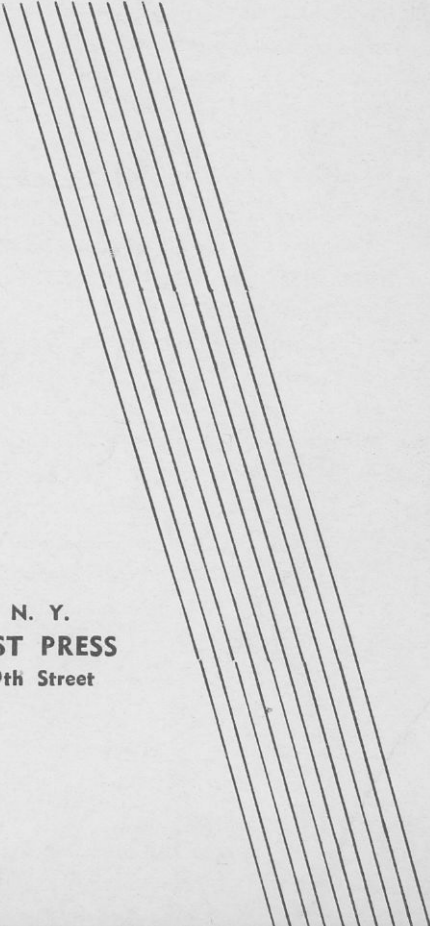


The Ceremonies of  
Holy Week  
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*From Approved Sources*



## PALM SUNDAY

**E**ARLY in the morning of this day Jesus sets out for Jerusalem. The Mother of Sorrows, the Blessed Virgin, trembles at seeing her Son thus expose Himself to danger, for His enemies are bent upon His destruction. But it is not death, it is triumph that Jesus is to receive today in Jerusalem. The Messiah, before being nailed to the Cross is to be proclaimed King by the people of the great city.

As soon as it is known that Jesus is near the city the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of those Jews, who have come from all parts to celebrate the feast of the Pass-over. They go out to meet our Lord, holding palm branches in their hands and loudly proclaiming Him to be King. Whilst some spread their garments on the way, others cut down boughs from the palm trees and strew them along the road. Hosanna is the triumphant cry, proclaiming to the whole city that Jesus, the Son of David, has made His entry as her King.

Thus did God procure a triumph for His Son and in the very city which a few days later was to clamor for His Blood. Holy Church would have us hail Jesus as our King. She has so arranged the service of today that it should express both joy and sorrow; joy by uniting herself with the loyal hosannas of the city of David; and sorrow by compassionating the Passion of her divine spouse. The whole function is divided into three parts.

*Nihil Obstat:*

ARTHUR J. SCANLAN, S.T.D., *Censor Librorum.*

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✠ PATRICK CARDINAL HAYES, *Archbishop of New York.*

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## BLESSING OF THE PALMS

We have an idea of the importance of the blessing of the Palms from the solemnity used by the Church in this sacred rite. The prayers she uses for the blessing are eloquent and full of instruction and, together with the sprinkling of the holy water and the incensation, impart a virtue to these branches which elevates them to the supernatural order, and makes them means for the sanctification of our souls and the protection of our persons and dwellings. The faithful should hold these palms in their hands during the procession and during the reading of the Passion of our Lord at Mass.

The Palms thus blessed are carried in memory of those wherewith the people of Jerusalem covered the road as our Savior made His triumphant entry.

There is every reason to believe the practice of celebrating the Sunday before Easter with a procession of palms dates back to Apostolic times, or at least to the very earliest period at which it was possible for Christians to practice their worship in public. The following prayers are some of those said by the priest for the blessing of the palms.

### Prayers Said at the Blessing of the Palms

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

#### LET US PRAY

Increase, O God, the faith of them that hope in Thee, and mercifully hear the prayers of Thy suppliants; let Thy manifold mercy come upon us, and let these

branches of palm trees or olive trees be blessed; and as in a figure of the Church thou didst multiply Noah going out of the ark and Moses going out of Egypt with the children of Israel, so let us, carrying palms and branches of olive trees, go and meet Christ with good works, and enter through Him into eternal joys. Who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God.

