus Deus et Pater noster ratione creationis et justificationis seu naturae et gratiae: nam naturam et gratiam a Deo trino sortimur; in Missa tamen specialiter ad Patrem dirigitur, sicut orationes in Canone praecedentes et oratio proxime sequens (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 37).

itself contains not only all that we should ask for, but the succession one after another of the seven petitions shows the order which we should observe in imploring the various goods from God; it therefore regulates our affections, inclinations, and desires.

Evidently the first object of our desires is God Himself, who is the end of our whole being. But our desires aspire to God in a two-fold manner: as we desire the glory for God Himself, and as we desire the glory of God for ourselves. Accordingly, the first petition reads, "hallowed be Thy name," whereby we implore the glorification of God; the second, "Thy kingdom come," whereby we ask that we may arrive at the participation in the glory and beatitude of His heavenly kingdom.

The two following petitions refer to what is conducive to the attainment of our last end. For this it is necessary, above all, that we merit eternal happiness by obediently keeping the divine commandments; but since we are unable to accomplish this by our own strength, we beg the necessary assistance of grace from on high with the words: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." A further means for the attainment of the end of our being is our daily bread, in so far as the bread of the soul is here understood, that is, chiefly the holy Sacrament of the altar, the devout daily reception of which is profitable to man, and in which, as in their source, all the other sacraments are included. On the other hand, in so far as the bread of the body is here understood, by which is meant all that serves for the maintenance of life, the fourth petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," implores the Father for all that is necessary for the attainment of our natural end.

The last three petitions beg God to remove all impediments which could hinder us in the attainment of our last end. The first and greatest of these impediments is sin, which directly excludes us from the kingdom of heaven; hence we pray: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." We further implore God to remove from us the temptation to sin, which incites us to oppose the will of God and renders its fulfillment difficult: "And lead us not into temptation"; that is, do not permit us to be overcome by temptation, but strengthen us to gain the victory over it. In the last petition we cry. "Deliver us from evil," and continue this petition in the following prayer.

This last petition is made in the name of the faithful by the acolyte

or choir,⁹ after which the priest concludes the Pater Noster by saying, in a low voice, *Amen*.¹⁰ This *Amen* from the lips of the priest, who is mediator between God and man, has in this place a peculiar significance. It does not express consent and desire, as at other times, but is, so to speak, the answer that God gives, that He has received the petition of the people. The Pater Noster is recited aloud,¹¹ or sung, in order that all present may join in the prayer with devout hearts and in childlike confidence,¹² to which they are also incited by the *Oremus* said before the prayer. This divine prayer, so full of power, inspiration, and holiness, should indeed at all times be recited with profound devotion,¹³ but especially during the celebration of Mass, when before our eyes on the altar He reposes who taught and commanded us thus to pray.¹⁴

⁹ Hoc septimum chorus succinit, in quo se orasse cum sacerdote ostendit. Ad hoc enim fuerat invitatus, cum sacerdos ante orationem Dominicam diceret *Oremus*. Deinde subjungit sacerdos *Amen* ad petitionum omnium praemis-sarum confirmationem (Robert. Paulul., II, chap. 29).

¹⁰ In orationis dominicae particula finali populus tamquam infirmus petiit a malo liberari. Cui sacerdos compatiens dixit *Amen*, desiderans dicti populi liberationem secundum unam, aut petitionis susceptionem affirmans secundum aliam ejus expositionem (Gabr. Biel, *Exposit. Canon. Miss.*, lect. 79).

¹¹ Alta et distincta voce dicitur, ut et populus et postea loco ipsius chorus ultimam petitionem quasi quendam orationis Dominicae epilogum recitare et sic in ejus partem venire potuerit (Krazer, sect. 4, art. 1, c. 12, § 273). In ecclesia ad altare Dei quotidie dicitur ista Dominica oratio et *audiunt* illam fideles (S. August., *Serm.*, LVIII, n. 12).

¹² In the Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries the *Amen* is omitted after the Our Father. Later (probably not until after the eleventh century) it was taken up in the rite, but recited only in a low tone (*submissa voce*) by the priest, as the people, or the acolyte, at the close of the Embolism, which really concludes the petitions of the Our Father, express by a loud *Amen* their faithful and devout assent, the confirmation and recommendation of these petitions. In the Hours of the breviary the *Amen* is, on the contrary, to be added only when the entire Pater Noster is recited in silence (*totum secreto*), for example, at Compline before the Confiteor; it is always omitted when the Our Father throughout is recited aloud (*totum clara voce*), for example, in the ferial prayers of Lauds and Vespers; or when it is recited in silence, but commenced and concluded aloud, for instance, in the dominical prayers of Prime and Compline.

¹³ Hanc sacratissimam orationem ex divinae ac sempiternae Sapientiae fonte immediate manantem devotissime proferamus, et tanto devotius, quanto frequentius, ne frequentia incuriam pariat atque fastidium, sed eam saepius iterando crescamus semper in ejus effectu seu gratia, per quam ardentius solito repetatur (Dion. Carthus., *In Matt.*, chap. 6).

¹⁴ Oratio Dominica cum singulari et maxima devotione dicenda est in Missa, ubi Christus auctor ejus tam dignanter atque mirabiliter ac verissime praesens

2. The last petition of the Pater Noster is enlarged upon by the priest; this appendix or addition to the Lord's Prayer is commonly called the Embolism.¹⁵

Libera nos, quaesumus, Domine, ab omnibus malis, praeteritis, praesentibus et futuris: et intercedente beata et gloriosa semper Virgine Dei genitrice Maria, cum beatis Apostolis tuis Petro et Paulo, atque Andrea, et omnibus Sanctis, da propitius pacem in diebus nostris: ut ope misericordiae tuae adjuti, et a peccato simus semper liberi, et ab omni perturbatione securi. Per eundem Dominum.

Deliver us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, from all evils, past, present, and to come; and by the intercession of the blessed and glorious ever Virgin Mary, Mother of God, together with Thy blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and Andrew, and all Thy saints, graciously give peace in our days, that aided by the help of Thy mercy, we may be always free from sin and secure from all disturbance. Through the same Lord.

Why do we dwell so long on the petition for deliverance from every evil? Because this earth on which we, as exiled children of Eve, are still sojourning, is a land of spiritual and corporal evils that sprout from the poisonous root of sin. The life of mortal man overflows with hardships and miseries, sorrows and cares, dangers

est, et qui eam taliter dicit, ineffabilem fructum reportat (*idem, Expos. Miss., a. 37*).

¹⁵ *Embolismus*, ἐμβολισμός from ἐμβάλλω, I add = inserted; substantive = insertion, middle links, addition. Authors of the Middle Ages usually translate: *superaugmentum*, *excrescentia*. Sequitur in altum praefatio Dominicae orationis et oratio Dominica cum embolismo (*Ordo Rom. II, n. 11*). Sequitur embolismus, i.e. superaccrescens: superaccrescitur enim ultimae petitionis repetitio et expositio (Sicard., III, chap. 6). On Good Friday this prayer is said aloud *in tono orationis Missae ferialis*; the Ambrosian rite always prescribes that it should be recited aloud or chanted. The silent recitation of the Embolism is prescribed already in the fourth Ordo: Dicit dominus papa, interveniente nullo sono, hanc orationem: *Libera nos*. . . . Bishop Bonizo of Piacenza (d. 1088) is of the opinion that St. Gregory the Great ordered the silent recitation of the Embolism. Beatus Gregorius constituit, ut sequens oratio, quae sic incipit: "Libera nos, Domine, ab omnibus malis," quae ante eum alta voce decantabatur, secrete diceretur (*Lib. de Sacramentis*). It seems, however, that the silent recitation serves to represent the Embolism as an ecclesiastical addition to the Lord's Prayer. Facta confirmatione Dominicae orationis dicendo *Amen*, totus textus qui sequitur pro venia peccatorum orat et pro pace (B. Odo Camer., *In Can.*, dist. 4).

and temptations. "Many are the afflictions of the just; but out of them all will the Lord deliver them" (Ps. 33:20). As long as we remain on earth, encompassed with infirmity and subject to suffering and spiritual combat, it is ever necessary for us to pray for deliverance¹⁶ from all evils, past, present, and to come. Of past evils, sins often continue to abide in their painful consequences, in their unhappy results and fruits, which we wish to be totally removed. In the present we are pressed down by evils from within and without, from all sides, and from these we wish to be delivered. The future is frequently enveloped in darkness, and in its bosom conceals a host of threatening evils, from which we would beg to be spared.

The infinitely holy and just God often permits painful sufferings and tribulations to befall us, not merely for our trial and purification from all inordinate attachment to the world, but also as a chastisement for our sins and imperfections. Therefore we earnestly beseech the Lord not to chastise us in His wrath and indignation (Ps. 6:2), but to regard us with the eyes of His favor and be propitious to us, and to give us true peace in our days.¹⁷ We here pray in the first place for interior peace of soul, which consists in this, that by the powerful assistance (*ope*¹⁸) of the divine mercy we may ever keep ourselves free from sin and thus persevere in the blessed love and friendship of God and rejoice in the sweet consolations of His grace. Then we pray for exterior peace of life, which consists in this, that by God's help and merciful protection we may be ever secure from all disturbances, disorders, and persecutions, by which in our frailty we are easily drawn from the right path of salvation and led into evil. If the days of our life are not darkened by fears from within and combats from without (II Cor. 7:5), that is, by

¹⁶ *Liberare*, to loosen, to deliver us from something that, as it were, chains or binds us; here in the full sense = to deliver from evils present and to preserve (protect, guard) us from impending evils (*inde se recte dicunt liberari, quo per liberatores suos non sunt permissi perduci* [S. August.]). In consuetudine latinae linguae liberari duobus modis dicitur et maxime in eo consuevimus audire hoc verbum, ut quicumque liberatur, intellegatur periculum evadere, molestiis carere (S. August., *Serm.*, CXXXIV, n. 2).

¹⁷ *Exaudi nos, Deus salutaris noster, et dies nostros in tua pace dispone, ut a cunctis perturbationibus liberati, tranquilla tibi servitute famulemur* (*Sacram. Gregor.*). *Ecclesia deprecatur pacem in diebus nostris, quod et post nos alii et post ipsos alii usque ad finem saeculi similiter orabunt* (Pseudo-Alcuin., chap. 40).

¹⁸ *Ope* from the obsolete *ops* = every assisting means; power, vigor, strength, assistance, support.

the bitterness of sin and the misery of contention, then we enjoy the blessings of interior and exterior peace,¹⁹ whereby we taste already beforehand some drops from the fountain of heavenly, eternal peace. To obtain the inestimable gift of this desirable peace the more easily and in greater abundance, we have recourse to the intercession "of the glorious ever Virgin Mary, Mother of God, together with the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and Andrew,²⁰ and all the saints." For the sake of such intercessors, our supplications will be answered, and the superabundant riches of the divine mercy will be imparted to us.

While the priest prays, "Graciously give peace in our days," he makes the sign of the cross on himself with the paten²¹ to express symbolically the desire of participating in that peace which Christ brought us by His cross and by the sacrifice of His body; for in a few moments the host is placed on the paten.²² The kissing of the paten²³

¹⁹ *Populus fidelium in hujus saeculi peregrinatione, tamquam in Babylone captivus et supernae patriae suspirans, orat etiam pro pace temporali, ne impediatur a spirituali, ut, remotis per Dei pietatem omnibus adversitatibus, quietam et tranquillam vitam agat Ecclesia. Hoc autem paucissimis, sed eminentissimis Sanctis nominatis exorat (Pseudo-Alcuin., chap. 40).*

²⁰ These three apostles are also in the first place in the list of the saints before the Consecration. As the brother of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, St. Andrew was ever held in great veneration in Rome and his feast kept with marked solemnity. (Cf. *Ordo Rom XI*, n. 76.) In the Middle Ages the celebrant could according to his pleasure mention here other saints, especially the Patrons of the Church. *Aliorum Sanctorum nomina annumerare non debemus, nisi quos in Canone invenimus antiquitus descriptos, excepto post "Pater noster" in illa oratione, ubi juxta Ordinem quorumlibet Sanctorum nomina internumerare possumus (Microl., chap. 13). Cf. Ordo Rom IX.*

²¹ In the Middle Ages the paten was kissed previous to the sign of the cross in many places. *Vide quod sacerdos cum osculata patena se in ultima clausula signat (Sicard., III, chap. 6). Cf. Durand., IV, I, 4.*

²² In the most ancient times the breads offered were consecrated on the paten, later on the corporal, and only the fraction of the host took place on the paten; already during the Middle Ages the present rite originated of placing the host on the paten before and after the breaking over the chalice (*ut facilius tolli possit*). *Patenam sacerdos de manu diaconi suscipit et in altari, ut fractionem super eam faciat, deponit. Nos tamen hanc fractionem ad cautelam faciamus super calicem (Robert. Paulul., II, chap. 39).*

²³ According to the (three) oldest Roman *Ordines* the paten was not kissed in this place by the celebrant, but only by the archdeacon; first in the *Ordo Rom. V*, n. 10 (of the eleventh century) appears the rubric: *Patenas diaconus episcopo osculandas praebeat*. The present rite is found in *Ordo Rom. XIV*, c. 53: *Pontifex patenam accipiens cum dextra manu, quando dicit "intercedente b. Dei genitrice . . ." faciat sibi cum ipsa patena signum crucis (a com-*

is a sign of love and reverence toward this "new sepulchre" of the holy body of Christ.²⁴

plete sign of the Cross), et quando dicit "da propitius . . ." osculetur ipsam patenam in superiori ejus parte (*on the upper end or rim*). The present rubric, *Patenam ipsam osculatur*, is more accurately explained by a decree: Patena in extremitate seu in ora congruentius osculanda est (S. R. C., July 24, 1683).

²⁴ In Spain many priests communicated immediately after the Pater noster, or after the Embolism, and only afterward gave the blessing to the congregation. To oppose these innovations the Fourth Council of Toledo (633) prescribed, ut post Orationem dominicam et conjunctionem panis et calicis benedictio in populum sequatur et tunc demum sacramentum corporis et sanguinis Domini sumatur. After the summons *Humiliate vos benedictioni* and the salutation (*Dominus sit . . .*), the formula of blessing was pronounced, to the individual petitions of which the people answered *Amen*. The ancient Gallican rite had also at this place a similar imparting of the blessing. The benediction formulas were manifold. In Spain bishops and priests used the same formula, but the priest was not permitted to impart the blessing in presence of a bishop. In Gaul priests made use of a shorter formula than bishops, which was not subject to change; it was as follows: Pax, fides, caritas et communio corporis et sanguinis Christi sit semper vobiscum. It appears that in Germany likewise, at least in some places, at Pontifical Mass the episcopal blessing was solemnly imparted before the Communion. The Roman rite, as well as the Greek and Oriental liturgies, ignores the above benediction. Cf. the remarks of Lesley, S. J., on the Mozarabic Missal (Migne, LXXX, 592); Gerbert., *Vetus Liturg. Alemann.*, Part I, disp. I, chap. 3, n. 39.

CHAPTER XLI

THE FRACTION OF THE HOST AND THE MINGLING OF THE CONSECRATED ELEMENTS

THE breaking of the host is connected with the concluding formula belonging to the Embolism: *Per eundem Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus per omnia saecula saeculorum. R. Amen.* While the priest says in silence, "Through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son," with both hands he holds the host over the chalice and reverently breaks it in half, one half of which he lays with his right hand on the paten; and while he continues, "Who liveth and reigneth with Thee," from the other half he breaks from below a particle and holds it firmly in the right hand. He proceeds: "in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God," and at the same time joins the other half in the left hand with that on the paten in such a way that the host again appears entire and round; at the last words, "World without end," the priest raises his voice, and then says aloud: *Pax ✠ Domini sit ✠ semper vobis ✠ cum* ("May the peace ✠ of the Lord be ✠ always with ✠ you"), while with the small particle he makes the sign of the cross three times over the chalice. After the acolyte has given to this salutation the answer: *Et cum spiritu tuo* ("And with thy spirit"), the priest drops the particle of the host into the chalice, and while doing so he says silently: ¹

Haec commixtio et consecratio
Corporis et Sanguinis Domini
nostri Jesu Christi fiat accipien-
tibus nobis in vitam aeternam.
Amen.

May the mingling and the con-
secration of the body and blood
of our Lord Jesus Christ be unto
us that receive it effectual for
life everlasting. Amen.

¹ In the Mozarabic rite the prayer for the mingling is as follows: *Sancta sanctis* (τὰ ἁγία τοῖς ἁγίοις) et conjunctio corporis (et sanguinis) D. N. J. Ch. sit sumentibus (= edentibus) et potantibus nobis ad veniam, et defunctis fide-

The liturgical Fraction of the host and the mingling of the consecrated elements is a rite very simple, but exceedingly rich in holy mysteries. This small portion of the Eucharistic celebration is of profound significance and of the highest importance, as is seen from the fact that this rite of the breaking and the mingling, although greatly modified, is found to agree in its essential features in the liturgies of all countries and times. Even if this rite in former times was occasioned by natural reasons, still the fraction and the mingling have a higher symbolical signification, in the explanation of which it must not be forgotten that the breaking and mingling of the consecrated elements are intimately connected.

1. The great importance of the Fraction of the host is already indicated by the fact that the bishop, after the ordination of the newly ordained priests, urges them to carefully study the entire rite of the Mass before they celebrate, especially the Consecration, the Fraction, and the Communion. Although here the Fraction of the host is mentioned together with the Consecration and the Communion, still it would be erroneous to describe it as an essential or even as an integral part of the Eucharistic sacrificial action.² The Fraction is, indeed, very significant in the constitution of the sacrificial celebration, but in no wise does it touch upon the essence or integrity of the sacrifice. The peculiar importance of this breaking of the host is manifold. At one time it is done in imitation of what the Lord did at the Last Supper, when He broke the Eucharistic bread before distributing it; hence in the early ages the Eucharistic sacrifice and Communion celebration were designated by the name of the breaking of bread (*fractio panis*; cf. Acts 2:42; 20:7, 11; I Cor. 10:16). Consequently the liturgical breaking of the host has a profound significance in a twofold connection, first, with the preceding sacrificial action; secondly, with the Communion which follows.

The host is broken in order more vividly to represent in a liturgical

libus praestetur ad requiem; in the Ambrosian Missal: *Commixtio consecrati corporis et sanguinis D. N. J. Ch. nobis edentibus et sumentibus (= potantibus) proficiat ad vitam et gaudium sempiternum.*

² *Fractio hostiae consecratae et quod una sola pars mittatur in calicem, respicit corpus mysticum, sicut admixtio aquae significat populum et ideo horum praetermissio non facit imperfectionem sacrificii, ut propter hoc sit necesse aliquid reiterare circa celebrationem hujus sacramenti (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 6 ad 6).*

manner the Eucharist's character as a sacrifice; for the breaking symbolizes in an expressive way Christ's violent and bloody death on the cross, inasmuch as it indicates that wounding and lacerating that caused the separation of His soul from His body, which resulted in His sacrificial death.³ In the breaking of the host, Christ is figured as the Lamb that was slain and bruised for our sins (Isa. 53:5). The breaking of the host, therefore, expresses the same mystery that is represented by the separate consecration of the two species. The host, moreover, is broken over the chalice.⁴ This rite may be founded especially on great reverence towards the Blessed Sacrament, so that any loose particles may fall into the precious blood;⁵ but nevertheless the breaking has a mystical signification.⁶ The breaking of the Eucharistic bread over the chalice is intended to indicate that the blood contained in the chalice proceeds from the broken (wounded and mangled) body of Christ, and therefore belongs to it and with it constitutes but one sacrifice and one sacrificial gift.⁷

That the Fraction of the Eucharistic species has also a connection with Communion, as a preparation and introduction to it, is universally acknowledged; for "to break bread" means the same as to prepare it for food, to present or distribute it for participation.⁸

³ Sicut species sacramentales sunt sacramentum corporis Christi veri, ita fractio hujusmodi specierum est sacramentum dominicae passionis, quae fuit in corpore Christi vero (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 77, a. 7).

⁴ In the eleventh century the host was broken on the paten. Archidiaconus patenam osculatam dat uni ex diaconibus tenendam, ad confractionem in ea faciendam. Unde sacerdos sine ministro sacrificans ad eundem locum eam de sub corporali absconditam resumit et osculatam in altari deponit, ut hostiam in ea confringat (Microl., chap. 17).

⁵ Super calicem frangitur, ne minutiae spargantur, sed in ejus concavitate caute recipiantur (Durand., *Ration.*, IV, chap. 51).

⁶ Confractio et commixtio corporis Domini tantis mysteriis declarata antiquitus sanctis Patribus fuit, ut dum sacerdos oblationem frangeret, videbatur quasi Angelus Dei membra fulgentis pueri cultro concaedere et sanguinem ejus in calicem excipiendo colligere (S. Germanus, *Expositio brevis antiquae Liturgiae Gallicanae* [Migne, LXXII, 94]).

⁷ Fractio significat passionem Domini . . . frangitur autem supra calicem propter reverentiam Sacramenti, ne aliqua ejus particula aliorum prosiliat . . . praeterea ad significandum, quod in fractione, h. e. in vulneratione corporis Christi, sanguis, qui in calice continetur, continue fluxit de corpore (Gabr. Biel, *Expos. Can. Miss.*, lect. 80).

⁸ "The breaking of the body takes place at the sacred banquet; on the cross it did not occur, but rather the contrary, since it is said: 'Neither shall you break a bone thereof' (Exod. 12:46). What He did not suffer on the cross, He suffers for thy sake at the Holy Sacrifice, and He permits Himself to be

But this connection ought to be more deeply and more fully understood. The Fraction characterizes the Eucharistic bread of life as a sacrificial food; for it means that the body of Christ broken for us, that is, sacrificed, is given in Communion to be eaten. Our Lord Himself promised: "The bread that I will give, is My flesh for the life of the world" (John 6:52). Inasmuch as Christ gave His body for us in His bloody death of the cross, and daily on the altar gives it in a mystical sacrificial death,—which twofold giving is symbolized by the liturgical breaking of the host—He makes it a sacrificial food, which is administered and partaken of in Holy Communion.

According to the Roman rite the consecrated bread, at least since the ninth century, is divided into three parts; ⁹ all three parts are consumed by the celebrant, the two larger together, the smallest with the sacred blood, into which it was dropped. Formerly the practice was somewhat different. As the hosts were much larger, one of these three parts was subdivided into several particles and used in different ways: ¹⁰ distributed to those present, sent to the

broken that He may satiate all" (St. Chrysostom, *Homilies on I Cor.* [10:27], XXIV).

⁹ In the Mozarabic liturgy the host is broken into nine parts, which are named after the chief mysteries of redemption: (1) *Corporatio* (Incarnation); (2) *Nativitas* (Nativity); (3) *Circumcisio* (Circumcision); (4) *Apparitio* (Apparition); (5) *Passio* (Passion); (6) *Mors* (Death); (7) *Resurrectio* (Resurrection); (8) *Gloria* (Glorification); (9) *Regnum* (Kingdom). The first seven parts are placed on the paten in such a manner as to form a cross, while the two remaining portions are placed to the right at the foot of the cross (*ultra rotas*, that is, outside of the marks in the form of a ring affixed to the paten for the other seven particles).

	1	
6	2	7
	3	
	4	8
	5	9

¹⁰ *Sacerdos rumpit hostiam ex dextro latere juxta Ordinem ad designandam dominici lateris percussionem. Deinde majorem partem in duo confringit, ut tres portiones de corpore dominico efficere possit. Nam unam in calicem, faciendo crucem, mittere debet, cum dicit: Pax Domini . . . , ad designandum corporis et animae conjunctionem in resurrectione Christi. Alteram vero ipse presbyter necessario sumit ante calicis participationem juxta dominicam institutionem. Tertiam autem communicaturis sive infirmis necessario dimittit (Microl., chap. 17). Diaconus sacerdoti offerat patenam, in qua sacerdos corpus Domini tripliciter dividat, quarum partium unam sacerdos calici immittens Pax Domini alta voce dicendo, protinus subdat secrete: "Fiat commixtio corporis et sanguinis Domini nobis accipientibus in vitam aeternam." Alia se, diaconum subdiaconumque communicet. Tertiam viati-*

absent, or put into the chalice at the next sacrificial celebration.¹¹ Participation in the same Holy Sacrifice was regarded as a sign and pledge of ecclesiastical Communion; hence popes and bishops sent to other bishops, or priests too, parts of consecrated hosts, which the recipients dropped into the chalice and consumed.¹² This division of the the host into three parts was symbolically interpreted in various ways. The three parts were, for example, referred to the Holy Trinity, or to the earthly life, the sacrificial death, and the eternal glory of Christ; but generally and principally to the mystical body of Christ, the Church: the three parts of the host were interpreted to refer to the Church militant, suffering, and triumphant; and there were other interpretations.¹³

2. There is an immediate and intimate connection between the Fraction of the host and the mingling of the Eucharistic species.¹⁴ If we pay attention to this connection, the object and

cum, si opus fuerit, in patena usque ad finem Missae reservet; si autem opus non fuerit, tertiam sacerdos aut unus ministrorum accipiat (Joann. Abrincens. [d. 1079], *De offic. eccles.*).

¹¹ A particle previously consecrated was preserved and united to the precious blood at the following sacrifice, to represent, in all probability, the continual succession of the sacrifice, as well as the unity of the last with the present celebration.

¹² This custom existed in Rome until about the ninth century. There the pope on Sundays and feast days sent to those priests who had charge of divine service at the churches within the city, the Eucharist as a symbol of communion with the ecclesiastical head, and as a sign that they were empowered to celebrate. To more distant churches, situated outside the city, the Eucharist was not permitted to be borne, through reverence for the holy mysteries and also because the priests in those places had already permission to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice. The name "*fermentum*," whereby these consecrated particles were designated by Popes Melchiades, Siricius, and Innocent I, has received various interpretations. Cf. the Brief [*epistola regularis*] of Pope Innocent I [402-17] to Decentius, bishop of Gubbio; Mabillon, *In Ord. Rom. comment. praevious*, chap. 6.

