

# Foreword

*The following text was part of a series called “Liturgy for Lay Folk,” published at the turn of the twentieth century, with an introduction by the renowned English priest and liturgical author, Adrian Fortescue. The introduction for that series, entitled “The Rites of Holy Week,” is this very text, included in this book for the edification of the faithful. We hope it will prove to our readers a good resource to greatly enrich and deepen their knowledge of these historical and symbolic rites, which can only lead to a more contemplative and fruitful participation at these sacred liturgies.*

# The Rites of Holy Week

by Adrian Fortescue



The week before Easter, now commonly called Holy Week (in the missal it is “*Hebdomada maior*”), is not only the most sacred time of the year; liturgically it forms an exception to the normal course of church functions in many ways. Indeed these great days stand out from all the rest of the year, with their rites unlike anything we are accustomed to see in church. It is true that some of the services, as for instance the Mass on Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday, are not so very different from Mass on other days; but even they have many noticeable peculiarities; other services, such as those of Good Friday and Holy Saturday morning, are quite unlike anything else. To the student of liturgy these days, as no others, are full of interest for the history of our Roman rite in the past.

Perhaps the first thing to note about Holy Week is that it is part of the same feast as Easter Week following. We must think of all that fortnight, from Palm Sunday to Low Sunday, as one event. The whole fortnight makes up the Easter feast, the “*paschalia solemnia*,” in which we remember, each year, our redemption by the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ. It is true that the character of these two weeks seems as different as anything could be. Holy Week is the time of mourning, the saddest week of the year, the Easter octave the most joyful. Yet they belong together; we should think of them as the two halves of one whole. The change from the mourning of Holy Week to the joy of Easter, taking place in the middle of the function of Holy Saturday, is of the essence of this Paschal solemnity. It was so at the first Easter. Our Lord said to the disciples of Emmaus: “Was it not necessary that Christ should suffer these things, and so enter into his glory?” (Luke, xxiv, 26). So now, as we remember the story of our Redemption, we too, following him, pass during the one feast from the mournful memory of his suffering, to the joyful memory of his glory.

The reason why this Paschal feast is the greatest of all is not so much because it is the remembrance of certain events in our Lord’s life, as that these events mean our Redemption. After our belief in the existence of God, nothing in the Christian religion is more fundamental than the idea that we are redeemed by the Sacrifice of Christ on the cross; this is the very heart of all our religion. And we must understand too that his Resurrection is just as much part of our Redemption as his pain and death. “Christ was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification” (Rom. Iv, 25). The Resurrection is the great witness of Christ’s mission, without which no one would have believed in him, no one would have received the fruit of his suffering. So the Apostles say: “If Christ has not risen again, our preaching is vain, vain is your faith” (1 Cor. Xv, 14). The Church always looks upon the Resurrection as an integral part of our Redemption, as much as the cross. What the Apostles preached was not only Christ crucified, it was “Christ Jesus who died and

who rose again” (Rom. Viii, 34); we believe in “Jesus who died and rose again” (1 Thes. Iv, 14) and so on throughout the New Testament. Inevitably then, the early Church took all this, the memory of the Crucifixion, and of the Resurrection, as one thing. In every Mass the solemn remembrance of our redemption is of “the blessed passion and Resurrection from the dead of Christ thy Son, our Lord,” and, as completing the idea of the Resurrection, also of his “glorious ascension into heaven.” Inevitably too the Church makes the memory of these things the cardinal feast of all the year. More important than Christmas, greater than Pentecost, standing out from all other feasts and memories, towering above the normal course of the year in this great Paschal solemnity around the Sunday after the first Spring full moon. No wonder that five-sixths of the year revolves around Easter<sup>[1]</sup>; no wonder that these days are unlike any other. And this Paschal feast begins on Palm Sunday and lasts till Low Sunday. The Easter octave has fewer liturgical peculiarities than the former week; it needs less explanation of its ceremonies; but it is all part of one solemnity.

So, on Palm Sunday, with the chant of “Hosanna filio David” we seem to enter another world. All the usual course of Saints’ days is laid aside; no other thought may disturb the yearly remembrance of our Redemption. One would like to spend these days in something of the nature of a retreat. That is not possible for most people. But at least, we should, as far as we can, leave behind us our usual cares, at the threshold of Palm Sunday, to take them up again when we come out of the great days after Low Sunday.

Symbols of this exceptional time are the strange rites we see then in church.

The rites of Holy Week consist chiefly of three main elements, from which others follow. The first is the blessing of palms and procession on Palm Sunday, the second the fact that no Mass is said on Good Friday, though the celebrant makes his Communion on that day, the third the Easter vigil and anticipation of Easter on Holy Saturday. The fourth element, Tenebrae, is less of an exception than it may seem.