R. Amen.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

V. Lift up your hearts.

R. Lift them up unto the Lord.

V. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

R. It is meet and just.

It is truly meet and just, right and available to salvation, always and in all places to give Thee thanks, O holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God, Who art glorious in the assembly of Thy saints. For Thy creatures serve Thee, because they acknowledge Thee for their only Creator and God. And the whole creation praiseth Thee, and Thy saints bless Thee, because they confess with freedom, before the kings and powers of this world, the great name of Thy Only-begotten Son. Before Whom the Angels and Archangels, the Thrones and Dominations stand, and with all the troops of the heavenly host, sing a hymn to Thy glory, saying without ceasing:

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!

*(The prayers which follow explain the mystery of the palms.)*

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

LET US PRAY

We beseech Thee, O holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God, that Thou wouldst be pleased to bless and sanctify this creature of the olive tree, which Thou madest to shoot out of the substance of the wood, and which the dove, returning to the ark, brought in its bill; that whoever receiveth it may find protection of soul and body, and that it may prove, O Lord, a saving remedy, and a sacred sign of Thy grace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

LET US PRAY

O God, Who gatherest what is dispersed, and preservest what is gathered, Who didst bless the people that carried boughs to meet Jesus, bless also these branches of the palm tree and olive tree which Thy servants take with faith in honor of Thy name; that into whatever place they may be carried, the inhabitants of that place may obtain Thy blessing, and Thy right hand may preserve from all adversity, and protect those that have been redeemed by our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son. Who liveth and reigneth, etc. Amen.

LET US PRAY

O God, Who by the wonderful order of Thy providence wouldst, even in insensible things, show us the manner of our salvation; grant, we beseech Thee, that the devout hearts of Thy faithful may understand to their benefit the mystical meaning of that ceremony,



when the multitude, by direction from heaven, going this day to meet our Redeemer, strewed under His feet palms and olive branches. The palms represent His triumph over the prince of death; and the olive branches proclaim, in some manner, the coming of a spiritual unction. For that pious multitude then knew, what was by them signified, that our Redeemer, compassionating the misery of mankind, was to fight for the life of the whole world with the prince of death; and to triumph over him by His own death. And therefore in that action they made use of such things as might declare both the triumph of victory (His) and the riches of His mercy. We also with a firm faith, retaining both the ceremony and its signification, humbly beseech Thee, O holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God, through the same Lord Jesus Christ, that we, whom Thou hast made His members, gaining by Him, and in Him, a victory over the empire of death, may deserve to be partakers of His glorious resurrection. Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.

## LET US PRAY

O God, Who by an olive branch didst command the dove to proclaim peace to the world, sanctify, we beseech Thee, by Thy heavenly benediction these branches of olive and other trees, that they may be serviceable to all Thy people unto salvation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## LET US PRAY

Bless, O Lord, we beseech Thee, these branches of the palm tree, or olive tree; and grant that what Thy

people this day act corporally for Thy honor, they may perform the same-spiritually with the greatest devotion by gaining a victory over their enemy, and ardently loving the work of Thy mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(The priest completes the blessing of the palms by sprinkling them with holy water and purifying them with the incense. After which he says the following prayers.)*

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

#### LET US PRAY

O God, Who for our salvation, didst send into this world Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord that He might humble Himself to our condition, and call us back to Thee: for Whom also, as He was coming to Jerusalem, to fulfill the Scriptures, a multitude of faithful people, with a zealous devotion, spread their garments together with palm branches in the way: grant, we beseech Thee, that we may prepare Him the way of faith, out of which the stone of offense and the rock of scandal being removed, our actions may flourish with branches of righteousness, so that we may be worthy to follow His steps. Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.

#### THE PROCESSION

The second ceremony of Palm Sunday is the Procession. It represents our Savior's journey to Jerusalem and His entry into the city. It was to testify to their delight at seeing Jesus enter within their walls that the inhabitants of Jerusalem, even the little children, went



forth to meet Him with palms in their Hands. Let us also go before our King singing our hosannas to Him as the conqueror of death and the liberator of His people.

At the close of the procession a ceremony takes place that is full of the sublimest symbolism. On returning to the church the doors are found closed. The procession is stopped but the songs of joy continue. A hymn in honor of Christ our King is sung. The subdeacon strikes the door with the staff of the Cross. The door opens and the procession reënters the church.

