

The Holy Sacrifice Of The Mass Part X

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The Mass Comes Directly From The Passover

The Mass, having come from the Passover or Last Supper only indirectly from the Temple, follows the former in the number of its ministers and ceremonies. Whence the bishop, the high priest of the Church, is served not by twelve priests as the pontiff in the Temple, but by seven ministers as the Rabbi was served in the synagogue. “The Torah was read by seven men.” We find repeated in many places of the Tract Megilla of the Talmud.

At all Jewish feasts parts of the Bible relating to the feasts were read in the Temple and synagogues, and from this was derived the custom of reading in the church portions of the Bible relating to the feasts.

How They Began To Read The Prophets

The celebrant reads the Epistle and Gospel before they are sung. This was also the way in the early Church. St. Augustine tells us that “While Lazarus the deacon read the Acts relating to the coming of the Holy Ghost and gave the book to the bishop, Augustine, the bishop said, ‘I wish to read, for the reading of these words gives me more pleasure than to preach.’”¹

When did they begin to read the Prophets? When the Greek king Antiochus forbade all sacrifices and public and private reading of Scripture under pain of death, the Jews divided the prophetic books into sections and began to read them in the synagogues.² The Machabees restored and endowed the synagogue worship with greater splendours. The Acts says “After the reading of the Law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them Paul and Barnabas, asking them to preach to the people.”³ Christ himself read the prophet Isaias in the synagogue of Nazareth.⁴

It was the text of the prophet⁵ relating to him that he read that day, towards the end of August. Christ read the Nitzauim “Section” of that day. But the Jews, seeing Him foretold in it, later changed it for another section which they read in our time on that day lest the people might see the Redeemer it foretold.

Reading the Law and the Prophets in the church therefore comes down to us from the Jewish Church which from early times followed the synagogue custom.

When Christ Read Isaias's Prophecy

How did it happen that Christ was called up that day to read Isaias's words relating to Himself? Any man in the congregation might be called up to read if he were over thirty years of age. After His fast of forty days on the Lenten mountain, Christ, in His thirtieth year began His public ministry. "And He came to Nazareth where He was brought up, and He went into the synagogue according to His custom on the Sabbath day, and He rose up to read. And the book of Isaias the prophet was delivered to Him. And as He unfolded the book, He found the place where it was written:

- "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, wherefore He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor, He hath sent Me to heal the contrite of heart, to preach deliverance to the captives, and sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of reward.⁶ And when He had folded the book, He restored it to the minister and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him."⁷

Stretching Forth Of Hands

During Temple and synagogue services the priests praying stretched out their hands, following the example of Moses praying for victory over the enemies of Israel when Aaron and Hur upheld his arms! But during these prayers they were forbidden to hold their hands higher than the Phylacteries on their brows.⁸ "Why," say the Talmud, "is it then the custom at present for the priests to raise their hands in the afternoon prayer of the fast day? Because the afternoon prayer is said very near sunset, it is regarded the same as the closing prayer."

Isaias in his prophetic description of the Last Supper⁹ foretold the Lord during the first Mass on Sion. He continues, "As he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hand to swim," etc.

Following Temple, synagogue, and Last Supper, at the Mass the celebrant still stretches forth his hands, with his body forming a cross. For the Jewish

ceremony related to the Crucified who stretched forth his hands on the cross when he would redeem our race. And the celebrant who now offers the Mass as a memorial of the crucifixion still stretches forth his hands during the prayers. As he cannot hold his hands out all the time in the form of a cross he holds them near his body.

Did Christ Pray For The Dead

At every Mass we pray for the repose of the souls of the dead. Did Christ pray for the dead at the Last Supper? We find no record, but it was the custom of the Temple and synagogue in his day.

Prayers for the repose of the souls of the dead are found in the earliest records of the Temple and synagogue.

The Jews of our day believe that their dead go to a place like purgatory, where they remain for a time and are aided by their friend's prayers. Children pray for their parents on the day of death, on the third, seventh, thirtieth day, and on the anniversary of their death. These customs coming down from the Temple and synagogue services gave rise to the burial of the dead on the third day, the "Month's Mind," the anniversary and Masses for the departed.