¹³ *Fractio hostiae tria significat: primo quidem ipsam divisionem corporis Christi, quae facta est in passione; secundo distinctionem corporis mystici secundum diversos status; tertio distributionem gratiarum procedentium ex passione Christi* (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 5 ad 7).

¹⁴ Ancient writers have various designations for this universally prescribed rite, for example: *commixtio corporis et sanguinis Domini; conjunctio panis et calicis; immissio panis in vinum v. calicem; officium consecrationis. Hac oratione (the Embolism) expleta, commiscens sacerdos Dominicam oblationem, ut calix Domini totam plenitudinem contineat sacramenti, tamquam per ejusdem mysterii copulationem imprecatur Ecclesiae pacem, dicens: Pax Domini . . .* (Pseudo-Alcuin., chap. 40). *Immissionem panis in vinum cerno apud quosdam varie actitari, ita ut aliqui primo mittant de sancta in calicem*

meaning of the rite of mingling will easily be seen from the symbolism of the Fraction. In the separate consecration under two species, as well as in the liturgical breaking of the host, Christ's body and blood appear as though they were separated from each other; but from the fact that the consecrated elements are united with each other by the mingling, it is thereby symbolically expressed that in reality on the altar the body is not without the blood, and the blood not without the body, but under each species the whole Christ is present as one sacrificial gift and one sacrificial food.¹⁵ Furthermore, as the mystical separation of the body and blood of Christ by the consecration and Fraction represents His bloody

et postea dicant: *Pax Domini* . . . ; e contra aliqui reservent immissionem, usque dum pax celebrata sit et fractio panis (Amalar., III, chap. 31). In Rome for a considerable time (perhaps until the ninth century) it was customary to unite the sacred body and blood of Christ twice in the chalice when celebrating Mass. The first mingling, when a previously consecrated host, or a host received from another place, was used, took place at the salutation of peace (*Pax Domini* . . .) after the Our Father; the second mingling, for which was used a particle broken from the host just consecrated, did not take place until the Communion. (Cf. *Ordo Rom. I*, n. 18, 19, 22; *II*, n. 12 f.) Hence Amalarius, in his explanation of the Roman rite, speaks of a *bis positus panis in calicem* (*De eccles. offic.*, III, chap. 31). But when the custom of sending the Eucharist to other churches as a sign of union ceased, only one immission of a particle into the chalice was retained, the first one at the kiss of peace. Only when the Pope officiated, the union of the sacramental species at this point was omitted, taking place after the consuming of the sacred body. This variation continued until about the fifteenth century, when at the Pontifical Mass of the pope the universal and still existing mingling rite came into use. (Cf. *Ordo Rom. IV* and *XIV*. Innocent. III, *De sacr. alt. myst.*, VI, chap. 9). According to the *Ordo Rom. I*, n. 8, as the pope advanced to the altar, the Eucharist (*Sancta*) was carried before him in an open case by two acolytes. This particle, preserved from the previous consecration, was dropped into the precious blood after the salutation of peace, *Pax Domini*. . . . Ex his con-jicere licet, recentiorem morem Eucharistiam praeferendi Pontifici, cum aliquo proficiscitur, forsitan manasse non solum ex communi primorum christianorum more, qui peregrinantes Eucharistiam secum gestare solebant, sed etiam ex veteri consuetudine deferendi sacrosancta mysteria ante Pontificem, cum ad Missarum solemniam celebranda ad altare procederet, qui tamen ritus in primo tantum Romani Ordinis libello praescribitur, non in aliis. Nam secundus libellus praecipit, ut Pontifex, cum venerit ad altare, "primo adoret Sancta," quae proinde ibidem antea exstitisse necesse est (Mabillon, *In Ord. Rom. comment. praeuv.*, chap. 6).

¹⁵ Fit haec permixtio: primo ad notandum, quod Christi corpus non fuit sine sanguine nec sanguis sine corpore; secundo ad designandum, quod unum sacramentum conficitur ex speciebus panis et vini; tertio corporis et sanguinis post trinum crucis signum permixtio est animae ad corpus reditio (Durandus, *IV*, li, 17).

sacrificial death, so the mystical union of the body and blood of Christ by this mingling symbolizes His glorious resurrection, in which His body and blood were again united and vivified.¹⁶ If we consider both of these meanings together, we can then say that the liturgical act of mingling is intended to represent the Eucharistic Saviour as the undivided and living victim on the altar. As the breaking of the host can be referred to the Communion, so likewise can the mingling; for the union of the Eucharistic body and blood contains an allusion to the fact that the whole Christ, and indeed the gloriously risen Christ, is the bread of life for the world. Thus the Fraction and the mingling of the two elements announce in a mystical but eloquent manner that Christ suffered death for us and now lives eternally (Apoc. 5:12, 14).

3. After the breaking of the host and before the mingling, the priest makes three signs of the cross over the chalice with the small piece of the host broken off in his right hand,¹⁷ at the same time saying: "May the peace of the Lord be always with you." The fact that this salutation of peace is made precisely between the symbolical fraction and mingling, signifies that Christ by His redeeming death and glorious resurrection has become the author and source of true peace; likewise does the sign of the cross over the chalice,

¹⁶ Per particulam oblatae immissae in calicem ostenditur corpus Christi, quod resurrexit a mortuis (Joann. Abrinc., *De officiis ecclesiast.*). *Pax Domini* . . . dicens, sacerdos vel episcopus ter super calicem cum particula signat et infundit calici, quia cunctis in coelo et terra pacificatis ad corpus rediit anima Jesu Christi. Quidam infundunt, antequam dicant *Pax Domini* . . . , quod etiam non vacat a mysterio, quia post resurrectionem manifestum est pacem datam hominibus bonae voluntatis (Sicard., III, chap. 8).

¹⁷ As may be seen from the most ancient Roman *Ordines*, as early as the ninth century the sign of the cross was made three times over the chalice with a small particle, but not until the dropping of the (second) particle (immediately before receiving the precious blood), when the present prayer at the mingling (*Fiat commixtio et consecratio* . . .) was recited. (Cf. *Ordo Rom. I*, n. 19; *II*, n. 13.) According to *Ordo IV* no prayer was then said: Quando communicat dominus apostolicus, partem sibi mordet et reliquam in calice mittit, faciens crucem de ea tribus vicibus super calicem nihil dicens. Crux quae formatur super calicem particulae oblatae, ipsum nobis corpus ante oculos praescribit, quod pro nobis crucifixum est. Ideo tangit quattuor latera calicis, quia per illud hominum genus quattuor climatum ad unitatem unius corporis accessit et ad pacem catholicae Ecclesiae (Amalar., III, chap. 31). Cum dicitur: *Pax Domini* . . . inter calicem fit triplex signaculum crucis ad laudem et honorem ss. Trinitatis, quae misit Agnum qui per crucem salvavit mundum et fecit pacem hominum et angelorum (Stephan. Augustod., *De sacram. altar.*, chap. 18).

containing the precious blood, allude to the fact that the peace of God was purchased for us by the holy cross and the blood shed thereon, for through the blood of the cross Christ has made peace, "both as to the things that are on earth and the things that are in heaven" (Col. 1:20). Moreover, in this connection the sign of the cross illustrates and completes the meaning of the previous Fraction, inasmuch as it more particularly characterizes the immolation of the divine victim symbolized thereby as a sacrifice accomplished on the cross. Finally with regard to the mingling that follows, the signs of the cross made with the host over the chalice express that the glory of the resurrection was given to the Saviour as a reward for His ready self-humiliation even to the death of the cross.

4. The dropping of the small particle of the host into the most precious blood is designated in the accompanying prayer as the mingling (*commixtio*) and consecration (*consecratio*) of the body and blood of Christ. It is most difficult to determine precisely the sense and signification of the word *consecratio*, since this passage has various readings in the liturgical documents.¹⁸ Liturgical writers have attempted numerous explanations.

The words *haec commixtio et consecratio* have been frequently understood in a concrete sense: may these mingled and consecrated¹⁹ sacrificial gifts of the body and blood of Christ be effectual to us for life everlasting.²⁰ This conception is assuredly favored by the

¹⁸ *Commixtio consecrati corporis et sanguinis; haec sacrosancta commixtio corporis et sanguinis; conjunctio corporis et sanguinis; haec commixtio corporis et sanguinis; fiat commixtio et consecratio corporis et sanguinis; fiat commixtio et consecratio corporis et sanguinis D. N. J. Ch. nobis accipientibus vita aeterna; haec sacra commixtio corporis et sanguinis D. N. J. Ch.*

¹⁹ Both expressions are also correctly used in another sense (= *commixtum et consecratum*); for example, in Lev. 27:29 we find *consecratio* = dedicated.

²⁰ The words consecration of the body and of the blood signify here merely the consecrated body and blood (Lebrun, V, art. 5). *Respondeo, consecrationem hic objective sumi pro rebus consecratis, non formaliter pro actu, quo res consecrantur* (Tournely, *Tract. de Euchar.*, II, x, 2). In support of this conception are adduced the words of the holy deacon Lawrence to Pope Sixtus II, when the latter was led to martyrdom: *Experire, utrum idoneum ministrum elegeris. Cui commisisti dominici sanguinis consecrationem, cui consummandorum consortium sacramentorum, hic sanguinis tui consortium negas?* (S. Ambr., *De offic. ministr.*, I, chap. 41.) *Sanguinis consecratio* here is conceived as = *sanguis consecratus*, the distribution of which was a function of the deacon. But the reception of the precious blood forms, as Micrologus asserts (chap. 19), the *complementum communionis*, and the Holy Communion in general, as the sacrificial banquet, is the termina-

circumstance that not the act of mingling or of consecration, but the mingled and consecrated elements are for us the source of life; ²¹ but this explanation does not altogether suffice. Perhaps *commixtio et consecratio* are best explained according to the Ambrosian rite, which has: *Haec commixtio consecrati corporis et sanguinis* ("This mingling of the consecrated body and blood of Christ").

Therefore the mystical rite of the breaking of the host and its mingling with the blood in the chalice brings vividly before our eyes the death and resurrection of the divine victim, who has become for us in the Eucharistic sacrifice and in the sacrificial banquet the inexhaustible source of a heavenly life (*fiat accipientibus nobis in vitam aeternam*).

The body of Christ, born as the divine victim for the sins of the world, was also the heavenly grain of wheat sown by the Holy Ghost in the virginal earth; it was the heavenly grape on the virgin vine which sprung up under the breath of the Holy Spirit. In order to become our sacrifice for the atonement of sins, the body of Christ was to die and shed its blood upon the altar of the cross: the heavenly grain of wheat was to die in the earth; the heavenly grape was to be trodden down. To become food and drink for the nourishment of our life of grace, the body of Christ was again to resume its vitality: the heavenly wheat was to be ground and baked into the life-giving bread; the heavenly juice of the grape was to

tion of the sacrificial mysteries, so that we can say the deacon shares (*consortium*) in the *consummatio*, that is, in the accomplishment of the Eucharistic sacrifice. This interpretation may of course be accepted, but it does not appear to exhaust the full sense of the expression *consecratio sanguinis dominici*. The deacon is ordained mainly, *ut proxime assistat sacerdoti sacra facienti sitque ejus in tanti mysterii celebratione adiutor* (Menardus), and in the *Pontif. Roman.* he is called *comminister et cooperator corporis et sanguinis Domini*; hence a certain participation not merely in dispensing Holy Communion, but also in the celebration of the sacrifice can and must be ascribed to him. In this sense, then, is the deacon admitted "to the consecrating and offering of the blood of the Lord, to the accomplishment of the holy mysteries." (Cf. Bona, *Rerum liturg.*, I, xxv, 4, cum notis et observationibus R. Sala.)

²¹ *Commixtio et consecratio dicuntur fieri in nostram salutem, non quod ipsa actio commiscendi et consecrandi nos salvet, sed quia res ipsae commixtae et consecratae, dum a nobis devote suscipiuntur, multum prosunt ad salutem; unde hic dicimus: fiat summentibus nobis in vitam aeternam* (Bellarm., *De Missa*, II, chap. 27). Non ex ipsa commiscendi cum sanguine corporis actione salutem et vitam exspectamus, sed ex corpore et sanguine Christi, quae commiscentur a nobis, ut post adumbratam passionem, adumbremus et resurrectionem, quae ad justificationem nostram cum ipsa passione suo modo concurrit (Tournely *loc. cit.*).

be pressed and fermented into the inebriating wine of life. Thus life and death were to be swallowed up in Christ, in order to make Him our life's bread and drink. He was to be dead and yet live, He was to be alive and yet die. How was this to be effected? This was accomplished at the Last Supper. This continually takes place in the Mass, where, by virtue of the words of Christ, His blood is represented separated from His body, as the blood of the immolated victim shed once for all on the cross, but where in virtue of the blessed immortality of the risen Christ, His living body is permeated with His living blood, to be to us the nourishment and refreshment of eternal life.²²

²² Laurent, *Christol. Predigten*, 1, 284.

CHAPTER XLII

THE AGNUS DEI AND THE KISS OF PEACE

THE Holy Eucharist is the sign of unity, the bond of charity, the symbol of concord,¹ that is, the sacrament of peace; for peace is one of the principal effects of the reception of the Eucharist, but at the same time it is also a necessary requisite for participation in the Eucharistic sacrifice and banquet of love. At the table of the Lord the bond of love and concord should be formed ever more closely between the faithful, until they have "but one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32); "for we, being many, are one bread, one body, all that partake of one bread" (I Cor. 10:17). Peace must reign in the heart into which the "God of peace and love" enters and takes up His abode. Therefore after the Pater Noster there are such frequent and fervent prayers for the great gift of peace in preparation for the Communion. In the Embolism we meet with the urgent supplication: "Graciously give peace in our days" (*da propitius pacem in diebus nostris*), and at the Fraction the three signs of the cross are accompanied with the salutation of peace: "May the peace of the Lord be always with you" (*Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum*); at the Agnus Dei we now implore the Lamb of God lying on the altar to give us peace (*dona nobis pacem*), and in the prayer immediately following, this petition is continued, as we implore the Lord to impart peace to His entire Church and preserve it; and finally, the peace prayed for so urgently is sealed by a holy kiss.

THE AGNUS DEI

Pope Sergius I (687-701) is said to have been the first to order the singing of the Agnus Dei by the clergy and the people at the

¹ Trid., Sess. XIII, cap. 8.

breaking of the host.² The original rite differs in some respects from the present one, which was developed from the eleventh to the thirteenth century.³ At this time we meet everywhere the threefold repetition of the *Agnus Dei*,⁴ and instead of concluding, as previously, each with the same petition, *miserere nobis* ("have mercy on us"), the third petition, *dona nobis pacem* ("grant us peace"), began to be substituted. The last petition was occasioned by many calamities and disturbances that had befallen the Church.⁵ The reason for it lies in the relation of the *Agnus Dei* to the imparting of the kiss of peace, or to the reception of Holy Communion.⁶

² Hic statuit, ut tempore confractionis dominici corporis, *Agnus Dei*, qui tollis peccata mundi, a clero et populo decantaretur (*Lib. Pontific.*). Now, since the *Agnus Dei* occurs already in the *Sacrament. Gregor.*, Mabillon (*In Ord. Rom.*, chap. 8, n. 7) infers that it was said already before the time of Sergius, but only by the choir, as was again the case soon after Sergius. (Cf. *Ordo Rom. I*, n. 19; *II*, n. 13.) In *Missa Sabbati sancti*, quae veteri more etiam nunc celebratur, omittitur *Agnus Dei* cum Antiphonis ad *Offertorium* et ad *Communionem*, quae primarii non esse instituti Walafridus Strabo et alii observarunt (Mabillon, *loc. cit.*).

³ The most ancient Roman *Ordines* and the earliest liturgical writers say nothing with regard to the repetition of the *Agnus Dei*. Gradually the rite became fixed and general of singing, or reciting it three times. *Agnus Dei* ter canitur (Beleth). At the same time the practice was also introduced of saying the third time *dona nobis pacem*. Bis repetitur *Miserere nobis* et tertio variatur per *Dona nobis pacem* (Beleth). On Holy Thursday alone was an exception made during the Middle Ages, probably because the kiss of peace was not given. In coena Domini ter debet dici cum *Miserere nobis* (Beleth, chap. 48). According to Durandus the Roman *schola cantorum* still observed in the thirteenth century the ancient custom of singing three times *miserere nobis*, which is done at present only in the Basilica of St. John Lateran (cf. IV, chap. 52). Usually the choir sang it: Chorus psallat *Agnus Dei* (Joann. Abrinc.); chorus clamat ad Jesum et postulat: *Agnus Dei* . . . (Innoc. III); sometimes also the people (cf. Pseudo-Alcuin., chap. 40; Sicard., III, chap. 8). Quidam sacerdotes dicunt *Agnus Dei* manibus super altare depositis . . . alii vero stant manibus junctis, parum super altare inclinati (Durand., IV, chap. 52). Pontifex, junctis ante pectus manibus, dicit *Agnus Dei* submissa voce cum ministris adstantibus (*Ordo Rom. XIV*, chap. 53).

⁴ Generally in former times the priest, as a general custom, did not recite what the choir sang and what was recited by the assistant ministers (deacon, subdeacon, lector), as he directed his attention either to the singing or to the reading, or was in the meantime engaged in other liturgical functions.

⁵ Postmodum autem multis et variis adversitatibus et terroribus Ecclesiae ingruentibus, coepit ad Dominum clamare de tribulatione: *dona nobis pacem*. Et ut clamor ejus facilius audiretur, in ipsa duxit immolationis hora clamandum (Innoc. III, *De sacr. alt. myst.*, VI, chap. 4).

⁶ Postquam ad communicandum et ad percipiendum corpus perventum fuerit, pacis osculum sibi invicem tradunt, cantantes: *Agnus Dei, qui tollis*

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

In the foregoing Fraction and mingling of the sacrificial elements, Christ is mystically placed before our eyes as the victim immolated by shedding His blood and again gloriously risen to life; therefore this humble supplication of the Agnus Dei, in which the priest addresses himself to the Saviour concealed and offered under the Eucharistic species, appropriately concludes with the twofold cry for mercy and the single cry for peace.⁷ The priest at the same time strikes his breast three times to express his sinfulness and compunction.⁸

peccata mundi, miserere nobis, ut pacifici sacramentum perficientes, in filiorum Dei numero (remissis delictis omnibus) mereantur copulari (Raban. Maur., De clericor. institut., I, chap. 33).

⁷ Sequitur vox Ecclesiae supplicans Agno largitori pacis et misericordiae. Ter cum eodem principio cantatur et duplici fine terminatur; itaque orat: *miserere nobis*, dando veniam; *miserere nobis*, conservando justitiam; *dona nobis pacem*, quae superat omnem sensum et intellegentiam. Miserere captivis, miserere peregrinis, da nobis finem laboris; miserere peccatoribus, miserere exsulibus, da requiem laborantibus; tribue peccatorum remissionem, perduc ad patriae certam mansionem, da post laborem pacem et requiem (Stephan. Augustod., chap. 18). *Agnus Dei* ter cantatur, ut verus Agnus, cujus carnem et sanguinem sumimus, nobis propitietur. Primo rogamus, ut nobis misereatur peccata relaxando; secundo, ut nobis misereatur devotos sibi faciendo; tertio, ut nobis pacem donare dignetur, quae hic initium habet in sanctis, et in beata vita perficietur (Robert. Paulul., II, chap. 40).

⁸ Ad *Agnus Dei* sacerdos manus jungit et caput inclinat, ut nimirum non tantum verbis, sed etiam actione statum supplicantis exprimat: manibus autem altare non tangit ad majorem erga Christum in illo quiescentem venerationem. Elata voce illud recitat ad excitandam populi attentionem eumque exstimulandum, ut simili oratione ac pectoribus percussione Dei misericordiam imploret. Post primum *Agnus Dei*, deposita sinistra, ne sola pendula maneat, super corporale usque ad tertium *Agnus Dei*, postremis dexteræ digitis pectus percutit in signum compunctionis, dum bis profert, *miserere nobis*, itemque dum inquit *dona nobis pacem*, quum cordis compunctio sit optima dispositio ad pacem obtinendam. In Missis defunctorum sacerdos non percutit sibi pectus, dum pronuntiat *dona eis requiem*, ut nempe significet, se in

In the Old Law a lamb was one of the usual animals of sacrifice, and all these sacrificial lambs were types of Jesus Christ, the one true Lamb, who took away the sins of the world, who atoned for them by His blood. The designation of Christ as a Lamb expresses His sacrificial character, at the same time denoting His purity and freedom from guilt; but prominently it refers to the gentle patience and voluntary resignation with which He subjected Himself to the most painful sufferings and death.⁹ The name, "Lamb of God" (*Agnus Dei*), not merely signifies that Christ, by the will of God and for His honor, became a sacrifice slain for the world; but moreover, it includes the deeper meaning that He is the well-beloved Son of God, that the fullness of the divinity dwells in Him.¹⁰ In reality Christ is the sacrificial Lamb that takes away the sins of the world, only because He is the beloved Son, in whom God is well pleased. As a lamb Christ was promised in the Old Law (Isa. 53:7); as a lamb He was pointed out in the New Law by John the Baptist and extolled by the apostles (John 1:29; I Pet. 1:19). With marked preference St. John in his mystical Apocalypse calls the Son of God a lamb (about twenty-seven times). In a mystical ecstasy he beholds Jesus as the Lamb that was slain and that purchased souls for God out of all tribes and nations, that washed them clean in His blood and thereby made of them a royal-priestly people; as the Lamb that with His blood strengthens the Church militant, making it victorious in its combats with Satan; as the Lamb worthy to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and

hiscæ Missis pro defunctis specialiter celebratis ipsorum magis quam sui memorem esse (*De Carpo, Biblioth. liturg.*, I, a. 50, n. 202).

⁹ *Agnus propter innocentiam, mansuetudinem, obedientiam et immolationem vocatur Christus* (Dion. Carthus., *In Apoc.*, 5:6).

¹⁰ The addition of "God" is variously explained, for example, the divine Lamb; the Lamb belonging to God, His property; the Lamb destined by God for sacrifice; the Lamb submissive or pleasing or dedicated to God. (Cf. Haneberg-Schegg, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, I, 125.) This formula of prayer (taken in part from Holy Scripture, John 1:29) has a wealth and profundity of meaning. In the first place, it discloses the entire sublimity of the nature and mission of Jesus Christ, since the highly significant designation of *Agnus Dei* characterizes the Saviour as the Son of God, as the divine sacrificial Lamb given by God and again offered to Him, who innocently, meekly and freely underwent the death of the Cross; in the next place, it exalts the sin-effacing, world-redeeming power and efficacy of His sacrificial death; finally, it contains a humble, sorrowful, contrite appeal for mercy and for the obtaining of peace.

benediction; as the Lamb to whom all creation and all the choirs of angels present praise and adoration.

As the lamb in Holy Scripture is a consistent symbol of Christ, and as the citizens of heaven bless the Lamb without ceasing, so also does the Church love to invoke Jesus Christ in a simple, touching manner as the "Lamb of God." Throughout all ages there continues ever to resound in her liturgy of the Mass this fervent supplication to the divine, eternal, sacrificial Lamb, who has taken upon Himself the sins of the world and effaced them. As often as she administers Holy Communion to the faithful, she exhorts them in the words of St. John the Baptist (*Ecce Agnus Dei! ecce qui tollit peccata mundi!*) to consider the wealth of grace contained in this heavenly sacrificial food. Almost all her litanies conclude with this solemn invocation to the Lamb of God: "spare us, . . . hear us, . . . have mercy on us."

The Church has ever been accustomed to represent the divine Saviour both under the figure of the Good Shepherd and under the symbol of the lamb: both images are intimately connected with each other. Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd, who Himself became our sacrificial Lamb on the cross, and who daily becomes the same again on the altar; He is the Good Shepherd, who gave His life for us and who, with His living flesh and heart's blood, nourishes us for an eternal life of blessedness.

From the sacrificial Lamb present on the altar there streams forth salvation and redemption, the favor and blessing and peace of God. This Lamb, that was slain from the beginning of the world and that will be slain until the end of the world, we should adore and invoke during Mass, in order that we may obtain the fullness of mercy and peace, whereby we shall be prepared for admittance to the "royal banquet of the lamb."¹¹

In Requiem Masses the petition of the *Agnus Dei*—perhaps since the eleventh century, certainly since the twelfth—is quite different, inasmuch as we twice implore the divine sacrificial Lamb to "grant

¹¹ Sancta Mechtildis: "Eia mi Domine, modo mihi aliquid ex praesentibus Missae verbis dona, unde anima mea spiritualiter consoletur." Cui Dominus: "Ecce jam mihi canitur ter *Agnus Dei*: in primo me offero Deo Patri cum omni humilitate et patientia mea pro vobis; ad secundum, offero me cum omni amaritudine passionis meae in plenam reconciliationem; ad tertium, cum toto amore divini Cordis, in supplementum omnium quae homini desunt bonorum" (S. Mechtild., *Lib. special. grat.*, III, chap. 19).

rest" to the suffering souls in purgatory, and the third time we implore for them "eternal rest" in heaven.¹²

THE PRAYER FOR PEACE

As the Agnus Dei, so also are the following prayers until the Communion addressed, not to the Father, but to the Saviour present in the Blessed Sacrament. The longing for peace is so ardent that the priest, bowing humbly and looking intently upon the sacred host lying on the paten, continues to beg for this precious gift for the whole Church.¹³

Domine Jesu Christe, qui dixisti Apostolis tuis: Pacem relinquo vobis, pacem meam do vobis: ne respicias peccata mea, sed fidem Ecclesiae tuae: eamque secundum voluntatem tuam pacificare et coadunare digneris: qui vivis et regnas Deus per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who saidst to Thy apostles: Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you, look not upon my sins, but upon the faith of Thy Church; and vouchsafe to grant her peace and unity according to Thy will: who livest and reignest God world without end. Amen.

