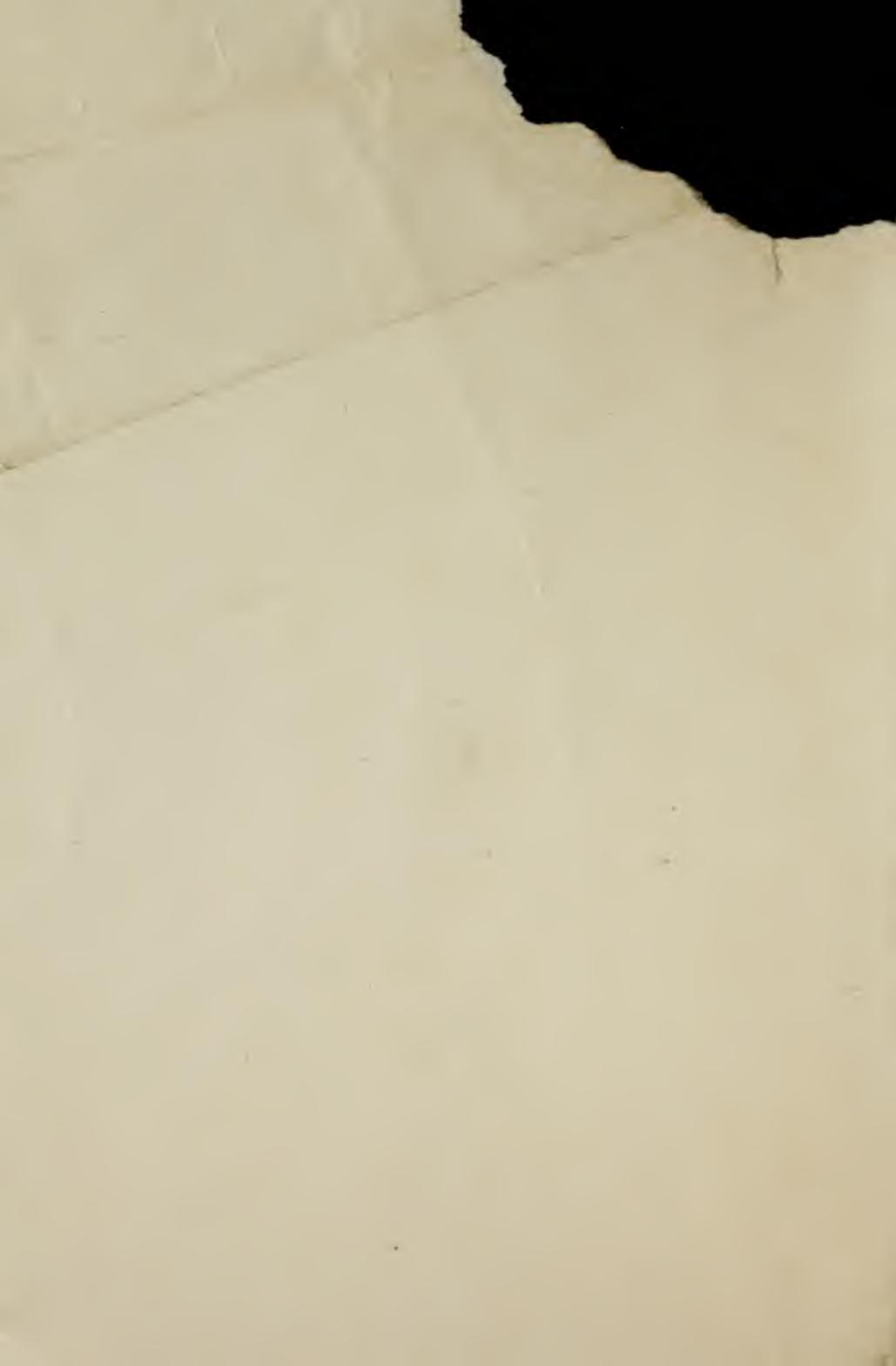


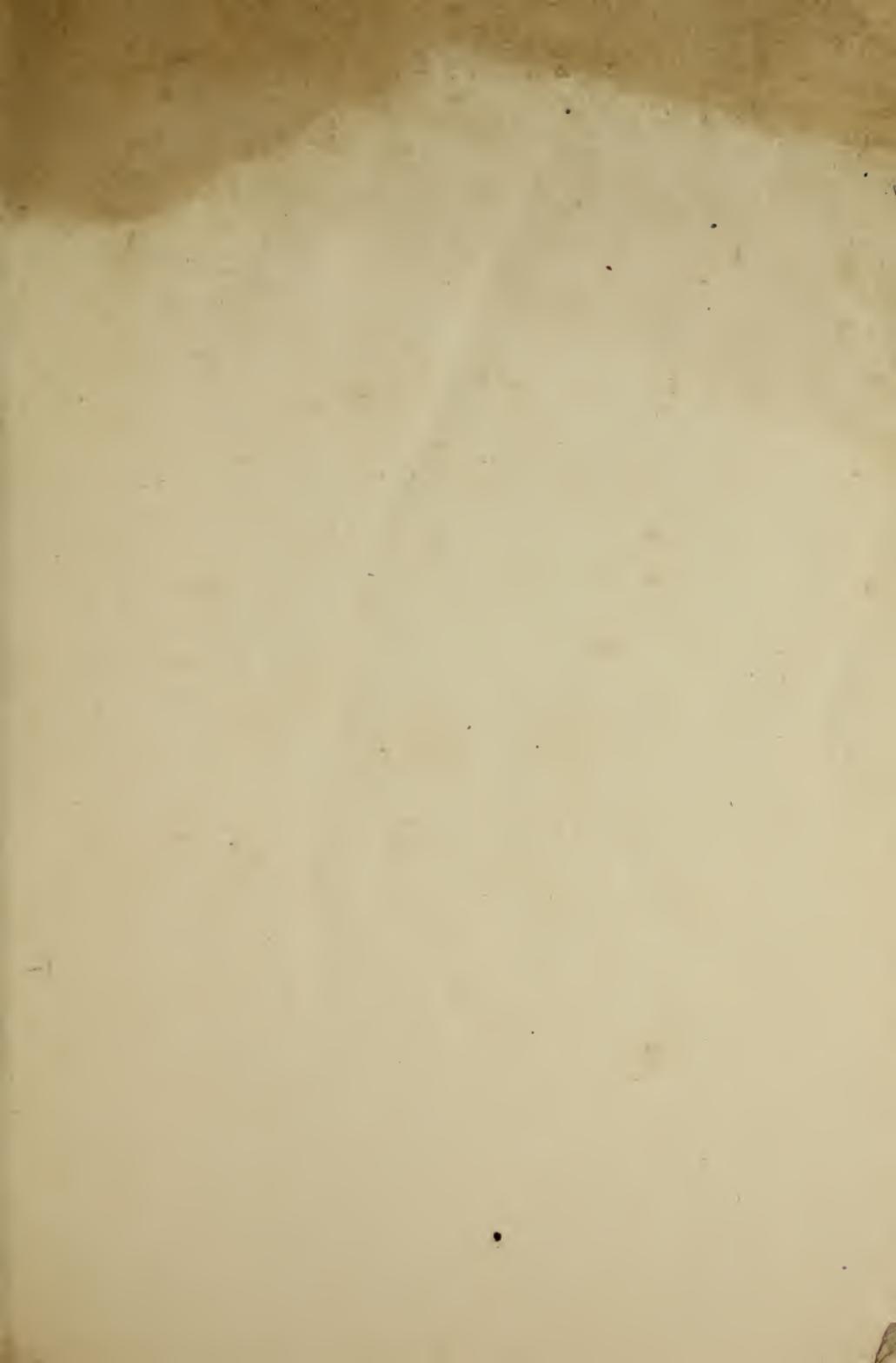
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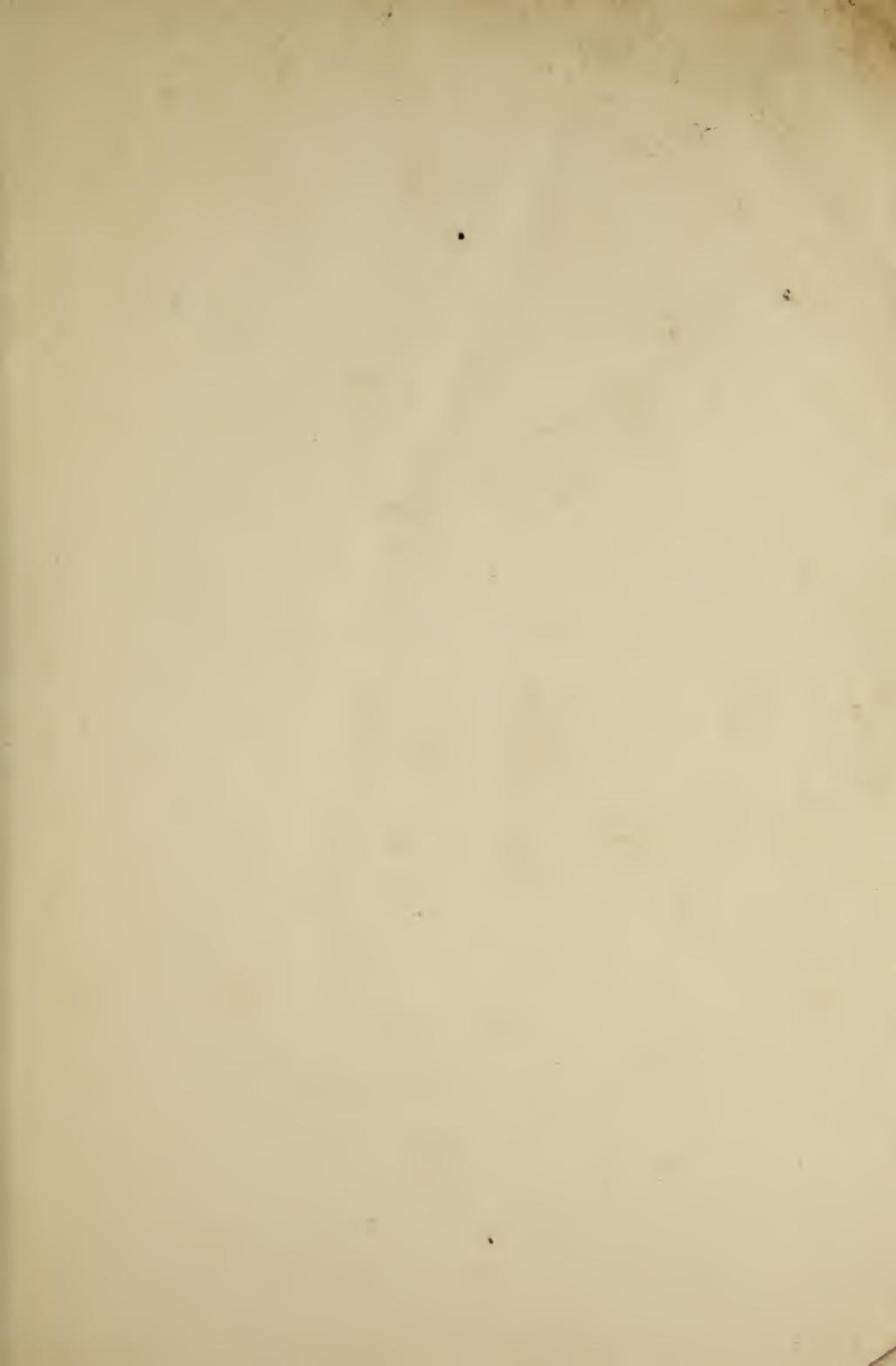
The Order for
The Consecration
of an Altar