## PALM SUNDAY

At once, on the morning of Palm Sunday, we notice something unlike the rest of the year. The blessing of palms with its first antiphon: “Hosanna filio David,” ushers in the great days. A careful observer, even knowing nothing about the history of this rite, might already notice two points about it. The first is that the procession of palms does not go to any special place; it has no further object than to be a procession. It starts from the altar; the ceremony at the doors of the church is performed, then eventually it comes back to the place from which it set out. Compare this with the other Holy Week procession, on Maundy Thursday. Here we see its object at once. It is to carry the Blessed Sacrament to the place of repose. The second noticeable point about

[1] From Septuagesima to Advent.

Palm Sunday morning is that the ceremony of blessing the palms has a most curious likeness to a Mass. It has, indeed, nearly all the elements of a Mass, up to the Canon. It begins with an introit (“Hosanna filio David”), then comes a collect, a lesson, gradual, gospel, even a preface and Sanctus. It seems, in short, like a Mass with the essential part, the Consecration and Communion, left out.

From these points a man might conclude at once, first that the origin of the rite is not Roman, since it is not according to the Roman tradition to hold processions without some practical purpose; secondly that this ceremony of blessing was once a Mass. Both conclusions are reasonable.

The old, pure Roman rite was nothing if not austere practical. It contained no ceremonies done for their own sake, no decorative or symbolic features, as do the Eastern rites. Nothing could be wider off the mark than the common Protestant idea that our Liturgy is made up for theatrical effects, that we deliberately hold gorgeous ceremonies to impress people’s imagination. The exact opposite is true. If there is a fair reproach that could be made against the Roman liturgical tradition it is rather that, in its austere simplicity, in its exceeding commonsense, it is even dull. Fortunately, in the course of the year we have a few ceremonies taken from other rites, just enough to take away this reproach, not enough to change the essentially sober Roman feeling of the whole. One of these ceremonies is that of Palm Sunday. Most such traditions come from north of the Alps, from those more emotional rites that we class together, loosely, as Gallican. But it seems that this one came to us from the East. It is a case of dramatic ceremony best understood when we know that it began in Jerusalem itself. There we can easily understand it. Nothing could be more natural than that pilgrims at Jerusalem on Palm Sunday should go over the very ground where our Lord passed as he came into the city, meditating the story in the gospels. They would go out to Bethany and there, thinking of that first Palm Sunday procession, they would come back to Jerusalem, holding palms and singing to Christ as the Hebrew children had sung. Then, when pilgrims came home, they would describe what they had seen and done. Their friends could not perhaps go to Jerusalem; but they could make a Jerusalem at home. Their Church was Jerusalem to them.<sup>[2]</sup> So they would choose some other church, perhaps a chapel out by a country road at some distance. They would make this their Bethany for the occasion; coming from it up to the cathedral or city church they, too, would remember the entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem; they, too, would hold palms and sing to him in the same way. There are many cases of this development, many ceremonies that we understand when we know that they began as a dramatic reproduction of the gospel story, at the place where it happened, that then they were copied at home by people who could not go to the Holy Land. Our Stations of the Cross are a conspicuous example. They, too, began when people went in pilgrimage through the very streets where our Lord had passed from Pilate’s house to Calvary. And then people in Europe, wishing to feel the same emotions, made a little Via Dolorosa

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<sup>[2]</sup> In the Middle Ages it was very common to name places at home after scenes of our Lord’s life. There were Galilee porches, Jerusalem chambers, Bethlehem chapels, Nazareth houses.

around their church. It is not then surprising that the first certain notice we have of the Palm Sunday procession comes from an account of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.<sup>[3]</sup> Some time about the fourth, or even sixth, century a lady from Southern Gaul, whose name seems to have been Aetheria, though she is commonly called Silvia, went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Places.<sup>[4]</sup> She wrote an account of what she saw there, which account is of great importance, as showing the rites celebrated in Jerusalem and thereabouts at the time. Aetheria was at Jerusalem on Palm Sunday; she describes the procession of palms. At about the seventh hour (1-2 p.m.) all the people with the bishop go to the Mount of Olives, sing hymns and antiphons and hear lessons. Then, at the eleventh hour (5-6 p.m.) the gospel about our Lord's entry into Jerusalem is read; the people gather branches of palm and olive, they sing: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," and so escort the bishop back to the city. She notices that the people take the bishop as a type of our Lord, and go with him to represent the Jews around Christ.<sup>[5]</sup> It was then, no doubt, from Jerusalem that this ceremony spread throughout Christendom. It spread first to the Eastern rites. Nearly all of them still have a blessing and procession of palms. Then, perhaps as early as the sixth or seventh centuries, it came to the West. It had spread throughout the West by the ninth.<sup>[6]</sup>