The human heart longs for peace and finds no rest until it has found true peace. For "so great," says St. Augustine, "is the gift of peace, that even in worldly and mortal things nothing more pleasant can be heard, nothing more desirable can be longed for, and nothing better can be found."¹⁴ These words apply both to that

¹² The Ambrosian rite has the Agnus Dei only in Requiem Masses. The formula is the same as in our missals; but the third time the petition is enlarged by an additional clause: "Dona eis requiem sempiternam et locum indulgentiae cum Sanctis tuis in gloria."

¹³ Micrologus (in the eleventh century) does not know of this prayer; while Durandus (in the thirteenth century) mentions it. According to the Roman rite, the kiss of peace was formerly imparted after the salutation: *Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum*, without the preceding special prayer for peace. The Mozarabic and the ancient Gallican liturgies have an *Oratio ad pacem* which varies according to the Mass. In many Oriental missals we find likewise a similar prayer (*oratio ante pacis osculum, oratio osculi pacis, oratio amplexus, εὐχή τοῦ ἀσπασμοῦ*). Infertur oratio pro osculo pacis, ut caritate omnes reconciliati invicem digne sacramento corporis et sanguinis Christi consocientur (S. Isid., *De ecclesiast. offic.*, I, chap. 15).

¹⁴ *De civit. Dei*, XIX, chap. 11.

interior peace of soul with God and with one's self, and that exterior peace with one's neighbor.¹⁵

Interior peace is the state of a soul enjoying spiritual well-being and prosperity, to which belongs, first of all, the consoling consciousness that by the remission of sin we are reconciled to God and united to Him by the holy bond of a mystical friendship, by which we may confidently expect the plenitude of all the gifts and blessings that flow from this abundant source of grace. This peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding (Phil. 4:7), comprises, therefore, all the beneficial and refreshing effects of divine truth and grace, all the precious fruits of supernatural faith, hope, and love in the sanctified soul, which is the dwelling place of God; this disposition of the heart is a gift that the Holy Ghost imparts. But here below this peace is more or less imperfect,¹⁶ because it is mingled with sorrow and pain; perfect and unperturbed it will be only above in heaven, where all woe shall cease.¹⁷ The more a man rids himself of attachment to the world and recollects his heart in God, the more he mortifies and overcomes his passions, the more he lives a life of faith and grace: the more also will he taste the consolation and sweetness of that interior peace which the Lord pours out, as a stream, on humble and self-sacrificing souls (Isa. 66:12). True piety is joy and peace in the Holy Ghost; it is godliness.

This is the peace which Christ left to His own, and which the world can neither give nor take away (John 14:27). Such peace of heart the world cannot bestow, for it has and offers only treasures that do not satiate: earthly goods, vain honors, and sensual pleasures. All these things are but apparent goods, they are vanity and vexation of spirit (Eccles. 2:17), and consequently they cannot impart true peace, but only a transitory, counterfeit peace. Sensual pleasure

¹⁵ Continet pax Christi 1. amicitiam cum Deo; 2. tranquillitatem animi et serenitatem in tentationibus et persecutionibus; 3. mutuam inter ipsos homines concordiam (Corn. a Lap., *In Joann.*, 14:27).

¹⁶ Hic (*on earth*) talis est pax nostra, ut solatium miseriae sit potius quam beatitudinis gaudium (S. August., *De civ. Dei*, XIX, chap. 27).

¹⁷ Dicendum, quod cum *vera* pax non sit nisi de bono, sicut dupliciter habetur verum bonum, sc. perfecte et imperfecte, ita est duplex pax vera. Una quidem perfecta, quae consistit in perfecta fruitione summi boni, per quam omnes appetitus uniuntur quietati in uno, et hic est ultimus finis creaturae rationalis, secundum illud (Ps. 147:14): "Qui posuit fines tuos pacem." Alia vero est pax imperfecta, quae habetur in hoc mundo; quia etsi principalis animae motus quiescat in Deo, sunt tamen aliqua repugnantia et intus et extra, quae perturbant hanc pacem (S. Thom., *IIa IIae*, q. 29, a. 2 ad 4).

“goeth in pleasantly, . . . but in the end it will bite like a snake and will spread abroad poison like a basilisk” (Prov. 23:31 f.). The world, tossed about and turbulent like a restless ocean, is unwilling to understand what conduces to its peace (Luke 19:42); at present this knowledge is concealed from its eyes and it lives in a false peace.¹⁸ But the world cannot rob us of the peace of God, which is deeply rooted in the heart and is elevated above earthly conditions and external influences. This peace comes from heaven and leads to heaven; it is affected neither by the alluring pleasures nor by the oppressive sufferings of this transitory life. If mind and heart are firmly centered in God, then they will also remain calm and tranquil and serene amid the storms of persecution, temptation, and distress.¹⁹ To such a holy peace St. Theresa exhorts us:

Let nothing trouble thee,
Nothing afright thee;
All things pass away:
God is immutable.
Patience obtains all.
He that possesses God
Can want for nothing;
God alone suffices.

¹⁸ Dicendum, quod pax consistit in quietatione et unione appetitus. Sicut autem appetitus potest esse vel simpliciter boni vel boni apparentis, ita etiam et pax potest esse et vera et apparens. Vera quidem pax non potest esse nisi circa appetitum veri boni, quia omne malum, etsi secundum aliquid appareat bonum, unde ex aliqua parte appetitum quietat, habet tamen multos defectus, ex quibus appetitus remanet inquietus et perturbatus. Unde pax vera non potest esse nisi in bonis et bonorum. Pax autem, quae malorum est, est pax apparens et non vera; unde dicitur (Sap. 14:22): In magno viventes inscientiae bello, tot et tam magna mala pacem appellant (S. Thom., *IIa IIae*, q. 29, a. 2 ad 3).

¹⁹ Orat Archiapostolus, ut pax nobis multiplicetur, i.e. abundanter ac multipliciter divinitus detur et conservetur, videlicet pax pectoris, quae est tranquillitas mentis in Deo, pax temporis, quae est quies ab exterioribus impugnationibus, et pax aeternitatis, quae est tranquillissima quies beatorum in patria imperturbatumque gaudium eorum in Deo. Quantumcumque autem forinsecus impugnemur aut corporaliter molestemur, semper tamen pro posse conemur pacem pectoris conservare, ut tranquilletur in Deo cor nostrum et spiritaliter gaudeat in adversis. De qua pace ait Psalmista: “Pax multa diligentibus legem tuam.” Qui enim divinae legis praecepta amore custodiunt, mentis inquietudinem vincunt in omni eventu, in prosperis scilicet et adversis in Deo se figunt ac bene agendo gloriantur in Domino: estque in eis corpus subditum animae, sensualitas rationi, ratio Deo, ex qua optima ordinatione consurgit et manet in eis pax pectoris, quae ab Augustino vocatur tranquillitas ordinis (Dion. Carthus., *In I Pet.*, 1:2).

Exterior peace consists in concord and union with our neighbor; therefore it presupposes a meek, gentle, accommodating disposition, even towards those who injure or oppress us: "With them that hated peace, I was peaceable" (Ps. 119:7). A peaceful disposition, free from irritation, aversion, and bitterness, should reign among Christians; "of one mind, having compassion one of another, being lovers of the brotherhood" (I Pet. 3:8), they should live together. Unity of sentiment should animate us to a sincere participation in one another's welfare and joy and sorrow, and to true, sincere fraternal love. For this unity among His disciples the Saviour prayed on the night before His death: "The glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them, that they may be one, as We also are one; I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one" (John 17:22 f.). And the Apostle of the Gentiles exhorts us: "If it be possible, as much as is in you, have peace with all men" (Rom. 12:18); "Follow peace with all men" (Heb. 12:14). How beautiful and edifying it is to see so strong a bond of union and harmony bind together all the members of the Church! It gives joy, consolation, strength, amid all the trials and persecutions at the hands of a hostile, godless world. *Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est* ("Where there is charity and love, there God is"), the Church chants at the washing of the feet on Holy Thursday.

This peace, interior and exterior, Christ acquired by His death and bequeathed to us as a precious heritage. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, do I give unto you" (John 14:27). To this promise and legacy of the Saviour we here appeal when we implore peace for the Church militant, that all "with humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity, [be] careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:2 f.). At the same time we petition the Lord to rescue His Church from all the hostility, violence, and persecution to which she is exposed in the world. Why should the Lord not listen to such supplication? Is it not altogether in accord and in compliance with His holy will (*secundum voluntatem tuam*)? Does He not wish that the Church should live in peace and concord? For He underwent the painful death of reconciliation to destroy the wall of separation and to gather into one body the dispersed children of God. In humble fear that his own sinfulness should be an impediment to the granting of this petition, the priest implores that

the Lord would not look with anger upon him, the unworthy minister of the Church, but behold rather the worthiness and holiness of His beloved spouse, the Church (*ne respicias peccata mea, sed fidem Ecclesiae tuae*), in order to impart to her and increase in her the gift of peace and concord.

THE KISS OF PEACE

In the Epistles we frequently meet the admonition to the Christians, that with the kiss of love, or with the holy kiss,²⁰ they should salute one another (I Pet. 5:14; Rom. 16:16; I Cor. 16:20). This salutation took place after the Epistles were read in the assemblies for divine worship. Thus it came to pass that the holy kiss formed a constituent part of the Eucharistic celebration from the days of the apostles, as a symbol and confirmation of Christian love that dwells with peace in all. In the Roman rite the kiss of peace (*Pax*) has always been placed before the Communion;²¹ in the Oriental Church,

²⁰ The *osculum* was always and everywhere regarded as a sign and expression of love, veneration, friendship, peace, reconciliation, gratitude, and joy. In Christianity, and especially by its reception into the liturgy, it received a supernatural character and a higher consecration. The *osculum sanctum*, of which the apostles speak, does not proceed merely from natural affection, but from *caritas*, from Christian brotherly love, which it would nourish and strengthen: this spiritual, divine love which has for its root Christian faith, and which is poured out by the Holy Ghost into our hearts and, therefore, appears, not as the work of nature, but of grace. The liturgical *osculum* (kiss of peace and the kissing of the hand of the celebrant at Solemn Mass by the assistants) is given to persons and to things. As the hand is an emblem of power, of protection, of help and of blessing in general, kissing the hand symbolizes the veneration and esteem bestowed upon some one on account of the authority and blessings conferred upon him. This *actus reverentialis* is certainly appropriate toward the person who celebrates the Eucharistic sacrifice, this act of omnipotent love, and who holds in his consecrated hand the Most Holy, who administers Holy Communion and blesses all present. *Erat osculum non solius communionis, sed et omnium ecclesiasticarum functionum signaculum et sigillum, quod in omnibus Sacramentis adhiberi solebat* (Bona, II, xvi, 7).

²¹ Pope Innocent I writes to Decentius, Bishop of Gubbio, that the kiss of peace is not to be given until after the completion of the holy mysteries, that is, immediately before Communion. "You assert that some persons recommend the kiss of peace to the congregation before the completion of the mysteries (*ante confecta mysteria*, that is, before the Consecration), or the priests mutually give it, when necessarily it should be given only after all is over, that by it may be revealed that the congregation give their consent to all that has been done in the mysteries and celebrated in the church, and to

on the contrary, as well as in the Mozarabic and Gallican liturgies, it is placed already before the Consecration.²² Moreover, the mode and manner of imparting the *Pax* varied at different times and in different churches.²³ Since the end of the thirteenth century, the real kiss (*osculum oris*)²⁴ was gradually omitted, and only the embrace (*amplexus*) formerly connected with it has been retained. In consequence of this, the *Pax* also began to be imparted in another way: by kissing the so-called *Osculatorium*, a small tablet to which was affixed the picture of the Saviour or of a saint. Later on, however, the general imparting of the *Pax* ceased and it was, as is the case at present, limited almost entirely to the Solemn Mass, at which only the clergy assisting in the sanctuary receive the kiss of peace by embracing one another. On special occasions dignitaries of the laity are permitted to receive the kiss of peace through the *Osculatorium*.²⁵

prove by this sign of the concluding kiss of peace the completion of the celebration of reconciliation (*finita esse pacis concludentis signaculo demonstrantur*)."

²² In many churches it was (with reference to Matt. 4:23: *si offers munus tuum ad altare* etc.) given only before the Oblation (S. Justin. M., *Apol. II*, n. 65), that is, immediately before the Preface (*Constit. Apostol.*, II, chap. 61).

²³ At the salutation of peace (*Pax Domini* . . .) the celebrant made the sign of the cross over the chalice three times and then dropped the (reserved) particle into it, after which he gave the *Pax* to the archdeacon. Sed archidiaconus pacem dat episcopo priori, deinde ceteris per ordinem et populis (*Ordo Rom. I*, n. 18). Archidiaconus pacem dat episcopo priori, qui et ultra dabit juxta se stanti ac deinde per ordinem ceteri, atque populus osculantur se invicem in osculo Christi (*Ordo Rom. III*, n. 16). Veniens presbyter accipiat pacem ab episcopo, eandem ceteris oblaturus (*Ordo Rom. V*, n. 12). Pontifex osculato altari (*after the prayer for peace*) convertat se ad capellanum et det ei pacem dicendo *Pax tecum*, quam ille recepturus prius inclinet reverenter ante Pontificem absque genuflexione; deinde recepta pace respondet *Et cum spiritu tuo* et osculetur pectus Pontificis; . . . postea det pacem diacono, et diaconus subdiacono . . . et sic pax diffunditur per circumstantes (*Ordo Rom. XIV*, chap. 53).

²⁴ Innocent III and Durandus affirm that kissing on the mouth was still the custom in the thirteenth century. Sacerdos praebebat osculum oris ministro . . . pacis osculum per universos fideles diffunditur in ecclesia (Innoc. III, VI, chap. 5). Sacerdos facta commixtione et finita oratione accipit in quibusdam ecclesiis pacem ab eucharistia sive ad ipso corpore Domini, vel secundum alios ab ipso sepulchro, i.e. calice vel altari et mox praebebat oris osculum ministro, sc. diacono (Durand., IV, chap. 53).

²⁵ In solemn Requiem Masses the kiss of peace is omitted, since St. Thomas remarks (IIIa, q. 83, a. 4), sacrificium offertur non pro pace praesenti, sed pro requie mortuorum. In the liturgy for the dead the Church is entirely engrossed in her care for the departed and, therefore, omits in all Requiem

The celebrant imparts the kiss of peace (*Pax*) to the deacon, who gives it to the subdeacon. Before giving the *Pax*, the priest, together with the deacon, kisses the altar to salute Christ and His saints in love and reverence, and thus to confirm and renew their mystical relation to the heavenly Church. For this connection is the necessary condition and source of the holy union and Christian fraternal love which should reign among the members of the Church militant, and which finds its expression and seal in the kiss of peace. In so far, therefore, as the kiss of peace is still in use, it has its proper place after the prayer for peace, and it serves as a preparation for the actual or spiritual reception of the Sacrament of charity and concord.²⁶ This holy kiss "reconciles and unites souls to one another, promising an entire oblivion of all offenses. It is a sign that the minds are again reconciled with one another, and that all remembrance of injustice suffered in the past is banished from the heart."²⁷

Masses also the preceding petition for peace for all present (*dona nobis pacem*) and the prayer for peace (*Domine J. Chr. . . .*) for the entire Church. Inasmuch as the *osculum pacis* is at the same time a symbol of joy and enhances the solemnity, it is likewise appropriately omitted in solemn Requiem Masses. The opinion that the kiss of peace is omitted in solemn Requiem Masses because in them Holy Communion is not administered, is now untenable; for according to the general decree of S. R. C., June 27, 1868, it is permitted to administer Holy Communion with previously consecrated particles even in black vestments, during as well as immediately before and after the Requiem Mass. On Holy Thursday the Church omits the *osculum pacis*, to express her sorrow and abhorrence of the deceitful kiss of Judas, as on Good Friday she omits the genuflection at the prayer for the Jews, because they reviled the Saviour on the day of His death by scornful genuflections.

²⁶ Liturgists of the Middle Ages often regard not only the eulogia (*hostiæ non consecratae—panis benedictus sanctæ communionis vicarius*) and the *Oratio super populum*, but also the kiss of peace as a kind of surrogate (substitute) for the general Communion of the congregation, which at that epoch had ceased for a considerable time to take place daily. *Contra hunc primæ institutionis defectum triplex est remedium. Primum est pacis osculum ideoque in gallicana ecclesia datur in omni Missa nisi defunctorum; secundum est panis benedictus, qui eulogia dicitur, qui quia in Quadragesima propter abstinentiã dari non debuit, institutum est tertium remedium, sc. Oratio super populum, cui prædicitur: "Inclinate capita vestra Deo" (Sicard., III, chap. 8). Cf. Belet., chap. 48; Durand., IV, liii, 3.*

²⁷ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech. Mystag.*, V, n. 3.

CHAPTER XLIII

THE LAST PREPARATORY PRAYERS FOR COMMUNION ¹

THE two prayers following the prayer for peace serve as a proximate preparation for Holy Communion. The moment is now at hand for the most intimate, blessed union of the priest with the body and blood, soul and divinity of the Eucharistic victim. Boundless, indescribable treasures of salvation and grace are concealed in the Eucharist; why then do we not daily become richer in the goods of heaven? Why do we remain so destitute of solid virtue, so full of imperfection, weakness, and frailty? No doubt this is due, for the most part, to our short, careless, and lukewarm preparation and thanksgiving for Communion. The Lord would pour out upon us the plenitude of blessing, but we check the current of His liberality because we do not more carefully prepare and guard the soil of our heart, because we are so slothful and distracted even during those sacred moments when the King of heaven and earth enters into our soul and abides there. On the contrary, the greater our solicitude,

¹ Ante-Tridentine missals have many kinds of private prayers for the priest before and after Communion. (Cf. Martene, *De antiq. Eccles. ritib.*, iv, 9.) Micrologus (in the eleventh century) and Radulphus de Rivo, Dean of Tongres (in the fourteenth), mention only the prayer: *Domine J. Chr., qui ex voluntate Patris. . . .* Orationem, quam inclinati dicimus, antequam communicemus, non ex Ordine, sed ex religiosorum traditione habemus, scilicet hanc: *Domine J. Chr., qui ex voluntate Patris. . . .* Sunt et aliae multae orationes, quas quidem ad pacem et communionem privatim frequentant, sed diligentiores antiquiorum observatores nos in hujusmodi privatis orationibus brevitati studere docuerent potiusque publicis precibus in officio Missae occupari voluerunt (Microlog., chap. 18). Cf. Radulph. Tungren., *De canonum observantia*, chap. 33. In *Ordo Rom. XIV* (chap. 71) the other Communion prayer (*Perceptio corporis. . . .*) is also inserted. Clichtoveus (d. 1543) mentions the three Communion prayers of our Missal and adds: *et alias pro arbitrio et pia devotione aut ritu suae ecclesiae dicere potest qui Missam celebrat.*

the more ardent our fervor, before, during, and after Communion, the more bounteous will be the measure of the gifts of grace where-with the Saviour will enrich our poverty.

1. Holy Communion draws near; we must make the final preparation for the reception of so great a gift. Hence the priest continues to pray, while with eyes fixed on the victim lying before him he contemplates the great mystery about to take place within him.

Domine Jesu Christe, Fili Dei vivi, qui ex voluntate Patris, cooperante Spiritu sancto, per mortem tuam mundum vivificasti: libera me per hoc sacrosanctum Corpus et Sanguinem tuum ab omnibus iniquitatibus meis et universis malis, et fac me tuis semper inhaerere mandatis, et a te nunquam separari permittas: qui cum eodem Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto, vivis et regnas Deus, in saecula saeculorum. Amen.²

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who, by the will of the Father and through the cooperation of the Holy Ghost, hast by Thy death given life to the world, deliver me by this, Thy most sacred body and blood, from all my iniquities and from all evils; and make me always adhere to Thy commandments and suffer me never to be separated from Thee. Who with the same God the Father and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest God, world without end. Amen.

This prayer, as solid and comprehensive as it is brief and simple, must principally be referred to the approaching Communion, but not exclusively so; for the words, "by this, Thy most sacred body and blood," together with the petition that follows, have so general

² In the three prayers before Communion, which are equally addressed to the Second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, the peculiar and varying concluding formula (*conclusio*) is worthy of notice. The prayer for peace concludes with the rarely occurring short formula: *qui vivis et regnas Deus per omnia saecula saeculorum*, in which the addition *Deus* forms a departure from the rule. As in the above prayer the Father and the Holy Ghost are mentioned, this is signified in the prolonged concluding formula, but in a peculiar way: *qui cum eodem Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto vivis et regnas . . .* (in Clichtoveus: *qui cum eodem Patre vivis et regnas in unitate ejusdem Spiritus sancti . . .*; the *Ordo Rom. XIV* has still a different conclusion). The third prayer (*Perceptio . . .*) alone has the regular longer concluding formula, as is customary in the Collects. As Communion prayers that were originally private and intended especially for the priest, since they date from a period in which the general Communion of those present had ceased, these prayers have this peculiarity that the petitions in the singular number refer to the celebrant only (*libra me, fac me, prosit mihi . . .*).

a meaning that they may at the same time be referred to the Sacrifice of the Mass, and likewise be understood of the fruits of the sacrifice, as is the case also with the prayer after the Communion. The petition for gaining the fruits of the Eucharistic Communion and sacrifice is highly appropriate here, for we may assume that the priest who celebrates worthily, obtains at least a portion of the sacrificial fruits which fall to him at the moment in which the sacrifice is completed, that is, during the act of Communion.³

St. Peter once addressed to the Lord this solemn profession of faith: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16: 16). He saw only His humanity and confessed His divinity; therefore he was called "blessed" by the Lord and his faith was praised and rewarded. On the altar Christ's divinity and humanity are both concealed from mortal vision, and yet the priest confesses both with a firm faith at the moment he receives the God-man, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God." He confesses not only the divine dignity of Jesus Christ, but also His most sublime, divine and human act: the restoring to a new life of a world dead in sin, by His propitiatory sacrificial death for our redemption (*per mortem tuam mundum vivificasti*). With special predilection the Church extols this wonderful mystery: Jesus Christ, who is life, the source and the author of all life, suffered death and by His death destroyed our death, that is, regained for us the life of grace and glory.

The work of redemption was accomplished by Christ according to the will of His Father, "through the cooperation of the Holy Ghost."⁴ The Father did not spare His only-begotten Son, but placed upon Him the sins of the world and presented to Him the bitter chalice of the passion; through love for the Father, Christ became

³ Probabile est, celebrantem bene dispositum tunc sacrificii fructum, saltem aliquem percipere, quando percipit fructum sacramenti, h. e. in communione, quando sacrificium jam perfecte completur (Sylvius, III, q. 83, art. 1, quaer. 2, concl. 4 ad 8).

⁴ Qui sacrosanctam Christi Domini meditatur incarnationem, ejusque miras operationes et amarissimam passionem propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem ac instructionem, nonne statim gratias agat toti sanctissimae Trinitati mysterium hoc operanti, et singulis specialiter personis? Patri quidem, qui "sic dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret," qui ut servum redimeret, tradidit Filium; Filio etiam, qui tam arduum et difficile, propter amorem creaturae, munus redemptoris suscepit: et Spiritui sancto, qui principaliter, tamquam amoris principium, ad hoc mysterium concurrisset dicitur (Philipp. a ss. Trinitate, *Summa theol. mystic.*, I, Part I, tr. 1, disc. 3, art. 5).

obedient, obedient even unto the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8). The Holy Ghost, who had formed His sacred body in the womb of the immaculate Virgin, at the same time breathed into Him the most ardent love of sacrifice, in order that He might sacrifice Himself for us unto death; for by the Holy Ghost has Jesus Christ offered Himself unspotted unto God the Father (Heb. 9:14).⁵

Christ's redeeming death is mystically renewed and perpetuated on the altar; for as often as we eat the Eucharistic bread and drink of the Eucharistic chalice, we show the death of the Lord until He come (I Cor. 11:26). What graces do we here implore in virtue of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, sacrificed for us and about to be received by us? On the one hand, deliverance from all that oppresses us; on the other, the granting of all that may conduce to our happiness. The first petition refers more to the sacrifice than to the sacrament of the Eucharist; for as a sacrifice of propitiation and petition does the Eucharist chiefly effect for us deliverance from all our sins and from all evils (*ab omnibus iniquitatibus meis et universis malis*). The second petition, however, refers rather to the sacrament than to the sacrifice of the Eucharist; for as a sacrament it is mainly a powerful means of keeping the divine commandments and of being indissolubly united to Christ (*fac me tuis semper inhaerere mandatis et a te nunquam separari permittas*). Among the effects of the Eucharist, final perseverance in good is also reckoned. Frequent, devout Communion is, according to the Fathers and doctors, to be regarded as a mark of predestination. For he who often and worthily communicates will avoid sin, increase in the love of God, become enriched with good works, and advance in the way of divine commandments, and thus he will be preserved from the loss of eternal salvation. The Eucharistic food is the bread of the strong; it re-

⁵ The Father willed, decreed, ordained the passion and death of His Son; the Son executed this divine plan of salvation in that He assumed human nature and voluntarily suffered death: this mighty sacrifice of His life on the part of Christ was an act of obedience which emanated from His love of the Father and of the salvation of mankind; but this love and this obedience of His human will were infused by the Holy Ghost. Hoc ipsum quod Christus obedivit, processit ex dilectione quam habuit ad Patrem et ad nos (S. Thom., *In Epist. ad Rom.*, chap. 5, lect. 5). Christus passus est ex caritate et obedientia, quia et praecepta caritatis ex obedientia implevit et obediens fuit ex dilectione ad Patrem praecipientem (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 47, a. 2 ad 3). Causa quare Christus sanguinem suum fudit, fuit Spiritus sanctus, cujus motu et instinctu, scilicet caritate Dei et proximi, hoc fecit (S. Thom., *In Epist. ad Heb.*, chap. 9, lect. 3).

freshes and strengthens the earthly pilgrim on his painful journey to the eternal home in heaven. "Suffer me never to be separated from Thee." How touching is this petition at the moment in which the soul celebrates the most intimate espousals with her divine bridegroom! "What can the world without Jesus impart to thee? To be without Jesus is a bitter hell; to be with Jesus, a sweet paradise." We cannot do without Jesus; we need Him at every step. There is something delightful in this feeling of utter dependence on Him. No loss can be comparable to the loss of Jesus; no sorrow, to the sorrow of being separated from Him by grievous sin. Worthy Communion strengthens us to avert this misfortune.