Translated from the Roman Pontifical

New York
The Cathedral Library Association
1891









AN ORDER
FOR THE CONSECRATION
OF AN ALTAR

Translated for the use of the laity from

THE ROMAN PONTIFICAL



New York
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1895.



Imprimatur;

† MICHAEL AUGUSTINE,

Archbishop of New York.

THE ORDER OF THE CONSECRATION
OF AN ALTAR WHEN THE
CHURCH IS NOT TO BE
DEDICATED.

Though the consecration of altars may be lawfully performed on any day, it is nevertheless more fitting that it take place on Sunday, or the solemn festivals of the Sain's.¹ In the evening before the day of consecration, the Bishop prepares the Relics to be enclosed in the altar to be consecrated, putting them into a fitting and clean case, together with three grains of incense ; he puts in also a small strip of parchment bearing the following inscription :

A. D. MDCCC. . . ., on the — day of the month of N., I., N., Bishop of——, have consecrated this altar in honor of Saint N., and inclosed therein, the Relics of the holy Martyrs, N. and N.,

¹ The Dedication of churches and Consecration of altars could at first be lawfully performed only on Sundays and festivals, as still recommended in the Rubric, but the answer of Innocent III. to the Bishop of Tournai allows these functions on common (in the text, "private") days. See Decretals, Book iii. Title 40, *De Consecratione Ecclesia*, chap. 2.

and have granted to all the Faithful of Christ, on this day, one year of true Indulgence, and on the anniversary of this Consecration, to them that shall visit it, forty days, in the usual form of the Church.

This case he seals up carefully, depositing it in a suitable and cleanly place, with two candlesticks bearing lighted tapers beside it.

A vigil¹ is to be held before these Relics, and Matins and Lauds are to be sung in honor of the saints whose Relics are to be inclosed.

Whatever is required for the consecration of an altar is prepared in the Church, viz., the Holy Chrism, in a stock, and a cruet; the Holy Oil of Catechumens, also in a stock, with a cruet; one lb. of incense, half of which shall be in grains; the thurible, boat and spoon; a pan of burning charcoal; a vessel full of water; a vessel of ashes; a vessel of salt; a vessel of wine; a sprinkler made of hyssop; coarse towels, to wipe the altar table when needed; a cere-cloth² of the size of the altar, to be consecrated; five small crosses made of thin wax taper for each altar to be con-

¹ St. Ambrose, in his letter to his sister Marcellina, (*Epist.* 22), mentions a like vigil kept before the newly discovered Relics of SS. Felix and Nabor. Most of the prayers and rites of this function are to be found in St. Gregory's *Sacramentary*, in the Pontifical of Egbert of York, which latter carries us back eleven centuries.

² A waxen cloth.

secrated; a few small wooden scrapers to scrape off the altar-table the residuum of the burnt tapers and incense; a vessel to receive these scrapings; lime and sand or tile-dust, to make mortar for cementing the sepulchre of the Relics, and to fix the altar-table on its base; a mason to do this work; two lighted torches to be borne before the Bishop wherever he may go; vessels with water to wash the Bishop's hands, and crumbs of bread and towels wherewith to cleanse and dry them, cotton to wipe off the cross traced on the base of the altar; clean new altar-cloths, and vases and ornaments for the Divine Service, and the use of the altar, to be blessed after the consecration.

In the morning the Bishop in his usual dress comes to the Church and seated at the right or on the fald-stool to the left of the altar to be consecrated, he begins and says in a low tone of voice with the clergy the seven Penitential Psalms with the Antiphon; Ne Reminiscaris, etc., omitting the Litanies. Meanwhile, he vests in amice, alb, cincture, stole, and cope of white color, putting on his plain mitre, and taking his crosier in his left hand. Thus vested, having ended the seven Psalms, the Bishop and his attendants go before the altar to be consecrated, where laying aside his crosier he intones and the choir continues the following Antiphon:

Be with us, Thou One Almighty God, Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost.

¹ See appendix. I.

Standing as before, he says :

Prevent us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, in all our doings by Thy gracious favor, and further them by thy continual help, that every prayer and work of ours may ever begin from Thee, and, being so begun, may be happily ended. Through Jesus Christ Our Lord.

R. Amen.

The Bishop then, putting on his mitre, kneels at the faldstool which is there set for him, and the Cantors, or leaders of the choir, begin the Litanies (of the Saints), at a proper place in which are twice named the Saint to whose honor and name the altar is dedicated, and those saints whose relics are inclosed in it. After the petition ut omnibus fidelibus defunctis, etc. That thou wouldst vouchsafe, to grant eternal rest, etc., has been sung, the Bishop rises. Holding the crosier in the left hand, he raises his right hand, and makes thrice in succession the sign of the Cross over the altar to be consecrated, saying first :

That it may please Thee to bless ✠ this altar now to be consecrated to Thine honor and under the name of S. N.