The other question is whether the early part of the ceremony was once a Mass. People went out to the other church; there the palms were blessed and, it would seem, Mass was said.<sup>[7]</sup> Then they came in procession back to the cathedral, and here the service ended by the High Mass sung by the bishop. It was only gradually, as it became difficult to hold a station at another church, that the palms were blessed at the same altar where the High Mass would be sung; so the earlier Mass, if there was one, was reduced to the fragment we still have.<sup>[8]</sup> It is worth noting that in this fragment we have the one commonly known example of what was a very common function in the Middle Ages, a "dry Mass," that is the prayers of Mass, without Consecration or Communion.<sup>[9]</sup> As the procession returns to the door of the church, we have a most beautiful symbolic rite. This return became, naturally, a symbol of our Lord's entry into Jerusalem where he is to suffer. In this people saw a conqueror coming to the place of his triumph. They thought of that entry into Jerusalem as the beginning of his victory, "qui immolatus vicerit." So they made a great ceremony of his entrance. One has the picture of a mighty victor thundering at the doors of the city: "Lift up your gates, ye princes, and be ye lifted up, eternal gates, that the King of glory may

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[3] There may be earlier allusions to the ceremony, by St. Cyril of Jerusalem (+386). See *Thurston, Lent and Holy Week*, p. 192.

[4] *Peregrinatio Silviae ad loca sancta*, ed. by P. Geyer in the C.S.E.I., vol. 39 (Vienna 1898), pp. 35-101. The date of her journey is much discussed. She was abbess of a convent.

[5] *Per. silv.*, xxxi., 1-3; ed. cit., pp. 83-84

[6] For allusions to it in the West see *Thurston*, op. cit., pp. 195-196.

[7] See the evidence of St. Ulrich of Augsburg (10th cent.), *Thurston*, p. 201

[8] Lately some doubt has been thrown on the existence of this first Mass at the blessing of palms.

[9] The Carthusians still celebrate dry Masses.

come in" (Ps. xxiii, 7). To welcome Christ they sent a choir of boys (boys because of the "Pueri Hebraeorum") at a gallery or platform above the church doors, to sing the hymn: "Gloria laus et honor," alternately with the procession waiting below. In many mediæval churches the Palm Sunday gallery is a feature of the building, over the main doors. In other cases a temporary platform was set up. The "Gloria laus" is, without question, one of the most splendid hymns we possess. Unlike most, it is written in a classical metre, in elegiacs. There is a pretty story about the origin of this hymn. It is said that Theodulph, Bishop of Orleans, in 828 was in prison at Angers for having conspired against the Emperor Lewis the Pious, son of Charles the Great (814-840). From his prison he heard the Palm Sunday procession pass. Then he lifted up his voice and sang out this hymn that he had just composed. The Emperor was in the procession, and was so charmed that he there and then forgave the bishop.

At the end of the ceremony at the church doors the subdeacon, carrying the processional cross, knocks with it at the door. It is opened from within, the procession passes up the church singing the Responsory: "Ingrediente Domino in sanctam civitatem." In Roman ceremonies it is always safest to look for a practical explanation at first. Does the cross-bearer knock at the door simply because they want to get in? Yet there are other processions which pass outside the church and return without this knocking. Since we have to do with a rite that is not Roman in its origin, perhaps this time we need not be too anxious to find a prosaic explanation. It seems that here there is conscious symbolism from the beginning. This knocking at the door fits in with the symbol of the chant outside, adding to the picture of our Lord's triumphant entry: "Attolite portas principes vestras." In the later mediæval derived rites they added much further decoration to the Palm Sunday procession. In some churches they carried round a statue of our Lord on the ass; sometimes they turned the whole service into a kind of Corpus Christi procession, using white vestments, taking down the Lenten veil, bearing the Blessed Sacrament and strewing about singing cakes. This is a good example of that exuberant late mediaeval ceremonial which so often spoiled the functions, destroying their old meaning for the sake of more gorgeous ornament. We may be glad that, since the reformed missal of 1570, we have now the simpler, infinitely more pregnant ceremonies, as they were received at Rome, though not originating there, long before these later additions.

Almost every year a discussion is started in the papers as to what kind of palms should be used. In modern times we generally import real palms from abroad. This may perhaps keep more exactly to the example of the gospel story; on the other hand, these palms have the disadvantage that when we get them they are dead. The "golden" colour advertised by the church furnishing shops means, of course, really that the branches are dead and dry. In the Middle Ages people kept what was perhaps nearer to the real principle by cutting down branches of green trees at home. The favorite "palms" then were the willow and the yew; which may be one reason why these trees were so often planted in churchyards.

It accounts also for the common use of the name “palm” for these trees. [10] Perhaps long boughs of green trees and the beautiful catkins of the willow would be more in accordance with the idea of the feast, as well as more beautiful in themselves, than the dead vegetation we usually carry.

The only other special feature of Palm Sunday is the singing of the Passion; and this is less an exception than it may seem. For essentially the Passion is simply the gospel of the Mass, though it is a very long one. It is quite an old custom to read the whole account of our Lord’s Passion on the days of Holy Week. St. Augustine refers to it.[11] In our rite the Passion according to St. Matthew is read on Palm Sunday, St. Mark on Tuesday, St. Luke on Wednesday, St. John on Good Friday. It was, no doubt, originally only because of the great strain to one voice in reading the long narrative that it is divided among three deacons, one who sings the narrative, one our Lord’s words, one all that is spoken by anyone else. The chant, now so characteristic of Holy Week, is really only an adornment of the usual chant of lessons, with the fall of a fifth at the end of each phrase.[12] To allow the choir to sing the answers of the crowd (the “turba”) is a later ornament. The popular “Passion music”[13] is a development from this chanting of the Passion at Mass. People should hold their palms in their hands while the Passion is sung. The palms may afterwards be taken home and kept; but they ought to be burned on Shrove Tuesday of the next year. It is from those palms that the ashes are made for Ash Wednesday.