2. The second prayer in preparation for Communion, as simple as it is efficacious, refers directly and exclusively to Holy Communion.

Perceptio Corporis tui, Domine Jesu Christe, quod ego indignus sumere praesumo, non mihi proveniat in iudicium et condemnationem, sed pro tua pietate prosit mihi ad tutamentum mentis et corporis, et ad medelam percipiendam: qui vivis et regnas cum Deo Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Let not the partaking of Thy Body, O Lord Jesus Christ, which I, though unworthy, presume to receive, turn to my judgment and condemnation; but by Thy mercy may it be unto me a safeguard and a healing remedy both of soul and body; who with God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest God, world without end. Amen.

Here the priest first humbly confesses his own unworthiness; then with fervor he petitions the Saviour to avert from him the misfortune of an unworthy Communion and apply to him the plentiful blessings of a worthy Communion. The priest reflects on this great miracle about to take place. "The bread of angels becomes the food of man. O miracle! wonderful thing! the poor, the servant, the lowly, receives his Lord" (*Hymn. Eccl.*). Hence the priest humbly acknowledges that he is not worthy to receive the most holy body of our Lord (*quod ego indignus sumere praesumo*).⁶ Well does he know the admonition of the Apostle: "But let a man prove himself,

⁶ Praesumptio interdum accipitur pro abundanti fiducia (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. prol. Sent.*). *Praesumere* = to presume, to venture.

and so let him eat of that bread and drink of the chalice" (I Cor. 11:28); therefore, he guards against approaching the table of the Lord laden with grievous sin: "Whosoever shall eat this bread or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord; . . . for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself" (I Cor. 11:27, 29). Such an unworthiness as would make the Communion sacrilegious is not alone intended by this acknowledgment of the priest. The unworthiness here referred to presupposes, rather, the state of grace (freedom from mortal sin). It expresses the want of perfect worthiness, of that perfect purity, reverence, love, and devotion which are a becoming requisite for the entirely worthy reception of the ineffably sublime and holy sacrament of the altar. The frailty of human nature and the weakness of the human will are so great that our disposition almost invariably remains defective, that is, it is less perfect than it could and should be. If a man has done all in his power, if he has prepared himself as carefully as possible, then indeed we say, and justly, that he is worthy to receive Holy Communion. But this does not prevent his regarding and confessing himself as unworthy of so great a grace; it is precisely this humble avowal of his own unworthiness that is required to make him in some degree worthy of Holy Communion. In sentiments of holy and salutary fear he should at all times prepare himself, and that so much the more carefully, the oftener he has the grace and happiness to approach the Eucharistic banquet.⁷

To receive the Blessed Sacrament with impure mouth and heart,

⁷ *Dico, quod ceteris paribus multo melius sit ex caritate et zelo boni communis accedere, quam ex humilitate et timore cessare, praesertim cum sacramentum istud sit sacramentum totius caritatis, liberalitatis ac gratiae, medicinae animae. Et dato, quod quis tam meritorie quoad se abstineret, sicut accederet: tamen multo fructuosius est accedere per comparisonem ad alios: quia devote accedens multipliciter succurrit non sibi dumtaxat, sed et toti ecclesiae, et vivis ac mortuis, specialiter quoque adstantibus et eis, pro quibus sacrificat ac deposcit. Quamvis autem nullus sit absolute dignus celebrare aut communicare per considerationem ad infinitam dignitatem Christi, et quoad suae deitatis majestatem nec non etiam per respectum ad suae assumptae humanitatis sanctitatem et honorabilitatem, tamen secundum quandam proportionabilitatem dignus est homo, si cum debita diligentia, custodia, humilitate, munditia et fervore se praeparet atque accedat. Verumtamen, qui accedunt quotidie, studeant tanto ferventius quanto frequentius tanta mysteria pertractare et coram Altissimo jugiter mundi ac fructuosi consistere (Dion. Carthus., IV, dist. 12, q. 5).*

that is, to make an unworthy Communion, is one of the most grievous of sacrileges, and consequently it draws down on the guilty person a severe chastisement from God. Full of humble distrust in himself, on account of his weakness and infidelity, the priest implores the Lord to keep far away from him the outrage and curse of a sacrilegious Communion, that he may not be judged and condemned (*non mihi proveniat in iudicium et condemnationem*).⁸ Such a request on the part of the priest is so much the better founded since, being permitted to partake daily of this precious heavenly food, greater is the danger for him that frequent reception of the Blessed Sacrament may, through routine, beget carelessness and tepidity, and thus more easily pave the way to an unworthy Communion.

Confiding in the paternal goodness of the Saviour, the priest continues to pray that the Holy Communion may become rather a source of blessing to him (*sed pro tua pietate prosit mihi*). The word *pietas* designates the divine condescension, goodness, mildness, mercy toward man.⁹ How unutterably great does this condescending goodness and mercy of the Saviour appear in the crib, on the cross, and on the altar! Everywhere He conceals His majesty and shows Himself only as the Good Shepherd and heavenly physician who has come to seek and to heal us, as well as to inflame our hearts with childlike, grateful love. Now the priest prays that the Lord, by this merciful goodness, may be pleased to grant that His holy body may be profitable to those who receive it as "a safeguard and a healing remedy both of soul and body" (*ad tutamentum*

⁸ *Judicium* (κρίσις, κρίμα) is often = *condemnatio* (κατάκρισις), for example, I Cor. 11:29: *iudicium sibi manducat et bibit*, but here it can be taken in the sense of a legal proceeding, a process, and be distinguished from *condemnatio* = final condemnatory judgment. Cf. the petition in the Office of the Dead: *dum veneris iudicare, noli me condemnare*. Or also: *iudicium* = judicial condemnation; *condemnatio* (from *damnum*, damage, loss, injury) = the sentence of the judge, punishment, chastisement. Da quaesumus Domine, ut tanti mysterii munus indultum non condemnatio, sed sit medicina sumentibus (*Sacrament. Gelas.*). Similar petitions are found in other liturgical formulas.

⁹ The expressions *pius* and *pietas* are, after the example of Holy Scripture (cf. II Par. 30:9; Ecclus. 2:13), in the liturgy (especially in the prayers) by a particular preference applied to God. Cf., for instance, *in festo s. Matthiae*: "Deus . . . tribue . . . ut tuae circa nos pietatis semper viscera sentiamus." Quos tuos efficis, Domine, tua pietate circumtege (*Sacrament. Leonian.*). Haec (sc. pietas) perfecta virtus in hominibus, haec plena in Deo laus est. (S. Ambros., *In Ps. 118 Serm.*, XVIII, n. 46).

mentis et corporis et ad medelam percipiendam); these words include the whole wealth of the sacramental grace of the Eucharistic banquet.¹⁰ The life of a true Christian is a continual combat between grace and nature, between spirit and flesh, between virtue and vice. Without intermission we must struggle against the visible and the invisible enemies of our soul; for we are surrounded by the weaknesses and temptations of sensual nature, by the attacks and allurements of this sinful world, by the snares and deceits of the devil. In this warfare of salvation the Holy Eucharist is, on the one hand, a strong and powerful weapon of defense by which we are enabled to victoriously overcome all assaults; and on the other, it is a salutary medicine to heal anew the injuries suffered and the wounds received.¹¹

Holy Communion preserves and protects the life of grace in the children of God, for one of its effects is preservation from mortal sin: The Lord Himself declared that whoever would eat of the Eucharistic bread, should not die (John 6: 50); that is, he should not die the death of sin. The world drinks in sin like water; the enemy lies in ambush and everywhere dangers threaten, so that we must work out our salvation in fear and trembling. How consoling, therefore, is the thought that in the "bread of the strong" we have so powerful a means of protection against the danger of sinning, of being separated from God and forfeiting His grace! Thus the Eucharist protects the life of grace principally in this way, that, as a supernatural food, it imparts perfect health of soul and refreshment of heart. It strengthens the spiritual life; for it increases sanctifying grace, awakens and fortifies the supernatural virtues, above all, charity, but also faith and hope, purity and devotion, humility and

¹⁰ Similar petitions often occur, especially in the Postcommunions, for example: *per coelestia alimenta contra omnia adversa muniamur; perceptione sacramenti ab hostium liberemur insidiis; hoc sacramentum sit fortitudo fragilium, sit contra omnia mundi pericula firmamentum; sacri dona mysterii in nostrae proficiat infirmitatis auxilium; per haec sacramenta, quidquid in nostra mente vitiosum est, ipsorum medicationis dono curetur. Sentiamus, quaesumus Domine, tui perceptione sacramenti, subsidium mentis et corporis: ut in utroque salvati, coelestis remedii plenitudine gloriemur (Postcomm., Dom. XI post Pent.). Sit nobis, Domine, reparatio mentis et corporis coeleste mysterium (Dom. VIII post Pent.).*

¹¹ *Sacramentum hoc est vigorosissima medicina contra reliquias vitiorum, contra concupiscentiam saevientem, contra venialia quotidianasque culpas, et contra mortalia peccata oblita, et singulari modo valet contra universa animae vulnera (Dion. Carthus., De sacram. altar., a. 7).*

meeekness, patience and perseverance. Thus it impels to good works, bestows upon us earnestness and fervor to consecrate and devote ourselves with generosity to the service of God. Holy Communion at the same time brings a stream of heavenly joy and bliss into the well disposed heart of the recipient. Already here below, the Eucharistic banquet refreshes the soul with a foretaste of the happiness of heaven, with sweetness and peace and serenity, with that vigor whereby we overcome all the dangers and obstacles to salvation. The soul that is still weak and tepid may become strong and healthy by means of the heavenly medicine of the holy sacrament of the altar, which cleanses from venial sins, destroys rebellious sensuality, weakens inclinations and aversions, diminishes the perverse love for the world and for one's self. The Holy Eucharist, therefore, possesses in the highest degree power to conduct us to eternal glory. It is the pledge of future glory and an unfailing guarantee of celestial bliss. It is the fountain of living waters that issue forth from life eternal. Hence the Church teaches us to pray: "Grant, O Lord, we beseech Thee, that we may be satiated with the eternal enjoyment of Thy divine glory, prefigured by the temporal reception of Thy precious body and blood."

The Eucharist protects and strengthens the supernatural life of the soul, but to the body also do its effects of grace extend. The soul is the recipient of grace and salvation; through the soul and for the sake of the soul supernatural gifts are also imparted to the body.¹² If, therefore, in Holy Communion sanctifying grace, together with the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, is increased, and if sacramental graces of light and strength are also imparted, that we may remain in Christ and Christ in us, that in time we may persevere in the life of grace and in eternity attain to the life of glory, then the body too is benefited thereby, at least indirectly, because the superabundance of grace in a certain degree flows from the soul into the body. Holy Communion, by inflaming the

¹² Quia sacramenta operantur salutem quam significant, ideo secundum quandam assimilationem dicitur quod in hoc sacramento corpus offertur pro salute corporis et sanguis pro salute animae, quamvis utrumque ad salutem utriusque operetur, cum sub utroque totus sit Christus. Et licet corpus non sit immediatum subjectum gratiae, ex anima tamen redundat effectus gratiae ad corpus, dum in praesenti membra nostra exhibemus arma justitiae Deo (Rom., cap. 6) et in futuro corpus nostrum sortietur incorruptionem et gloriam animae (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 79, a. 1 ad 3).

heart with ardent love and heavenly aspirations, by imparting more abundant grace for energetic resistance against the attacks of the enemy, diminishes at least indirectly the sensuality of the body. But we may go still further and assume that the most holy and pure body of Christ suppresses also directly the temptations and inclinations to concupiscence in the body of the worthy communicant. In so far as the miraculous Eucharistic food thus preserves the body pure and chaste, it disposes and preserves it for the glorious resurrection. Since in Holy Communion we receive Christ's body and blood into our heart, we are not merely spiritually united with Him by faith, charity, and grace, but also corporally united with Christ; and as a consequence, in a more perfect sense we become members of the body of Christ, bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh, as it were one body and one blood with Christ (*concorporei* and *consanguinei*).¹³ Since by Christ's body and blood the personality of the devout communicant is elevated and ennobled, consecrated and sanctified, Christ loves and cherishes it as His own, for it is in a special manner espoused to Him. The eternal glorification of the body is, consequently, already here below prepared and established through the sanctification imparted to mortal flesh by the heavenly Eucharistic food. By Holy Communion, therefore, the soul and body of man are healed of every weakness and frailty, and are preserved and safeguarded for life eternal.¹⁴

¹³ Cf. S. Cyrill. Hierosol., *Catech. mystag.*, IV, chap. 1.

¹⁴ Actualis consecutio gloriae peculiari quadam ratione est et dicitur effectus hujus sacramenti. Id quod non solum ad animae, sed etiam corporis beatitudinem referendum est, ut eo scil. novo titulo unionis cujusdam corporis nostri cum corpore Christi, dignius praeparantur corpora communicantium ad dotes corporales in resurrectione futuras, idque veluti participatione quadam et incoatione quasi in semine, qua justis etiam in hac vita communicatur agilitas quaedam et vigor ad studiosa opera simulque mundities ex assistentia divini auxilii et aliud quid simile dotibus, per quod caro, imminuto in dies fomite, promptius obediat spiritui et quasi spiritualis reddatur, eo fere sensu, quo I Cor., cap. 15, post resurrectionem corpus dicitur fore spirituale quoad effectum, quia perfecte obediet spiritui. Eodemque sensu in *Catech. Rom.*, II, cap. 4, q. 41, dicitur sacrae Eucharistiae summam vim esse ad aeternam gloriam comparandam hujusque sacramenti gratia fideles, dum hanc vitam degunt, summa conscientiae pace et tranquillitate perfrui, ejusque virtute recreatos non secus atque Elias, qui subcinericii panis fortitudine ambulavit usque ad montem Dei Horeb, cum ex hac vita migrandi tempus advenit, ad aeternam gloriam et beatitudinem ascendere (Tanner, disp. V, q. 7, dub. 1, n. 8).

CHAPTER XLIV

THE HOLY BANQUET

THE preceding prayers the priest recites with a humble inclination of the body and with eyes fixed on the sacred host (*oculis ad Sacramentum intentis*); now the preparation for Communion is concluded in the following manner.¹

THE CONCLUSION OF THE PREPARATION FOR COMMUNION

The priest longs to be fed with the fat of wheat and filled with honey out of the rock (Ps. 80: 17); he yearns for the strength of the true manna; therefore he adores the Blessed Sacrament by genuflecting and manifests, while rising again,² the desire and longing of his heart in the words: *Panem coelestem accipiam*³ *et nomen*

¹ Sacerdos ante perceptionem corporis et sanguinis Christi debet dicere orationes a s. Patribus institutas; deinde meditari debet in incarnatione, in passione, in virtute hujus Sacramenti, dicens: *Panem coelestem*. . . . Hoc dicens se ipsum incitat ad devotionem, reducens ad memoriam, quid est quod sumere debet, quia panem qui de coelo descendit, et qualiter sumere debet, quia nomen Domini invocando, ut sic cum majori sumat reverentia et timore. Dicendo vero subsequenter: *Domine, non sum dignus*, ex humilitate suam profitetur indignitatem (Durand., IV, liv, 10). This is the most ancient notice of the liturgical use of the above mentioned formulas of prayer before the Communion of the celebrant. The *Ordo Rom. XIV*, chap. 53, remarks after the recitation of the Prayer for Peace and the imparting of the kiss of peace: *junctis manibus dicat reverenter illas orationes: Domine J. Chr., Fili Dei vivi . . . et alias orationes, quae dicendae sunt ante sumptionem corporis prout habentur in libro (in the missal).*

² Adoratio hic signanter praescribitur tamquam actus proxime disponens ad communionem. Deinde surgens dicit "Panem coelestem accipiam . . ." ad explicandam famem et fervens desiderium hujus panis coelestis, quo mirifice disponitur anima ad percipiendam ex eo perfectam nutritionem et pinguedinem spiritus (Quarti, II, x, 4).

³ *Accipere* = to take in the hand, to seize and = to partake of, to eat. In Evangelio legitur quod Christus accepit panem et calicem; non est autem intellegendum quod acceperit solum in manibus, ut quidam dicunt, sed eo

Domini invocabo ("I will take the bread of heaven, and will call upon the name of the Lord"), that is, I will magnify the Lord and praise Him (cf. Ps. 115:4). Then he takes the host and paten in the left hand and, slightly inclining his body, strikes his breast three times with the right hand, saying each time:

Domine, non sum dignus, ut intres sub tectum meum: sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea.

Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed.

The profound humility and unshaken confidence of the priest preparing for Communion could not be expressed more strikingly and, at the same time, more simply than by the threefold repetition of words spoken by the centurion of Capharnaum, to whom the Lord had said that He would enter his house and cure his sick servant (Matt. 8:5-14).⁴ Humility and confidence at this moment take possession of the soul. If the priest considers the greatness and holiness of the Eucharistic Lord, now about to enter into him, then he is profoundly humbled because of his unworthiness. Filled with fear, he would exclaim with St. Peter: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" (Luke 5:8.) Yet at the sight of the condescending love and goodness of the Saviour, who on the altar con-

modo accepit quo aliis accipiendum tradidit; unde cum discipulis dixerit: Accipite et comedite, et iterum: Accipite et bibite, intellegendum est quod ipse accipiens comederit et biberit (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 81, a. 1 ad 1).

⁴ These words of the centurion whom Jesus praised, the Church has taken in such a manner to heart, that she always places them in the mouth of her children before Holy Communion, the corporeal visit of our Saviour; on the one hand, to confess her unworthiness for a like visitation, and, on the other, to express her confidence that by a single word of His gentle power, He will deliver them from their unworthiness. Dicendo se indignum, praestitit dignum, non in cuius parietis, sed in cuius cor Christus intraret. Neque hoc diceret cum tanta fide et humilitate, nisi illum, quem timebat intrare in domum suam, corde gestaret (S. August., *Serm.*, LXII, n. 1). Non sum dignus qui sub tectum meum intres. Tecto non recipiebat, corde receperat. Quanto humilior, tanto capacior, tanto plenior. Colles enim aquas repellunt, valles implentur (*ibid.*, *Serm.*, LXXVII, n. 12). Per centurionem figurati sunt timorati ac humiles christiani, qui Christi opem desiderant, sed eum intra se communicando vel celebrando recipere vehementer verentur, unde cum spirituali receptione Sacramenti multoties contentantur. Et quamvis hoc interdum sit bonum, melius tamen est ex fervore et spe pietatis divinae Sacramentum recipere. Semper etiam expedit, cum centurione Christi dignitatem propriamque vilitatem perpendere et intimo corde fateri (Dion. Carthus., *In Matt.*, chap. 8).

ceals His glory in order to attract us, he is again encouraged and animated with joyful confidence.

O sweet and amiable word in the ear of a sinner, that Thou, O Lord my God, shouldst invite the poor and needy to the communion of Thy most sacred body! But who am I, O Lord, that I should presume to come to Thee? Behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; and Thou sayest: "Come you all to Me." What means this bounteous condescension and this so friendly invitation? How shall I dare approach, I, who am not conscious of any good in me on which I can presume? . . . I sigh and grieve that I am yet so carnal and worldly, so unmortified in my passions, so full of the motions of concupiscence; so unguarded in my outward senses; so often entangled with many vain imaginations; so much inclined to exterior things, so negligent as to the interior; so easy to laughter and dissipation, so hard to tears and compunction; so prone to relaxation and to the pleasures of the flesh, so sluggish to austerity and fervor; so curious to hear news and to see fine sights, so remiss to embrace things humble and abject; so covetous to possess much, so sparing in giving, so close in retaining; so inconsiderate in speech, so little able to hold my peace; so disorderly in my manners, so impetuous in my actions; so greedy at meat, so deaf to the word of God; so eager for rest, so slow to labor; so wakeful to hear idle tales, so drowsy to watch in the service of God; so hasty to make an end of my prayers, so wandering in my attention; so negligent in saying the Divine Office, so tepid in celebrating, so dry at the time of receiving; so quickly distracted, so seldom quite recollected in Thee; so easily moved to anger, so apt to take offense at others; so prone to judge, so severe in reprehending; so joyful in prosperity, so despondent in adversity; so frequent in good resolutions, and so backward in carrying them out.⁵

Thus does the priest bewail his imperfections and weaknesses. Yet he also has unlimited confidence in Jesus Christ, who, as St. Agatha said, by His word alone can cure all maladies. Whilst acknowledging his unworthiness, he at the same time confidently implores that the Lord, by a mere word of His omnipotence (*tantum dic verbo*) would perfectly heal and restore his diseased soul, make it worthy for God's entrance into the lowly tabernacle of the human heart. Already before Mass the priest prayed: "O Lord, be Thou merciful to me. Heal my soul (*sana animam meam*); for I have sinned against Thee" (Ps. 40:5).

⁵ *Imitation of Christ*, IV, i, 2 f.; vii, 2.

THE RECEIVING OF THE HOST

“The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife [the soul] hath prepared herself. . . . Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Apoc. 19:7, 9). Holy Communion is the greatest joy and happiness of this life; it is heaven upon earth and in the heart. Therefore “rejoice O my soul, and give thanks for so noble a gift and so singular a comfort left to thee in this vale of tears. For as often as thou repeatest this mystery and receivest the body of Christ, so often dost thou celebrate the work of thy redemption and art made partaker of all the merits of Christ. For the charity of Christ is never diminished, and the greatness of His propitiation is never exhausted.”⁶

The priest takes the sacred host in his right hand and blesses himself⁷ with Christ’s sacrificial body, pronouncing at the same time these words: *Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi*⁸ *custodiat animam meam in vitam aeternam. Amen.* (“May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul unto life everlasting. Amen.”) Then with profound humility and reverence, with fervent devotion and ardent love, he receives the heavenly bread of life which God in His sweetness has provided for the poor and hungry (Ps. 67:11).⁹

The prayers said when the priest receives Christ’s body and blood express the plenitude of the fruits of Communion. The preservation of the soul to eternal life includes that of the body also as a necessary consequence: for the sake of the soul and by the soul, the body, too, is preserved to life eternal; the salvation of the soul is likewise the

⁶ *Ibid.*, IV, ii, 6.

⁷ *Corpus et sanguinem Domini sumpturus se cum illis ante faciem cruce signat. Sicut enim prius cruces faciendo active tamquam minister illa sanctificavit, sic se eis nunc cruce signando passive petit sanctificari* (Durand, IV, liv, 11).

⁸ *An sacerdos seipsum signans cum hostia et calice consecratis ante sump-tionem sanctissimi Sacramenti ad verba, Jesu Christi, debeat caput inclinare?* Resp.: Affirmative, juxta Rubricas (S. R. C., September 24, 1842).

⁹ *Deinde sacerdos communionem sumit, quam cum magno affectu et reverentia summa accipere debet, non festinando, sed beneficia Christi ardentissime recolendo, videlicet incarnationem, passionem, dilectionem ejus ad nos, tantam dignationem ac liberalitatem, qua sic dignatur esse nobiscum et sumi a nobis. Debet etiam Christum fiducialiter alloqui eumque intime exorare pro his, quae vehementius cupit adipisci ab ipso, tam pro se quam pro carioribus sibi, deprecando Christum, ut dignetur se omnino convertere et stabilire semperque confortare in ipso* (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 38).

salvation of the body. The divine power of the Eucharist protects the soul against all dangers to salvation, inasmuch as it preserves, strengthens, and perfects in it the life of grace. To them who eat His glorious body, Christ gives the fat, the unction, the fullness of the life of the spirit (*se manducantibus dat spiritus pinguedinem*).¹⁰ United most intimately with the Eucharistic Saviour, the soul experiences how sweet the Lord is (Ps. 33:9); she is quickened, refreshed, and encouraged: she finds strength and vigor, comfort and peace, amid the temptations and sufferings of life. "Thou didst feed Thy people with the food of angels, and gavest them bread from heaven prepared without labor, having in it all that is delicious and the sweetness of every taste, for Thy sustenance shewed Thy sweetness to Thy children" (Wisd. 16:20 f.). Pious thoughts, affections, and resolutions fill the breast of the communicating priest during the short pause that the rubrics prescribe for the silent meditation on the sublime and wonderful grace that has been bestowed upon him.¹¹ The Church expresses this injunction most beautifully in the following words: *quiescit aliquantulum in meditatione Ss. Sacramenti* ("he rests a short time in meditation on the Most Blessed Sacrament").

THE RECEIVING OF THE CHALICE

The celebrant must receive the Sacrament under both species; this is necessary for the completion of the sacrifice, which he accomplishes by the consecration of the two elements.¹² After the

¹⁰ *Offic. ss. Corp. Christi*. "When thou beholdest the pure and immaculate body of the God-man lying before thee on the altar, say to thyself: Through this body I am no longer dust and ashes, no longer a captive, but free; through this body I hope to obtain heaven and all it contains; eternal life, the lot of the angels, the society of Christ. This body pierced through with nails, death could not retain; in the presence of this crucified body the sun was enveloped in darkness; because of it the veil of the temple was rent, the rocks were split, and the whole earth shook; this is the body, covered with blood, pierced with a lance, from which issued for the entire universe two fountains of salvation, blood and water" (St. Chrysostom, *Homilies on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, XXIV).