R. We beseech, etc.

Then:

That it may please Thee to bless ✠ and hallow ✠ this altar, etc.

¹ See appendix. II.

R. We beseech, etc.

Lastly:

That it may please Thee to bless ✠, hallow ✠ and ✠ consecrate this altar, etc.

R. We beseech, etc.

After this, laying aside the crosier, he again kneels, at the faldstool, and the Litanies are finished; whereupon he rises, and, with mitre, goes towards the altar to be consecrated, and standing at a convenient distance from it, he takes off the mitre, and kneeling sings:

Come unto my help, O God.¹

He then rises, and the choir answers:

O Lord, make haste to help me.

The Bishop, standing unmitred as before, then says:

Glory be to the Father, etc.

The Choir:

As it was in the beginning, etc. Amen, *without Alleluia.*

The same is repeated a second and a third time, in the same place and manner, only the voice is raised to a higher pitch each time. The Bishop next standing mitred, in the same place, blesses the water, with the salt, ashes, and wine. He begins forthwith the exorcism of the salt:

¹ Psalm lxix. 2. "Here," says Durandus, "the main part of the function begins."

I exorcise thee, creature of salt, in the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who tells His Apostles ; "Ye are the salt of the earth,"¹ and by the Apostle, says : "Let our speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt,"² that thou mayest be hallowed ✠ for the consecration of this altar, to drive away all temptations of the devil ; and that to all that partake of thee thou mayest bring defence, soundness and protection of soul and body, and perfect safety. Through the same Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who will come to judge the living and the dead, and the world by fire.

R. Amen.

Having put off his mitre, he says :

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

O Lord God, Father Almighty, Who has been pleased to grant from heaven to salt the gift of seasoning all things whatsoever Thou hast created for the food of man, bless ✠ this salt, the work of Thy hands, that it may put the enemy to flight, and send into it a wholesome virtue, that to all who partake of it it may profit unto health of both soul and body. Through Christ Our Lord.

R. Amen.

¹ St. Matt. v. 13.

² Colos. iv. 6.

Then having put on his mitre, he proceeds at once to the exorcism of the water :

I exorcise, thee, water, thou creature of God, in the name of God the ✠ Father, and of God ✠ the Son, and of God the Holy ✠ Ghost, that thou mayest drive the devil far from the borders of the just, lest he lurk beneath the shadow of this altar. And do Thou, O Lord Jesus Christ, pour forth Thy Holy Spirit upon this church and altar of Thine, that it may avail those that worship Thee unto health of soul and body, that Thy Name may be glorified among the nations, and the hearts of unbelievers may turn to Thee, and have no other God but Thee, the only true Lord, Who will come to judge the living and the dead, and the world by fire.

R. Amen.

Taking off the mitre, he says :

V. Lord hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come to Thee.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

O Lord God, Father Almighty, from Whom all things derive their beginning, Who by Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Our Lord, hast decreed that this element of water should serve unto the salvation of mankind, we humbly beseech Thee to

hearken to our prayers, and to hallow ✠ this water by Thy merciful look, so that the inroads of every unclean spirit may by it be driven back, and wherever it be sprinkled in Thy Name, the gift of thy blessing may be vouchsafed, and by Thy favor all evils depart. Through the same Jesus Christ Our Lord, etc.

Then standing bareheaded, he says over the ashes :

V. Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come to Thee.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Almighty, everlasting God, spare them that repent, be favorable to them that beseech Thee, and be pleased to send down from heaven Thy hoily angel to bless ✠ and hallow ✠ these ashes, that they may be a wholesome remedy to all who humbly call upon Thy holy Name, and who, conscious of their offences, accuse themselves, and, before Thy Divine mercy, mourn over their sins, or, who humbly and earnestly entreat Thy loving kindness; and grant, through the invocation of Thy most holy Name, that whosoever shall sprinkle themselves herewith to redeem their sins, may receive health and protection for soul and body. Through Christ Our Lord.

R. Amen.

He then takes salt and mixes it with the ashes in the form of a cross, saying :

May this salt and ashes be mingled together : in the Name of the Father ✠, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy ✠ Ghost.

R. Amen.

Then taking a handful of the mixed salt and ashes, and dropping it thrice into the water, in the form of a cross, he says each time :

May this salt, ashes, and water be mingled together : in the Name of the Father ✠, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy ✠ Ghost.

Then standing unmitred, he (blessing the wine) says :

V. Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come to Thee.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who at Cana of Galilee, ¹ didst change water into wine, and Who art the True Vine, ² show forth unto us Thy manifold mercy, and be pleased to bless ✠ and to hallow ✠ this wine Thou hast created, that wherever it shall be poured out or sprinkled, the place may be filled and hallowed with the plenty of Thy

¹ St. John ii. 1-11.

² St. John xv. 1.

heavenly blessing. Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest forever more.

V. Amen.

He then pours the wine into the water in the form of a cross, saying:

May this wine, salt, ashes, and water be mingled together: in the Name of the Father ✠, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy ✠ Ghost.

R. Amen.

V. Lord hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come to Thee.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Almighty, everlasting God, Maker and Preserver of mankind, Who givest grace to our souls, and bestowest everlasting salvation, send forth Thy Holy Spirit upon this wine mixed with water, salt, and ashes: that endued with a protecting virtue from above, it may serve for the consecration of this Thy altar. Through Our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son, etc.

R. Amen.

The Bishop now proceeds with his mitre on to the altar, where he intones, and the Choir continues the following Antiphon:

Antiphon

I will go unto the altar of God ; unto God Who gives joy to my youth.

Psalm xlii.

Judge me, O God, and defend my cause, [and deliver me] from an ungodly nation : * from the unjust and deceitful man do Thou deliver me.

Repeat the Antiphon.

For Thou, O God, art my strength ; * why hast Thou cast me off ? and why must I walk about mourning while the enemy oppresses me ?

Repeat the Antiphon.

O send out Thy light and Thy truth ; * they shall lead me, and bring me to Thy holy mountain, and to Thy tabernacles.

Repeat the Antiphon.

Then will I go unto the altar of God, * to the God Who gives joy to my youth.

Repeat the Antiphon.

I will praise Thee on the harp, O God, my God ! * Why art thou sad, O my soul ? and why dost thou disquiet me ?

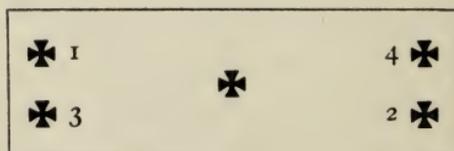
Repeat the Antiphon.

Hope in God : for I shall yet praise Him, the salvation of my countenance, and my God.

Glory be to the Father, &c., is omitted, but the *Antiphon* is once more repeated. At the first recital of the *Antiphon*, the *Bishop*, retaining his mitre, stands before the altar, and, dipping the thumb of his right hand into the water he has just blessed, he traces a cross therewith on the middle of the altar-table, saying:

May this altar be ✠, hallowed in honor of Almighty God, of the glorious Virgin Mary, and of all the Saints, and to the name and in memory of St. *N.* In the name of the Father ✠, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy ✠ Ghost. Peace be to thee.

Then dipping the same thumb anew into the blessed water, he traces four crosses at the four angles of the altar-table, repeating each time the foregoing words. The following scheme will show in what order this is to be done.



Having finished this, at the conclusion of the *Antiphon* and *Psalm lxii.*, the *Bishop*, standing in the same place, takes off his mitre, and says:

Let us pray.

The Sacred Ministers:

Let us bend our knees.

R. Arise.

Thou Victim of propitiation, offered once for all on the altar of the Cross for our ransom, foreshadowed by the stone the Patriarch Jacob erected for a memorial where sacrifice should be offered, and the gate of heaven above be ever opened for the declaration of Divine Truth; Thee, Lord, do we humbly beseech to command that the polished surface of this stone, which is to be wet with the Blood of the heavenly sacrifice, be enriched with the fulness of Thy gracious blessing, Thou Who didst of old, write the Law on tablets of stone. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

After this prayer the Bishop goes round the altartable seven times, sprinkling it and its base with the water he has blessed, using a bunch of hyssop as a sprinkler. Standing before the middle of the altar he intones, and the choir continues the Antiphon.

