

The Holy Sacrifice Of The Mass Part VI

How Christ Said The First Mass

Fr. James L. Meagher, D.D. 1906

Water Mixed With Wine

Now let us see how honoured was the water mixed with wine in the Temple ceremonial, foretelling the water mixed with Mass wine.

“There was not a court in Jerusalem that was not illuminated by the lights of the water-drawing. Pious and distinguished men danced before the people with lighted candles in their hands, and sang hymns and lauds before them, and the Levites accompanied there with harps, psalteries, cymbals and numberless musical instruments. On the fifteen steps, which led into the women’s court, corresponding to the fifteen Psalms of Degrees, stood the Levites with their musical instruments and sang. At the upper gate, which leads down from the court of Israel to the women’s court, stood two priests with trumpets.

“When the cock first crowed, they blew a blast, a long note, and a blast. This they repeated when they reached the tenth step, and again the third time when they got into the court. They went on blowing their trumpets as they went, until they reached the gate that leads out to the east, when they turned westward with their faces towards the Temple and said: ‘Our ancestors, who were in this place, turned their backs on the Temple of the Lord, and their faces towards the east, for they worshiped the sun towards the east, but we lift our eyes to God. We belong to God and raise our eyes to God.’ (Babyl. Talmud, Tract Succah. 77)

“A golden pitcher that held three logs was filled with water from the brook Siloh. (It is now called Siloam, a little village at the south of Jerusalem). When they came with it to the water-gate, they blew a blast, a long note, and again a blast. The priest then ascended the stair of the altar, and turned to the left. Two silver basins stood there. They were of gypsum, but had a dark appearance from the wine. Each was perforated with a small hole at the bottom like a nostril, the one for the wine somewhat wider, the one for water narrower, that

both might be emptied at once. The one to the west was used for water, the other to the east for the wine.” (Babyl. Talmud Tract Succah. 72)

History Of The Holy Oil And Chrism

Now let us see the origin and history of the holy oil with which Christ anointed the apostles at the Last Supper, and which is used in the administration of the Sacraments.

From remotest times came down the custom of anointing with oil persons, objects and religious articles. When Jacob saw the ladder like a cross, reaching from earth to heaven, God resting at the top — a vision of the Crucified he set up the stone pillow as a monument “pouring oil on it.”(Gen. xxviii. 18)

When God blessed him, foretelling that from him would be born races and kings, Jacob “set up a monument of stone, in the place where God spoke to him pouring drink-offerings upon it, wine and water, and pouring oil thereon, and called the place Bethel “House of God.” (Gen. xxxv. 14-15)

God told Moses to anoint the tabernacle with all its utensils. With a special holy oil Aaron, his sons and priests of his family were ordained to the priesthood. With oil Samuel anointed Saul and David to be rulers over Israel. Every official of church or state — priest, Levite, rabbi, or judge was inducted into his office with laying on of hands and anointed with oil, in Christ’s day.

These officials foretold the Messiah; Christ “the Anointed,” Jesus “Jehovah will Save,” the “Hope of Israel,” the “Expectation of the nations,” who was to come and built an empire of religion spreading over all the earth.

From far beyond historic times oils, unguents, pomades, or perfumed mixtures had been used to anoint the body, beautify the complexion and cure blemishes. But these differed from the holy mixture Moses made by God’s command.

The Temple sacred oil was composed of myrrh, cinnamon, cassia and olive oil mixed in mystic manner. With it priest, king, and all Temple furniture were anointed. In Greek this mixture was called chrism from the word chrio, “to anoint,” foretelling the Saviour, in Greek the Christ, in Hebrew the Messiah,

“The Anointed,” not with oil but with the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit (Isaias ii. 2).

This holy mixture was so sacred, that they were forbidden to use it except as laid down in the law, and the one who would give it to the stranger would be killed (Exod. xxx 33). A hundred and eighty times it is mentioned in the Old Testament.