¹¹ Sumat duas partes hostiae cum omni devotione et reverentia, et dum habet in ore sacrum Domini corpus, teneat manus ante pectus junctas in modum orantis (*Ordo Rom. XIV*, chap. 53).

¹² Ex parte ipsius sacramenti convenit quod utrumque sumatur, scil. et corpus et sanguis, quia in utroque consistit perfectio sacramenti, et ideo quia ad sacerdotem pertinet hoc sacramentum consecrare et perficere, nullo modo debet corpus Christi sumere sine sanguine (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 80, a. 12).

receiving of the body of Christ, therefore, follows the receiving of the precious blood. He prepares to receive the chalice¹³ by uncovering it, genuflecting before it, putting into it the fragments of the sacred host which may have been gathered up by the paten, and at last holding it with the right hand; meanwhile he recites some verses of the Psalms (115:12 f.; 17:4):

Quid retribuam Domino pro
omnibus, quae retribuit mihi?
Calicem salutaris accipiam et
nomen Domini invocabo. Lau-
dans invocabo Dominum, et ab
inimicis meis salvus ero.

What shall I render to the
Lord, for all the things that He
hath rendered to me? I will take
the chalice of salvation and I
will call upon the name of the
Lord. Praising I will call upon
the Lord, and I shall be saved
from my enemies.

While the priest in silent adoration reflects for some moments on the inconceivable love and liberality of God, on the boundless riches and joys of the Eucharistic banquet, "in which Christ is received, the remembrance of His passion celebrated, the soul inundated with grace, and an earnest of future glory given to us,"¹⁴ his heart overflows with gratitude and he cries out in holy enthusiasm: "What shall I render to the Lord, for all the things that He hath rendered to me?"¹⁵ The infinite God with infinite love bestows upon me an infinite gift; for in Communion Jesus offers Himself to me with His glorious divinity and humanity. Although He is almighty, He could not give me more; although He is omniscient, He knows not how to give me more; although He is most wealthy, He has not more to give. While in silence the priest considers how he might

¹³ In the thirteenth century the rite in this place was somewhat different. *Junctis manibus inclinans sanguini dicat: Quid retribuam . . . et dicens: Calicem Domini accipiam* (et non prius) accipit et elevat calicem de altari. Postea vero dicens: *Laudans invocabo Dominum* se signat cum illo, quo versu expleto sanguinum sumit (Durand., IV, liv, 11). Dicat illos versus: *Quid retribuam . . . Calicem . . . et alia dicenda ante sumptionem sanguinis*, prout in libro habentur (*Ordo Rom. XIV*, chap. 53 [in the fourteenth century]).

¹⁴ *Antiph. II Vesp. ss. Corp. Christi.*

¹⁵ Versiculus iste cum ingenti devotione dicendus est, quatenus tota mente optemus Deo esse grati, ejus beneficia memoriter atque frequenter recolendo eaque Domine humiliter confitendo, ipsum pro eis ferventer amando (Dion. Carthus., *In Ps.*, 115:3).

suitably thank the Lord for His boundless goodness,¹⁶ he collects the particles on the corporal, and then, taking the chalice in his right hand, he breaks out into words which betoken his elevated sentiments of gratitude: "I will take the chalice of salvation and I will call upon the name of the Lord. Praising I will call upon the Lord, and I shall be saved from my enemies." While considering what we may give to the Lord, we find nothing else than what He had previously given us. Thus the priest affirms his gratitude by taking the chalice with its infinitely precious contents, to offer it for the glorification of the divine name and to drink it while gratefully magnifying the Lord.

God has no need of our gifts (Ps. 15:2); the most acceptable thanksgiving to His loving heart is for us to esteem His benefits, to receive them with desire and fervor,¹⁷ and to employ them in His honor with fidelity and zeal. Therefore the priest returns thanks for the heavenly bread of life by extending his hand for new gifts, the chalice of salvation.¹⁸ At the same time his heart overflows with grateful sentiments of divine praise and glorification, and he is animated with unshaken confidence toward God that he shall find in the chalice salvation, safety, redemption. The Lord has prepared the

¹⁶ Subsistens aliquantulum in considerandis bonis, quae cum sacratissimo Christi corpore accepit, in eam postea sententiam magno effectu erumpit: *Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus, quae retribuit mihi?* cum in hoc solo Sacramento omnia contineantur, eo quod sit summum bonum, in quo omnia bona latent. Et sacrum Calicem accipiens, quasi respondeat sibi interroganti: *Calicem, inquit, salutaris accipiam et nomen Domini invocabo.* Sanguinem scilicet pretiosissimum, qui in hoc salutis meo Calice continetur, accipiam in gratiarum actionem pro innumeris bonis, quae cum sanctissimo suo Corpore mihi est largitus. Et quoniam cum ipso Sanguine eadem bona recipio, ac propterea est singulare omnino beneficium, pro utroque laudabo semper sanctum ejus nomen et cupio, ut totus mundus ipsum laudet ac benedicat et cum Angelorum hierarchiis novum illud canticum cantet in honorem hujus sacrificii, quod ejus mortem repraesentat: "Dignus est Agnus, qui occisus est (et hic immolatus) accipere virtutem et divinitatem et sapientiam et fortitudinem et gloriam et honorem et benedictionem in saecula saeculorum. Amen" (Apoc. 5:12). (De Ponte, *De christian. hom. perfect.*, IV, tr. II, chap. 14.)

¹⁷ Prima gratitudo et gratiae repensio est beneficium gratanter (*with joy*) recipere (Dion. Carthus., *In Ps.*, 102:2).

¹⁸ Ad sacra mysteria celebranda trahat te gratiarum actio pro omnibus beneficiis temporalibus et spiritualibus tibi et aliis impensis, cum nihil habeamus Deo retribuere pro omnibus quae retribuit nobis, aliud quam calicem salutaris accipere et sacrificare hostiam laudis (Ps. 115:3 f.), i.e. Jesum Christum (S. Bonav., *Tr. de praep. ad Miss.*, I, §4, n. 15).

Eucharistic table against all that afflict us (Ps. 22:5); in this joyful banquet lies the mystery of strength and fortitude, by which the faithful soul victoriously bears all exterior and interior trials and triumphs gloriously over Satan, the world, and the flesh.

“The chalice of benediction, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?” (I Cor. 10:16.) Appropriate and fearful utterance! For the Apostle would thereby say: the blood in the chalice is identical with that which flowed from the side of Jesus, and this we drink. He calls it a chalice of benediction, because while holding it in our hands, we praise and magnify Christ, we admire with astonishment His unutterable gift, and thank Him that He has not only shed this blood to redeem us from sin, but that He has, moreover, imparted the same to us.¹⁹

The priest now makes the sign of the cross over himself with the chalice, pronouncing the words of benediction: *Sanguis Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam meam in vitam aeternam. Amen.* (“The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul unto life everlasting. Amen.”) Then with desire, fervor, and joy he drinks the precious blood, which streams forth unto eternal life. At this moment his heart exults. The sacrificial chalice bestows new devotion and the ardor of love and spiritual joy. “It imparts to the soul a fountain of well-being which overflows to the body, so that heart and flesh rejoice in the living God and cease to desire aught that is carnal.” Exceedingly glorious, excellent, and noble is the inebriating sacrificial chalice. Therein shines the Eucharistic blood, the holy blood which once coursed through and animated the mortal members of the Saviour; that divine blood which, in His painful passion and death, was shed upon the earth from His lacerated body and pierced heart; that adorable blood which in heaven above flows through the corporeal heart of Jesus; that precious blood which, as the price of our redemption, streams forth over the earth in the ever-fresh fountain of the Sacrifice of the Mass and in the sevenfold stream of the sacraments.

THE COMMUNION OF THE FAITHFUL

Immediately after having received the precious blood,²⁰ the priest prepares to administer the Eucharistic bread to the faithful who are

¹⁹ St. Chrysost., *Homilies on I Cor.* (10:16), XXIV.

²⁰ “The Communion of the people within the Mass shall take place immediately after the Communion of the celebrating priest (unless, for a reason-

prepared to receive it. The faithful, or the server alone in the name of the faithful, recite the Confiteor, humbly acknowledging their sinfulness and unworthiness to receive this precious heavenly gift. The priest then turns to the people and says the following prayers.

Misereatur vestri omnipotens Deus, et dimissis peccatis vestris, perducatur vos ad vitam aeternam. R. Amen.

Indulgentiam, ✠ absolutionem, et remissionem peccatorum vestrorum, tribuat vobis omnipotens et misericors Dominus. R. Amen.

May almighty God be merciful to you and, forgiving you your sins, bring you to life everlasting. R. Amen.

May the almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, ✠ absolution, and remission of your sins. R. Amen.

By these prayers and this absolution ²¹ the priest would remove the last traces of sin and imperfection in the souls of the faithful, and thus make them more worthy to receive the spotless body of Christ. We can note how the Church, in the entire liturgy of the Mass, strives to make her children ever more pure and holy, free from every stain, thus to prepare them to receive with perfect dispositions the divine victim sacrificed on the altar. Finally, just before Christ's body is given to the faithful, the priest turns to them and,

able cause, it take place immediately before or after the private Mass), for the prayers which are said after the Communion in the Mass apply not only to the priest but also to the people" (*Rituale Rom.*, Tit. IV., chap. 2, n. 11). The faithful should receive Holy Communion, not before or after Mass, but during Mass, whenever that is possible. "The faithful exercise their priesthood, that is, take that active participation in the holy sacrifice, desired by Christ and the Church, in no other way than in the sacrificial meal after the sacrifice has been offered" (Parsch, *The Liturgy of the Mass*, p. 306). The practice by many pious souls of receiving Holy Communion before Mass in order to make a long thanksgiving during the whole Mass, is an abuse to be discouraged wherever possible, for it degrades the Holy Sacrifice to a mere devotional exercise.

²¹ "The practice of saying the Confiteor, the absolution formula, the Agnus Dei, and the more recent *Domine non sum dignus*, came into the Mass during the fourteenth century, from the rite of Communion for the sick and from the Communion rite outside of Mass. In the Communion of the sick, this practice is well founded, because the Communion rite for the sick represents an abbreviated Mass, which begins with the Confiteor and closes with the blessing by the priest" (*Ibid.*, p. 311). Although the ritual expressly states that the blessing is to be omitted after the distribution of Holy Communion in the Mass, "because the priest will give it at the end of the Mass," the introductory prayers have been retained and are obligatory.

to excite their devotion and love, holds up before them the sacred host, saying while he does so: *Ecce Agnus Dei: ecce qui tollit peccata mundi* ("Behold the Lamb of God; behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world"). Then three times the priest says, still holding aloft the host:

Domine non sum dignus, ut
intres sub tectum meum: sed tan-
tum dic verbo, et sanabitur
anima mea.

Lord, I am not worthy that
Thou shouldst enter under my
roof; but only say the word, and
my soul shall be healed.

Behold the Lamb who was sacrificed on the cross for the sins of the world. By His bitter passion and death Christ atoned for all sins; this same death has just been renewed on the altar, and now this sacred body once sacrificed on the cross is given to the faithful to apply to them all the graces of redemption. O precious gift! O sacred body of Christ now become our sacrificial food! Who is worthy to receive this heavenly bread which contains God Himself? "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof." With such sentiments of humility and unworthiness, the faithful receive the sacred body of Christ, which the priest places on their tongues ²² with the words: *Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam tuam in vitam aeternam. Amen.* ("May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul to life everlasting. Amen.") ²³

²² The rite for administering Communion to clerics and to the laity differed greatly in various times and places. Until the seventeenth century the faithful received the Blessed Sacrament standing, but with a reverential, bowed posture of the body. "The custom of placing the sacred Host on the bare hand of the men and upon a cloth (*dominicale*) spread over the hand of the women, was observed until after the beginning of the Middle Ages; as late as the nineteenth century, a council at Rome was legislating against the practice" (*Ibid.*, p. 308). Until the fourteenth century the laity communicated under both species during Mass; but already from the thirteenth century the practice was gradually discontinued: it is now observed only at the High Mass of the Pope, when the *ministri sacri* (deacon and subdeacon) receive Communion under both species. After the sixth century the precious blood was received through a chalice tube (*calamus, fistula, pugillaris, pipa, canna*). In the Middle Ages frequently a portion of the consecrated blood was poured into a ministerial chalice filled with wine, or in many places the host was dipped into the precious blood. In very early times the communicants would touch their fingers to their still moist lips and then to their eyes, forehead, nostrils, and ears, thus to sanctify all their senses with Christ's precious blood (cf. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystag. Catech.*, V, 22).

²³ This is the usual formula for administering Holy Communion; but if

Now Christ has entered into intimate union with the faithful soul. Only after partaking of the Eucharistic sacrificial banquet are the priest and faithful perfectly one with the divine victim. This sacrificial meal belongs to the sacrifice; it is the fruit and the effect of the holy sacrifice; only by partaking in this sacrificial meal can they fully participate in the sacrifice and derive from it its full effects.

The Church ardently wishes that her children should often by sacramental Communion participate in the Sacrifice of the Mass.

With parental affection [she] admonishes, exhorts, prays, and beseeches through the bowels of the mercy of our God, that [all Christians be] . . . mindful of so great a majesty and such boundless love of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . that they may believe and venerate these sacred mysteries of his body and blood with such constancy and firmness of faith, with such devotion of mind, with such piety and worship, that they may be able to frequently receive this super-substantial bread, and that it may truly be to them the life of the soul and the perpetual health of their mind; that being invigorated by its strength, they may be able, after the journey of this miserable pilgrimage, to arrive in their heavenly country, there to eat, without any veil, the same bread of angels which they now eat under sacred veils.²⁴

They who do not receive sacramentally, should unite themselves to the Eucharistic Saviour at least by a spiritual communion,—by

Communion is given *per modum viatici*, the priest says: *Accipe frater (vel soror) viaticum corporis D. N. J. Ch., qui te custodiat ab hoste maligno et perducatur in vitam aeternam. Amen.* At the Communion of the newly ordained, the bishop says: *Corpus D. N. J. Ch. custodiat te in vitam aeternam;* and each priest answers: *Amen.* In former times various formulas were in use, for example, *Corpus Christi. R. Amen. Sanguis Christi. R. Amen. Corpus D. N. J. Ch. conservet animam tuam. Corpus et sanguis D. N. J. Ch. conservet et custodiat te in vitam aeternam. Corpus D. N. J. Ch. custodiat corpus tuum et animam tuam in vitam aeternam. Perceptio corporis Domini nostri sit tibi vita et salus et redemptio omnium tuorum peccatorum. Corpus et sanguis D. N. J. Ch. in vitam aeternam te perducatur et in die judicii ad sanctam requiem te resuscitet. Corpus D. N. J. Ch. sit tibi salus animae et corporis. Corpus D. N. J. Ch. sanguine suo intinctum conservet animam tuam in vitam aeternam. Amen.* In the ancient Communion rite the *Amen* of this administering formula was a responsory, whereby the communicant expressed his faith in the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. *In toto orbe terrarum pretium nostrum accipitur: Amen respondetur* (S. Aug., *Ennarr. in Ps.*, 125, n. 9). *Habet magnam vocem Christi sanguis in terra, quum eo accepto ab omnibus gentibus respondetur Amen* (*Idem., Contra Faust.*, XII, chap. 10). Cf. Pseudo-Ambr., *De sacrament.*, IV, v, 25.

²⁴ Trid., Sess. XIII, cap. 8.

lively faith, compunction, sincere humility, ardent love, fervent desire—for spiritual communion also obtains for the soul many precious graces.

THE PURIFICATION OF THE CHALICE AND THE ABLUTION OF THE FINGERS ²⁵

In the smallest particle of the sacramental species the whole Christ is present. Numerous liturgical practices and ordinances are founded on the belief in this truth, all of them aimed to prevent the slightest profanation of the smallest portion of the sacred host or of a single drop of the Eucharistic blood. After the Consecration, therefore, the thumb and forefinger must continually be held together,²⁶ and as often as they touch the sacred host, be purified over the chalice. For this reason the fragments on the corporal and paten must be so carefully collected after Communion, and the chalice and hands well cleaned. In this matter great care and attention have always been

²⁵ *Purificatio* in liturgical books designates not only the cleansing of the chalice, and the mouth also, but likewise the wine with which the priest rinses the chalice after receiving the precious blood, and even the wine which may be given to those who communicate after they have received the sacred host. By *ablutio* is understood the wine and water whereby the fingers that held the host are cleansed from any particle of the sacred host that may be attached to them, and the chalice rinsed a second time. *Celebrans, sumpta purificatione, lavat digitos et sumit ablutionem (Cerem. Episc., II, xxix, 8)*. By the purification and ablution it is intended to prevent as securely as possible every profanation of the Blessed Sacrament. This object is, however, obtained, since by a strict adherence to the prescribed rite hardly any particle of the consecrated species can yet remain. Practically unimportant is the question, whether the rest of the consecrated wine still remaining in the chalice is drunk with the fluids poured in, or whether it is so altered by being mixed with the wine and water, that the real presence of Christ ceases therein. The Church nowhere prescribes more water than wine to be taken at the ablution, but it is recommended by many authors, in order more securely to effect the destruction of holy species that might still be in the chalice. We should take notice, moreover, that the Church very unwillingly and quite seldom grants that the ablution be taken with water only. *Verisimile est et pietate conforme asserere, colligi ab angelis fragmenta, quae remanent, praesertim minutiora, quae conspici non possunt, nec consequenter humana diligentia custodiri et colligi (Quarti, Comment., II, x, 7)*.

²⁶ *Sacerdos digitos jungit post consecrationem, scil. pollicem cum indice, quibus corpus Christi consecratum tetigerat, ut si qua particula digitis adhaeserit, non dispergatur, quod pertinet ad reverentiam sacramenti (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 5 ad 5)*.

exerted; ²⁷ thus already St. Cyril of Jerusalem exhorts: "Have the utmost care that no part of the Eucharistic species be lost. For, tell me, if anyone gave you grains of gold, would you not guard them with the greatest circumspection and be most solicitous that none of them be lost and that you thereby suffered no loss? How much more cautious must you be not to lose a crumb of that which is incomparably more valuable than gold and precious stones." ²⁸

The present purification and ablution rite, which is minutely ordered and prescribed, was established and developed only during the course of the Middle Ages.²⁹ While the priest, filled with profound reverence toward the Blessed Sacrament, performs the exterior act of cleansing the chalice and his fingers, his mind and heart are recollected in meditation on the heavenly sacrificial banquet, which has so wonderfully refreshed and strengthened him; for he makes use of two similar prayers to implore the blessed effects of

²⁷ Archidiacono nimis caute procurandum est, ne quid in calice aut patena sanguinis vel corporis Christi remaneat (*Ordo Rom. IV*, n. 12).

²⁸ *Mystag catech.*, V, 21.

²⁹ With respect to the purification of the chalice and paten, as well as the ablution (washing) of the mouth and fingers after Holy Communion, we have no information dating from the first ten centuries. The *Ordo Rom. IV* (written probably at the beginning of the eleventh century) mentions (n. 13) that the bishop at this point washes his hands; the *Ordo X* of a later period remarks (n. 15) in reference to Good Friday and Requiem Masses: perfusionem facit Pontifex in calice et ipse sumit et postea lavat cum aqua in bacilibus (*vessels or basins*). In the Middle Ages the chalice was generally purified with wine, and the purification drunk; the fingers, on the contrary, were usually rinsed with water and the ablution thrown into the sacarium. Post contrectata et sumpta Sacramenta sacerdos . . . manus lavat et in locum sacrum huic cultui deputatum ipsa aqua vergitur (*Ivonis Carnot., Serm., V*). Post sumptum Eucharistiae sacrificium sacerdos abluit et perfundit manus, ne quid incaute remaneat ex contactu divinissimi Sacramenti. . . . Ablutionis autem aqua debet in locum mundum diffundi honeste, ut altitudo Sacramenti reverentius honoretur (*Innocent. III, IV, chap. 8*). For the purification of the fingers, as a rule, another chalice was used. Sanguine sumpto, recipiat Pontifex modicum de vino in calice, infundente illud subdiacono, et illud sumat ad abluendum os suum. Postea dicendo illas orationes, *Quod ore . . . et Corpus tuum . . .*, tenens super calicem digitos utriusque manus, quibus tetigit hostiam, abluat ipsos modicum, subdiacono iterum infundente vinum, et antequam illud sumat, abluat iterum eos digitos cum aqua, quam infundat capellanus cum pelvibus, et ipsa aqua projiciatur in loco mundo. Pontifex, ablutis digitis praedicto modo cum aqua, abstergat os cum panno tersorio. . . . Postea sumpto vino quod erat in calice, tergat os suum eodem panno (*Ordo Rom. XIV, chap. 53*). This rite of the first half of the fourteenth century is almost similar to that prescribed later on by Pius V for general practice, which is still in use.

Holy Communion. This is all the more proper since, according to an established opinion, during the whole period of the corporal presence of Christ in the heart of the communicant, the sacramental grace is being ever increased, provided that the communicant produces constantly new and, at the same time, more perfect acts of devotion.³⁰ Hence the two following prayers are intended to foster and augment the actual disposition of the celebrant, that he may become susceptible to further outpourings of grace.

1. Immediately after consuming the precious blood, that is, without making a short meditation,³¹ as is allowed or prescribed after the reception of the sacred body, the priest has wine poured³² into the chalice, while he recites the following prayer, which is found already in the most ancient sacramentaries³³ and is still to be seen in our missal as a Postcommunion:

Quod ore sumpsimus, Domine,
pura mente capiamus: et de
munere temporali fiat nobis re-
medium sempiternum.

What we have taken with our
mouth, O Lord, may we receive
with a pure mind; and from a
temporal gift may it become for
us an everlasting remedy.

By these words we beseech God the Father to grant us a twofold grace: in the first place, that our sacramental Communion may be also a worthy Communion, rich in grace through the greatest pos-

³⁰ The present *capiamus*, in opposition to the transitory or past reception (*sumpsimus*) of the host, seems to indicate this permanent efficacy of the Eucharistic sacrament as well as the requisite cooperation of the communicant.

³¹ S. R. C., September 24, 1842.

³² Vinum ratione suae humiditatis est ablutivum et ideo sumitur post susceptionem hujus Sacramenti ad abluendum os, ne aliquae reliquiae remaneant, quod pertinet ad reverentiam Sacramenti . . . et eadem ratione perfundit vino digitos, quibus corpus Christi tetigerat (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 5 ad 10). Calicis purificatio fit solo vino ob reverentiam pretiosi sanguinis, cujus gutta quaequam, uti plerumque accidit, ad imum calicis fluit. Ablutio sumitur ex eadem parte, per quam pretiosus sanguis absorptus est, ne scil. sacrae ejusdem reliquiae circa labia calicis remaneant. Hic advertendum est, in ablutione digitorum minime fas esse adhiberi, sine Apostolica dispensatione, sola aqua. (Cf. Indultum S. R. C., January 15, 1847; De Carpo, *Biblioth. liturg.*, I, a. 52, n. 207.)

³³ In the *Sacrament. Leonian.* we read: Quod ore sumpsimus, Domine, quaesumus, mente capiamus et de munere temporali fiat nobis remedium sempiternum. Micrologus remarks (chap. 19) that in this place the prayer *juxta Romanum Ordinem sub silentio* is to be recited; the other: *Corpus tuum . . .* he does not mention, while the *Ordo Rom. XIV* (in the fourteenth century) alludes to it.

sible purity of soul; and, in consequence of this disposition, may the participation in the temporal celebration of the Eucharist produce in us lasting and imperishable effects, that is, may it conduct us to eternal life.³⁴ In Communion we truly receive into our mouth the human nature of Christ, we truly eat His flesh and truly drink His blood (*Quod ore sumpsimus*); but in order that by this sacramental union with Christ and by His corporal indwelling we may draw grace upon grace, we must receive this sublime and heavenly guest, embrace and hold Him fast with a heart that is pure and chaste, disengaged from attachment to whatever is temporal and perishable, and penetrated with heavenly love and desire for that which is eternal and imperishable (*pura mente capiamus*).³⁵

By the temporal gift the Eucharist is to be understood as a sacrifice and as a sacrament; the gift of the Eucharist is, therefore, called temporal mainly³⁶ because sacrifice and sacrament are instituted and necessary only for time, for the duration of our temporal life, for the days of our earthly pilgrimage, but not for eternity and for the life to come, where the full possession and enjoyment of all heavenly gifts without sacramental veils shall be bestowed upon us.³⁷ The Eucharist, moreover, may be designated as a temporal

³⁴ Post perceptionem sacramenti petit sacerdos, ut hoc mysterium, quod sub venerandis signis corporaliter est sumptum, spiritualiter etiam sumatur et cum debita puritate mentis ipsius sacramenti fructus et virtus percipiatur, quoniam nihil prodest, quinimo plurimum obest sumptio sacramentalis, nisi eidem conjuncta sit perceptio spiritualis et gratiae illius participatio. Secundo postulat idem, ut de hoc munere temporali, participatione scil. sacrorum mysteriorum sub visibilibus signis ad tempus et pro vitae hujus curriculo data fiat illi et omnibus sumentibus ore et spiritu remedium sempiternum contra vitia et tentationes, ut hoc cibo et potu confortati non excidamus umquam virtute, sed perducamur ad vitam aeternam (*Clichtov., Elucidat., III, n. 82*).