Sprinkle me with hyssop, O Lord, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Psalm l.

Have mercy on me, O God,* according to Thy great mercy.

And according to the greatness of Thy tender mercies, * blot out my sins.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, * and cleanse me from my sin.

The Bishop, meanwhile, having resumed the mitre, goes round the altar, sprinkles it, and returns to the middle thereof as before. These three verses ended, the Bishop still standing in the same place mitred, intones the Antiphon, as above, a second time: Asperges me—sprinkle me, and the Choir continues it as before.

For I acknowledge mine iniquity, * and my sin is ever before me.

Against Thee only have I sinned, and done evil before Thee, * so that thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and prevail when Thou judgest.

For behold, I was conceived in iniquity, * and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Here the Antiphon is again intoned and sung, and the same ceremony observed as before.

For behold, Thou lovest Truth, * the uncertain and hidden things of Thy wisdom, Thou hast discovered unto me.

Sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; * wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Thou shalt make me to hear joy and gladness, * and the bones Thou hast crushed shall rejoice.

The Antiphon and the same ceremony as before.

Turn away Thy face from my sins, * and blot out all mine iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, * and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not out of Thy presence, * and take not Thy holy Spirit from me.

Antiphon and the same ceremony as before.

Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, * and uphold me with a generous spirit.

I will teach the wicked Thy ways, * and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.

Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation, * and my tongue shall extol Thy justice.

Antiphon and the same ceremony as before.

Lord, Thou shalt open my lips, * and my mouth shall declare Thy praise.

For hadst Thou desired sacrifice, I would indeed, have given it; * in whole burnt-offerings Thou delightest not.

The sacrifice of God is an afflicted spirit: * a broken and afflicted heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

Antiphon and the same ceremony as before.

Deal favorably, O Lord, in Thy good pleasure with Sion: * and may the walls of Jerusalem be built.

Then shalt Thou accept the sacrifice of justice, offerings, and whole-burnt offerings: * then shall they lay calves upon Thine altar.

The Glory be to the Father, etc., *is omitted.*
The same ceremony as before for the seventh time.
Then the Bishop standing, without his mitre, before the middle of the altar, says :

V. O Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come unto Thee.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

O God, who art the Creator of all things visible and invisible, and consecrator of all blessings, vouchsafe to assist at the dedication of these tables of the Lord ; and pour forth the power and consecration of Thy blessing upon them anointed and hallowed with sacred oil and chrism by us who are unworthy ; so that all those who shall approach them in order to pray to Thee, may feel the help of Thy propitiation. Through Christ Our Lord.

Amen.

The Bishop now puts on his mitre, and goes before the altar, where, with the blessed water already mentioned, he mixes mortar or cement. He then takes off the mitre, and standing in the same place pronounces this blessing :

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

O God Most High, Who guardest the highest, low, and lowest things, Who art around every creature, containing it within Thyself, hallow ✠ and bless ✠ these creatures of lime and sand that Thou hast made. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

This mortar thus blessed is kept, but what remains of the blessed water is poured around the foot of the altar. The Bishop goes in procession, with the Cross and the clergy, to the place where the relics were left the preceding night, but before entering the place of the Relics, standing outside and uncovering, he says :

Let us pray.

The Sacred Ministers :

Let us bend our knees.

R. Arise.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, to take away from us all our iniquities, that, with purified souls, we may be fit to enter into the Holy of Holies. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

The Bishop, still uncovered, enters the place ; and standing near, and with his face towards the relics, says :

Let us pray.

Grant we beseech Thee, O Lord, that we may worthily handle these members of Thy Saints,¹ which have been specially devoted to Thy service; whose patronage we desire to have unceasingly. Through Christ Our Lord.

R. Amen.

The Bishop still uncovered reverently takes the vessel in which the Relics are enclosed; then having received the mitre, he comes solemnly and processional-ly to the altar or altars to be consecrated, he intoning and the choir continuing the Antiphon:

Ye shall go out rejoicing, and be led forth in gladness: for the mountains and hills shall leap for joy, awaiting your coming, Alleluia.

Second Antiphon:

Arise, ye Saints of God, from your abodes, hallow these places, bless the people, and keep us sinners in peace.

Third Antiphon:

Forward, ye Saints of God, enter the City of the Lord; for a new church has been built for you, where the people shall worship the Divine Majesty.

¹ St. Basil, on Psalm cxv. observes that "he who touches the bones of a martyr, becomes, to a certain extent, a partaker in his holiness, on account of the virtue abiding in those sacred remains."

Fourth Antiphon :

For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven, who, despising an earthly life, have attained the rewards of the heavenly Kingdom, and have washed their garments in the Blood of the Lamb.¹

When the procession comes near the altar in which the relics are to be deposited, these are placed reverently on a table suitably prepared by the altar, and lighted tapers are placed on either side. The Bishop, still mitred, intones, and the Choir continues this Antiphon :

The saints shall rejoice in glory, and shall sing aloud on their beds.

Psalm cxlix.

Sing to the Lord a new song, * His praise in the assembly of the Saints.

Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him, * and the children of Sion exult in their King.

Let them praise His Name in the dance, * let them sing to him with the timbrel and the harp.

For the Lord is well pleased with His people, * and will glorify the meek with salvation.

The saints shall rejoice in glory, * they shall sing aloud upon their beds.

The high praises shall be in their mouth, * and two-edged swords in their hands.

¹ Comm. of Many Martyrs, First Vespers, *Magnificat*.

To execute vengeance upon the nations, * and punishments upon the people.

To bind their kings in chains, * and their nobles with fetters of iron.

To execute upon them the judgment written * this honor is for all His saints.

The Glory be to the Father, etc., is omitted after this and the next Psalm.

Psalm cl.

Praise ye the Lord in His holy places, * praise Him in the firmament of His power.

Praise Him for His mighty acts, * praise Him according to the abundance of His greatness.

Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet, * praise Him with the psaltery and harp.

Praise Him with the timbrel and dance, * praise Him with stringed instruments and organ.

Praise Him on loud cymbals, praise Him on cymbals of rejoicing. * Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.

No Gloria Patri, etc.

The Antiphon is repeated here, after which the Bishop uncovers, and turning towards the altar, says :

Let us pray.

O God, Who in all places of Thy dominion art present, hallowing them in grace and mercy, hear us, we beseech Thee, and grant that the conse-

cration of this place may remain inviolate, and that the entire body of Thy suppliant faithful may deserve to receive the favors of Thy bounty. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Then, having put on his mitre, the Bishop dips the thumb of his right hand into the Chrism, and anoints the cavity or sepulchre of the altar, where the Relics are to be inclosed, at the four corners, making at each the sign of the Cross, and saying :

May this sepulchre be ✠ consecrated and hal-
lowed ✠. In the Name of the Father ✠, and of
the Son ✠, and of the Holy ✠ Ghost. Peace be
to this house.

Then, taking off his mitre, he reverently places the case containing the Relics and other things inclosed therein, intoning the following Antiphon, which the Choir continues :

Ye have found a resting place under God's altar, ye Saints of God, intercede for us with the Lord Jesus Christ.

V. The Saints shall rejoice in glory.

R. And shall sing aloud upon their beds.

Glory be to the Father, etc., *is omitted, but the Antiphon is repeated. Meanwhile the Bishop, standing bareheaded, puts incense into the thurible, and incenses the case inclosing the Relics, after which, resuming his mitre, he makes a Cross with the Holy Chrism on the*

middle of the nether side of the stone with which the sepulchre is to be closed, saying :

May this stone be consecrated ✠ and hallowed ✠ by this anointing and God's blessing. In the Name of the Father ✠, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy ✠ Ghost. Peace be to thee.

He next fits the stone or slab into the cavity, closing it, and intoning the following Antiphon, to be continued by the Choir :

Under the altar of God, I heard the voices of them that were slain, saying: Why dost Thou not avenge our blood? And they received answer from God: Rest yet for a little time, until the number of your brethren be fulfilled.¹

Another Antiphon.

The bodies of the Saints are buried in peace, and their name liveth forever.²

V. Glory be to the Father, etc. As it was in the beginning, etc.

The Bishop, having taken off the mitre, then says:

Let us pray.