This ceremony is intended to represent the entry of Jesus into that Jerusalem of which the earthly one was but the figure of the Jerusalem of heaven, which has been opened for us by our Savior. The sin of our first parents had shut it against us but Jesus opened its gates by His Cross. Thus by the procession the Church raises up our thoughts to the glorious mystery of the Ascension, whereby heaven was made the close of Jesus' mission on earth.

### MASS

The third part of today's ceremony is the offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The portions that are sung by the choir are expressive of the deepest desolation. The history of our Lord's Passion which is now to be read by anticipation, gives to the rest of the day that character of sacred gloom, which we all know so well. During the singing of the Passion the people should hold their palm branches in their hands and by this emblem of the triumph protest against the insults offered to Jesus by His enemies. As we listen to each humiliation and suffering, all of which were endured out of love for us, let

us offer Him our palm as to our dearest Lord and King. When should we be more adoring than when He is most suffering?

### TENEBRAE

The service of Tenebrae, which is sung in the evening of Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of Holy Week is the only occasion upon which the laity are brought into contact with the nocturnal portion of the divine office, that public prayer of the Church through which from the earliest times she has offered to God by night as well as by day an uninterrupted sacrifice of praise. This service is an excellent opportunity for the laity to acquaint themselves with a most beautiful portion of the night Office of the Church.

Tenebrae is the Latin word for darkness. It is applied to this service for two reasons. First, the Office of "Matins" was recited by the early Christians at night; second, the gradual extinction of the candles and lights finally plunge the church into total darkness, which, according to many, signifies in a mystical way the desolation and darkness of the world when the Son of God, its light, died on Calvary.

All is sad and mournful, as though it were a funeral service. Nothing could more emphatically express the grief that now weighs down the heart of our holy mother the Church.

The most striking feature of the Tenebrae as far as externals are concerned is the gradual extinction of the candles in the triangular candlestick which is always a conspicuous object in the sanctuary during these Offices. There are fifteen candles in all, fourteen of which are

of unbleached wax while the one at the top is white. At the end of each psalm or canticle one of these candles is extinguished until but one at the top is left lighted. During the singing of the *Benedictus* the six candles on the altar are also put out. Then the master of ceremonies takes the lighted candle from the triangle and holds it upon the altar on the epistle side, while the choir repeats the antiphon after the canticle; after which he hides it behind the altar during the recitation of the *Miserere* and the prayer which follows the psalm. As soon as this prayer is finished a noise is made which continues until the candle is brought forth from behind the altar and shows by its light that the Office of Tenebrae is over.

### Meaning of the Ceremony

The glory of the Son of God was obscured, as it were, eclipsed by the ignominies He endured during His Passion. He, the Light of the World, powerful in word and work, Who, but a few days ago, was proclaimed King by the citizens of Jerusalem, is now robbed of all His honors. He is, as He says of Himself, an object of shame even to His own disciples, for they are all scandalized in Him, and abandon Him. Even Peter protests that he never knew Him. This desertion on the part of His Apostles and disciples is expressed by the candles being extinguished, one after the other, not only on the triangle but on the altar itself. But Jesus, our Light, though despised and hidden, though eclipsed by the smothering darkness of man's ignorance and sin is not extinguished. This is signified by the candle which is momentarily placed on the altar; it typifies our Re-

deemer suffering and dying on Calvary. In order to express His burial the candle is hidden behind the altar; its light disappears. A confused noise is heard in the church where all is now darkness. This noise and gloom express the pall of darkness that enveloped the earth; the convulsion of nature when Jesus expired on the Cross. The earth shook, the rocks were split, the dead came forth from their tombs—all nature was in agony at the death of its God. But the candle suddenly reappears; its light is as fair as ever; the noise is hushed and homage is paid to the Conqueror of death.

### HOLY THURSDAY

The Roman Missal and Breviary call this day *Feria Quinta in Cæna Domini*, that is, the Thursday of the Lord's Supper, being the day when our Lord, at His last supper, instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist. We call it Maundy Thursday from the ceremony of the washing of the feet, called the Mandatum, from the words of the first antiphon sung during the ceremony, which is not now universally performed.