³⁵ Cf. similar petitions in the Postcommunions, for example: quod ore percepimus, pura mente sectemur; quae sedula servitute donante te gerimus, dignis sensibus tuo munere capiamus; quod ore prosequimur, contingamus et mente, quae temporaliter agimus, spiritualiter consequamur; quod ore contingimus, pura mente capiamus.

³⁶ At the same time we can also think of the temporal, earthly, material elements, bread and wine, which are offered to God and consecrated in the Eucharist. Plebis tuae munera, quaesumus, Domine, propitius intende, et quae sanctis mysteriis exsequendis temporaliter nos offerre docuisti, ad aeternam nobis proficere fac salutem (*Sacram. Leon.*).

³⁷ Quia hoc sacramento non est in aeternum mors Christi annuntianda, sed tantum donec veniat, quia postea nullis mysteriis egebimus, constat illud transitorium esse signum et temporale, quo tantum egemus nunc, dum videmus per speculum et in aenigmate (*Alger., I, n. 57*).

gift in so far as the sacrifice is accomplished in a short time and the Sacrament is present within us for but a few minutes, so long as the species remain within us. Although a temporal gift, the Eucharist is yet to become for us an eternal remedy³⁸ and a means of obtaining eternal salvation.³⁹ For it has the power to redeem our life from perdition, to heal all spiritual and corporal frailty, to enrich us with every gift, whereby it becomes for us the guarantee and pledge of a blessed eternity.

2. The prayer for the washing of the fingers is as follows:

Corpus tuum, Domine, quod sumpsit, et Sanguis, quem potavi, adhaereat visceribus meis, et praesta: ut in me non remaneat scelerum macula, quem pura et sancta refecerunt sacramenta: qui vivis et regnas in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

May Thy body, O Lord, which I have received, and Thy blood which I have drunk, cleave to my inmost parts; and grant that no stain of sin may remain in me, whom the pure and holy mysteries have refreshed: who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

Here we beseech⁴⁰ the Lord that His transient sacramental presence may produce in the depths of our soul lasting and profound interior effects, that it may obtain for us in a special manner perfect purity from all that is sinful. Christ's body and blood remain in us so long as the sacramental species are not destroyed, they remain also afterward within us (*adhaereat visceribus meis*)⁴¹ by the

³⁸ *Remedium* = a remedy for something, a healing remedy, a helpful means; *remedium sempiternum* = *salutis aeternae remedium*.

³⁹ This same thought is expressed in various Postcommunions: Quod temporali celebramus actione, perpetua salvatione capiamus; quod temporaliter gerimus, aeternis gaudiis consequamur; quae nunc specie gerimus, rerum veritate capiamus; quod temporaliter gerimus, ad vitam capiamus aeternam; quod est nobis in praesenti vita mysterium, fiat aeternitatis auxilium.

⁴⁰ As this prayer is in the singular and presupposes that holy Communion has been received under both kinds, it appears to be intended and destined for the celebrant, while the preceding prayer (as well as the Postcommunion) is applicable to all who have received Communion.

⁴¹ Petit sacerdos, quod ipsius sumpti sacramenti virtus adhaereat immaneatque visceribus ejus, non quidem corporalibus, sed spiritualibus ipsius animae, quae sunt memoria, intellectus et voluntas. . . . Postulat autem Missam celebrans ipsum quod sumpsit sacramentum adhaerere suis visceribus, non quidem secundum substantiam et rei adhaerentiam, quemadmodum cibus sensibilis adhaeret stomacho, sed secundum virtutem et efficaciam, per quam memoria intellectualis jugem habeat divinorum beneficiorum coelestiumque bonorum

sacramental power and grace which purify, ennoble, and sanctify the faculties of the soul and the inclinations of the heart, so that it is no longer we that live, but Christ that liveth in us (Gal. 2:20). As the branch is connected with the vine, so in like manner Communion causes us to remain in Christ and continually to draw from Him grace and life, in order that we may be ever faithful in the love and service of God. In that our Eucharistic Saviour remains and acts in us like a glowing coal,⁴² we become perfectly cleansed from every stain of sin; all that is impure is consumed within us. The garment of sanctifying grace is so brilliantly white and so resplendent that no imperfection, no breath of evil may tarnish its purity (*in me non remaneat scelerum macula*).⁴³ These spiritual miracles of purification and sanctification are produced by the pure and holy mysteries (*pura et sancta sacramenta*)⁴⁴ of the Eucharist, which ever continue to refresh, rejuvenate, quicken, renew (*refecerunt*),⁴⁵ the

recordationem, intellectus rectam eorum quae credenda sunt et agenda cognitionem, voluntas vero promptam et ardentem bonorum et Deo placentium operum prosecutionem. Neque id quidem in transitu et perfunctorie, sed permanentem et indesinenter (Clichtov., *Elucid. eccles.*, III, n. 82). *Viscera*, in the first place = entrails (in Holy Scripture often regarded as the seat of the affections), then = the interior, the inmost part of the heart.

⁴² In the primitive Church the incarnate Son of God (*Verbum incarnatum*) was called, especially in the Blessed Sacrament, a glowing coal (*carbo ignitus, pruna ignita*); for the Eucharist is a food of fire which purifies and inflames (cf. Isa. 6:6).

⁴³ Deus, qui sumitur, ignis consumens est omnem peccati scoriam exurensque spirituali et sacro incendio omnes noxios humores vitiorum in anima. Ipse itidem lux est clarissima illuminans tenebras nostras et omnem iniquitatis caliginem infusione sui luminis effugans (Clichtov., *Elucidat. eccles.*, III, n. 83).

⁴⁴ The designation of the Eucharistic sacrifice and sacrament by the plural *sacrificia* and *sacramenta* is usually explained and justified with reference to the two divisions of the sacramental species; but in this we should notice, that the word *sacramenta* in the liturgy is often used in a wider sense = *mysteria*, that is, mysteries. The stricter (specific) signification in which it is now used to designate the seven means of grace in the Church, became customary only since the Middle Ages. For the Eucharistic mysteries we frequently in the Postcommunions come across similar expressions, for example, *mysteria, divina sacramenta, sancta, sacri dona mysterii, sancta vel sacra munera, dona coelestia, salutis nostrae subsidia, mystica vota et gaudia, coelestia sacramenta et gaudia, salutaria dona, votiva sacramenta, coelestia alimenta, magnifica sacramenta, munera sacrata*.

⁴⁵ Refecerunt haec sacramenta animae viscera quantum ad effectum ab eis causatum et derelictum ex digna eorum sumptione. Sic enim refecerunt rationem et intellectum in sinceritate cognitionis illuminando, voluntatem per amorem et dilectionem inflammando, memoriam ad passionis rememorationem

higher life of the soul so that it may not wither away and be lost.⁴⁶

O dearest Lord Jesus, what great sweetness hath a faithful soul perfectly devoted to Thee, that feasteth with Thee at Thy banquet, where there is no other meat set before her to be eaten but Thyself, her only beloved and most to be desired above all the desires of her heart. And to me indeed it would be delightful to pour out tears in Thy presence with the whole affection of my heart, and like the devout Magdalen, to wash Thy feet with my tears. But where is this ardor of devotion, where is this stream of holy tears? Surely in the sight of Thee and of Thy holy angels, my whole heart ought to be inflamed and to weep for joy. For I have Thee in the Sacrament truly present, though hidden under another form. For to behold Thee in Thine own divine brightness, is what mine eyes would not be able to endure, neither could the entire world subsist in the splendor of the glory of Thy majesty. In this, therefore, Thou condescendest to my weakness, that Thou hidest Thyself under the sacramental species. I truly have and adore Him whom the angels adore in heaven; but I as yet in faith, they by sight and without a veil. I must be content with the light of true faith and walk therein till the day of eternal brightness break forth and the shades of concealing forms pass away. But when that which is perfect shall come, the use of sacraments shall cease; for the blessed in heavenly glory stand not in need of the medicine of the sacraments. For they rejoice without end in the presence of God, beholding His glory face to face; and being plunged from brightness into the brightness of the incomprehensible Deity, they taste the Word made flesh, as He was from the beginning, and as He remaineth forever.

O how sublime and how venerable is the office of priests, to whom it is given to consecrate by sacred words the Lord of majesty, with their lips to bless, with their hands to hold, with their mouths to receive Him, and also to administer to others. O how clean ought those hands to be, how pure that mouth, how holy that body, how unspotted the heart of the priest, into whom the Author of purity so often enters! From the mouth of the priest, who so often receives Jesus Christ in His Sacrament, nothing but what is holy, no word but what is good and profitable, ought to proceed. His eyes, which are used to behold the body of Christ, ought to be simple and chaste; his hands, which are used to handle the

excitando, suavitatem quandam et laetitiam spiritualem in toto homine efficiendo (Gabr. Biel, *Expos. Canon. Miss.*, lect. 83).

⁴⁶ Sacrosancti corporis et sanguinis D. N. J. Chr. refectione vegetati, supplices te rogamus Deus, ut hoc remedio singulari et ab omnium peccatorum nos contagione purifices et a periculorum munias incursione cunctorum (*Sacram. Leon.*).

Creator of heaven and earth, should be pure and lifted up to heaven in prayer. . . . O almighty God! come with Thy grace to our assistance, that we priests may serve Thee worthily and devoutly, in all purity and good conscience. And, if we cannot live yet perfectly free from every fault, as our calling demands, grant us at least the grace duly to bewail the sins which we have hitherto committed; and in spirit of humility, and the resolution of a good will, to serve Thee more fervently for the time to come.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ *Imitation of Christ*, IV, xi, 1 f., 6 ff.

CHAPTER XLV

THE THANKSGIVING

THE moments which immediately follow the reception of Holy Communion are exceedingly blessed and precious and rich in grace and devotion; for in astounding condescension the sweet and gracious Jesus now dwells, with all the treasures of heaven, in the inmost sanctuary of the poor human heart. It is then especially requisite¹ for us to forget the world and its pleasures, to avoid all levity, in recollection and silence to direct all the powers and faculties of the soul to the heavenly guest, to embrace Him with devotion and ardent love, to glorify, adore, and petition Him—in short, to offer a joyful and heartfelt thanksgiving for the unutterably marvelous grace of Holy Communion. Heavenly, imperishable food has been presented to us, Christ's most sacred body and His most precious blood. As the soul is here filled with the marrow and fatness of celestial gifts and consolations, she should overflow with gratitude, and with joyful lips praise and magnify the Lord (Ps. 62:6). This thanksgiving, by which the Eucharistic stream of grace is more copiously poured into the heart, the Church leaves to the fervor and devotion of the individual. Hence for public worship she has prescribed only a very short and simple celebration after Communion, which is called the thanksgiving.²

¹ Decet post communionem in omnibus mente et corpore custoditum ac modestum consistere nec minus esse sollicitum ad Christum grate tenendum quam ante exstiterat ad eum digne suscipiendum. Unde multi arguendi videntur, qui post communionem et Missae consummationem tam faciliter se foras effundunt atque in exterioribus occupantur, nisi necessitas postulet (Dion. Carthus., *Expos. Miss.*, a. 38). Expleto officio, ferventi ac devotissimo corde gratias age, gratus permane atque in omni conversatione tua esto sollicitus, ne offendas: esto timoratus et custoditus, ne susceptam gratiam perdas, ne fructum amittas adeptum, et sic tota vita tua sit praeparatio ad celebrandum continua (Dion. Carthus., *De sacr. serm.*, III).

² Tota missae celebratio in gratiarum actione terminatur, populo exultante

Here we find the Communio and the Postcommunio, to which on the ferial days of Lent the *Oratio super populum* is added.

THE COMMUNIO

The antiphon which is read out of the missal by the priest after Communion, on the Epistle side ³ of the altar, is called the Communio. Like the Offertory before the oblation, this antiphon is an abbreviated chant, that is, a remnant of that longer psalm chant which in former times (from the days of the apostles until about the twelfth century) accompanied the administration of the Eucharist to the clergy and laity. The psalm verses which were sung by the choir alternately with a frequently repeated antiphon, received the name Communio (Communion hymn) because they accompanied the act of Communion and were intended to intensify the devotion of the communicant.⁴ Since the twelfth century ⁵ these psalm verses

pro sumptione mysterii (quod significat cantus post communionem), et sacerdote per orationem gratias offerente, sicut et Christus celebrata coena cum discipulis, hymnum dixit ut dicitur Matth. c. 26 (S. Thom., IIIa, q. 83, a. 4).

³ On the Epistle side, as the less worthy side of the altar, the less important portions of the Mass are read, that is, those parts which precede the first Gospel and follow the Communion; on the Gospel side and in the middle of the altar *tamquam in partibus dignioribus altaris*, on the contrary, are performed those prayers and ceremonies which by their intimate connection with the accomplishment of the sacrifice have a more profound signification. (Cf. Quarti, II, xi, 1.)

⁴ Mox ut Pontifex coeperit in senatorio (*that is, at the place destined for the more distinguished men*) communicare, statim schola incipit Antiphonam ad Communionem per vices cum subdiaconibus et psallunt usquedum, communicato omni populo, annuat Pontifex ut dicant "Gloria Patri" et repetito Versu (antiphon) quiescunt (*Ordo Rom. I, n. 20*). Facta confractione debent omnes communicare, interim cum et Antiphona cantatur, quae de Communionem nomen mutavit, cui et Psalmus subjungendus est cum "Gloria Patri," si necesse fuerit (*Microl., chap. 18*). In the Ambrosian rite this antiphon to be recited after Communion is called *Transitorium: scil. quia tunc sacerdos ex cornu Evangelii transit ad partem Epistolae*.

⁵ Cantus quem communionem dicimus, quem post cibum salutarem canimus, gratiarum actio est, juxta illud: "Edent pauperes et saturabuntur et laudabunt Dominum, qui requirunt eum" (Ps. 21:27). (Rupert. Tuit., *De divin. offic.*, II, chap. 18.) Since this time it received in many places also the name postcommunio, which later on was exclusively used to designate the last prayer. Antiphona, quam usitato nomine vocamus Postcommunioem (*Hildeb. Turon. [d. 1134], Lib. de expositione Missae*). Antiphona, quae Postcommunio a pluribus nuncupatur, ideo sic appellata est, quoniam post com-

were gradually omitted at the administration of Communion, and sung afterward, so that they constituted a portion of the liturgical thanksgiving. Later on this hymn was abridged and reduced to the Antiphon which at present, notwithstanding its altered position and application to the thanksgiving, still retains the original name (Communio). The custom, introduced at an early date and universally adopted in the East as well as in the West, of enhancing the celebration of Communion by the singing of psalms, had undoubtedly its origin in the supper room at Jerusalem, where the Lord and His apostles at the Last Supper concluded a hymn (Matt. 26:30) before they proceeded to the Mount of Olives.

As a rule the Communion verse is taken from Holy Scripture, usually from the Psalms, but also frequently from the other books. Occasionally it is of ecclesiastical origin, or consists of a characteristic saying of the saint commemorated. As to its contents the Communion antiphon does not refer to the reception of the Eucharist, as might be presumed from its name and position, but to the particular celebration of the day. In harmony with the remaining variable parts of the rite of the Mass, it serves to bring the mystery of the feast, or the idea of the ecclesiastical time, or the subject of the Mass being celebrated, more prominently into view. But rarely is the text so arranged that a reference to Holy Communion could therein be discovered. Rather, the same fundamental tones, which were often heard in the Introit and during the progress of the Mass, return in the concluding chant of the Communion antiphon and in the Postcommunion.

THE POSTCOMMUNION

1. The Communion antiphon and the usual salutation, *Dominus vobiscum: Et cum spiritu tuo*,⁶ constitute the introduction to the

municationem sive in signum, quod communicatio expleta est, concinitur (Durand., IV, lvi, 1). Afterward (chap. 57, n. 1) he observes: Sacerdos elevatis manibus ultimam orationem, quae proprie Postcommunio vocatur, exsequitur.

⁶ Departing from the present rite, the celebrant, when intoning the Gloria, formerly turned toward the people, while he omitted doing so at the *Dominus vobiscum* after Communion. Placet regula Joannis Diaconi ex epistola ad Senarium: "Illud firma mente custodio, quod non a majoribus tradita custodiret Ecclesia, nisi certa sui ratio poposcisset; nec ea possumus dicere inania videri ac frivola, quia eorum minime rationem accepimus." Si tamen conjecturis indulgere licet, ideo Pontifex "hymnum angelicum" praecinens con-

last prayer, which, from its position after the Communion of all, received the name, Postcommunion.⁷ Like the Collect and Secreta, the Postcommunion is also a prayer of petition, but in it the following characteristic distinction is to be made and emphasized. While in the Collect the idea (the subject) of the ecclesiastical celebration is exclusively expressed, and in the Secreta the remembrance of the sacrifice of the Mass takes precedence, there is frequently in the Postcommunion a reference to the reception of the Eucharist. The petition presented in the last prayer is based, at one time on the subject of the day's celebration, at another on the celebration of the sacrifice, again, on participation in the sacrificial banquet, and even on all these motives combined. The gifts implored are of various kinds. They comprise all that may be beneficial to our welfare and salvation for time and for eternity. Chiefly do we pray for a plentiful outpouring of all the fruits of the sacrifice and of the Communion celebration. What is more opportune at this moment than the ardent desire that the sacrificial body and blood of Christ, which we have received, may bring forth the fruit of virtue and sanctity? The Postcommunions are always recited by the priest in the plural number, that is, for all and in the name of all who have taken part in the Mass, either by actual (sacramental) Communion, as was generally the case in ancient times, or at least by spiritual communion.⁸

vertebat se ad populum, ut eum ad laudandum Deum invitaret. Ideo vero salutationem illam postremam pronuntiabat versus altare, quod ad fideles communionem seu corpore et sanguine Christi Domini tum refectos verba dirigeret, quibus proinde non jam apprecantis optantisve, sed gratulantis more Dominum inesse hac salutatione contestabatur (Mabillon, *In Ord. Rom.*, chap. 21).

⁷ Other ancient designations are, for example, *ultima benedictio* (this last word often = *oratio sacerdotis*), *oratio ad complendum* (*complenda*, inasmuch as in the first ten centuries it formed the conclusion of the sacrificial celebration, as only the dismissal [*Ite missa est*] followed it). *Finita Antiphona surgit Pontifex . . . et veniens ante altare dat Orationem ad complendum, directus ad Orientem. Nam in isto loco, cum Dominus vobiscum dixerit, non se dirigit ad populum (Ordo Rom. I, n. 21). Collectae quae dicuntur ad complendum (Rupert. Tuit., II, chap. 19). Sequitur oratio, quae post communionem vocatur, in qua sacerdos orat pro his, qui ad communionem eucharistiae accessere (Sicard., III, chap. 8). Sacerdos salutato populo orationem dicat; cui iterum saltanti populum, diaconus "Ite missa est" tempore suo aut "Benedicamus Domino" succinat. Clero respondente "Deo gratias" officium finiat (Joann. Abrinc., *De offic. ecclesiast.*).*

⁸ Sequitur oratio sive orationes post communionem dicendae, quae eodem numero et ordine orationibus ante lectionem sive pro secreta ante praefa-

On the Second Sunday of Advent we pray:

Repleti cibo spiritualis alimoniae, supplices te, Domine, deprecamur: ut hujus participatione mysterii, doceas nos terrena despiciere, et amare coelestia.

Having been filled with the food of spiritual nourishment, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord, that by the participation in this mystery Thou wouldst teach us to despise earthly things and to love those that are heavenly.

On the Feast of St. Catherine of Siena:

Aeternitatem nobis, Domine, conferat, qua pasti sumus, mensa coelestis: quae beatae Catharinae Virginis vitam etiam aluit temporalem.

May eternal life, O Lord, be conferred on us by the heavenly food with which we have been fed, and which nourished even the temporal life of the blessed virgin, Catherine.

On the Feast of St. Aloysius:

Angelorum esca nutritos, angelicis etiam, Domine, da moribus vivere: et ejus, quem hodie colimus, exemplo in gratiarum semper actione manere.

Grant us, O Lord, who have been nourished with the food of angels, also to live the lives of angels, and by the example of him whom we this day celebrate, always to abide in thanksgiving.

2. Although a prayer of petition differs and must be distinguished from a prayer of thanksgiving, yet the Postcommunion, which is a prayer of petition, is justly considered as a thanksgiving after Communion, and is designated as a thanksgiving.⁹ By this appellation,

tionem dictis debent respondere. Quae utique orationes non pro his, qui communicaturi sunt, sed qui jam communicaverunt, juxta proprietatem sui nominis agunt. Ergo et ante ipsas communicare non neglegant, quicumque earundem orationum benedictione foveri desiderant (*Microl.*, chap. 19). Iste orationes pro communicantibus institutae sunt, quando omnes vel plerique, quia aderant sacrificio, communicabant; nam et ipsum communionis vocabulum improprie hic usurparetur, nisi plures de eodem sacrificio participarent. Quamvis autem mos ille desierit, nihil tamen in orationibus immutatum est, sed ideo retentae sunt, ut sciamus, quid olim factum sit, et ex ipso precationum tenore ad pristinum fervorem excitemur (*Bona, Rer. liturg.*, II, xx, 11).

⁹ Participato tanto Sacramento, gratiarum actio cuncta concludit (*S. August., Epis.*, 149, n. 16 [*ad Paulin.*]). Sequuntur orationes, in quibus fit per-

petition and thanksgiving are not exchanged for one another, but it merely expresses that the petition which is contained in the Post-communion serves also to manifest and confirm the grateful sentiments of our heart toward God. Our gratitude is displayed in this, that we honor the greatness and goodness of our gracious Benefactor, esteeming His gifts, employing them faithfully, and striving as far as possible to make a return for them. Toward God we can render in various ways a grateful acknowledgment of benefits received, not only by actual prayer of thanksgiving or formal words of thanksgiving, but also by many other acts; for example, acts of praise and adoration, of offering and glorification, yes, even of petition. The prayer of petition is, in the first place and according to its intrinsic nature, an act of veneration and glorification of God, inasmuch as God is thereby acknowledged as the source and dispenser of all gifts.¹⁰ Accordingly, by filial and confident petition after Communion, homage is offered to the divine Majesty, and this homage is the principal gift which we present to the Lord, who has no need of our goods (Ps. 15:2), in return for the grace of Communion. These fervent and humble petitions, therefore, can justly be regarded as the outcome and testimony of our grateful disposition, and, consequently, they may be accounted as thanksgiving after Communion. Therefore as heartfelt thanksgiving for benefits received is the best claim for obtaining new favors (*de perceptis muneribus gratias exhibentes beneficia potiora sumamus*); so, vice versa, confiding petition after Communion is an acceptable thanksgiving for the sublime grace of the body and blood of Christ, which has been received.¹¹ Even that marvelous hymn of thanksgiving, the

ceptorum beneficiorum commemoratio et gratiarum actio (Ivonis Carnot., *Serm.*, V). In ultima oratione sacerdos rogat et gratias agit de sacramenti perceptione, dicens collectas pro numero Secretarum (Durand., IV, chap. 57). Ultima pars Missae sequitur, quae dicitur gratiarum actio atque incipit a communione. Vocatur autem communio quasi participatio, quam ideo canimus, ut per eam cum Sanctis divinae gratiae participes efficiamur. Appellatur etiam completio, quoniam per illam Missa, ut sic dicam, completur (Joann. Beleth., chap. 49).

¹⁰ Quamvis orans praeconia Dei in suis orationibus formaliter non exprimeret tamen ipsa oratio est Dei laudatio: quoniam orans eo ipso, quod oret Deum, fatetur, ac praesupponit insufficientiam propriam, et omnipotentiam, providentiam atque clementiam Dei, quem non invocaret, nisi crederet eum potentem ad adjuvandum et omnium provisorem ac pium ad succurrendum (Dion. Carthus., *De orat.*, a. 31).

¹¹ Cf. the *Postcom. Dom. XVIII post Pent.*: Gratias tibi referimus, Domine,

Te Deum, peals out in the most touching and hopeful petition, as, in general, almost all the prayers of the Church resolve into petition.

THE *Oratio super populum*

1. On the ferial days of Lent after the Postcommunion there follows a prayer for the people; it is directly introduced by an *Oremus* and the exhortation: *Humiliate capita vestra Deo* ("Bow your heads before God").¹² Concerning the origin and object of this prayer, a variety of opinions have been adduced.¹³ The following appears to be the most simple and correct. According to the ancient rite of the Roman Church, the *Oratio super populum* was not recited, as at present, only on the days of Lent, but every day, even on great feasts: it belonged to the ordinary prayers of the Mass. At that period, when the present benediction at the end of Mass had not yet been introduced, this prayer was intended to invoke God's blessing, protection, and assistance on the assembled congregation before they were dismissed from the house of God by the *Ite missa est* after

sacro munere vegetati: tuam misericordiam deprecantes, ut dignos nos ejus participatione perficias. Per Dominum.

¹² The *inclinatio capitis* must be made not merely at the *Oremus*, but it must also accompany the words *Humiliate capita vestra Deo* (S. R. C., December 12, 1879).