O God, Who, out of the gathering together of all Thy Saints, dost build up for Thy Majesty an everlasting abode, give to this Thy structure heavenly growth, and grant that we may ever be

¹ Apoc. vi. 9-11.

² Ecclus. xlv. 14.

helped by the merits of them whose Relics we here venerate with pious affection. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Resuming the mitre, the Bishop begins to secure the slab or stone covering the sepulchre with some blessed mortar, and the masons in attendance complete the work. He then traces a Cross on it with his thumb dipped in the Holy Chrism, saying ;

Be this altar sealed ✠ and hallowed ✠. In the Name of the Father ✠, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy ✠ Ghost. Peace be to thee.

Then his mitre is taken off, and he intones, and the Choir continues the following :

There stood an angel at the altar of the temple, having a golden censer in his hand, and there was given to him much incense, and the smoke of the incense went up before God. Alleluia.¹

Meanwhile, having resumed the mitre, he incenses the altar on every side, right, left, front, and on the top, until the above Antiphon be ended ; then standing unmitred before the altar, he says :

Let us pray.

May our prayer, we beseech Thee, O Lord, go up like incense before Thee, and may the Christian people obtain plenteous blessings, that who-

¹ Apoc. viii. 3, 4.

soever shall devoutly lay on this altar gifts to be consecrated, or receive them when consecrated, may obtain all that is needed for the present life, together with pardon of his sins, and the grace of everlasting redemption. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Resuming his mitre, he sits down, while two Priests, or Clerks in Holy Orders, wipe the altar-table with a clean towel. He next moves the thurible over it in the form of a Cross, in the middle, and at the four corners. The Bishop then puts fresh incense into the thurible, blessing it in the usual form :

Be thou blessed of Him in whose honor thou art to burn. In the Name of the Father ✠, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy ✠ Ghost.

R. Amen.

And hands it to a Priest in surplice, who, till the end of the consecration, continues going round the altar incensing it on all sides, save when the Bishop uses the thurible, in which case he hands it to the Bishop, who returns it to him, that he may continue as before. The Bishop then standing mitred, intones, and the Choir takes up this Responsory :

Let my prayer be directed before Thee, O Lord, as incense. *V.* The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.¹

¹ Psalm cxl. 2.

Meanwhile the Bishop goes thrice round the altar, turning to the right, and continually incensing it. He next intones, and the Choir takes up this Antiphon which is repeated after every verse.

Jacob set up the stone for a memorial, and poured oil on the top of it.¹ He vowed a vow to the God of Jacob.

Psalm lxxxiii.

How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!* My soul longs and languishes for the courts of the Lord.

My heart and my flesh* have rejoiced in the living God.

For the sparrow has found herself a house,* and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young.

Thine altars, O Lord of hosts,* my King, and my God.

Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord,* they will ever praise Thee.

Blessed is the man whose strength is from Thee,* in his heart hath he settled to go up [to Thy temple], through the vale of tears, to the place which He [God] hath appointed.

For the lawgiver shall bestow a blessing. They shall go from strength to strength,* the God of gods shall be seen in Sion.

¹ Genesis xxviii. 18, 20.

Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer,* hearken,
O God of Jacob.

Do Thou, O God our protector, behold,* and
look upon the face of Thine anointed.

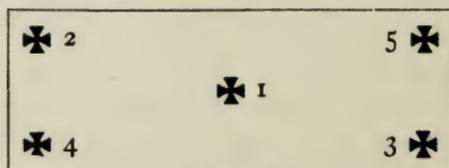
For better is one day in Thy courts* than a
thousand.

I had rather be a menial in the house of my
God,* than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

For God loveth mercy and faithfulness,* grace
and glory will the Lord give.

No good things will He withhold from them
that walk in innocence.* Lord of hosts, blessed
is the man that trusts in Thee.

Glory be to the Father, etc., *is not said.* *During
this chant, the Bishop standing mitred, dips his thumb
into the Holy Oil of Catechumens, and with it traces
five Crosses on the altar-table, as is shown in the
scheme below, saying at each Cross:*



May this stone be ✠ hallowed and ✠ conse-
crated. In the Name of the Father ✠, and of the
Son ✠, and of the Holy ✠ Ghost, in honor of God,
of the glorious Virgin Mary, and of all the Saints,
to the name and memory of St. *N.* Peace be to
thee.

Then taking the thurible from the Priest who incenses the altar, he puts in, and blesses incense as before, and standing mitred, intones, and the Choir takes up the Responsory:

Let my prayer be directed before Thee, O Lord, as incense. *V.* The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

After intoning this Responsory, the Bishop, turning to the right, goes round the altar once, incensing it; then handing back the thurible to the Priest, he takes off his mitre at the end of the Responsory, and says:

Let us pray.

The Sacred Ministers:

Let us bend our knees.

R. Arise.

May the unspeakable tenderness of Thy mercy be present to us, O Lord, and do Thou pour forth on this stone Thine effectual blessing ✠ and the virtue of Thine unction, that whosoever shall pay his vow to Thee may, through Thy bounty, receive a reward. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

After this, the Bishop intones, and the Choir takes up the Antiphon which is repeated after every verse of the Psalm:

Jacob, rising in the morning, set up the stone for a memorial, pouring oil on the top of it; he

vowed a vow to the Lord: surely this place is holy, and I knew it not.

Psalm xci.

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, * and to sing to Thy Name, O Most High:

To show forth Thy mercy in the morning, * and Thy faithfulness in the night;

On an instrument of ten strings, the psaltery, * with loud music on the harp.

For Thou, O Lord, hast made me glad through Thy doing,* and I will glory in the works of Thy hands.

O Lord, how great are Thy works!* Thy thoughts are exceeding deep.

An unwise man knows not,* nor does a fool understand this.

When the wicked sprout up like grass,* and all the workers of iniquity flourish;

[It is] that they may be undone for ever.* But Thou, O Lord, art Most High for evermore.

For behold, Thine enemies, O Lord, behold, Thine enemies shall perish,* and all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.

But my horn shall be exalted like that of a unicorn,* and mine old age [is refreshed] by an overflowing mercy.

Mine eye has looked down on mine enemies,*

and mine ears have heard [of the overthrow] of the wicked that rise up against me.

The just man shall flourish like the palm-tree : * he shall grow like a cedar in Libanus.

Planted in the house of the Lord,* they shall flourish in the courts of the house of our God.

They will still bear fruit in old age ; * hale and flourishing shall they be ; to declare

That the Lord our God is upright,* and there is no injustice in Him.

Glory be to the Father, etc., *is omitted.* The Bishop meanwhile resumes his mitre, and makes other five Crosses with his thumb dipped in the Holy Oil of Catechumens, in the same places and order as above, saying at each Cross:

May this stone be ✠ hallowed, etc.

The Bishop then puts in, and blesses incense, as before, and then intones the Responsory:

Let my prayer be directed before Thee, O Lord, as incense. V. The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

During the Responsory the Bishop begins from the right hand and goes round the altar, incensing it. When he has finished, he takes off his mitre, and says:

Let us pray.

The Sacred Ministers:

Let us bend our knees.

R. Arise.

Be Thou with us, O Lord, at the dedication of this Thy table; and now that it is anointed by us, though unworthy, with holy oil, do Thou pour forth upon it the efficacy and consecration of Thy ✠ blessing and of Thy hallow ✠ ing. Thou Who livest and reignest God for evermore.

R. Amen.

Another Prayer.

Almighty, everlasting God, do Thou hallow with the virtue of Thy blessing ✠ this altar, which we, though unworthy, consecrate to Thee, and in memory of Thy holy servant *N.*, and show forth Thy bountiful aid to all who shall here call upon Thee, and put their trust in Thee, so that the gifts laid upon this altar may ever find acceptance, and the sacraments their efficacy, and prayer its answer. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

The Bishop then intones the following Antiphon, which is taken up by the Choir and repeated after every verse of the Psalm.

O God, Thy God has anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.

Psalm xliv.

My heart hath uttered a good word; * I speak of my works to the King.

My tongue is the pen * of a rapid writer. ¹

Thou art fairer than the children of men ; grace is poured forth on Thy lips : * therefore hath God blessed Thee for ever.

Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh,* Thou most mighty,

Thy glory and Thy comeliness ;* bend [thy bow], ride prosperously, and reign

Because of truth, and of meekness and justice ;* and Thy right hand shall teach Thee wondrous things.

Thine arrows are sharp (people shall fall under Thee),* into the heart of the King's enemies [shall they enter].

Thy throne, O God, is for ever,* a sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom.

Thou hast loved justice, and hated wickedness,* therefore, O God, Thy God, has anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.

Of myrrh and aloes and cassia are all Thy gar-

¹ A plausible rendering is: "My heart is brimful—joyful the matter—I utter words—a king is my theme—my tongue is a pen, a rapid writer." The nuptials of a king of David's race (Solomon or Joram?) *may* have given occasion for this beautiful Psalm, but the contents, the very title ("A didactic, or instructive poem"), the unanimous consent even of the later Jewish commentators would prove its Messianic import ("A greater than Solomon is here"), even had we not the express witness of the "Spirit that spake by the prophets" (see Hebrews i. 8, 9). "The joyful matter" is the nuptials of Christ with His Church.

ments [fragrant]; from out of palaces of ivory,* whence kings' daughters [who are] among Thine honored women have made Thee glad.

The queen stood at Thy right hand in vesture of gold, * in embroidered apparel.

Hearken, O daughter, and look, and incline thine ear, * and forget thy people, and thy father's house.

And the King shall delight in thy beauty: * for He is the Lord [thy God],¹ and they shall worship Him.

And the daughters of Tyre shall come with gifts;* all the richest of people shall entreat Thy favor.

All glorious is the King's daughter within,² * in cloth of gold, in embroidered apparel.

Virgins shall be brought unto the King in her train;* her companions shall be brought to Thee.

They shall be brought with gladness and rejoicing:* they shall enter the King's palace.

Instead of thy fathers, sons shall be born unto thee;* thou shalt make them princes in all the earth.

They shall make Thy Name memorable * in all generations.

Therefore shall the people praise Thee for ever,* for ever and ever.

¹ "*Thy God*" has crept into the Vulgate text by inadvertence: "for He is thy Lord" is the proper rendering.

² "Within," *i.e.*, in the inner apartment.

Omit the Glory be to the Father, etc. When the Antiphon is begun, the Bishop puts on his mitre, and traces with his thumb dipped in the Holy Chrism, five Crosses on the middle of the altar-table, and at its four corners, as shown in the scheme above, saying at each Cross :

May this stone be hallowed ✠, etc.

He then takes the thurible from the Priest who is incensing the altar, puts in, and blesses incense, and intones the Responsory :

Let my prayer be directed before Thee, O Lord, as incense. *V.* The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

Meanwhile, the Bishop goes round the altar, turning this time to the left, and incenses it as before. He then takes off his mitre, and says :

Let us pray.

The Sacred Ministers :

Let us bend our knees.

R. Arise.

May Thy Holy Spirit, we beseech Thee, O Lord our God, descend upon this altar to hallow thereon our gifts and those of Thy people, and graciously to cleanse the hearts of the receivers. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

The Bishop then intones, and the Choir takes up the Antiphon as before :

The Lord hath hallowed His tabernacle: for this is the house of God, wherein they shall call upon His Name, of which it is written: And My Name shall be there, saith the Lord.¹

Psalm xlv.

Our God is our refuge and strength, * a constant help in afflictions that have fallen upon us.

Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved, * and though the mountains be carried into the heart of the sea.

Its waters may roar and foam, * and the mountains quake at its swelling.

A river there is, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, * which the Most High has hallowed for His tabernacle.

God is in her midst; she shall not be moved: * God will help her at the morning dawn.

Nations raged, kingdoms tottered: * He uttered His voice, the earth quaked.

The Lord of Hosts is with us, * our protector is the God of Jacob.

Come, and behold the works of the Lord, what wondrous devastations He hath made in the earth. * He makes wars to cease unto the end of the earth.

¹ III. Kings viii 29 Ant. at *Magnificat*, First Vesp. Dedicat of a Church.

He breaks the bow, and cuts the spears in pieces, * and burns the shields in the fire.

Be still, and know that I am God: * I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.

The Lord of Hosts is with us: * our protector is the God of Jacob.

Omit Glory be to the Father, etc. *While this Antiphon and Psalm are singing, the Bishop puts on his mitre, and pours and spreads the Holy Oil of Catechumens and the Holy Chrism together on the altar, rubbing the Holy Oils over it with his right hand. When he has ended, he intones, and the Choir takes up the Antiphon as before:*

Behold,¹ the smell of my son is as the smell of a plentiful field which the Lord has blessed: may my God make thee to increase as the sands of the sea,² and give thee the blessing of the dew of Heaven.

Psalm lxxxvi.

His foundations are in the holy mountains. * The Lord loves the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

Glorious things are told of thee, * O city of God.

¹ Genesis xxvii. 27, 28.

² Genesis xxviii. 3.

I will make mention of Rahab³, and Babylon * as of those who know Me.

Behold the Philistines, and Tyre, and the people of Ethiopia, * these were each born here.

And of Sion shall it be said: this and that one was born in her, * and He, the Most High, has established her.

The Lord shall number in registering nations and princes * all who were born in her.

All they that dwell in thee * are rejoicing.

Glory be to the Father, etc., *is not said.*

After this Psalm, the Bishop, standing with mitre, says:

Let us pray, dearest brethren, that our Lord would bless ✠ and consecrate ✠ this stone whereon the oil of Holy Unction hath been poured, to receive the prayers and offerings of His people; that what we have anointed may be anointed in His Name; that He may receive the prayers and vows of the people, and that we laying upon this altar, prepared thereunto by Holy Unction, the Sacrifice of Propitiation, may become fit propitiators with God. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who with Him, and the Holy Ghost lives and reigns God unto the ages of ages.

R. Amen.

The Bishop then intones, and the Choir takes up this

³ *i. e.*, Egypt—"the proud one," "the fierce one."

Antiphon.

Moses built an altar to the Lord God, laying thereon whole burnt-offerings; and, slaying victims, he offered an evening sacrifice of a sweet savor to the Lord God before the children of Israel.

Then, standing with his mitre on, he says :

Dearest brethren, let us humbly entreat the mercy of God the Father Almighty, that, yielding to the voice of our supplication, He would hallow this altar, which is to be bedewed with the Blood of Thy Mystic Sacrifice, with His effectual blessing ✠, and would be pleased ever to bless ✠ and hallow ✠ the offerings laid hereon by the earnest devotion of His servants; and that being appeased by the spiritual incense, He may ever readily hearken to the prayers of His household. Through Christ Our Lord.

R. Amen.

He then blesses the incense to be burned on the altar, standing without his mitre, and saying :

V. Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come unto Thee.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Lord God Almighty, in Whose presence the

angelic hosts stand trembling, who, as we read in Thy holy Word, serve Thee as spirits and a flaming fire, ¹ be pleased to look down upon, to bless ✠, and hallow ✠ this incense Thy creature, that wherever its perfume is smelt, all sickness and ailments, and every wile of the enemy may be made to flee, and be driven away from the creatures Thou hast redeemed with the Precious Blood of Thy Son; and that the sting of the infernal serpent may ever be powerless to harm them. Through the same Christ Our Lord.

R. Amen.

He then sprinkles the altar with holy water, and, putting on his mitre, forms, with his own hand, of this incense five Crosses, each consisting of five grains, on the five places of the altar-table where he previously made the five Crosses with water, oil, and Chrism. Over each Cross of incense he places one Cross of the same size made of thin wax taper; he lights the tops of each Cross, and with them the incense is burned and consumed. When all these Crosses are lighted, the Bishop, laying aside his mitre, kneels before the altar, and intones the following, to be continued by the Choir:

Alleluia. Come, O Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of Thy faithful, and kindle in them the fire of Thy love.

¹ Psalm ciii. 4.