## TENEBRAE

The office of Tenebrae is much less of a special function than many laymen imagine. It is only Matins and Lauds for the next day, with certain peculiarities suitable for these days. But they are now almost the only occasion when lay people (unless they live near a monastery) have an opportunity of attending one of the oldest of all Church offices. All the more reason for doing so when they can.

The name “Tenebrae,” used specially for Matins and Lauds of the last three days of Holy Week,[14] is obviously derived from the gradual extinction of the lights, leaving the church at last in total darkness. It may seem odd that we should say Matins and Lauds rather late in the afternoon of the day before. But this is the invariable tendency of church functions, to be pushed back and kept earlier. The morning office of Holy Saturday is a conspicuous example of the same thing. Originally Matins was said during the night, its three Nocturns at intervals and Lauds at

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[10] For this see Thurston, pp. 225-229.

[11] Sermo, ccxxxii, C. I (M.P.I., XXXIX, col. 1108).

[12] There are several ornamented forms of the simple lesson tone. It does not seem that their object is ornament so much as to help the voice to strike that not easy interval true. In all the ornament is seen to be a scale, or part of one, from the *do* down to *fa*. The Passion is set for three voices. The Narrator (supposed to be a medium baritone) hold *do* in the middle, the “Synagoga” (a high tenor) *fa* above, “Christus” (a bass) *sol* below.

[13] For instance, Bach’s Passions, etc.

[14] These three days are the “Triduum sacrum.”

cockcrow. Then people found it hard to get up in the middle of the night; so, instead of saying Matins later, they said it before going to bed. So now a priest is allowed to say his Matins and Lauds at any time from the latter part of the afternoon before.

Comparing Tenebrae with the normal Matins and Lauds, we notice the following differences. First, naturally, the psalms and lessons are all appropriate for these days; but this is not an exception; appropriate psalms and lessons are chosen for every feast. Then Tenebrae lacks all the later additions to the Divine office. It has no hymns, no Invitatorium psalm, no blessings.<sup>[15]</sup> It is reduced to the bare essentials; that is at Matins three Nocturns, each consisting of three psalms and as many lessons; at Lauds five psalms and the “Benedictus.” To this only the versicles in each Nocturn and at Lauds, the silent Pater noster, and the characteristic ending of every part of the Divine office on these days (the verse “Christus factus est,” etc., the “Miserere,” and last prayer) are added. What is the reason of this simplicity? It cannot be the idea of mourning, which might exclude additional ornament, because much the same is the case on Easter Day; at Easter, too, the office has no hymns nor many of the later additions. The reason is the greater solemnity of the days, and the fact that people were long accustomed to this older form of the office. When later additions were made they were not applied to these greatest days, partly no doubt from the idea of reverence in not touching their services; partly, too, because the people would neither understand nor like changes in the services they knew so well. This is a common tendency, that very great days, with whose offices the people have specially sacred associations, keep a more archaic form. To a great extent this more archaic form is the only important feature of Tenebrae. The outer ceremonies, which strangers notice first, are less important. The lessons of the first Nocturn are always taken from Scripture. In Holy week they are, most suitably, from the Lamentations of Jeremias. There is no great mystery about the Hebrew words sung at the beginning of each clause of these Lamentations. The original text, like that of many psalms, is an acrostic, each sentence beginning with one of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, in order. The acrostic is not preserved in the Latin version, but we name the Hebrew letters with which the original begins. The extraordinarily beautiful chant of the Lamentations is a special one, not merely the usual tone adorned.

At Tenebrae fifteen candles are lighted on a triangle called the hearse.<sup>[16]</sup> They are of unbleached wax. This is a common sign of mourning, dating from the time when bleached wax was considered a rather sumptuous ornament. These candles are put out gradually, one after each psalm of the office. This little ceremony, which attracts so much attention, is not of primary importance. Now it represents to us the idea of darkness and mourning. It is a question how it first began. According

[15] Nor, of course, the Te Deum which ends Matins only on feasts and joyful Sundays.