¹³ Micrologus says (chap. 51), that the *Oratio super populum* is intended for those who do not communicate, while the *Postcommunio* is destined exclusively for the communicants. That, namely, those persons, who on the ferial days of Lent did not communicate, might not be dismissed without prayer or blessing, the above prayer has been added in their behalf, *in qua non de communicatione, sed de populi protectione specialiter oratur*. This ordinance was made expressly for the season of Lent, *quia cum majorem conflictum in jejuniis et orationibus contra spirituales nequitias sumimus, necessario nos instantius Deo commendare debemus*. On Sundays it is not said, either because the prescribed genuflection is omitted, or rather because all present should have received Holy Communion. Honorius of Autun beholds in the *Oratio super populum* a substitute for the otherwise customary distribution of the so-called eulogia, which during Lent (*proper jejunium*) did not take place (cf. *Gemma animae*, I, chap. 67). The occurrence of this prayer in Lent may also be regarded as a reminder of the ancient observance, which now is customary only on Holy Saturday, and which consisted in combining Vespers with the Mass sung after None; the *Oratio super populum* was at the same time a concluding benediction and prayer at the end of Vespers preceding the formula of dismissal, as even now the *Oratio super populum* and the prayer of Vespers in Lent are alike (Quadt, *Die Liturgie der Quatemberstage*, p. 113).

the celebration of the Eucharist. These very ancient prayers are intended as a supplication for the divine benediction, not merely by their contents, but still more by the accompanying ceremony, for from the earliest times the liturgies require a humble bow to be made by the faithful whenever they receive a blessing. St. Gregory the Great restricted the *Oratio super populum* to the ferial days of Lent. This ancient prayer was retained in the Masses for Lent because this period of the ecclesiastical year has in many respects preserved the ancient Roman rite; then, too, it is characteristic of this great and solemn season of penance to implore more frequently and more urgently the protection and assistance of Heaven, so as to enable us to support courageously the combat against the enemies of our salvation. The original object of the *Oratio super populum*, which formerly was said every day, is, consequently, to be distinguished from the reason of its being exclusively restricted to the penitential season of Lent.¹⁴

2. With what enthusiasm should not the love of our God and Redeemer be praised for the banquet of grace, for the food and drink of life, which He dispenses to us on the altar: for the bread, which is His body, and for the blood, which issues forth from His sacred heart. Yes, upon the marble of our altars there is found a wondrous food and a wondrous drink, prepared for the poor pilgrims who in pain and sorrow tread the rugged and stony path, and walk amid the cruel thorns and brambles of this life. To the shadow of the altar they retire as to a haven of rest. Exhausted and weary by reason of the weakness of their nature, amid the pressure of temptation and the bitter warfare of this life, they seek in this nourishment solace, refreshment, and strength. Hence the heart of the Church expands with joy and gratitude and exults in beholding this sacred,

¹⁴ The forty days of Lent are, according to the Fathers and the spirit of the liturgy, a time of combat of the Christian army against Satan, the world, and the flesh. Cf. the expression *praesidia militiae Christianae* in a prayer for Ash Wednesday. Amalarius mentions the prayer in question in reference to the Postcommunion *ulterior ultima benedictio, in qua milites Christi commendantur pugnae contra antiquum hostem*. He then adds: *Sacerdos noster, prudens agonotheta et pugnator, quantum in majore periculo videt milites fore, tantum munit eos amplius sua benedictione. Arma nostra contra diabolum sunt humilitas et ceterae virtutes. Vult sacerdos noster, ut nostris armis vestiti simus: propterea jubet per ministrum, ut humiliemus capita nostra Deo, et ita tandem infundit super milites protectionem benedictionis suae (De eccles. offic., III, chap. 37).*

mystical nourishment on the altar, our life's food. By fervent prayers and chants the Church urges her children to praise unceasingly the treasure of grace, the boundless wealth bestowed upon them in these gifts. Well aware that the praise and gratitude of men are at all times inadequate to the dignity and grandeur of these gifts, the Church presents herself in supplication at the portals of heaven, she appears at the celestial court and invites all the angels and saints to unite with her in praise, adoration, and thanksgiving (Eberhard).

CHAPTER XLVI

THE CONCLUSION

AFTER the Postcommunion that reciprocal salutation is said again¹ which throughout the celebration of Mass has so often been repeated in order to maintain between priest and people an active, lively intercourse: *Dominus vobiscum. Et cum spiritu tuo.*² By the sacrifice and communion our relations with God have become more close and intimate; hence the priest, before the conclusion of the holy action, desires for all present that the Lord, by His grace, protection, and assistance, would be with them during the course of the day, in joy and in sorrow, in fatigue and in labor; that, as the Good Shepherd, He would conduct and pasture them, be their staff and support; that He would remain with them when the day draws to a close and the evening appears, so that they “may watch with Christ and rest in peace.”

¹ It is peculiar to the soul, repeatedly to pronounce that with which she is strikingly and profoundly impressed. The repetition of the *Dominus vobiscum*, accordingly, signifies that the most ardent wish of the Church is that the Lord may always remain with us. This applies especially at the conclusion of Mass, when the *Dominus vobiscum* is in a particular manner a petition, that we may be nourished and strengthened by the sacramental or spiritual Communion and the sacrificial fruits, in communion with Christ, that is, in His grace and love, that we may persevere unceasingly in His peace and service; for only he that abides in Christ and Christ in him, produces much fruit (John 15:5), because he does nothing without Christ, but all with and through Christ.

² Hoc tantum bonum sibi invicem optant et postulant (et sacerdos Ecclesiae et Ecclesia sacerdoti), ut sicut ejus gratia illuminatur, ejus praesentia confortatur, ejus protectione munitur, semper eum manere nobiscum, quem admodum est pollicitus, sentiamus (Florus Diacon. [d. about 860], *De actione Missarum*, n. 13).

THE DISMISSAL

According to the character of the celebration of the Mass, there now follows the concluding formula: *Ite missa est* or *Benedicamus Domino* or *Requiescant in pace*.³

From the earliest times it was customary at the Christian assemblies for divine worship, to liturgically announce the dismissal at the close of the holy action.⁴ In the East and West there were different formulas of dismissal; ⁵ it is probable that to the Roman Church the formula *Ite missa est* ("Go, it is the dismissal") was at all times peculiar. As is evident from the translation given, the word *missa*, from which the whole sacrificial celebration has received its name of Mass,⁶ occurs here again in its original signification (*missio* = *dimissio*).⁷ In the eleventh century ⁸ the present rule was adopted, that the faithful were solemnly dismissed only on days of a festive or joyful character, that is, the formula of parting, *Ite missa est*, was used only when the hymn *Gloria in excelsis* was recited.⁹ The *Ite*

³ "Ite missa est" dicitur versus populum, quia dimittitur; "Benedicamus Domino" versus altare, quia ibi peculiari modo Dominus adest; "Requiescant in pace" item versus altare quia sermo est de absentibus (Gravant., *Thesaur.*, II, tit. 11 ad Rubr. 1). When the deacon sings this concluding formula, the celebrant must likewise say the *Benedicamus Domino* and the *Requiescant in pace*, but not the *Ite missa est*, because the latter has not the character of a prayer, but is only a formula for dismissing the people (S. R. C., September 7, 1816).

⁴ Post communionem et post ejusdem nominis canticum, data benedictione a sacerdote ad plebem (*that is, after the recitation of the Postcommunion*), diaconus praedicat Missae officium esse peractum, dans licentiam abeundi (Raban. Maur., *De clericor. instit.*, I, chap. 33).

⁵ In the Apostolic Constitutions (VIII, chap. 15): "Go in peace"; in the liturgy of St. James: "In the peace of Christ let us go"; in the liturgy of St. Chrysostom: "Let us go in peace"; in the Ambrosian rite: *Procedamus in pace*; in the Mozarabic: *Solemnia completa sunt in nomine D. N. J. Ch., votum sit acceptum cum pace*.

⁶ On the name, "Mass," see the note at the end of this chapter.

⁷ Finitis vero omnibus, adstanti et observanti populo absolutio datur, inclamante diacono: "Ite missa est." Missa ergo nihil aliud intellegitur, quam dimissio, i.e. absolutio, quam celebratis omnibus tunc diaconus esse pronuntiat, cum populus a solemnibus observatione dimittitur (Florus Diaconus, *De actione Missarum*, n. 92).

⁸ The three oldest *Ordines Romani*, written before the tenth century, mention without any distinction of days or Masses only the concluding formula, *Ite missa est*. R. *Deo gratias*. (Cf. *Ordo Rom.* I, n. 21, 24; II, n. 15; III, n. 18.)

⁹ Semper cum "Gloria in excelsis" etiam "Te Deum" et "Ite missa est" recitamus (Microlog., *De observat. eccles.*, chap. 46).

missa est, therefore, since the Middle Ages has been regarded as a characteristic mark of the joyful days of the ecclesiastical year, and to this aspect also corresponds the circumstance that in the singing thereof, it resounds in joyous tones.

On other days which bear the character of sorrow and penance, the dismissal was not announced; but instead of the *Ite missa est*, the *Benedicamus Domino* ("Let us bless the Lord") was substituted, whereby all were encouraged to praise God. This usage originated from the fact that on those days of penance and prayer the people were not permitted to leave the house of God immediately after the conclusion of the Mass, but had to remain there¹⁰ for the canonical hours or the celebration of the stations which followed directly after the sacrifice.¹¹ Hence arose the present prescriptions, that those Masses whose character does not admit of the *Gloria in excelsis* should be concluded by the more grave and supplicatory *Benedicamus Domino*.¹² To these two formulas, of which the first directly and the other at least indirectly announce the close of the sacrificial celebration, the people answer by the mouth of the acolyte: *Deo gratias* ("Thanks be to God"), for a sentiment of gratitude should now fill the people, since they have been admitted to mysteries so sublime and enriched with graces so precious.¹³

As Requiem Masses are a service of mourning for the departed,

¹⁰ For this reason in the Middle Ages the first Mass of Christmas Eve was often concluded, not as now with the *Ite missa est*, but with *Benedicamus Domino*, whereby the congregation was exhorted not to leave the church, but to assist at Lauds, which followed immediately after the first Mass. (Cf. Microl., chap. 34; Joann. Beleth, chap. 49; Durand., IV, lvii, 7.)

¹¹ Crederem, tunc omissam dimissionem, cum fideles peracta Missa non statim abibant, sed permanebant in Ecclesia, donec recitatis canonicis precibus et statione soluta abire fas erat (Bona, *Rer. liturg.*, II, xx, 3).

¹² Already Micrologus remarks (chap. 46) that in Advent and Lent, instead of *Ite missa est*, the *Benedicamus Domino* should be sung *pro tristitia temporis insinuanda* (to show the penitential sorrow of these days). The frequently used liturgical formula, *Benedicamus Domino*, to which is regularly given the answer *Deo gratias*, is itself a magnifying of the Lord, and contains, at the same time, a summons to praise the Lord. In the Middle Ages it was also called *Versus clusorius*, because with the *Deo gratias* all the canonical hours are concluded.

¹³ *Deo gratias*, i.e. *Deo dicamus agamusque gratias de Missae consummatione et sacrorum mysteriorum completionem, ne merito nobis impingatur et exprobetur ingratitude. Est enim gratiarum actio cum in ceteris a Deo perceptis bonis, tum in hoc excellentissimo dono sacrificii salutaris apprime necessaria et nequaquam praetermittenda* (Clichtov., III, n. 84).

many prayers and ceremonies are omitted in them which either designate the participation of the living in the sacrificial fruit or denote joy and solemnity. For the last reason already, in Requiem Masses the dismissal of the people is not accompanied by the joyful and festive *Ite missa est*. Besides, those present are not to depart at once, but should continue in prayer until the suffrages, which as a rule take place for the departed after Requiem Masses, are completed. Already in the twelfth century¹⁴ it was the general custom to conclude divine worship for the departed with the devout and prayerful wish: *Requiescant in pace* ("May they rest in peace").¹⁵ A more comprehensive and suitable formula of conclusion could not be found; for it includes all the gifts which we would procure by the sacrifice for the suffering souls,¹⁶ and which we can in general implore: eternal rest and heavenly peace in the bosom of God. The *Amen* ("So be it") given as reply by the acolyte, unites the wishes of the people with those of the priest, so that the combined supplication may be more readily and promptly answered.¹⁷

Formerly, until about the twelfth century, the Holy Sacrifice was concluded with one of these formulas; for the three following parts—the *Placeat*, the Blessing, and the beginning of the Gospel of St.

¹⁴ Diaconus Missae finem imponit decantans "Benedicamus Domino" vel "Ite missa est" in diebus festivis vel "Requiescant in pace" ut in mortuorum exsequiis (Stephan. Augustod., *De sacram. alt.*, chap. 18). Dicitur in Missis pro defunctis "Requiescant in pace," quod ex sola consuetudine generali natum est (Joann. Beleth., chap. 49).

¹⁵ This formula is an abridgment of the more detailed one, which frequently occurs in the Office of the Church: *Fidelium animae per misericordiam Dei requiescant in pace*. In it is found a harmony with the biblical words: *In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam* (Ps. 4:9), that is, "in peace in the self same I will sleep (= with all the saints of God) and I will rest" in gentle slumber, full of hope in a glorious resurrection to come. Whether Mass is celebrated for one or for more departed souls, the plural number *Requiescant* always refers to all the suffering souls; for the Church is accustomed in her liturgy to unite her intercession for departed individuals most intimately with her intercession for all the faithful departed.

¹⁶ In Missa (etiam pro uno defuncto) semper "Requiescant" dicendum (S. R. C., January 22, 1678).

¹⁷ In Missa pro defunctis celebrata dicitur haec conclusio: "Requiescant in pace," ut finis hujus Missae respondeat principio, in quo eis aeterna requies postulatur. Quoniam enim totum illud officium peculiariter ordinatur pro requie defunctis impetranda, ideo ipsis placida requies postulatur in Missae principio, medio et in fine. Et hic respondet pro populo chorus aut minister: "Amen," i.e. fiat quod petitur piaque nostra desideria compleantur (Clichtov., III, n. 84).

John—are later additions which gradually found acceptance, but which were not until the sixteenth century universally prescribed.

THE *Placeat*

While the priest rests his joined hands on the altar, he prays¹⁸ with head bowed and in silence:

Placeat tibi, sancta Trinitas, obsequium servitutis meae, et praesta: ut sacrificium, quod oculis tuae majestatis indignus obtuli, tibi sit acceptabile, mihi que, et omnibus, pro quibus illud obtuli, sit, te miserante, propitiabile. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

May the performance of my homage be pleasing to Thee, O Holy Trinity; and grant that the sacrifice which I, though unworthy, have offered up in the sight of Thy Majesty, may be acceptable to Thee, and may, through Thy mercy, be a propitiation for myself and all those for whom I have offered it. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Originally the *Placeat* was a private prayer recited by the priest at the close of the holy celebration, but previous to his leaving the altar; since the tenth century it is to be found in different missals.¹⁹ Wherever the concluding blessing was introduced, this prayer was

¹⁸ Primum condensationem et acceptionem Dei circa obsequium jam in officio altaris exhibitum exoptulat ipse sacerdos. Deinde supplex orat, quod hoc sacrificium divinae majestatis oculis oblatum sit illi acceptabile . . . ex parte offerentis, ut quantulumcumque ejus devotio acceptetur a Deo; sit etiam idem sacrificium et ipsi offerenti et omnibus christianis tam vivis quam defunctis, pro quibus illud obtulit, propitiabile, utile et salutare ad diluenda peccata et consequendam gratiam. Et quo facilius exaudiatur sacerdos, haec supradicta deprecatur sibi praestari non ex suis meritis et operibus justitiae quae fecerit, sed ex divinae misericordiae magnitudine et miseratrice ejus bonitate. Similiter eadem petit sibi indulgeri per Chr. D. N., in cujus nomine quidquid petere volumus est postulandum et quidquid postulatum fuerit haud dubie ut promisit impetrabitur: cui pro expleta expositione familiari ipsius sacri Canonis sit laus, honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum. Amen (Clichtov., III, n. 86).

¹⁹ Finitis omnibus osculatur sacerdos altare, dicens: "Placeat tibi, sancta Trinitas . . ." (Microlog., chap. 22). We find in many missals up to the sixteenth century the rubric, that the prayer *Placeat* should be recited *finita Missa* or *post Missa*.

said after it; ²⁰ only since the fifteenth century has it been placed before the blessing.

This prayer is a brief repetition, or an epitome, of the oblation petitions, which before as well as after the Consecration form a constituent portion of the liturgy of the Mass. In the name of and for the glorification of the triune God the Holy Sacrifice was begun, continued, and completed; to the Blessed Trinity it is now once more and for the last time recommended.²¹ Impressed with the consciousness of his frailty, sinfulness, and unworthiness, the priest first implores that the sacrifice offered by him and the homage of profound submission thereby rendered ²² may be graciously accepted by the Holy Trinity; he then begs that, in consequence of the divine pleasure taken in the sacrifice and in virtue of the divine mercy, reconciliation and grace may flow from the altar to all for whom it was offered. In order to understand the last petition, it is to be remarked that God does not always impart at once all the sacrificial fruits after the accomplishment of the act of sacrifice, but many of them He frequently bestows at a later period, when, where, and as it pleases Him, in conformity with the impenetrable designs of His wise and merciful providence.

²⁰ This ordinance is still found in *Ordo Roman. XIV*, of the fourteenth century. Even some missals of the sixteenth century have the concluding benediction before the *Placeat*.

²¹ Sanctae Trinitati, cui unam debemus et individuum per omnia servitutem, sicut unum sacrificium offerimus, sic unam quoque gloriam fidei devotione cantamus. Nam quia unam naturam constat esse sanctae Trinitatis, dignum est ut una gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui sancto dicatur a fidelibus in hymnis et psalmis (S. Fulgent., *Contra Fabian.*, fragm. 34).

²² The worship and veneration (*obsequium*) of which there is question here, is more minutely characterized as such by the addition *servitutis*, as is due by the totally dependent creature toward the Creator, because of His absolute dominion, and as in sacrifice it principally finds its expression; that is, as a worship of servitude and adoration due to God alone (*λατρεια*). *Obsequium servitutis* would, therefore, as to its meaning be the same as *oblatio servitutis*. The Vulgate often translates (John 16:2; Rom. 9:4; 12:1) *λατρεια* by *obsequium*. In the *Sacram. Leonian.* the Eucharistic gifts are called *piae devotionis obsequia*. We find there also the following prayer: Repleti, Domine, munificentia gratiae tuae, benedictione copiosa, et pro nostrae servitutis obsequiis et pro celebritate Sanctorum, coelestia dona sumentes, gratias tibi referimus. Trinitati exhibemus servitutis obsequium (S. Fulgent., *Contra Fabian.*, fragm. 12).

THE BLESSING

As a recapitulation²³ of the preceding oblation prayers, the *Placeat* is at the same time a suitable preparation for the blessing which immediately follows;²⁴ for every blessing proceeds from the sacrifice, and the celebrant is the minister through which the divine blessing is imparted. After the *Placeat* the priest kisses the altar and then pronounces aloud the blessing: *Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus, Pater et Filius ✠ et Spiritus sanctus. R. Amen.* ("May almighty God bless you: the Father, the Son ✠, and the Holy Ghost. R. Amen.") The act which accompanies and completes the text is as simple as it is impressive: in pronouncing the first words (*Benedicat vos omni-*

²³ Sacerdos velut in quodam compendio petitiones priores recolligit, humiliter petens pro se aliisque omnibus, pro quibus sacrificium illud obtulit, exaudiri (Gabr. Biel, *Expos. Can.*, lect. 89).

²⁴ The present blessing at the end of Mass can not be shown to have been in use during the first ten centuries. In the ninth century some commentators do indeed mention a similar *benedictio*, but they understand thereby the concluding prayer (the *Postcommunio* or the *Oratio super populum*). The three oldest Roman *Ordines* mention that the celebrant at the end of Mass, not at the altar, but on returning to the sacristy, to the petition of the different ranks of the officiating clerics for the blessing (*Jube domne benedicere*), repeated each time the words *Benedicat nos (or vos) Dominus*, to which they responded *Amen*. (Cf. *Ordo Rom. I*, n. 21; *II*, n. 15; *III*, n. 18.) Since the tenth century many bishops no longer gave the blessing before the Communion (as was the custom in a number of places), but only at the end of Mass, and gradually the priest also began to bless the congregation after the sacrificial celebration, which according to Micrologus (chap. 21) already in the eleventh century they could not omit without great scandal (*absque gravi scandalo*). The words and actions of the benediction rite during the whole of the Middle Ages were neither fixed nor uniform. Some priests often blessed with a threefold sign of the cross, while others made merely one or even four signs of the cross; in so doing frequently the chalice or paten or a cross was held in the hand. Already in the fourteenth century (*Ordo Rom. XIV*, chap. 71) the formula now in use is found; on the other hand, we read in Clichtoveus (III) still in the sixteenth century, the following formula of blessing: *Coeli benedictione benedicat et custodiat vos divina majestas et una deitas: Pater et Filius et Spiritus sanctus. Amen.* Only at the revision of the missal, under Pius V and Clement VIII (d. 1605), was the different rite of the episcopal and priestly blessing fully regulated and universally prescribed, as Pope Clement interdicted priests from blessing with three signs of the cross even in *Missa solemni*. Only since that time may the bishop make, even in low Masses, a threefold sign of blessing, when he introduces the usual formula with some versicles (*Sit nomen Dom.* . . . with the so-called German cross on the breast and *Adjutorium nostrum* . . . with the so-called Latin cross); for *benedictio solemnis* the mitre is placed on the head and the crosier in the left hand of the bishop.

potens Deus), the priest raises his eyes and hands toward heaven, whence all good gifts come to us; then he turns to the faithful who are present and, at the mention of the triune God (*Pater et Filius et Spiritus sanctus*), makes over them the sign of the cross.

To comprehend the full import of the kissing of the altar here prescribed, it must be considered in its twofold relation: to the preceding prayer, *Placeat*, and to the imparting of the blessing which follows. In the first place, the kissing of the altar concludes the prayer *Placeat*, inasmuch as symbolically it strengthens and confirms the petition therein expressed.²⁵ In the *Placeat* the celebrant begs for a gracious acceptance of the sacrifice which is accomplished and for an abundant bestowal of the sacrificial fruits, that the union with Christ and His saints, renewed by the sacrifice and sacrificial banquet, may be confirmed and completed. This petition is now crowned by the kissing of the altar, which concludes the prayer. For it is not intended merely to manifest homage and reverence toward the Church triumphant; but rather, according to its profound signification, it is a figure, expression, and pledge of the holy communion of love, in which we live with Christ and His saints, and which at the altar, by the sacrificial celebration, has once again been ratified and strengthened. Like the *Placeat*, with which the altar kiss forms a whole, the latter has, then, a relation to the blessing, which it introduces. The kissing of the altar, therefore, renews the mystical union with Christ. But precisely from this living and mysterious union with Christ, whose representative he is, the priest draws the power and efficacy to pour out upon the assembled people, in the name of the triune God and by means of the words and signs of blessing, the plenitude of the graces of our salvation. Moreover, as the kissing of the altar, independently of the blessing and in connection with the *Placeat*, still retains its essential meaning with respect to the conclusion of the sacrificial celebration, it is prescribed even when the concluding blessing is omitted, that is, in Requiem Masses. In these Masses those who are present (the living) are not blessed, in order to indicate that all the sacrificial fruits are reserved for the benefit of the departed.

From the rite prescribed for the blessing, we see that the priest

²⁵ Per altaris osculum, quod in fine Missae fit, intellegitur sacerdos omnia praecedentia approbare et eis toto mentis affectu assentire (Durand., IV, xxix, 7).

blesses in the name and by the commission of the Church; he implores of almighty God the fullness of heavenly and earthly blessings upon the faithful; while, by making the sign of the cross²⁶ over those who are present, he indicates the source of all blessings and symbolically represents the fulfillment of the benediction pronounced. From the triune God proceed all the blessings of the creation and redemption; by His almighty power (*omnipotens Deus*) He can impart every blessing. The priest implores the blessing of the triune God who has created, redeemed, and sanctified us: the blessing of the Father, who gave His only-begotten Son for the world, and to whom the Son has even now presented the infinitely precious sacrifice; the blessing of the Son, who, for love of man and the redemption of mankind, endured the poverty of the crib and the ignominy of the cross, and who, day after day, renews the humiliation of His sacrificial life and death on the altar; the blessing of the Holy Ghost, who prepared the sacrificial body of the Saviour in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and whose heavenly ardor changes earthly elements into the body and blood of Christ.

To bless as well as to offer sacrifice is the vocation of the priest.²⁷ After he has offered on the altar the Lamb of God to the Most High, he raises his hands in order to bless the people. But his prayer of sacerdotal blessing is more than a devout wish of happiness; it is at all times efficacious and has the guarantee of being answered. The priest pronounces the words and God bestows the blessing, for God blesses by his mouth and by his hand.²⁸

²⁶ *Crux est signum Christi, quod nobis est fons omnis benedictionis et gratiae. Quocirca a Christo et Apostolis manavit traditio, ut, dum cui benedicimus, manibus in formam crucis deductis id faciamus (Corn. a Lap., In Luc., 24:50).*

²⁷ *Benediximus nos episcopi et praelati vobis, o subditi, de domo Domini, i.e. de Ecclesia Christi praedicando vobis verbum salutis, ministrando vobis sacramenta N. L., orando quoque pro vobis et gratiam nobis divinitus datam, sicut caritas exigit, communicando. Benedictio proprie dicitur collatio gratiae Dei; gratiam autem non confert nisi Deus. Quomodo ergo unus nostrum alteri benedicere seu gratiam communicare potest nisi instrumentaliter, non principaliter? Ideo subditur: *Deus Dominus et illuxit nobis*, i.e. Deus, qui est Dominus noster, ipse et illuxit nobis, illuminando corda nostra Spiritu sancto et gratiam splendidam nostris mentibus infundendo, dando quoque vobis auctoritatem ligandi atque solvendi, ministrandi sacramenta, praedicandi evangelica verba, consecrandi et benedicendi—ex quibus idonei sumus ad benedicendum vobis (Dion. Carthus., *In Ps.*, 117:25).*

²⁸ *Sacerdotes benedicunt exorando, Deus largiendo (Florus Diac., n. 43). Fit mirabilis operationis divinae effectus, ut per sacerdotum ora Deus ipse*

The concluding blessing is so efficacious because it is an ecclesiastical blessing, which can never be fruitless and inefficacious provided that the recipient present no obstacle. The liturgical blessing is especially a powerful petition of the Church: a petition which is always answered and granted by God, since, on the one hand, it is supported by the authority and holiness of the Church, and, on the other hand, it is based on the infinite merits of Jesus, on His precious blood and loving promises. Already in the Old Law, the Lord spoke in this manner to Moses (Num. 6:23, 27): "Say to Aaron and his sons [the high priests and the priests]: Thus shall you bless the children of Israel. . . . They shall invoke My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them." Should not this divine promise have far greater value in the Church of Christ, which is an institution and a kingdom of blessings, of salvation and redemption for the whole human race, in fact, for all creation? But as the full efficacy of the sacramentals, to which this blessing appertains, depends also in part on the worthiness of the dispenser and of the receiver, therefore during this holy act of blessing both priest and people should be animated and filled with faith, confidence, humility, and devotion.