The Mass on this day differs from the rest of the Office. That of the Holy Eucharist is celebrated, a subject, therefore, of joy and thanksgiving being expressed by the ringing of the bells and the white color of the vestments and ornaments of the altar. For though the Church is wholly taken up during this week with the Passion of Christ, and for that reason has appointed the feast of Corpus Christi as a day of thanksgiving for the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, yet she could not refrain from some expression of her joy and gratitude on the very day when our Lord was pleased to give us a

wonderful pledge of His love. But after the *Gloria in Excelsis* the bells are silent during the remainder of this day, all Good Friday and Holy Saturday, until the recurrence of the same angelical hymn on Saturday. This is intended to honor the silence of our Savior during His passion and to express the astonishment and mourning of the Church for the death of her Spouse.

The Rubrics prescribe the consecration of two Hosts—one for the sacrifice of this day, the other to be carried in solemn procession to a place adorned with lights, where it is kept with splendor for the Office of the next day. The reason for this solemn worship of God in the Blessed Sacrament is to give the people an opportunity of returning thanks to God for this blessing on the very day of institution and this sentiment is strikingly evidenced by them in the frequent visits to places where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. The Blessed Sacrament is removed from the Principal Altar, so that the devotion of the Passion, which was begun there the evening before, at *Tenebrae*, may be continued without pomp or magnificence.

The priest (at the conclusion of the ceremonies) divests the altars of the church of their coverings and other ornaments. The Antiphon (*Diviserunt*) and the Psalm (*Deus, Deus meus*), said by the priest and sung by the choir during the ceremony, show that it represents the stripping of our Savior of His garments, for which the soldiers cast lots, and which they divided among themselves. The nakedness of the altar signifies that Christ in His Passion lost all His beauty and majesty and was in a manner deprived of the glory of His divine nature.



### Blessing of the Oils

Three solemn Masses were anciently celebrated on this day. The first was preceded by the absolution of the public penitents and their readmission to the Church. The second Mass was that of the blessing of the holy oils. This blessing takes place *only in cathedral churches*.

Faith teaches us we are regenerated by water, so are we confirmed and fortified by oil. The first of the holy oils, that is the first blessed by the Bishop is the Oil of the Sick for the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. Formerly, it was blessed on any day of the year as often as required, but later on its blessing was fixed for this day that the three oils might be blessed all together.

The noblest of the three oils is the Chrism and its consecration is more solemn and fuller of mystery than those of the other two. It is by the Chrism that the Holy Ghost imprints His indelible seal on the Christian who has already been made a member of Christ by Baptism. The water gives us our spiritual birth, the Chrism gives us strength, confirms us in our faith, makes us strong and perfect Christians, soldiers of Christ.

In order to express by an outward sign the sacredness of Chrism, an apostolic tradition requires the Bishop to mix balm with it. This balm represents what the Apostle calls the good odor of Christ of Whom it is written, "We will run after Thee, to the odor of Thy ointments."

The holy Chrism, besides its sacramental use in Confirmation and its being put upon the head of the newly baptized is also used by the Church in the consecration of Bishops, in the consecration of chalices and altars, in the blessing of bells and in the dedication of a church.



The third of the holy oils is that which is called the oil of catechumens. Its blessing is less solemn than that of the Chrism but more so than that of the oil of the sick. It is used in Baptism for anointing the breast and shoulders; also for the anointing of a priest's hands in ordination and for the coronation of a king or queen.

### GOOD FRIDAY

The Church commemorates every day the bloody sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross by a true and real unbloody sacrifice, the Sacrifice of the Mass, in which she offers to God the same body and blood that were given for the sins of the world. But on Good Friday she offers no sacrifice, nor is there any consecration of the Holy Eucharist, the celebrant alone receiving the Sacred Host which had been consecrated the day before. So that instead of the Mass, the Church contents herself with a bare representation of the Passion, and makes it her chief business to expose to the faithful Jesus Christ crucified for them. For this end she reads such lessons and tracts as contain predictions of His coming for their redemption and types of His immolation on the Cross, and then she reads the history of the Passion as related by St. John to show how the Law and the Prophets were verified by the Gospel.

The people by these Lessons are instructed in the mystery of this day and therefore beg with the priest the fruit and application of this Passion by praying for all persons, even schismatics, heretics, Jews and pagans. None are excluded on a day when Jesus Christ prayed

for His persecutors and offered His Blood to His Father for the salvation of those who shed it.