Prayers To The Saints

They also prayed to the Saints in heaven in the following words "May they in heaven show forth our merit for a peaceable preservation, and may we receive a blessing from the Lord and justice from the God of our salvation, and good understanding in the sight of man." Prayers to the Saints in Church service were copied from the Jewish Church at the time of Christ.

Mass Said At Night In Apostle's Day

"Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will profane My sanctuary, the glory of your realm."¹⁰ **At Christ's death the Old Testament passed away, the New had begun. The synagogue was rejected, the Church was established on Pentecost.**

The Lord broke the Eucharistic bread to the doubting disciples at Emmaus and only then they knew Him.¹¹ The apostles went forth from house to house,

breaking the Eucharistic bread of the Mass with prayers;¹² “continuing daily with one accord in the Temple and breaking bread from house to house, they took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart.”¹³ “On the first day of the week when we assembled to break bread,”¹⁴ “going up and breaking bread and fasting.” The Greek words of the original, “eulogia” and “eucharistia” “show that the breaking of bread was the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Mass. The first word, eulogia, “praise,” shows that they began with the synagogue praise and prayers, following Christ’s example at the Last Supper, and finished with the consecration and the distribution of the Eucharist.¹⁵

Following the example of the Last Supper, the meetings were held in the evening, in the synagogues, on the Sabbath, and the instructions took up the time till after midnight.¹⁶ Psalms and Prayers of the synagogue were sung, the members of the infant Church saluted each other with a holy kiss.¹⁷ St. Paul mentions four times¹⁸ the kiss of friendship and of love, a Hebrew custom continued in the Church, and was the origin of the ceremony of the “kiss of peace,” the clergy give during Mass.¹⁹

The apostles following the Lord’s example went into the synagogues in all the lands where Jews were found, and preached first to the Hebrews. As the synagogue the Sabbath service on Saturday was the best attended, they preached that day, and in the evening said the Mass. The services were protracted into the night, and later Mass was said in the early morning hours of Sunday. Whence, in apostolic times, Sunday took the place of Saturday of the Jews. When at last the Church broke with the synagogue, it was called the “Lord’s day,” in memory of the resurrection and of the coming of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost Sunday.²⁰

Use Of Candles At Mass

Thousands of candles lighted the Temple courts, lights burned in synagogues during services, numerous lights you will find in the synagogue of to-day as candles illuminated the Cenacle during the Last Supper; “and there were a great number of lamps in the upper chamber where we were assembled,” says the Acts.²¹ Mass being said at night in the Apostles’ day, candles burned on the altars. The candles burning on our altars came down, not from the

catacombs, as some writers hold, but from Temple, synagogue and Last Supper.

This synagogue service — singing Psalms, reading the Law and the Prophecies before the Eucharistic Sacrifice, developed into the Matin-Lauds with their Psalms, Nocturns, “By night,” prayers, versicles, responses, vespers and offices of our breviaries. The peculiar divisions and arrangements show they came down from the apostolic age. The Last Supper began with the synagogue services which were always said at night before beginning the Passover feast, and this is the reason of that ancient custom of saying the office, as far as Terce, before saying Mass.

Many were the disputes between Christians and Jews regarding the Crucified; at last the synagogue excluded the apostles, who then went to the homes of converts. They found that the synagogue service would not do for the Eucharistic sacrifice. New elements, the Divinity of Christ, the Real Presence, the sacramental system, and numerous other truths had been added to Judaism.

On the Liturgy of the Last Supper they founded new Rites — Liturgies of the Mass which were handed down by word of mouth till they were later written down. These were in the languages of the people. Oriental Christians claim that their Liturgies have come down to us unchanged from the apostles. Numerous Hebrew terms they incorporate into these Liturgies, as, “Amen;” “Let it be so;” Alleluia, “Praise Jehovah; Hosanna, “Save, I beseech thee;” Sabaoth, “Hosts;” “The Lord be with thee,” “Peace be to thee,” etc.

We have shown how the Holy Ghost wrote a religious truth in every object and movement of Temple and Passover worship. The Passover Liturgy and ceremonial were loaded with type image and symbol of the Messiah, His Passion and of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. When the apostles founded the Liturgies of the Mass, they followed the lesson God gave in the Jewish ceremonial and worship. Every object, movement and ceremony of the Mass teaches the people truths hidden in the service, so that the Mass is a book written by God Himself through the apostles.