[16] “Hearse” means a harrow for raking the ground. In a derived sense it applies first to the Tenebrae hearse, a triangle with spikes, just like a harrow. It is only because the stand on which a coffin is laid once also had, over the coffin, triangles with spikes to hold candles, that this stand is also called a hearse. See Thurston, pp. 258-263. An example of a funeral hearse with the candles may be seen in the well-known contemporary drawing of the funeral of Abbot Islip of Westminster (XVth cent.), from this the connection will be seen at once.



to the usual reason for all Roman ceremonies one is tempted to see in this, originally, merely a practical expedient. If Matins were sung in the night and Lauds at cockcrow, the church would be getting gradually lighter, so the candles would be no longer wanted. Father Thurston, however, while not entirely rejecting this, suggests another ingenious explanation. He explains that it was the tradition at Rome to celebrate *Tenebrae* in the dark, as a sign of mourning; that in the North they wanted to imitate this custom, but could not read their books in the dark, so they had to light some candles. Then, towards the end, since the psalms of Lauds are so much better known, they found it possible to do exactly as Rome did, to finish quite in the dark, singing by heart.<sup>[17]</sup> The hiding of the last candle and its restoration to the hearse at the end may have begun so that while the end of *Tenebrae* is quite dark, nevertheless there should be a light by which to see one's way out. Or perhaps, as all this ceremony is not originally Roman, there may be here deliberate symbolism of Christ's death and resurrection.

The knocking at the end was undoubtedly merely a sign that all should rise and depart. Since the bells are silent these days, it was given with a clapper or by knocking a book. This is a most typical example of the way a ceremony is evolved, and acquires later symbolic meaning.

## MAUNDY THURSDAY

The name "Maundy" is from "Mandatum," the ceremony of washing the feet at the end of the Mass, whose first antiphon begins: "Mandatum novum do vobis." It is usual to call a service after the first word of its chants. In the same way we speak of a "Requiem," a "Dirge" ("Dirige" is the beginning of the first antiphon at Matins for the dead), and so on. It is curious that in England the ceremony of washing the feet should have given its name to the whole day.

The main feature of the function today and tomorrow is that on Good Friday the holy Sacrifice is not offered. This is as old a custom as any in the Church. It obtains equally in all rites. Indeed, in most of the Eastern rites, as once at Rome, there were many "aliturgal"<sup>[18]</sup> days in Lent. The Byzantine rite, for instance, has this Liturgy of the Presanctified every Wednesday and Friday in Lent, and on Monday and Tuesday in Holy Week. We now have it only on Good Friday. But, although no priest consecrates on Good Friday, it is the equally old custom that the priest (and once the people, too) should make their Communion. For this purpose, it is necessary to reserve the Sanctissimum consecrated at the Mass the day before. Nowadays, it would be easy to take the Sanctissimum from the tabernacle; but the ceremonies of Holy Week date from a time when it was by no means the universal custom to reserve in every church. So special arrangements had to be made to reserve for this occasion. At the Mass of Maundy Thursday the priests consecrate two

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[18] That is, days on which the holy Liturgy (Mass) was not celebrated.

[19] Churches where the Blessed Sacrament was not reserved had no tabernacle.

[20] Notice how constantly the kiss of Judas recurs in the office of Maundy Thursday.

[21] Thurston, pp. 277-281.

hosts. One he receives as usual; the other he takes to a place prepared,<sup>[19]</sup> where it is kept till his Communion on Good Friday. That is the root of the service of both days.

For the rest, the Mass of Maundy Thursday is a festal Mass, with white vestments, with the “Gloria in excelsis.” It is the only case in the year when the Mass of the day and office do not correspond. The office is all mournful. Here the memory, which seems most to fill the mind of the Church, is the betrayal of Judas.<sup>[20]</sup> But when Mass is said the Church cannot forget, although it is the middle of the week of mourning, that this is the day to which we owe the Holy Eucharist. So, a startling exception to the usual note of the time, at Mass at least we put aside all thought of mourning and celebrate with joy our Lord’s last gift before he died. The ringing of the bells at the “Gloria” is only the sign that from now on they will not be heard again till the first Easter Mass. The Church is accustomed to do a thing solemnly for the last time before it ceases, as we say the “Alleluia” solemnly twice at the end of Vespers before Septuagesima. Probably the time of the “Gloria” is chosen because it corresponds to the time when the bells ring out on Holy Saturday. The playing of the organ at the same time is obviously a further development of the same idea. The organ, too, comes back at the “Gloria” on Holy Saturday.<sup>[21]</sup> To play the organ on Maundy Thursday is less logical, since it should not have been heard during all Lent; but one can see the connection of ideas.

From this time begin the “still days” of our forefathers, on which all are to be intent only on the memory of what our Lord bore for us.

After Mass the procession takes the Sanctissimum to the place where it is kept till the next day. This is an example of a real Roman procession, having a definite object. It is usual to call the place to which the Blessed Sacrament is taken the “altar of repose.” This is a harmless popular name; but it is not really an altar. No sacrifice is offered on it. At first it seems that nothing more was done than to keep the Sanctissimum reverently in some safe place, often in the sacristy, as it is still reserved in many Eastern Churches. Then people realized that this was the one occasion when they had the Blessed Sacrament in their churches. So they made much of it. They fitted up and adorned a place of honour; they began to watch and pray before the “altar of repose” all the day and all night. Much of the ideas of such later developments as Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, of the “Forty Hours,” and so on, seems to have begun during this time between Mass on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. And then, even after it had become usual to reserve the Sanctissimum on the altar of nearly every church all the year round, the old custom of special reverence on this occasion went on. That, too, is a nearly always so. Custom preserves many things in liturgy after their first reason has ceased. This accounts for the special reverence with which we still treat the Sanctissimum at the altar of repose, although we have it now in the tabernacle always. And, indeed, on this night of all nights, when our

<sup>[22]</sup> For references see Thurston, pp. 307-309. As a typical example see the Rule of St. Benedict, chaps. 35 and 53.