Both priest and people adore Jesus Christ crucified, expressing their adoration by kneeling thrice before they kiss the Cross. The veneration of the Cross is as ancient as Christianity itself. It is not the frail materials of the Cross that we pay our adoration to but to Him Who on it offered the sacrifice of propitiation for our sins.

The service of this morning consists of four parts, the lessons, the prayers, the veneration of the Cross and the Mass of the Presanctified. These solemn and unusual rites announce to the people the sacredness of this day, as also the suspension of the Holy Sacrifice for which they are substituted. The altar is stripped, the Cross is covered with a black veil, the candles are of yellow wax. The black vestments denote the grief of holy Church.

On reaching the foot of the altar the celebrant and ministers prostrate themselves while the altar is covered with a single cloth instead of the three which are required when Mass is celebrated. They then rise and the Lessons are begun.

### The Lessons

The priest then recites at the Epistle corner of the altar the three Lessons. The first, the passage from the prophet Osee tells us of the merciful designs of God in favor of His new people, the Gentiles, who were dead, and who were to rise again in three days with Christ Whom they do not yet so much as know.

The second Lesson describes the ancient rite of the Paschal lamb which was the figure of the reality, that is

given us today. This is followed by the history of the Passion according to St. John, the fourth of the evangelists and an eyewitness of what took place on Calvary.

Having thus described to us the Passion and death of Christ, the Church from the earliest ages has presented to the Divine Majesty upon this day a solemn formula of prayers in which she intercedes for the necessities of the whole world. Each of the prayers is prefaced by a few words which show its object. The deacon then bids the faithful kneel down, the subdeacon tells them to rise and unite in the prayer made by the priest.

Celebrant: *Oremus*—Let us pray.

Deacon: *Flectamus genua*—Let us kneel down.

Subdeacon: *Levate*—Stand up again.

At one particular prayer the people do not kneel. The Church has no hesitation in offering up a prayer for the descendants of Jesus' executioners but in doing so she refrains from genuflecting because this mark of adoration was turned by the Jews into an insult against our Lord during the Passion. She prays for His scoffers but she shrinks from repeating the act wherewith they scoffed at Him.

### The Veneration of the Cross

The holy ceremony of venerating the Cross on Good Friday was first instituted in Jerusalem in the fourth century. Due to the zeal of the Empress St. Helen, the true Cross had then recently been discovered. It was exposed every Good Friday. This brought numbers of pilgrims to Jerusalem. Comparatively few could make this visit and witness the ceremony. So it was that about

the seventh century the practice of publicly venerating the Cross on Good Friday was introduced to other churches. Such was the origin of this ceremony.

After reading the prayers, as mentioned before, the priest takes off his chasuble, and taking down the Cross covered with a veil, from the altar, he goes with the deacon and subdeacon to the Epistle corner of the altar where he uncovers the top of the Cross and shows it to the people as he sings:

*Ecce lignum crucis*—Behold the wood of the Cross.

This first exposition which is made at the side of the altar and the words sung in a low tone of voice represents the first preaching of the Cross which the Apostles made, when, for fear of the Jews, they dared not speak of the great mystery except to the few faithful disciples of Jesus. The homage here paid to the Cross is intended as a reparation for the insults and injuries offered to Jesus in the house of Caiphas.

The priest then comes to the front of the step at the Epistle corner of the altar. He unveils the right arm of the Cross and again holds up the crucifix higher than before as he intones in a higher note:

*Ecce lignum crucis*—Behold the wood of the Cross.

This second elevation of the Cross signifies the Apostles extending their preaching of the mystery of our redemption to the Jews, after the descent of the Holy Ghost. It is intended as a reparation to Jesus for the treatment He received in the court of Pilate.

The priest then goes to the middle of the altar, removes the veil entirely from the Cross. He sings in a still higher tone:

*Ecce lignum crucis*—Behold the wood of the Cross.

The third elevation of the Cross signifies the mystery of the Cross being preached to the whole world. It is intended as a reparation to our Lord for the outrages offered to Him on Calvary.

The priest then takes off his shoes, makes three genuflections on both knees and then kisses the Cross. The deacon and subdeacon follow, and lastly the people, for the veneration of the Cross.