Should the consecration take place between Septuagesima Sunday and the feast of Our Lord's Resurrection, the Alleluia is omitted, and the Versicle alone is said. The Bishop then stands without mitre facing the altar and the Choir sings the two following Antiphons :

The smoke of the incense went up before the Lord from the hand of the Angel. ¹

Another Antiphon :

The Angel stood at the altar, having a golden censer in his hand ; and there was given to him much incense and the smoke of the incense went up before God. ²

The Bishop then, still standing without his mitre before the altar, says :

Let us pray

The Sacred Ministers :

Let us bend our knees.

R. Arise.

Holy Lord, Father Almighty, everlasting God, gracious and merciful, hearken to the prayers of our lowliness, and look down upon the whole burnt offering of this Thine altar, that being made acceptable, not by visible fire, but by the outpouring of the grace of Thy Holy Spirit, it may go up before Thee as a sweet-smelling savor, that

¹ Apoc. viii. 4.

² Apoc. viii. 3, 4.

to all who duly partake thereof it may become a healing Eucharist, and avail them unto life everlasting. Through Christ Our Lord.

R. Amen.

After these prayers, the tapers and incense being consumed, the ashes are scraped off with the wooden spatulæ by one of the attendant clerks, and the scrapings are collected and cast into the piscina. Meanwhile the Bishop, without mitre, standing before the altar-steps, facing the altar, says :

Let us pray.

The Sacred Ministers.

Let us bend our knees.

R. Arise.

Almighty God, in whose honor, and that of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the Saints, and to the name and memory of St. *N.*, we, Thy unworthy servants, do consecrate this altar; graciously and mercifully give ear to our humble prayers, and grant that all offerings made upon this altar may be agreeable, acceptable, favorably received, and penetrated with the dew of Thy Holy Spirit: that at all times, Thou mayest be moved to relieve the anxieties of Thy people who shall call upon Thee in this place, to heal their diseases, to hear their prayers, to accept their vows, to strengthen their good purposes, to grant

whatsoever they ask. Through our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son, Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the same Holy Ghost, God.

Standing as heretofore, with his hands extended before his breast, he says this

Preface.

V. For ever and ever.

R. Amen.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

V. Lift up your hearts.

R. We have them towards the Lord.

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

R. It is meet and just.

Holy God, all-powerful Father, eternal and merciful God, it is truly worthy and just, and profitable unto salvation, that we should at all times, and in all places give thanks to Thee, whose existence we cannot measure, who art just what Thou wishest to be, the holy and wonderful God, whose majesty exceeds the limits of creation. We bless Thee, and we humbly beseech Thee to regard these altars as Thou did that which Abel, the forerunner in suffering of the mystery of salvation, being slain by his brother, imbued and consecrated with his pure blood. Look on these altars,

O Lord, as Thou didst on that which Abraham, our father, who merited to see Thee, built and invoking Thy name, dedicated to Thee; on which same altar the priest Melchisedech showed forth the pattern of the sacrifice of triumph. Look, O Lord, on these altars as Thou didst upon that on which Abraham, whose faith we inherit, with unquestioning trust and unresisting obedience, placed his son Isaac. On which same altar, by the offering of the son and the slaying of the lamb, the depth of the saving mystery of our Lord's passion was revealed. Look, O Lord, on these altars as Thou didst look on the well of exceeding great purity which Isaac found, and dedicated to Thy Majesty under a bounteous name. Look, O Lord on these altars as Thou didst look on that stone which supported Jacob's head, in the sleep in which he saw, by revelation, angels ascending and descending by a mysterious ladder. Look, O Lord, on these altars as Thou didst look on that which Moses, on receiving the commandments strengthened on a foundation of twelve stones thus foreshadowing the number of the Apostles. Look, O Lord, on these altars as Thou didst on that which Moses cleansed by a rite of purification, lasting over seven days, and by divine instruction called the Holy of Holies. As Thou hast spoken to Moses, saying: If anyone touch

this altar let him be considered sanctified. So, let the worship of these altars be a worship of innocence, let pride be immolated, let anger be suppressed, let luxury and lust in whatever shape be stricken down, let chastity be our substitute for the sacrifice of turtle-doves and innocence of life for that of the young pigeons.

What follows is read in an undertone, yet so as to be heard of the bystanders.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the same Holy Spirit, etc.

R. Amen.

The Preface finished, the Bishop taking the mitre, dipping the thumb of his right hand in the chrism anoints the front of the altar in the form of a cross, beginning the Antiphon which the choir continues.

Uphold, O God, in strength what Thou hast wrought in us, for Thy temple at Jerusalem. Alleluia.

Psalm lxxvii.

Let God arise, and His enemies be scattered, * and let them that hate Him flee before Him.

As smoke is driven off, so let them be driven away: * as wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.

But let the just rejoice, and exult before God, *
and let them be exceeding joyful.

Sing unto God, sing praises to His Name; *
prepare a way for Him that rides upon the
heavens. The LORD is His name; †

Rejoice before Him; * His enemies shall be
terrified at His presence. A Father of the father-
less, and an advocate of widows.

Is God in His holy place.* God who makes
those of one mind to dwell in a house.

Who brings out them that are bound into pros-
perity; * but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

O God, when Thou wentest forth before Thy
people,* when Thou didst march through the
wilderness:

The earth quaked, the heavens also dropped at
the presence of God; [yon] Sinai,* at the presence
of the God of Israel.

A plentiful rain didst Thou pour down, O God,
upon Thine inheritance: * when it was weary,
Thou didst truly strengthen it.

Thy flock dwelt therein; * Thou didst provide
of Thy goodness for the poor, O God.

The Lord gave the word to the messengers of
good tidings,* a numerous host.

Kings of hosts [are made vassals] of the dearly-

† In the Hebrew, "Jah," an abridged form of "Jehovah."

beloved [people]; *¹ and the beauty of the house shall divide the spoils.

When ye have lain among the folds, (ye shall be) very dove-wings covered with silver,* and her pinions with glistening gold.

When the Almighty scattered kings in it,* it was white as snow on Selmon.* Thou mountain of God, Mount Bashan.

Thou many-peaked mountain, thou range of Bashan; * why look ye jealously, ye many-peaked mountains?

¹ So Allioli, in his attempt to make some sense out of this difficult passage, in his German (Catholic) version of the Divine Scriptures. The Hebrew, as pointed by the Masoretic (*i. e.* traditional) vowel points, can be translated: "The kings of hosts shall flee, shall flee." St. Jerome, in his version of the Psalms from the "Hebrew Verity," renders it: "The kings of armies shall league together." The Alexandrian Greek version, from which the Vulgate Psalter is translated, renders its original literally: "The king of forces (powers) of the beloved of the beloved," which approaches somewhat the version of the Samaritan Symmachus (about the close of the second century of our era), who gives: "Kings of soldiers were loved, and were beloved." The Syriac gives it: "Kings of armies shall gather together, and the beauty of thy house shall divide the spoils." The Arabic: "The king of forces (*virtutum*) is the beloved, and in the splendor of the house of the beloved one he shall divide the spoil." The Chaldean Targum, or interpretation of Jonathan ben Uzziel: "Kings with their armies have gone forth from their places of judgment, and the wise have been removed from their knowledge, and the congregation of Israel shall divide the prey from heaven." Save the last, these translations are all meant to be literal.

That mountain God hath been pleased to dwell in ; * surely the Lord will dwell there forever.

The chariots of God are two myriads, thousands of joyous angels ; * the Lord is among them, Sinai itself is in the sanctuary.

Thou didst go up on high, Thou didst take captive a captive-band ; * Thou didst receive gifts among men.

Yea, even among unbelievers,* that the Lord God might have a dwelling.

Blessed be the Lord, day by day,* He makes our course prosperous, the God of our salvation.

Our God is a God of salvation,* and of the Lord, the Lord are the escapes from death.

But God will crush the heads of His enemies,* the hairy skull of them that walk in their trespasses.

The Lord hath said: From Bashan I will bring back, * I will bring back from the depths of the sea.

That thy foot may be dipped in blood, * that the tongue of thy dogs [may drink] of the same [flowing] from thy enemies.

They have seen Thy processions, O God ! * The processions of my God, my King, Who is in the sanctuary.

First came singers, accompanied by players on instruments, * in the midst of damsels playing on timbrels,

In the assemblies bless ye God, the Lord, * [ye that are] of the fountain-head of Israel.

There is Benjamin the youngest * in a trance.

The Princes of Juda their commanders, * the princes of Zabulon, the princes of Nepthali.

