

The Holy Sacrifice Of The Mass Part XIII

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How Christ Said The First Mass

Christ Carries The Lamb Into The Temple

It was nearly half-past three when Christ leading His band of twelve apostles entered the great Nicanor Gate of Corinthian bronze. The lamb had been sacrificed, the incense offered in the Holies, and the priests and Levites were ready to immolate the paschal lambs. Twenty-four Levites formed two long lines leading up to the great gate. One line had gold staves and the other silver staves in their hands to keep order. Each strikes the pavement with his staff as a sign of authority, while the chief chazzan cries out, "People of the Lord, listen, the time for sacrificing the paschal lamb has arrived in the name of Him who rests in this holy house."

With two other bands the Lord and His apostles enter the Priest's Court, Christ carrying the lamb on His shoulders as leader. To the north of the great altar with its three ever-burning fires on top, they pass and Christ lays down the lamb. A priest comes forward and receives the seal the examiner had given them without the Courts, testifying that the lamb was without blemish.

They pour a chalice of wine on the lamb, emblem of the Eucharist, uniting Passover and Mass with Temple sacrifices. They tie his feet with a cord, the right fore foot to the left hind foot, and the left fore foot to the right hind foot, making with the cord a cross, uniting the lamb with Calvary's cross. They wash again the victim with perfumed water, showing forth the odor of miracles of Christ's humanity. They give it a drink of water to prophesy the vinegar and gall they offered the Victim of the cross.

Ceremony Of Offering The Lamb

The members of each band now approach, lay their hands on the lamb's head, while the attending priests lay on their hands — all hands are held with thumbs crossed, palms down while they together recite.

“Ah, Jehovah, they have committed iniquity — they have transgressed; they have sinned — Thy people, the house of Israel. Oh, then, Jehovah, cover over, I entreat Thee, cover over their transgressions, and their sins, which they have wickedly committed, transgressed, and sinned before Thee — Thy people, the house of Israel, as it is written in the Law of Moses, saying, “For on that day it shall be covered for you, to make you clean from all your sins, before Jehovah ye shall be cleansed.”

They put their hands under the lamb, raise him up as high as their heads, and offer him to the Lord as a victim of their sins. Thus from Moses’ day the victims foretold Christ raised up on the cross. Lowering him a little they “wave him” to the north, south, east and west, making with him a cross, to foretell the world’s Victim crucified. These two ceremonies were carried out with every offering of Temple and Passover, and are still continued in the Mass, when the celebrant offers the bread and wine.

On the steps of the Nicanor Gate leading up from the Women’s Court into the Court of Israel, its great bronze doors given by the Scaramella family of bankers of Alexandria, now swung wide open, stands a choir of 500 Levites, vested in white albs, bound by wide girdles with miters on their heads and the Book of the Psalms in their hands. Their sons stand with them and many have flute, cornet, harp and cymbals in their hands as the great organ with bellows of elephant hide burst forth in diapason melody and the men begin the base, the youths tenor, and the young boys soprano.

In the Priests’ Court, stand 500 priests of the rank of Abia, “the eighth,” vested in rich robes of cloth of gold, embroidered in white, green, violet, and red, the sacred colors of the sanctuary of the Lord of hosts, God told Moses to make for Aaron and his sons. Miters are on their heads, their brows are bound round with tephilim, phylacteries are on their left arms next the heart, the strap wound round their arm seven times and circle their two fingers, but the feet are bare, for the ground where Abraham offered Isaac is holy.

All turn their backs to the east to mock the pagans worshiping the rising sun, moon and stars. They face the Holies and the Holy of Holies, where the Shekina, the Holy Ghost, once dwelled in their fathers’ days. They face to the

west, waiting, praying for, and expecting the Messiah, who was foretold to come, end, seal up, and fulfill these sacrificial types. They did not know it, but they faced towards that Calvary, 1,000 feet west, outside the walls, where the next day their Saviour was to die.

How The Lamb Was Sacrificed

The priest drawn for that purpose, robed in red, now comes forward, and with sacrificial gem-encrusted knife he cuts the lamb's throat. Two long lines of priests vested in red robes magnificently embroidered in white, green, purple and red, range from the lamb on the north to the south side of the great altar, the priests of one line having each a gold chalice and the priests of the other line silver chalices in their hands. Each chalice was without a pedestal, so they could not be put down lest the blood might coagulate. The nearest priest catches the blood from the lamb's wounded throat in his chalice held in his right hand, turns round, passes it into the right hand of the next priest, and takes the empty chalice from him. To do this, each must cross his arms. The one who receives the filled chalice turns around, and in the same way hands it to the next; thus forming a cross with their arms as dying Jacob blessed Joseph's two sons, the blood passes along that line of priests to the passage on the south leading up to the great altar. Thus the ceremony foretold the sacrifice of the cross.

The last priest of the lines to receive the chalice mounts to the altar up the inclined passage on the south side, walks along the balustrade, and on the southeast horn he splashes the blood from below up, then another splash across. He does the same on the northeast, northwest and southwest horns — thus they mark the four horns of the great altar with a bloody cross to foretell Calvary's cross.