The chants used during this ceremony are exceedingly beautiful. First of all there are the *Improperia* or reproaches, *i. e.*, the reproaches made by our Savior to the Jews. Each of the first three stanzas is followed by the *Trisagion* or prayer to the thrice holy God, Who as Man, suffers death for us. The rest of this beautiful chant contains the comparison made by our Lord between the favors He has bestowed upon the Jewish people, and the injuries He has received from them in return.

## MASS OF THE PRESANCTIFIED

When the veneration of the Cross is almost finished, the candles upon the altar are lighted, the Cross is placed again upon the altar. The priest with his ministers and the clergy goes in procession to the repository where the Blessed Sacrament was placed the day before, from whence he brings It back to the main altar.

It hardly need be said that the Mass of the Presanctified, as it is commonly called, is no true Mass; it is not in a theological sense, a sacrifice. The rite which closes the ceremonies of Good Friday is no more than a Communion service, although a certain solemnity is given to

it by the employment of liturgical forms and acts which are usually associated only with the Mass itself.

The priest having placed the Blessed Sacrament on the altar incenses It and lays It on the corporal. The wine and water are put into the chalice and incense into the censer with which the priest incenses the Sacred Host and the offering of wine and water.

There is something singularly impressive in the very strangeness of these maimed rites and this we feel most of all when the priest after washing his hands and reciting the *Orate Fratres* proceeds immediately to sing the *Pater Noster*. The prayer *Libera* which follows is purposely spoken in a loud voice to show that no sacrificial words are being uttered. Then comes the Communion of the priest. Immediately afterwards the celebrant genuflects to the crucifix and with his ministers leaves the sanctuary. The Mass of the Presanctified is finished.

## HOLY SATURDAY

Although Holy Saturday is consecrated to honor the Savior's burial, gleams of Easter gladness now and then penetrate the general grief of the Church. The Office of Holy Saturday consists of six principal parts or ceremonies, the blessing of the new fire, the blessing of the Paschal Candle, the Lessons, the blessing of the Font, Holy Mass and Vespers.

### Blessing of the New Fire

This rite, with which the service on Holy Saturday begins, takes place in the church vestibule or outside in the open air. Perhaps in the early Middle Ages obtaining



a light from flint and steel and getting a charcoal fire to burn was a troublesome affair and attended by a good deal of smoke. This was evidently better done out of doors than in the sanctuary. Old liturgists state that the fire being struck from the flint tells us that Jesus Christ typified by the flint is come to infuse the fire of His divine love into the world by His death.

### The Procession to the Sanctuary

When the fire has been lit and blessed, the thurible filled with coals, the grains of incense to be used for the Paschal Candle blessed, a taper lit with the new flame, the procession enters the church.

The deacon in a white dalmatic which contrasts strongly with the purple vestments and is used on account of the joyful ministry he is about to fulfill, takes a rod with three candles fixed on top. Three times the procession halts. Each time one of the candles is lit by the deacon, who raising the light on high sings:

*V. Lumen Christi*—Behold the Light of Christ.

*R. Deo Gratias*—Thanks be to God.

The first showing of the light expresses the revelation made to us by Jesus, of the Divinity of the Father. The second signifies the world's receiving the knowledge of the Divinity of the Son. The third the revelation of the Divinity of the Holy Ghost. It is then, through Jesus, the light of the world that mankind has been taught to know the Blessed Trinity.

When the procession reaches the sanctuary the deacon takes his place by the Paschal Candle, incenses the book and begins to chant that magnificent prayer known

from its first word as *Exultet*. It is one of the most striking chants in the liturgy of the Church. The deacon at the prescribed time interrupts his chanting and taking the five grains of incense, he fixes them in the candle in the form of a Cross. They represent the five wounds received by our Lord upon the Cross. The deacon also takes the rod which holds the three lighted candles and lights the Paschal Candle. This signifies our Lord's resurrection.

### The Prophecies

After the blessing of the Paschal Candle come the prophecies. They are usually spoken of as the prophecies though they do not all belong to the prophetic books, but the passages have some indirect reference to the coming Messias.

After each prophecy is said:

*Flectamus genua*—Let us kneel down.

*Levate*—Stand up again.