The priesthood of the Temple of the time of Christ were looked on as inferior in honour among the people to the priests of the days of David and Solomon. The synagogue Rabbis were held in higher esteem by some than Temple priests. The second Temple had not the flask of holy chrism handed down from Aaron’s day in Solomon’s Temple, for Jeremias had hid the ark in a cave on Mount Nebo, where Moses died, which they could not find (Mach. ii 4). Priests were set apart for their ministry by vesting them in their sacerdotal robes and imposing hands on their heads — they claimed that the anointment of their fathers with the holy oil in the first Temple was sufficient for their sons in the priesthood (Gelkie, Life of Christ i 81).

Jewish physicians used to anoint the sick with olive oil mixed with wine. R. Simeon Ben Elieser says: “R. Meir permitted the mingling of wine and oil and to anoint the sick on the Sabbath.

We see that when St. James gave the doctrine of the sacrament of extreme-unction, anointing the sick was not unknown to the early Christians converted from Judaism.

After imposing their hands on the head of the high priest to be consecrated, they poured the holy chrism on his head which was to wear the Aaronic miter. The Machabee priest-kings had made the miter into the form of a tiara with triple crown from which came the Pope’s tiara.

They poured the holy oil on his head so the ointment might flow down on his beard, to honour that mark of manhood, they incensed at the Passover! From that ceremonial comes down to us the rite of anointing the bishop on his head when he is consecrated.

The first blessing God gave mankind was on marriage (Gen. i 8). Afterwards the patriarchs blessed with the laying on of hands. Later oil and chrism were added to the imposition of hands, to more clearly signify the Holy Spirit on Christ. Priest, Levite, king, prophet, Judge of the Sanhedrin, and rabbi were thus ordained, set apart, or inducted into office.

In his last sickness, Jacob laid his hands on the heads of his two grandsons, his arms forming a cross (Gen. xlviii 18). Moses extending his hands over Egypt, brought signs and plagues, which forced proud Pharaoh to let the Hebrews depart. The laying on of hands by which spiritual power is given was carried out in the ordination of the Temple priesthood.

In the days of David from Eleazar, Aaron's son, had descended sixteen courses of priests (Numb. 60), and from his brother Ithamar, eight families came. These David divided into the twenty-four "courses" of the Temple. From these families the priests were chosen with greatest care lest the young man might have a blemish of body or defect of mind.

The young candidate, chosen in his thirtieth year, bathed, shaved and anointed with olive oil, brought his two goats to the Temple, stood before the Holies, having two cakes of unfermented bread in his hands. The high priest sprinkled him with water. He prostrated himself on the ground before the Shekina of his fathers, his face to the earth. Three times he makes the prostration. This was the reason Christ prostrated himself in the garden before he offered his sacrifice of the cross. This is why the clergy prostrate themselves during the ceremony of ordination in our churches.

The young priest rises to his knees, crosses his arms on his breast and the Temple priests impose their hands on him their arms crossed like Jacob blessing Joseph's sons (xlviii 18). He puts his sins on the two goats, the priests sacrifice them and splash their blood on the horns of the altar to foretell the cross. They take the flesh to be burned outside the walls, to foretell Christ sacrificed and buried outside Jerusalem (Exod. xxix 10-14; Levit. viii 2, 3, 11, 17).

They put the blood of the victims on the young priest's right ear, thumb and great toe. They mix the blood to show the two natures of Christ, and with it

they sprinkle him and his vestments (Levit. iv 3, 5, 16, vi 15; Psalm cxxxii 2). They anoint him on the head with the holy chrism, place in his hands the flesh of the sacrifice dripping with blood, and cakes of unfermented bread.

To the young Levite they gave the symbols of his ministry, the sacrificial vessels, and the keys of the Temple gates. The latter he placed over a stone flag in the Beth ha Mocked each night on which a priest slept. These are the reasons, the keys, chalice, etc., are handed to the candidates for minor orders and subdeaconship while receiving these orders.