How The First Churches Were Founded

The apostles carried out the synagogue services, read the Law and the Prophecies and then preached, exhorting the people to live good lives. The “Lord’s Table” was prepared with candles, flowers, and ornaments.²² The twelve priests with the apostle read the prayers of the Liturgy, and thus they celebrated the Eucharist. They took up a collection for the support of religion.²³ Sometimes these offerings were sent to the poor converts of Jerusalem.²⁴

The apostle remained with them instructing, making converts till a congregation was formed. Then he ordained twelve of them priests, called in Greek presbyters. He laid hands on one of them and anointed him a bishop, consecrating him with the holy oils as was the custom at the ordination of Rabbis and judges of Israel long before the time of Christ. Many works of the early Church mention these facts.

Thus the Clementine Homilies²⁵ says Peter founded a church in Tyre and set over it as bishop one of the presbyters and then departed for Sidon²⁶ where he did the same,²⁷ as at Bayrout and Laodicea.²⁸ “And having baptized them in the fountains which are near the sea, and having celebrated the Eucharist, and having appointed Maroones as their bishop, and having set apart twelve presbyters, and having designated deacons and arranged matters relating to widows, and having preached on the common good what was profitable for the ordering of the Church, and having counseled them to obey the bishop Maroones, three months being now fulfilled, he (Peter the apostle) bade those in Tripolis of Phoenicia farewell, and took his journey to Antioch of Syria, all the people accompanying him with due honour.”²⁹

Origin Of The Papal Benediction

Saying, “Increase and multiply.”³⁰ God blessed man and animals, that they might propagate their race. Following this example the patriarch blessed his eldest son, making him heir of his property and priesthood, and on his deathbed he blessed all the members of his family. At the end of the Temple ceremonial the high priest blessed the multitudes, and the Rabbi dismissed the congregation with his blessing.

According to these ceremonies of the Jewish Church, when ascending into heaven, Christ blessed his disciples. “And lifting up His hands He blessed them. And it came to pass that whilst He blessed them, He departed up into heaven.”³¹ Following these examples, the celebrant blesses the congregation at the end of Mass. This ended Mass in the early Church, and later St. John’s Gospel was added. Therefore when the people ask priest or bishop to bless them they follow the old custom of the Hebrew church. This blessing finds its highest form in the Apostolic Benediction of the Pope, which comes down from the days of Apostles and Patriarchs.

To Be Cont’d.

Endnotes:

1. S. Augustine, Sermo ccclvi. De Vita. Cler.
2. Zanolini, Opere citati; I. Mach. i. 52
3. Acts xiii 15
4. Luke iv. 16
5. Isaias lxi. i. etc.
6. Isaias lxi. 1, etc.
7. Luke iv. 13-20
8. Levit ix. 22
9. Isaias xxv. 6 to end.
10. Ezech, xxiv. 21.
11. Luke xxiv. 30, 35.
12. Acts, II. 42.
13. Acts, ii. 46.
14. Acts, xx. 7.

15. I. Cor. II. 20, 21 etc.; St. Ignatius, Epist as Smyr., c.4.; ncil of Carthage, Can. XLI.
16. Acts xx. 7.
17. I. Cor. Xvi. 20; II. Cor. Xiii. 12.
18. Rom. Xvi. 16; I. Cor. Xvi. 20; II. Cor. Xiii. 12; I. Thes. V. 26; I. Peter v. 14.
19. Tertullian, De Orat. C. 14; Justin Martyr, M. Apol. 11; Migne, Cursus Comp. ii. 1348
20. Acts ii.
21. Acts xx. 8.
22. Acts xx. 7-11.
23. II. Cor. IX. 1-15; Justin Martyr, Aplogo. I.
24. Ibidem.
25. This work is of doubtful authenticity, mentioned by Origen, Cap. 22, Philocalia and other writers as existing in the beginning of the third century.
26. Hom. VII. Cap. V.
27. Cap. VIII.
28. Cap. XXII.
29. Clementine Homilies. Hom. Xi. Cap. Xxxvi. See J. Iahn Archaeologia Biblica De Liturgia Apostolica, etc.
30. Gen. i. 22, viii. 17, ix. 1.
31. Luke xxiv. 50.