<sup>[23]</sup> Seventeenth Syn. of Toledo (694), can. 3 (Hefele-Leclercq : Hist. Des Conciles, iii, p. 586)

Lord was suffering his bitter torment, it is natural that people should spend part of the time with him in prayer, honouring the gift of that day. We leave the altar of repose, come back to the High Altar and say Vespers. This is not really a special feature of these days. On all fast days Vespers are now said in the morning, from the old idea that one does not break one's fast till after Vespers. Easier rule now allows people to eat at midday on fast days; but the liturgical sequence is preserved; so the meal pushed Vespers back to the morning. The fact that on fast days at the end of Mass the deacon says not: "Ite missa est," but "Benedicamus Domino," meant once that he did not dismiss the people then, because they were to stay for Vespers. After Vespers the altar is stripped. This ceremony has become to us one of the features of Holy Week; yet it is only one more case of an archaic custom otherwise abolished, but preserved on these days. Once, after Mass on any day, the altar was stripped. Now on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday the stripping of the altar has become a symbol of desolation, or a memory that our Lord was stripped of his garments.

The Maundy follows. When our Lord had washed the feet of the Apostles he gave us a clear command to do as he had done (John xiii, 15). Doubtless this means, in the first place, rather the general attitude he then observed; but the Church has always taken his command literally too. There are innumerable cases of washing feet (at one time a very practical work of charity) by Heads of religious houses, done to poor travelers, pilgrims, and so on, by Popes, bishops, Kings. Still in Catholic countries it is the custom for the Sovereign to wash the feet of thirteen poor men today. Indeed, so definite is our Lord's command to carry out this ceremony, so clear the implication of a grace given thereby (John xiii, 10, 11, 17), that at one time it seems to have been considered almost to approach the dignity of a sacrament. We shall certainly not consider the Mandatum to be a real sacrament; but it may be counted among the sacramentals. Naturally, it was most of all on this day that people obeyed our Lord's command. Whereas Fathers and synods, from the fourth century, recommend the washing of feet in general, often especially the washing of the feet of the newly baptized,<sup>[22]</sup> in the seventh century we find a Spanish council insisting on the restoration of this ceremony on Maundy Thursday, since in some places it was falling out of use.<sup>[23]</sup> It is curious that thirteen men whose feet are washed, not twelve, are constantly mentioned. In the twelfth century the Pope washed the feet of twelve subdeacons after Mass, and of thirteen poor men after dinner.<sup>[24]</sup> Various explanations are given of the number thirteen. Either it is meant to include St. Matthias, or St. Paul, or perhaps our Lord himself. There is

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[24] Ordo rom. Xii, 25, 27 (M.P.L. LXXVIII, col. 1074).

[25] Caer. Ep., L. II, cap. XXIV, 2.

[26] The Eastern rites keep to twelve.

[27] Prophecy because all the Old Testament is prophetic of Christ. It is a lesson from Osee about the hope that, after God had punished his people, some day he would save them. It is chosen probably because of vi. 2-3: "He will strike us and heal us. He will give us life after two days; on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."

[28] In this case (as often) really another lesson from the Old Testament, about the Passover, in Exodus ii, again a reminder that these are, already, our paschalia solemnity.

a legend about an angel who appeared and joined the twelve poor men entertained on one occasion by St. Gregory I. No number is specified in the missal; but the Ceremonial of Bishops speaks of thirteen;<sup>[25]</sup> this is the usual number now in the West.<sup>[26]</sup>

After the washing of feet the church is left all empty and bare; only in a distant chapel the lights burn and people watch silently before the altar of repose, waiting for the service of the next morning.

## GOOD FRIDAY

There is surely no other moment in the year when the Church succeeds in producing the right impression so perfectly as she does in the service of Good Friday morning. The very strangeness of the rites, utterly unlike any others, gives us at once the feeling that this is a day different from any other day. That little procession coming to the altar in dead silence, the prostration before the altar, then the lessons, the series of collects with their strange chant, all this produces a sense of desolation, of mourning, such as no other service in the year approaches. Today the most ignorant observer who enters a Catholic church can see that the Church mourns because her Lord is dead. Then comes the worship of the cross, so full of meaning today, and the one gleam of light in the dark altar, singing that superb hymn of the triumph of the cross. The gleam of light fades again; there follows the strange little Communion service that we call Mass of the Presanctified, then Vespers; again the altar is stripped, and now all the church is indeed desolate, waiting in gloom for the first light of the Easter sun next day. The wonderful thing about this service, expressing so perfectly the feeling of the day, is that it has all come together quite naturally. There was hardly any conscious symbolism in it at the beginning. Each element can be explained as the obvious thing to do under the circumstances. It is the association of long centuries that has filled it all with mystic meaning.