The Lord was anointed in an invisible manner by the Holy Spirit with His sevenfold gifts (Isaias xi 1, etc.). But was He anointed with oil as were king, priest, rabbi and judge who foretold Him in ceremonial and office? He was anointed in this very visible manner, and He anointed His apostles the same way at the Last Supper when He consecrated them bishops.

On the fertile western shores of the Sea of Galilee, so rich as to be called the "Udder of the Land," at a place where then rose an ancient watch-tower called Migdol-El, "God's Tower," around which spread fertile fields where they raised wheat for the proposition Temple, bread, was born to a wealthy Jewish family, Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, the latter being called the Magdalen from Magdala, the Greek name of the tower.

She married a strict Pharisee, Paphus, who divorced her because of adultery with a soldier Pandira, and with the latter she took up her residence in the neighbouring city Herod had built on the site of an ancient cemetery on the shores of that Lake, seven hundred feet below the ocean level, which he called Tiberias, after the then reigning Roman emperor. There she lived in sin with soldiers of the garrison, till as the woman taken in adultery, she was brought before Christ who drove seven demons out of her and told her to sin no more (See Talmud, John viii 3, 4).

Healed and repentant she went back to her home in Bethany, and lived with her brother and sister. When the Sabbath before the Passion ended with sunset, Simon gave a banquet in Christ's honour in his house, a few blocks west of Lazarus' house. With the other guests the Lord reclined at the table on the

couch, his feet stretched out as was the custom at feasts. Mary Magdalen came to anoint him. What kind of anointment was it?

The spikenard of olive oil mixed with many rare perfumes was for sale in costly carved alabaster flasks in cities of the Roman empire, but at such a price that only members of royal families and wealthy people could buy it. Mary being of a rich noble family, some writers say she was of royal stock, bought a “box” holding about a pound of this ointment and came to Jesus’ feet, which first she washed with bitter tears for her sins, and wiped with her hair hanging down, sign of the harlot among the Hebrews.

The strict Pharisees found fault for they knew her. Judas complained of the price (Luke vii 46). Christ reproved them because they did not anoint His head as was the custom at formal feasts (Luke vii 46), and Mary poured the precious ointment on His head (Mark xiv 3) and the whole house was filled with the odor of the ointment (John xii 3).

Thus as priest and king, and rabbi, and judge in Israel were anointed (Migne, *Cursus Completus*, S. *Scripturae* iii 923-924), so was the Lord anointed by the woman who was a great sinner. And Jesus said: “Let her alone that she may keep it against the day of My burial (John xii 7).” They prepared the Lord’s body for the grave with spices, myrrh, aloes, balsamodendron, resin of aquilaria, agallochum and perfumes, and this preparation the Greeks called *migma*, the Jews *chanat*, or *chunetto*, meaning to become “red like tanned leather.”

From apostolic times down the centuries in all the Liturgies the bishop blesses the holy oils at Mass on Holy Thursday. In the Greek and kindred Rites the oil is mixed with thirty-two perfumes. He is attended by the lower clergy or altar boys, seven subdeacons, seven deacons and twelve priests. From Jewish customs, Oriental Rites and the unchanging Roman Church, we are forced to conclude that Christ blessed the oils at the Last Supper. There is no other way of explaining that rite, so old and universal.

Incense

“And the Lord said to Moses. Take unto thee spices, stacte, and oncha, galbanum of sweet savor, and the clearest of frankincense, all shall be of equal weight (Exod. xxx 4), and thou shall make incense compounded by the work of the perfumer.”

That was the way they made the incense mentioned seventy-three times in the Bible.

The Temple incense was prepared of the four ingredients mentioned (Exod. xxx 34), with which, the Rabbis say, seven other materials were added, and a smaller quantity of the herb “Ambra” to give out a dense smoke — 368 pounds of this mixture being made at once, and half a pound was used at the morning and evening services. The formula of mixing this incense was a secret of the Abtinas family.