This concluding blessing will appear in a new light if we conceive it, according to the precedent of the liturgists of the Middle Ages, as a figure of that blessing which the Saviour bestowed upon His disciples on the Mount of Olives at His departure out of this world,²⁹ and which He will again impart to those who are His own when He returns to judge the world.³⁰ Such a conception is solidly established; for it cannot be denied that points of resemblance occur. The liturgical sacrificial celebration is frequently considered as the

benedicat . . . deprecatur quidem pro salute hominum pia sacerdotis intentio, et praestat eam divinae pietatis devotio, sicque fit, ut caritas quae exhibet in sacerdote deprecationem, ipsa praestet a Domino integram sanitatem (Raban. Maur., II, chap. 55).

²⁹ Haec ultima benedictio significat illam benedictionem, quam Christus ascensurus in coelum discipulis dedit; unde ea facta sacerdos se ad orientem vertit quasi se Christo ascendenti commendans (Durand., *Ration.*, IV, lix, 4).

³⁰ Post hoc sacerdos dicit: "Ite, missa est" et populum benedicit. Quod signat quod veniet Dominus in iudicio et se nobis ostendet et fidelibus suis dabit benedictionem suam et tunc laeti vadent ad mansiones suas, de quibus dicitur in Joanne (14:2): "In domo Patris mei mansiones multae sunt." Ad quas mansiones nos perducatur ipse Pontifex et Sacerdos, qui cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivit et regnat. Amen (S. Bonav., *Expos. Missae*, chap. 4).

representation of the entire sacrificial life of Christ, from the Incarnation to the Ascension; ⁸¹ or, even more comprehensively, as a representation of the history of salvation from the beginning to the end of the world. In this aspect the blessing at the end of the celebration of the Mass, by which Christ's work of redemption is mystically renewed, reminds us naturally of the last blessing given by the Saviour after the work of redemption was objectively accomplished; in like manner the concluding blessing at Mass contains an indication of the last and greatest of all blessings, which the Lord will impart at the end of time, when the redemption of the world will be entirely completed.

From the top of Mount Olivet the Saviour, in the presence of His Mother and His disciples, ascended to heaven; and as He ascended He blessed them with uplifted hands (Luke 24:50), making over them, as we may presume, the sign of the Cross. What devout thoughts and sentiments will be awakened in us if we consider the blessing at the end of Mass as a repetition of this solemn blessing given by the divine Saviour! And how greatly must the devotion and joy of our heart be increased if we behold in this blessing at the conclusion of the sacrificial celebration a figure of that perfect blessing which, at the consummation of the time of grace, will be imparted to all the elect at the Last Judgment! The full blessing which Christ acquired by His blood is reserved for us in eternity, where God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, where death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away (Apoc. 21:4). "Come, ye blessed (*benedicti*) of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34), will the Saviour cry out to His own, leading them to eternal glory, where they shall be blessed with imperishable goods and unspeakable joys. Christians are called that they may inherit a blessing (I Pet. 3:9)—a spiritual, heavenly, eternal blessing.

Since already here on earth God has showered upon us His blessings and in eternity will make us happy with the infinite plenitude of His blessing, we also, as the favored children of the heavenly

⁸¹ Missae officium tam provida reperitur ordinatione dispositum, ut quae per Christum et in Christum, ex quo de coelo descendit usquedum in coelum ascendit, gesta sunt, magna ex parte contineat et ea tam verbis quam signis admirabili quadam specie repraesentet (Durand., IV, i, 11).

Father, should shed blessings around us. Compassionate and active love of our neighbor, mercy and benevolence, goodness and friendliness, should be reflected in our whole life, so that whatever we do may be upright and noble, and consolation and happiness, peace and joy may enter into the hearts of all those around us. We should spend our life on earth doing good. As the apostles, after receiving the blessing on the Mount of Olives, "went back into Jerusalem with great joy, . . . praising and blessing God," (Luke 24:52 f.), so should we, filled with holy joy, return to our daily occupations; and our life, sufferings, labors, prayers, and joys should thenceforth be an uninterrupted praise of God and a perpetual thanksgiving for the ineffable riches of the sacrificial blessing which has been bestowed so undeservedly upon us.³²

THE LAST GOSPEL

The final conclusion of the Eucharistic sacrificial celebration is always the reading of a portion of the Gospel. In votive and Requiem Masses and usually ³³ at other times also, the last Gospel is the beginning of the Gospel according to St. John (1:1-14). The reading of St. John's Gospel at this place was universally prescribed by a decree of Pius V. Previously it was merely a custom introduced during the thirteenth century and observed only in some places, to recite in a low voice or aloud this section of the Gospel, which was ever held in high repute, either at the altar or when retiring from the altar or while taking off the sacred vestments.

³² St. Chrysostom endeavors to draw the faithful from sinful conversations, by reminding them of the grace and dignity which they obtained by participating in the holy mysteries. "Therefore, do nothing, say nothing that is earthly. God has elevated you to a heavenly rank: why do you again debase yourselves? Do you not behold here the sacred vessels? Do they not always serve one only purpose? Would any one venture to employ them for aught else? But you are holier than these vessels, yea, far holier. Why do you defile and contaminate yourselves? You stand in heaven and you slander? You dwell among angels, and you slander? The Lord has favored you with the kiss of peace, and you slander? So greatly has God adorned your mouth, by angelic praises, by a more than angelic food, by His kiss, by His embrace, and do you slander? Act not thus, I beseech you!" (*Homilies on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, XIV.)

³³ Except the third Mass of the feast of Christmas (*Ult. Evang. fest. Epiph.*), and the low Masses on Palm Sunday (*Ult. Evang. e bened. palm.*), and the feast day Masses which are celebrated on Sundays or on the ferial days and vigils that have a special Gospel (*Ult. Evang. de Dom., Fer. major. et Vigil.*).

As Moses received the Law from God amid thunder and lightning, so in like manner, as tradition informs us, St. John wrote the beginning of his Gospel in the midst of thunder and lightning. Rightly, therefore, was he called by Jesus the Son of Thunder, since from the dark cloud of mysteries in fruitful showers he pours out the floods of wisdom which he had drunk from the heart of the Master. As the eagle, like an arrow, flies with open eyes toward the sun, thus does St. John soar directly upward to the light of the loftiest mysteries of God; . . . consequently, among the Evangelists he is designated by the eagle. (Laurent.)

The profound, magnificent contents of St. John's Gospel are in most beautiful harmony with the mysteries of faith celebrated on the altar. All the rays of revelation scattered in the Holy Books regarding Jesus Christ, are here found gathered into a focus. The virginal Evangelist announces, in his majestic flight, the eternal divinity of the Son; he calls Him the Creator of the universe, he exalts Him as the uncreated Light and Life, as well as the Source of all supernatural light and life, that is, as the Author of the order of grace. He then declares His incarnation³⁴ and magnifies the Incarnate as the only-begotten Son of the Father, in whom the glory of the divinity, the fullness of truth and grace, appeared visibly to man. This Gospel, therefore, depicts the divinity and the divine efficacy of Jesus Christ; it shows in what manner all the blessings of creation and redemption proceed from Him. It may also be appropriately applied to the Eucharistic Saviour; for the sacrifice and the Sacrament of the altar is truly a memorial of all the mysteries of the Incarnate Word. To the eye of faith, the glory of His divinity is revealed on the altar under foreign appearances; thence He pours out light and life, truth and grace into all susceptible hearts. But on the altar the world and darkness do not recognize Him; many do not receive Him; hence they do not become children of God, but remain in the shadow and night of death.

The sacrificial celebration was introduced by the longing cry of the Old Testament: "Send forth, O Lord, Thy light and Thy truth!" It could not be concluded in a more worthy and more sublime manner than with the powerful and dignified words of the New Testament: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;

³⁴ To adore the incarnate Son of God and honor the mystery of His Incarnation as the foundation of our forgiveness by and union with God, that is, our adoption, a genuflection is made at the words: *Et verbum caro factum est.*

and we saw His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." And the faithful, highly favored and strengthened anew by the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, answer by the mouth of the acolyte: *Deo gratias* ("Thanks be to God"). Thus the Holy Sacrifice and the Communion celebration conclude with a simple expression of gratitude. And, in fact, this assuredly is the place in which joyfully to exclaim: "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift." (II Cor. 9:15.) For unutterably precious and glorious is the gift of God which we have received from the altar; inexhaustible and indescribable are the blessings that flow to us from the sacrifice and Communion.³⁵

The *Deo gratias* is an admonition to the priest to continue for some time in silent and devout thanksgiving.³⁶

³⁵ Frequently (at least in five Mass formulas) the Church recites the following Postcommunion: *Repleti, Domine, muneribus sacris; da quaesumus, ut in gratiarum semper actione maneamus.*

³⁶ The thanksgiving inserted in the missal by the Church (the *Canticum trium puerorum*, the psalm 150, the Our Father with several versicles and the three prayers) in the main dates from the Middle Ages; for already in the eleventh century Micrologus writes (chap. 22): *Sacerdos sacris vestibus se exuens cantat "Hymnum trium puerorum" . . . psalmum quoque "Laudate Dominum in sanctis ejus" in gratiarum actionem subjungens, cum "Pater noster" et versibus ad hoc competentibus, concludit eam cum oratione illa: "Deus qui tribus pueris."* Soon after (chap. 23) he mentions the prayer *Actiones nostras*. The *Ordo XIV* of the fourteenth century has all the constituent parts of our *gratiarum actio* with the exception of the third prayer, *Da nobis*, which we do not come across at this point until the fifteenth century. The history and the figurative representation of the three youths in the fiery furnace, was for the Christians in the dark ages of persecution a source of comfort and encouragement. Likewise the canticle of praise intoned by the youths miraculously preserved amid the flames, was at all times highly prized and frequently used in the liturgy. According to Alcuin (*De Psalm. usu*, I, n. 12) it is: *omnibus laudibus laudabilior et Deo pro omnibus amabilior—melle et favo dulcior—hymnus hymnorum, in quo succincte et affatim melius quam in omnibus laudatur Deus.* In consideration of the Mass and Communion celebration, in which the Lord has done such great things in him, the priest is filled with sentiments of joy, of jubilation, and of gratitude; hence he calls upon the entire creation, heaven and earth, all creatures, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, to unite in his prayer of praise and thanksgiving, with him and for him to glorify the triune God, because of the blessings wherewith he and the whole world have again been favored from the altar. This same invitation to join in jubilant praise of God is continued in psalm 150, in which all voices, all the manifold praises of the other Psalms again meet in unison and exalted accord. *Omnis spiritus laudet Dominum*, "Let every spirit praise the Lord." The main object and chief fruit of the Eucharist is unquestionably *quaedam integritatis restauratio, quae con-*

Thou oughtest not only to prepare thyself by devotion before Communion, but also to carefully keep thyself therein after receiving the Sacrament; neither is carefully guarding thyself afterward less required than devoutly preparing thyself before; for vigilance afterward

tinetur tum cupiditatum restinctione pro vita mortali, tum praeparatione ad gloriosam resurrectionem et immortalitatem pro vita futura (Franzelin). Hence the priest implores of God in the first and third prayers, that He would by the powerful breath of His grace suppress and extinguish in us the fire of concupiscence and of the passions, as He once changed the burning heat for the three youths in the furnace and the blessed Lawrence on the gridiron into a refreshing coolness. In the second prayer, he begs for the sanctification of his entire conduct, for self-sacrificing abandonment to God and to His service, as also the help of grace always to pray, to suffer and to labor for the salvation of souls. The first prayer is generally annexed in the liturgy (for example, on the Ember Saturdays) to the hymn of the three youths. The prayer of St. Lawrence was added, *quia hujus sacrificii fuit insignis minister et specialis advocatus offerentium sacrificium ad impetrandam puritatem et ne exurantur flamma vitiorum, eo vel maxime, quia ejus Oratio concordat cum prima Oratione, qua idem effectus ex sacrificio postulatur, et specialiter congruit hymno recitato trium puerorum, quibus mitigavit Deus flammam ignium* (Quarti, II, tit. 12). Yet the fervent priest is not satisfied with this short thanksgiving after the *sacrum convivium* of the Eucharist, as he knows the gift of God (John 4:19) and esteems it, and since he knows what has been presented to him by God (I Cor. 2:12). In silent meditation he is immersed in the unfathomable and, therefore, impenetrable mysteries he has just accomplished: his soul is thereby incited to interior and vocal acts of gratitude, of adoration, of astonishment, of praise, of self-annihilation, of petition, of atonement and of intercession. In the German mystics there are few prayers after Holy Communion. The reason may be because the German mystics understood full well and demanded of others, that after receiving the Blessed Sacrament the affections should be drawn from our inmost loving heart rather than from books. In consideration of this *excellens dilectio, summa dignatio, pietas maxima, misericordia infinita*, which the Saviour confers on the priest in the sacrament of the altar, a longer more fervent thanksgiving after Mass is for him an act of necessary homage and grateful love; at the same time it is, if well performed, a source of blessing and grace for the life and labors of the priest, that is, a specially powerful means of his own sanctification as well as of the salvation of the souls entrusted to his care. On the contrary, to leave the altar and to speak immediately after of worldly affairs without urgent necessity, and to occupy the mind with temporal cares, frivolity and distraction, infidelity and ingratitude directly after the holiest and most tremendous action, leads easily to that dangerous state of tepidity, which often passes into hardness and impenitence of heart (cf. Apoc. 3:15 f.). Then only will the Most Blessed Sacrament be for the priest *contra omnia mundi pericula firmamentum*, if he, as a man of mortification and prayer, overcomes the opposition of corrupt nature, in order that day after day he may bestow sufficient time and due care on the preparation for Mass as well as on the thanksgiving after Mass. (Cf. *Collect. Lacens.*, V, 165, 675, 902; Quarti, II, xi, 1-5; St. Teresa, *The Way of Perfection*, chap. 35.)

is the best preparation for again obtaining greater graces. For what renders a man very much indisposed to receive them, is to devote himself at once with all his soul to exterior things which claim his heart. Beware of much talk, remain in secret, and enjoy thy God; for thou hast Him, whom all the world cannot take from thee.

Who will help me, O Lord, to find Thee alone, that I may open my whole heart to Thee and enjoy Thee as my soul desireth? . . . This I pray for, this I desire, that I may be wholly united to Thee and may withdraw my heart from all created things, and, by Communion and the frequent celebrating of the Sacrifice of the Mass, may learn even more to relish heavenly and eternal things. Ah! Lord God, when shall I be wholly united to Thee and absorbed in Thee and altogether forgetful of myself? Thou in me, and I in Thee; grant that we both thus continue as one. . . . Verily, Thou art my peace-maker, in whom is sovereign peace and rest; outside of whom is labor and sorrow and endless misery. . . . What creature under heaven is so loved as the devout soul into whom God cometh, that He may feed her with His glorious flesh? . . . O infinite love, singularly bestowed upon man! But what return shall I make to the Lord for this grace, and for this so indescribable a love? There is nothing that I can give Him that will please Him better than my heart, and this will I wholly consecrate to Him and unite most intimately with His heart. Then all that is within me shall rejoice exceedingly when my soul shall be perfectly united to my God; then will He say to me: If thou wilt be with Me, I will be with thee; and I will answer Him: Vouchsafe, O Lord, to remain with me, and I will willingly be with Thee. This is my only desire, that my heart may be united to Thee.⁸⁷

To the divine Lamb, who was sacrificed for us and who, with His blood, hath purchased us from all tribes and languages and peoples and nations, be praise and honor and benediction and thanksgiving and power and glory for all eternity. Amen.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ *Imit. Christ.*, IV, xii, 4; xiii.

⁸⁸ Cf. Apoc. 5:6, 9; 19:14.

NOTE

THE NAME "MASS"

INNUMERABLE graces, incomprehensible wonders and mysteries are contained in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. This holy sacrifice is too great, too precious, and too glorious to be adequately expressed in words or to receive an appropriate name: it surpasses all created knowledge, it is unspeakably grand and sublime. Since the mind of man is too limited and his language too feeble to express perfectly the mystery of the Eucharistic sacrifice, there have been even from the most ancient times a number of titles bestowed upon it, each of which, however, brings into prominence but some aspect of the mystery, yet not one of them exhausts its unfathomably deep and rich contents.¹ Among these names that of *Missa* (Mass) deserves a more particular explanation, since it is the one most generally employed since the early part of the Middle Ages to designate the Eucharistic sacrifice.

The word *missa* (= *missio*, i.e. *dimissio*)² denotes the solemn

¹ Nomen dictum quasi notamen (*characteristic, mark*), quod nobis vocabulo suo res notas efficiat. Nisi enim nomen scieris, cognitio rerum perit (S. Isid., *Etymolog.*, I, V, 1). Such names are, for example: *collecta, dominicum, memoriale, communio, oblatio, λειτουργία, εὐχαριστία, θυσία, λατρεία, σύναξις, μυσταγωγία, οικονομία*. Cf. Bona, *Rer. liturg.*, I, chap. 3.

² Altogether untenable and therefore to be rejected is the etymological tracing of the word *missa* from the Hebrew (Deut. 16: 10, *missah* = *tributum, oblatio*), or from the Greek (*μύησις* = *initiatio, mystica doctrina*), or from the German (*Mess* = *festum, congregatio*). *Missa* is also not to be taken as a participle of *mitto*, to which the substantive *concio* or *congregatio* (*concio vel congregatio missa*, i.e. *dimissa est*) or *oblatio* (*oblatio missa*, i.e. *transmissa est ad Deum*) would have to be supplied; *missa* is rather a later Latin substantive for *missio*, as similar derivative words often occur, for example: *remissa* = *remissio*; *collecta* = *collectio*; *ingressa* = *ingressio*; *oblata* = *oblatio*; *accessa* = *accessio*; *confessa* = *confessio*. As a substantive, *missa* was used in many meanings. It designated in the first place the dismissal at the close of divine service and also of secular assemblies; for the holy Bishop Avitus of

dismissal or the departure of those present after the conclusion of divine service; this signification it even now retains in the well known concluding formula: *Ite, missa est* ("Go, it is the dismissal"). As long as the old baptismal and penitential discipline was in force, a twofold dismissal took place at the Eucharistic sacrifice: the catechumens and the penitents were permitted to assist along with the faithful at the readings or discourses, but were formally dismissed after the Gospel, or the sermon;³ the faithful only were allowed to assist at the celebration of the sacrifice, and to them also the dismissal was formally announced at the conclusion of the service. The rite of the dismissal with blessing and prayer was called *missa*; the term at first found its way into the language of the people, and later on was written and introduced into the public liturgical service which was introduced and concluded with the dismissal.

The name *Missa*, which in the beginning signified only the people's dismissal from divine service, was thus transferred to the celebration of divine worship itself. This without doubt occurred already at an early period; but when this first happened cannot be historically ascertained. A certain proof for the use of the expression *missa* in the meaning of the liturgical celebration of the divine sacri-

Vienne writes (about the year 500) to the Burgundian king, Gundobald, that it was customary in churches and in judgment-halls to cry out *missa est* when the people were dismissed (*in ecclesiis palatiisque sive praetoriis missa fieri pronunciatum, cum populus ab observatione dimittitur*). Furthermore, the word *missa* was employed to designate the entire *Officium divinum*, as well as the separate readings and prayers during it; for example, *missae matutinae*, was the name given to Matins; Vespers were called *missae vespertinae*. In the Middle Ages we meet the word *missa* in the signification of feast and annual fair, since celebration of the sacrifice was the principal part of the festivity, and since the people flocked together at the festivals for buying and selling. The view already advanced and recently defended by Müller in his pamphlet, *Missa, Ursprung und Bedeutung der Benennung*, that *missa* is an ancient Latin sacrificial name and originally signified the same as *oblatio*, is unfounded. Cf. Bellarmin., *De Missa*, I, chap. 1; Benedict. XIV, *De sacr. Miss. sacrif.*, II, chap. 1; P. Rottmanner, O. S. B., in the *Tübinger Quartal-schrift*, 1889.

³ *Missa (dismissal)*, tempore sacrificii, est quando catechumeni foras mittuntur, clamante levita: "Si quis catechumenus remansit, exeat foras," et inde missa, quia sacramentis altaris interesse non possunt, qui nondum regenerati noscuntur (S. Isidor., *Etymol.*, VI, chap. 19, n. 4). *Missa (the dismissal)* catechumenorum fiebat ante actionem Sacramentorum: *missa (the dismissal)* fidelium post confectionem et participationem eorundem Sacramentorum (*mysteries*) (Flor. Diac., *De expos. Miss.*, n. 131).

fice is first met with in the writings of St. Ambrose (d. 397);⁴ from his manner of speaking, it is evident that the word *missa* was at that time not a newly coined expression, but a traditional designation of the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

The transfer of the expression *missa* to designate the most holy and sublime sacrifice is at first sight strange indeed, but is, however, susceptible of explanation. At the period when the name *Missa* was first applied to the celebration of the Eucharistic mystery, the strictest discipline of secrecy was in force. This mode of calling the Holy Sacrifice was well fitted to conceal the holy mysteries from the uninitiated. Therefore the dismissals in use at that period are not to be regarded as implying "unessential rulings of Church discipline," but as important acts which were conducted with a certain degree of solemnity. After an appropriate prayer of thanksgiving and a blessing, the dismissal was liturgically announced by the deacon's exclaiming: *Ite, missa est*. The first dismissal, which was intended for the uninitiated, characterized the subsequent celebration as mysterious, and gave those who remained to understand what purity was required to assist at the sacrifice and to receive the sacrificial food. Not less venerable was the liturgical dismissal of the faithful; they were thereby admonished not to depart from the house of God without permission and not to return to the daily duties of their calling until they had rendered unto God the honor and adoration due to Him and had been enriched with the fullness of heavenly gifts and blessings.⁵

⁴ *Sequenti die (erat autem Dominica), post lectiones (sc. sacrae Scripturae) atque tractatum (sc. expositionem lectionis vel concionem), dimissis catechumenis, symbolum aliquibus competentibus in baptisteriis tradebam basilicae. Illic nuntiatum est mihi comperto quod ad Portianam basilicam de palatio decanos (= lictores) misissent et vela suspenderent, populi partem eo pergere. Ego tamen mansi in munere, Missam facere coepi. Dum offero, raptum cognovi a populo Castulum quemdam (S. Ambr., *Epistol.*, 20, n. 4 f.).*

⁵ "The Latins have given this name (*Missa*) to the sacrifice because, when the time of the offering was reached, the catechumens, the penitents, and the possessed, and at the end all the faithful, were dismissed by a solemn proclamation. . . . This solemn exclusion of these three kinds of persons inspired the people with an exalted idea of the holy mysteries, because it showed them how great a purity is required for assisting thereat, and much more still for participating therein. The dismissal of the faithful at the end of the service was not less venerable, because it gave them to understand that they should not go out of the church without leave, and that the Church did not dismiss her children until she had filled them with veneration for the majesty of the

In addition to this explanation, the most common and reliable, there is still another that deserves mention, one which was held in esteem especially by the liturgists of the Middle Ages. It runs thus: the Eucharistic sacrifice is called *Missa* because in it there is a sending forth (*missa = transmissio*) from earth to heaven and from heaven to earth. The Church sends up to the throne of God by the ministry of the priest the Eucharistic sacrifice and prayers and the necessities and desires of the faithful; God in return sends down upon men the riches of heavenly grace and blessing. Or we may put it this way: Christ is sent into the world by the Father as a sacrifice, and in turn He is sent back again to heaven by the faithful as a sacrifice, in order to reconcile us to the Father and to procure for us all blessings.⁶ This signification of *missa* is implied by the very nature of the thing, and thus far undoubtedly contains truth; but this point of view probably did not determine the selection of the expression *missa* to designate the holy sacrifice: in other words, the faithful of the first ages did not choose the word *missa* to express that in the sacrifice the above-mentioned mission or sending forth from God to man and from man to God takes place; only later was this explanation given to the word.⁷

holy mysteries and the graces accompanying their reception; so that they returned to their ordinary occupations, bearing in mind that the Church, which had dismissed them, admonished them thereby to perform them as religiously as their vocation called for, and with the spirit with which they were filled" (Bossuet, *Sur les prières de la Messe. Oeuvres complètes*, IV [Bar-le-Duc 1870], q. 447).

⁶ Sacrosanctum altaris mysterium idcirco missa dicitur, quia ad placationem et solutionem inimicitarum quae erant inter Deum et homines, sola valens et idonea missio est (Rupert. Tuitiens., *De divin. off.*, II, chap. 10). Dicitur autem Missa a mittendo, et repraesentat legationem inter homines et Deum; Deus enim mittit Filium suum Christum in altare, et iterum mittit Ecclesia fidelis eundem Christum ad Patrem, ut pro nobis intercedat (S. Bonavent., *Expos. Miss.*, chap. 2). Missa dicitur, quia in hoc officio repraesentatur missio Christi a sinu Patris in mundum redimendum, i.e. incarnatio, et missio Christi a mundo ad Patrem placandum, scilicet passio (Sicardus, *Mitral.*, III, chap. 1).

⁷ Prima etymologia verior videtur, altera ad pietatem propensior (Benedict. XIV, *De Miss. sacrif.*, II, chap. 1, n. 5).

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