The service of Good Friday morning is made up of three separate functions—first, the lessons and collects; secondly, the worship of the cross; thirdly the Mass of the Presanctified. Vespers and stripping the altar follow, as on the day before.

The first function is the lessons and the collects. Everything in the Good Friday rites (except the worship of the cross) is exceedingly old. Here we have what has otherwise almost always disappeared from our rite—namely, three lessons, a prophecy<sup>[27]</sup> from the Old Testament, an epistle<sup>[28]</sup> and a gospel.<sup>[29]</sup> Between them tracts are sung, as during the whole of Lent. The Gospel is the Passion according to St. John, sung by three deacons, as on Palm Sunday.

Then come the collects. Here, again, Good Friday has preserved what

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[29] These three lessons were once part of every Mass.

[30] *Peregr. Silviae*, xxxvii, 1-3 (ed. Geyer, pp. 88-89)

[31] For the connection between covering the images and the old Lenten veil, see Thurston, pp. 99-105.

[32] See Thurston, pp. 345-362.

was once an element of every Mass, a series of petitions for all kinds of people. Maybe something like this was once said before the offertory act at every Mass, at the place where the priest still says: “Oremus,” and then goes on at once to the collect. Once the form was longer, as we see it today. The priest not only says: “Let us pray,” he tells the people what to pray for: “Let us pray, dearly beloved for the holy Church of God, that God our Lord may give her peace, union, and may keep her throughout the whole world,” and so on. Then the deacon, whose office it is always to control the people, tells them to kneel. They kneel in silent prayer for that object (once they certainly spent some moments in this silent prayer); then the subdeacons tells them to stand up again, and the priest gathers up all the petitions in a final prayer aloud, the collect. That is why the typical Roman collect is so short, and often so general in its petition. It is not so much the prayer itself, as a final clause asking God to receive the prayers already said silently. Here again, we have a case where the ceremonies of Holy Week are invaluable, as showing the older form once common to all days. There is nothing that belongs specially to Good Friday in this chain of prayers for men of all sorts and conditions. We could say them equally well any day. But this relic of older times, with its petitions redolent of the circumstances of the early Church, bringing us memories almost from the catacombs, this too, by long association, has become part of the feeling of Good Friday.

Then follows the one element that is not very old, what our fathers called the “Creeping to the cross.” In the East we know of a ceremony of reverence to the relic of the true cross, on Good Friday, from the time of Aetheria’s pilgrimage.<sup>[30]</sup> No doubt this had some influence in the West too. But we can find a very simple explanation of the ceremony as we have it. Since the beginning of Lent originally, now since Passion Sunday, all pictures and statues in the church are covered. This is easily understood. These pictures and statues are a conspicuous ornament of the church. During the time of penance we deprive ourselves of them, for the same reason that we go without the music of the organ.<sup>[31]</sup> But a crucifix is a statue. So crucifixes too are covered from Passion Sunday. It must, eventually, have seemed strange that, on the very day of the Crucifixion, people should not see the crucifix. Hence, on Good Friday they made this one exception and uncovered the crucifix. We can imagine the origin of the ceremony as the simplest thing possible. Someone went and uncovered the crosses in the church. Then, especially

[33] These “Reproaches” (Improperia), with the hymn “Pange lingua” of Venantius Fortunatus (c. 600), are amongst the most beautiful poetry we have:

“What, O my people, have I done to thee?  
What have I done, how wronged thee? Answer me.  
From Egypt’s land I led and rescued thee,  
And thou hast wrought a bitter cross for me.”

Response: “Holy God,  
Holy and strong,  
Holy and immortal,  
Have mercy on us.” — (Canon Oakeley’s translation, in Thurston, p 353).

[34] The Trisagion in the Byzantine rite occurs at every Liturgy, at the “Little Entrance,” before the lessons.

[35] The Trisagion was sung in the Gallican rite, in Greek and Latin, before the “Kyrie eleison” at the beginning of Mass, and again before and after the Gospel (St. Germanus of Paris, +576, M.P.L., LXXII, col. 89, 91).

with the associations of this day, a ceremony, such as we have now, grew out of this. The cross is uncovered with honour, the people take this opportunity of paying to it symbolic reverence, reverence directed, of course, really to him who hung upon it. We know of a rite, very like the one we still have, since about the eighth century, first north of the Alps, then adopted at Rome.<sup>[32]</sup>

In the Reproaches,<sup>[33]</sup> sung at the same time we have one of the few cases of Greek in our Roman rite. The verses “Agios o Theos,” etc., are sung alternately in Greek and Latin. This is the famous Trisagion, a feature of the holy Liturgy in the Byzantine and other Eastern rites.<sup>[34]</sup> Its introduction into ours seems to be a case of the considerable influence of the Byzantine rite in Gaul,<sup>[35]</sup> whence it passed to Rome.