While the lamb was being slain, they played the Magrephah, and priests and Levites hastened to their places for their service of sacred song. The priest chosen to offer incense in the Holies, who could officiate only once in his life, with the gold censer hanging from its chains, mounts to great sacrificial altar, fills it with burning coals, takes more live coals in a gold dish, with an assistant on each side, like the deacon and subdeacon with the priest ascending to our altar; vested in magnificent vestments, they slowly mount the marble steps to the Holies, and enter behind the veil.

The priest chosen by “lot” for that function, most sacred Temple ceremony except that of the high priest the Day of Atonement, with his two ministers, one on either side, like the deacon and subdeacon at a high Mass, enter the Holies, reverently spread the live coals on the altar of gold, sprinkle it on the censer, and the two ministers retire, leaving the priest alone in the sacred sanctuary of the Lord of hosts.

The lone priest, image of the Priest of mankind, Jesus Christ, offering prayer while on earth to His heavenly Father before His death, swings the censer three times to the west, over the smoking altar, towards the Holy of Holies,

dwelling-place of the Shekina, the Holy Spirit, and then over each side, and at the two ends of the altar, each movement with mystic meaning, saying:

- “Let my prayer be directed as incense in thy sight, The lifting up of my hands as evening sacrifice. Set watch, O Lord, before my mouth, And a door round about my lips, Incline not my heart to evil words To make excuses in sins (Psalm cxl 2-4).”

The Jewish priest thus prayed alone in the Holy of Holies, and no one for him prayed, for he figured Jesus Christ, who wants no prayers, for He had no sin, as St. Augustine says, “He is the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Priest and the only Mediator between God and men.”

On that altar of gold within the gold-walled Holies, image of the sanctuary of our Church from which Christ through His priest offers the Eucharistic Sacrifice, only incense was offered, the animals were sacrificed without, in the Priests’ Court, for Christ is not slain now in our Church in a painful and bloody manner, as He was that fatal Friday by the Jewish priesthood. But on the Day of Atonement, the high priest reddened the horns of that gold altar with the blood of the victims, to foretell that the sacrifice of Calvary and of the Mass are identical.

The Passing Of The Jewish Church Into The Glories Of The Catholic Church

Birth Of St. John the Baptist

Let us now describe a scene which took place in the Holies when the Jewish Church was about to pass into the glories of the Catholic Church.

Early morning of the 24th of September, six months before Gabriel “God is mighty” appeared in the holy house of Nazareth to the Virgin espoused to Joseph, to announce the Incarnation, the “lot” drawn by the Temple superintendent fell on Zachary “Jehovah is renowned,” son of that Barachias Christ said the Jews had killed between the altar and the Temple (Matt. xxiii 35; Luke xi 51). For the first and last time he was to offer that sacred incense. He was of the course Abia, “the eighth” of the twenty-four divisions of the priests. He had married Elizabeth “God of the covenant;” his home was about

four miles north-west of Jerusalem, down in the valley on the side hill facing north, just beyond the little village now called St. John's.

They were both old and childless, a great disgrace in these days, when every mother hoped and prayed that she might bring forth the long-looked for Saviour. Zachary had just returned from a three months' retreat, spent with the Essenes, at their house built under the cliff on the north side of the ravine, about a mile up from Jericho, in the side of the Lenten mountain, where later Christ fasted. There he had spent his days praying for an heir. He had returned to the city, for it was the time his course of Abia was to go on duty in the Temple.

Early in the morning from the tower on Olivet's top, the priests announced that the sun illumined the tombs of the patriarchs at Hebron, then that the sun was rising over Nebo, where Moses' body reposed. The high priest ordered the lamb brought from the Beth-Moked chamber, where they had kept it for four days; others bring the gold and silver vessels, ninety-three in number, they examine the lamb again for blemishes, water it out of a gold cup — all this to foretell there would be no stain of sin on Christ, and also to foretell the vinegar and gall they gave to drink to Him the Jewish court had condemned to death four days before that fatal crucifixion Friday. They fasten the lamb to the second row of hooks on the pillar at the north of the altar, his feet tied with a cord to make a cross, his head to the south, its face to the west, for so faced Christ when sacrificed. The sign is given to open the great gates with three blasts on the silver trumpets which had replaced the ram's horns of the tabernacle, and vast crowds of people fill the Courts. The lamb is slain, its blood put on the horns of the outside altar in the form of a cross, and the priest Zachary was about to offer the daily incense in the Holies. He represented the foretold Christ, who was once to offer Himself for mankind's wickedness.