Rapidly they go through the ceremonial they practised for a month, for there are thousands of lambs to be sacrificed before sunset. The lamb is now hung up on a hook from the marble pillar, his skin taken off, as the Lord was hung up to a pillar the next day and his skin torn off by the scourges. The entrails and fat are taken out, with the tail salted and burned on the altar as an offering

to the Lord. The body of the lamb is rolled in the skin Christ takes it again on His shoulders, and they pass out, their places being taken by another band.

The Psalms Of The Sacrificial Ceremony

During this sacrificial ceremony, on the steps of the Nicanor Gate stand 500 Levites who with young men and sons of the tribe and people sing the Hallel. They begin with the Hebrew Hallelujah which now we pronounce Alleluia, "Praise Jehovah."

The Levites. Hallelu Jah.

The People. Hallelu Jah.

The Levites. Praise, O servants of Jehovah.

The People Hallelu Jah.

The Levites. Praise the name of Jehovah.

The People. Hallelu Jah.

The Levites. When Israel went out of Egypt.

The People. When Israel went out of Egypt.

The Levites. The house of Jacob from a barbarous people.

The People. Judea was made his sanctuary, Israel his dominion, etc.

Thus they sang to the end Psalm cxiii., then the next Psalm.

"I have loved because the Lord will hear the voice of my prayer," etc.

"I have believed, therefore have I spoken,"

"But I have been humbled exceedingly," etc.

"O praise the Lord, all His nations," etc.

"Give praise to the Lord, for he is good," etc.

When they came to the twenty-fifth verse of this Psalm its Hebrew words, Anna Adonai hoscihanna, "O Lord, save me: O Lord, give good success," are shouted as Hosanna with a mighty sound from the choirs of priests, Levites

and people. This word is sung by the choir at every High Mass, at the Sanctus before the “Lamb of God” is sacrificed.

What The Ceremonial Foretold

Hebrew writers tell us this was the great Egyptian Hallel, which differed from the common Hallel formed of Psalms cxix to cxxxv and pointed to five religious truths — the Delivery of the Hebrews from Egypt, the Passage through the Red Sea, the giving of the Law on Sinai, the coming of the Messiah and the general resurrection of the Dead.

The Son of God, carrying the lamb on His shoulders, with His apostles passes through the Women’s Court down the Nicanor Gate steps, down into the Chel, down and into the Chol. For the last time leaves His Father’s Temple He had visited and worshiped in so often since He had been confirmed at twelve with the laying on of the hands of its priesthood, when He argued with the doctors.

The Temple of Moriah, “Jehovah provides,” whose priesthood should have formed the foundations of His Church, had rejected Him and condemned Him to death. The magnificent ceremonial of the Sanctuary of the Lord foretelling Him was to be completed and finished by passing into the Church ceremonies. But the Hebrew priesthood was to end as the prophets had foretold.

But He would not leave the world without an official teaching body, else the modern world would have been inferior to the olden days.

He was about to found a priesthood, which was not to pass away like that of Aaron sacrificing suffering victims in the Temple. That new priesthood was to be an eternal order of priests, according to that of Melchisedech, offering Him under forms of bread and wine among the nations till the end.

The Glorious Future Of The Church

A great bridge then led from Moriah with its Temple to that other, higher and holier hill, Sion, mentioned a hundred and seventy-one times in the Old Testament. Patriarch, prophet and ancient seers of Israel seem to exhaust words foretelling Sions glorious future, because there the first Mass was to be offered. Numerous are the Scripture texts of prophets hundreds of years before

Christ that day leading His apostles to Sion, to say the first Mass and ordain them bishops, that they might sit on their Episcopal thrones among the heathens. We will cite only two texts.

“The Lord hath prepared his arm,
In the sight of all the Gentiles.
Depart ye, go out from thence,
Touch no unclean thing.
Go out of the midst of her.
Be clean you that carry
The vessels of Jehovah.
For Jehovah shall go before you,
And the Lord, the God of Israel,
Will gather you together.”

For the Lord hath chosen Sion,
He hath chosen it for his dwelling place.
This is my rest forever and ever;
Here will I dwell, for I have chosen it.
I will clothe her priests with salvation,
And let thy saints rejoice,
The Lord hath sworn the truth to David,
And he will not make it void,
Of the fruit of thy body I will set upon thy throne.
Their children forevermore shall sit upon thy throne.”

There was foretold His Church wherein the Prince of the House of David now rests enthroned in our tabernacle and sacrificed by priests according to Melchisedech's order, the patriarchal priesthood of the fathers of our race coming down from Abel and from Adam.

What did Christ do when the Temple priesthood rejected Him? He went beyond the Temple ceremonial and Jewish priesthood to the patriarchal Passover, and changed it into the new and eternal sacrifice. He did not found His Church and priesthood on the Temple and its priesthood, for these were to pass away. The Mass with its ceremonial comes directly from the Passover and only indirectly from the Temple, for the latter was but an extension, a development of the ancient Passover. Although we find the Temple ceremonies in the Mass and in our Church ceremonial, yet we trace them directly to the Last Supper which Christ and His apostles held that night as the Hebrew Passover.

To Be Cont'd.