Command, O God, Thy strength: * strengthen, O God, that which Thou hast wrought in us.

For Thy Temple at Jerusalem * shall kings bring Thee presents.

Rebuke the beasts of the reeds, the troop of bulls among the calves of the nations: * trampling upon those that take pleasure in silver.

Scatter the nations that delight in war. Princes will come out of Egypt; * Ethiopia will eagerly stretch forth her hands to God.

Kingdoms of the earth, sing unto God; * sing praises to the Lord;

Sing praises to God, Who rides upon the heaven of heavens * from the day-spring;

Behold, He shall send forth His voice, a voice of might. Give glory to God: over Israel * is His majesty, and His strength is in the clouds.

God is wonderful in His holy places: the God of Israel is He that gives strength and power to His people. * Blessed be God.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

As it was in the beginning, &c.

The Psalm finished, the Bishop, laying aside the mitre, says:

Let us pray.

We humbly beseech Thy Majesty, O Lord, that it may please Thee effectually to bless ✠, and hallow ✠ this altar anointed with the outpouring of Holy Oil to receive the gifts of Thy people; that having been anointed by us, though unworthy, with Holy Chrism, under the invocation of Thy Name, in honor of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the Saints, and in memory of Thy holy servant *N.*, it may be well-pleasing to Thee, and may remain a perpetual altar; so that whatever is henceforth offered or consecrated thereon may be to Thee a meet whole burnt-offering, and that the gifts of all who here offer Thee sacrifice may be graciously accepted by Thee, merciful Lord; may the bonds of all our sins be thereby loosed, our stains blotted out, pardon obtained, and graces acquired, so that together with Thy Saints and Elect, we may be found worthy to enjoy life everlasting. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Resuming the mitre, with his thumb dipped into the Chrism, the Bishop traces a Cross on the juncture of the altar-table and the base on which it rests, at the four corners, as if to join them together, saying at each Cross:

In the name of the Father ✠, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy ✠ Ghost.

Then taking off his mitre he says:

Let us pray.

We humbly beseech Thee, Almighty everlasting God, through Thine Only Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to hal✠ low with Thy heavenly blessing this altar devoted to holy purposes; and as Thou didst accept with wondrous condescension the offering of Thy High Priest Melchisedech, so Thou wouldst be pleased to accept the gifts laid on this new altar, that Thy people who come together into this holy dwelling of Thy Church, being ransomed and sanctified by these offerings, may obtain life everlasting. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Subdeacons now carefully wipe the altar-table with coarse towels, and the Bishop goes to his seat near the altar, where sitting down with his mitre on, he cleans his hands with crumbs of bread and washes and dries them. The Subdeacons or Acolytes then present to him the new altar-cloths, the vases and ornaments for God's service, destined for the consecrated altar. The Bishop takes off his mitre, and rising, blesses them, saying:

THE BLESSING OF THE ALTAR-CLOTHS
VASES AND ORNAMENTS FOR THE
CONSECATED ALTAR.

V. Our help is in the Name of the Lord.

R. Who made heaven and earth.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with Thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Almighty and merciful God, who from the beginning hast made all things useful and necessary to man, and willest that temples made by men's hands be dedicated to Thy Holy Name, and be called the places of Thine abode, and Who didst command by Thy servant Moses pontifical, priestly, and Levitical vestments, with all the other furniture of divers sorts, to be made for the service and adornment of Thy tabernacle and altar; graciously hear our prayers, be pleased to cleanse, bless ✠, hallow ✠, and consecrate ✠ by our lowly ministry all these ornaments of divers kinds for the use of of this Thy altar, that they may be meet for the Divine Service and Sacred Mysteries, and may be fittingly used with due service at the consecration of the Body and Blood of Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who with Thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, lives and reigns God, &c.

He then sprinkles them with holy water. The Acolytes then cover the altar-table with cere-cloth made to its exact dimensions; they vest the altar with the blessed cloths and ornaments, putting on it a Cross and other furniture. The Bishop, standing in the same place, intones the first Antiphon, which, with the following ones, the Respon-

series with their Verses, and the Psalm, is continued by the Choir.

Ye Levites, compass the altar of the Lord God, array it in white vesture, do ye also sing a new hymn, saying: Alleluia. *V.* God is wonderful in His holy places, and holy in all His works. *V.* Glory be to the Father, &c. As it was, &c.

Another Antiphon.

Compass Sion about, and walk round her, and tell the towers thereof. *V.* Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, in the city of our God, in His holy mountain.¹

Then this Responsory.

The Lord has clothed thee with a garment of gladness, and has set a crown on thy head, * and attired thee in holy apparel. *V.* Thou shalt shine with a glorious light, and all the ends of the earth shall worship before thee.* And attired. . . apparel. *V.* Nations from afar shall come to thee; and shall bring gifts, and adore the Lord and shall deem thy land holy, for they shall call upon the great Name in thee.* And attired . . . apparel. *V.* Blessed shall they be that shall build thee up. But thou shalt rejoice in thy children, because they shall all be blessed, and be gathered together to the Lord.* And attired. . . apparel.

Omit Glory be to the Father, etc., but sing the following Antiphon:

Under the shadow of Thy wings hide us, O Lord, and may we rejoice in Thy praise.²

Psalm. lxi.

O God, thou art my God,* early do I watch for Thee,*

My soul thirsts for Thee; * for Thee my flesh, O how often!

In a dry pathless land, where no water is.* Thus have I appeared before Thee in the sanctuary, to behold Thy power and Thy glory.

For better is Thy loving kindness than life.* my lips shall praise Thee.

Thus will I bless Thee during my lifetime; * and in Thy Name will I lift up my hands.

As with marrow and fat shall my soul be satisfied; * and with joyful lips shall my mouth praise Thee.

Whenever I remember Thee on my bed, I meditate on Thee in the morning. * For Thou hast been my help;

Therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I sing for joy. My soul cleaves unto following Thee: * me Thy right hand upholdeth.

But they that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth. * They shall

² Psalm cv. 47.

be delivered up to the power of the sword : they shall be a portion for jackals.

But the king shall rejoice in God : everyone that swears by Him shall glory ; * for the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

As it was, etc.

The Psalm being ended, the Bishop, putting off the mitre, goes up to the altar, and having bowed to the Cross on the altar, he intones, and the Choir continues :

All the earth shall worship Thee, O God, and shall sing unto Thee : they shall sing unto Thy Name,¹

While this Antiphon is singing, the Bishop moves the thurible over the altar in the form of a Cross. When it is ended, he intones it again, and the Choir continues it, he incensing meanwhile as before, then a third time. After which, standing before the altar, he says :

Let us pray.

O Lord our God, may Thy Holy Spirit come down on this altar, to hallow the gifts which we and Thy people shall lay thereon, and graciously to cleanse the hearts of all receivers. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Let us pray.

Almighty everlasting God, do Thou hallow✠ this altar, dedicated to Thy Name, with the bless-

¹ Psalm lxxv. 4.

ing of Thy heavenly power, and to all who trust in Thee show forth Thy bountiful aid, so that they may here obtain the graces of the Sacrament and the fulfilment of their desires. Through our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son, who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with Thy spirit.

V. Bless we the Lord.

R. Thanks to God.

The Bishop then returns to the sacristy, or to a side chapel, where he takes off his cope; should he, as is fitting, wish to celebrate Mass, he puts on his sandals, saying the Psalm, Quam dilecta—How lovely, etc., with the others; then after washing his hands, he vests. The altar meanwhile is duly prepared, and the lights are lighted. The Bishop then proceeds to celebrate. If, however, he be too tired to officiate, he appoints some Priest to celebrate High Mass in his stead.

At the end, the Bishop gives the solemn blessing, saying:

May the Name of the Lord be blessed, etc.

He further publishes the Indulgences¹ mentioned above, and then returns to the sacristy, where, having unvested, he departs in peace.

¹ Formerly Bishops were wont to grant a Plenary Indulgence at the consecration of a church or altar. Canon 62 of the 4th Council of Lateran restricts them to a grant of one year. That this restriction was not observed is shown by a grant of *fourteen* years indulgence by Roger, Bishop of London, at the consecration of St. Paul's, A. D. 1240