Zachary, clothed in magnificent vestments, went up the inclined passage on the south side to the great altar, holding in his right hand the censer with its three chains. He scraped up the burning coals in a gold vessel called the teni, put them in the censer and came down. While he did this his two assistants trimmed the lamps of the great golden candlestick, poured into each olive oil,

fixed the wicks made from worn-out vestments and lighted them. But the central middle lamp which bent towards the Holy of Holies could be lighted only from the ever-burning fire on the sacrificial altar.

The great organ, the Magrephah, began the music, the priests and Levites took their places — the first on the steps leading up to the Holies, the second on the steps of the Nicanor Gate, as Zachary with his two assistants ascend the steps preceded by the two priests who had dressed the gold altar, and the candlestick, and who had removed the vessels of their ministry and returned. One of the assistants spread the live coals on the altar, the other arranged the incense, and all retired leaving Zachary alone within that sanctuary before the altar, imaging the priest standing before our altar offering the Mass with its prayers, ceremonies and incense.

As the high priest without gives the sign, deep silence fell on the vast throng of priests and Levites while people prostrated themselves, fell down on their faces and bent the body down to the pavement. Zachary spread the incense on the burning coals, and the smoke ascended up before the Lord of hosts, prophesying the prayers and sacrifice of Jesus and His Saints (See Apoc. viii 1-4).

Thus Zachary offered the incense (Luke i 5-23), most holy and solemn Temple function (Edersheim, temple, 133-139). “When therefore,” says S. Augustine, the “father priest, trembling, stood at the divine altar, Gabriel the angel suddenly cleaving the air stood beside him, now trembling when he saw the vision standing at the right side of the altar of incense. And Zachary seeing him was troubled and fear fell upon him.”

But the angel said to him: “Fear not, Zachary, for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness and many shall rejoice at his birth (Luke I 12, 13, 14, etc.)” The angel called him John “The Pius.”

St. Augustine tells us that Zachary was a faded, withered up old man, and that was the reason he did not believe the words of Gabriel “God is mighty,” who in all Jewish history was in God’s ministry to comfort Hebrews with revelations of the Incarnation.

Thus in the Holies, the golden sanctuary with its massive gold altar foretelling the sanctuary of our churches, was revealed the birth of John the Baptist, last of the great men of the Old Testament and first Evangelist of the New Testament. He was, said Christ, the greatest man born of woman, prophet, priest, preacher, rabbi and martyr, who like the great men of olden days prepared the way for Christ preached the forgiveness of sins, and baptized the Lord.

When Herod killed the Bethlehem infants, all Judea was in a ferment of fear for her children, and they hid John in a cave they show under the house where his parents lived. When John was in his twelfth year they brought him to the Temple, priests imposed their hands on him with the Taleth vestments and confirmed him, the ceremony admitting him into the ranks of the men. Then he retired to the desert west of his home where he lived on locusts and wild honey as a hermit in watchings, prayers and fastings, clothed in one garment of camel's hair.

When John was thirty he came forth from his solitude to preach. As was the custom of the Rabbis of that day he gathered twelve disciples round him — one being that Simon who wished to buy the Holy Ghost with money and who later opposed Peter in his travels and at Rome. To Jordan's banks he came in the form and spirit of Elias who centuries before had ascended to heaven on the fiery chariot of the Lord from that very spot.