It is asserted that these portions of the Old Testament were read exclusively for the benefit of the catechumens to teach them the history of God's dispensations under the Old Law before they were initiated into the still closer covenant of the New Testament through the sacrament of Baptism.

### Blessing of the Font

After the prophecies the procession goes to the Baptismal Font, Baptistry or wherever the blessing of the water will take place. The priest begins this ceremony by calling to mind in a magnificent Eucharistic prayer a

sort of Preface, the wonders God deigned to perform by means of water. The priest divides the water in the form of a Cross, to teach us that it confers grace and sanctity by the merits of Christ crucified. He touches the water with his hand, praying that it may be free from all impressions of evil spirits. He signs it thrice with the Sign of the Cross to bless it in the name of the Holy Trinity. He separates it with his hand and casts some of it towards the four parts of the world to instruct us that the grace of Baptism like the rivers of paradise flows all over the earth. He breathes thrice upon it in the form of a Cross, desiring God to bless it with the infusion of the Holy Spirit, that it may perceive the virtue of sanctifying the soul. The Paschal Candle is plunged into the water three times signifying the mystery of Christ's Baptism in the Jordan, whereby the element of water received the pledge of its future sanctifying power. After this consecration of the Font some of the blessed water is taken through the church and the people sprinkled with it in accordance with a very ancient custom.

Then the holy oils and Chrism are placed into the water signifying the superabundant grace of Baptism. The priest then with his hand mixes the holy oils with the water that every portion of it may come into contact with this additional source of sanctification.

After the blessing of the Font it was formerly the custom to administer Baptism to those prepared for it. This custom has been discontinued.

The procession then returns to the sanctuary. The priest and ministers prostrate themselves at the altar steps and the Litany of the Saints is chanted, each invocation

repeated twice. This is said that the newly baptized may persevere in the grace they have received.

At the phrase "*Peccatores, te rogamus audi nos*" the celebrant and ministers rise, go to the sacristy and vest for Mass.

### MASS

Only one Mass is said on Holy Saturday. It carries with it all the sudden transformation of mourning into gladness. At the *Gloria* the bells are rung, the organ peals forth, the statues and pictures unveiled and the alleluias are heard again in jubilant tones.

Holy Saturday Mass has no *Credo*, *Agnus Dei*, Offertory verse, Communion verse, nor kiss of peace.

### HYMNS

#### Pange Lingua

Pange lingua, gloriosi  
 Corporis mysterium,  
 Sanguinisque pretiosi,  
 Quem in mundi pretium  
 Fructus ventris generosi  
 Rex effudit gentium.

Nobis datus, nobis natus  
 Ex intacta Virgine  
 Et in mundo conversatus,  
 Sparso verbi semine,  
 Sui moras incolatus  
 Miro clausit ordine.

**Tantum Ergo**

Tantum ergo Sacramentum  
Veneremur cernui,  
Et antiquum documentum  
Novo cedat ritui;  
Præstet fides supplementum  
Sensuum defectui.

Genitori Genitoque  
Laus et jubilatio,  
Salus honor, virtus quoque  
Sit et benedictio,  
Procedenti ab utroque  
Compar sit laudatio. Amen.

**Stabat Mater**

Stabat Mater dolorosa  
Juxta crucem lacrymosa,  
Dum pendebat Filius.

Cujus animam gementem.  
Contristatam, et dolentem,  
Pertransivit gladius.

O quam tristis et afflicta  
Fuit illa benedicta  
Mater Unigeniti!

Quæ morebat, et dolebat,  
Pia mater, dum videbat  
Nati pœnas inclyti.

Quis est homo, qui non fleret,  
Matrem Christi, si videret  
In tanto supplicio?

Quis non posset contristari.  
Christi matrem contemplari  
Dolentem cum Filio?

Pro peccatis suæ gentis  
Vidit Jesum in tormentis,  
Et flagellis subditum.

Vidit suum dulcem Natum  
Moriendo desolatum  
Dum emisit spiritum.

Eja Mater fons amoris  
Me sentire vim doloris  
Fac ut tecum lugeam.

Fac, ut ardeat cor meum  
Im amando Christum Deum  
Ut sibi complaceam.

Quando corpus morietur,  
Fac ut animæ donetur  
Paradisi gloria. Amen.

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