Before beginning his public ministry at the age of thirty Jesus came to John at Galgal, "the Circle," where the Hebrews crossed to take possession of the Promised Land, where Josue built the monument of twelve stones in memory of the miracle of the waters sweeping south toward the Dead Sea turning back to let them cross.

There where the river sweeps round in a half circle, amid the tamarisks lining its desert shores, Jesus passed through the throngs, went down into the waters. John baptized Him and told His disciples He was the "Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world," and John's disciples followed from that time the Lord and became the apostles.

John still continued to preach. One day Herod Agrippa, passing from his capital, Tiberias, nestling on the western shores of Galilee, going on his way to his winter home east of the Dead Sea, passed where John was preaching. He had seduced the wife of his half brother Philip, then living in retirement in Jerusalem, divorced his own wife, daughter of Aretis the Arabian king, and was then living with that base woman, Herodias, in adultery.

Before the multitude John said it was against the law of Moses to live with his brother's wife. Stung to the quick before the people Herod had him arrested and carried to his fortress Macarius, Josephus so minutely describes as having been built in the desert where the sulphur springs burst forth from desert sands.

At Macarius Herod celebrated his birthday with a great feast for his nobles and officers, and during the banquet his half-niece Salome, daughter of the woman he was living with and his half-brother Philip, half clothed danced the immodest suggestive Egyptian dance, and Herod half drunk, charmed with her graces promised her, before his guests, whatever she would ask, even half his kingdom. Prompted by her adulterous mother Herodias, she asked the head of John the Baptist on a salver.

Pretending to be saddened that the banquet should be the scene of such a bloody murder, but remembering his oath before his guests, he gave the sign to his guards standing round the banquet hall. They went down to the deep dungeon, cut off John's head, brought the ghastly trophy to the wicked woman Salome and she gave it to her mother.

Nazarene Customs — The Beard — Incensing

Heathens dedicated their hair to idols or demons, and Hebrews dedicated their hair and beard to God. Many ancient religious ceremonies we find among the heathens relating to the beard. To preserve the Hebrews from these superstitions God forbade them to shave head or beard.

The leper shaved his whole body, as a sign of his disease, while the Hebrew wore a long beard as a mark of manhood, virtue, perfection, strength and wisdom.

The Nazarite “Separated” never cut his hair or beard, to show that he was dedicated to God. His hair and beard were trimmed at the door of the tabernacle, at the Nicanor Gate when his vow ended. This was the origin of the tonsure, a ceremony which admits a man into the ranks of the clergy of our day. Christ was the Nazarite foretold by the prophets.

On Monday of Passion week, He came to the Temple and received the tonsure. From apostolic custom comes down the clerical tonsure. In the early Church all the clergy wore beards, as we learn in the fathers’ writings. The Fourth Council of Carthage rules “A cleric will not foster his hair nor shave his beard.”

Among the Hebrews the beard was so honoured that no one ever dared to touch it except to kiss manhood’s greatest ornament as a sign of honour. Joab took Amasa by the beard to kiss it, when he stabbed him. Hamon shaved the heads and beards of David’s ambassadors sent to comfort him at his father’s death, and that disgrace brought on a war. Arabs in ancient days shaved their beards, and cut their hair in round forms, when they dedicated themselves to Bacchus, god of drunkenness, and on all these people of the Orient, for their superstitions, God’s condemnation was foretold (Jeremias ix 26, xxv 28, xlix 32).

Following the Mosaic law, the beard was sacred to the Jew, and at the time of Christ all wore beards. The Jerusalem Jews of our day wear long ringlet, of hair hanging down before their ears, even boys after their confirmation at twelve conform to this custom. But as a sign of sorrow they shave off the beard and cut their hair.

When the Hebrews attended banquets at the time of Christ, a servant holding a censer in his right hand, went from one guest to another and incensed the beard of each guest, swinging the censer up and down before him, so the smoke rose up through his beard. When this custom first arose, we cannot find, but it was customary at all banquets and at the Passover in the time of Christ. This was the origin of the ceremony of incensing the clergy at a High Mass.

To Be Cont’d.