The Mass of the Presanctified, known to us on this day only, occurs frequently in Eastern rites. It is really only a little Communion service, in which the celebrant receives Holy Communion, not having consecrated today, but taking the particle reserved from the Mass of the day before. This Mass of the Presanctified is full of valuable details, as showing the earliest form of administering Communion out of Mass. The still farther shortened ceremony, by which we constantly give people Communion out of Mass, is a later case of the same thing. On Good Friday the Sanctissimum is brought from the place where it has been kept since Maundy Thursday; the altar is incensed, and the priest goes on at once to what would follow after the Consecration, “Pater Noster” and Communion. Later development made a splendid ceremony out of the bringing of the Sanctissimum to the altar, as we sing Venantius Fortunatus’s great hymn, “Vexilla Regis.” When the priest has made his Communion the torch bearers extinguish their candles, and the service comes to an end with the same sense of desolation with which it began. Vespers are said as yesterday, the altar is stripped, the church is left empty and bare for the rest of the day of mourning.

## HOLY SATURDAY

The first thing to understand about the service of Holy Saturday morning is that it was all composed to be held during the night between Saturday and Sunday. This is the most conspicuous case of the way services so often are pushed back in time. Gradual development first drove it back to the evening before, then to the afternoon, and now finally we keep it on Saturday morning. There are examples of the same process which has not gone so far. The Armenians keep their Easter vigil, with the Liturgy, in the afternoon of Easter eve. Possibly the fact that our Holy Saturday office ends with Mass has had something to do with the fact that it is now celebrated about twelve hours before the proper time. In the West it must soon have seemed strange to sing Mass in the afternoon; so, once the original hour was changed, the

<sup>[36]</sup> Thurston, p. 405.

<sup>[37]</sup> Because our Lord’s baptism has only an external resemblance to ours. The baptism of St. John was an example of Jewish symbolic purification; it was perhaps a prophecy, not a sacrament. The sacrament of baptism was not founded till long after this. On the other hand, the Roman connection between baptism and Easter is based on a far deeper mystic idea, that of Rom. Vi, 3-11, and Col. ii, 12.

<sup>[38]</sup> Thurston, pp. 408-412.

time would soon become the morning rather than the evening of Saturday. Nowadays, to understand these ceremonies, we must always remember that we are to imagine ourselves keeping the long Easter vigil during the night between Saturday and Sunday, ending with the first Easter Mass just before sunrise on Easter Day. “That is,” says Father Thurston, “the effort of the imagination which the Church requires us to make.”<sup>[36]</sup> We have, then, in this service one remaining example of the old vigils that Christians kept before great feasts. The Easter vigil was always kept with special solemnity, not only on account of the greatness of the day, but also because, for many centuries, people believed that our Lord would come again, to judge the world, during this night. So he would find them watching.

Though perhaps the service of Holy Saturday is one degree less magnificently impressive than that of Good Friday, it is even more redolent of an earlier age. There is no office of the Church now existing, which preserves such clear traces of antiquity, as does this. Its two main elements are, first, the preparation for Easter, and then the Baptism of the Catechumens. In the East the Epiphany was, and is still, the great day for baptizing; the West, by a happier instinct,<sup>[37]</sup> has always connected the solemn administration of this sacrament with Easter. The Catechumens, who during Lent have become “Competentes,” are baptized during the Easter vigil, they wear their white robes during the Easter octave, and make their first Communion, then laying aside the robes, on Low Sunday.

The long service, longest of any that is usually seen in a Catholic church, has five main parts: 1. The new fire and paschal candle; 2. The Prophecies; 3. The blessing of the font and baptism; 4. The Litanies; 5. The first Easter Mass.

The service begins, outside the church doors, with the striking of the new fire and its blessing. Here, too, we may begin with a simple explanation. All fires have been extinguished during the last days. We have seen that to keep the offices as far as possible in darkness was an obvious symbol of mourning. Since *Tenebrae* the evening before, there has been no light in the church. But now a light is needed, not only for the practical purpose of seeing during the night watch, but also as a double symbol. It is a symbol used at baptism; the baptized are “enlightened” (*illuminati*), and receive a lighted candle; also light, fire and warmth are obvious symbols of the glory of the Resurrection. Indeed, there may well be some pre-Christian symbolism mixed with this idea of fire and light at the great Spring feast. The fact that the day of our Lord’s Resurrection is a Sunday in Spring suggests to us, too, light and warmth, after the long dark winter, as part of the joy of the feast. But the new fire is not originally Roman. Again its obvious decorative symbolism would

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[39] Thurston, pp. 415-416.

[40] In the rubric after the “*Exsultet*”; “*Completa benedictione cerei*.”

[41] If a deacon baptizes solemnly he uses several forms, which must be called blessings; if he distributes Holy Communion, the little sign of the cross made with the *Sanctissimum* over each person is, undeniably, a blessing.

[42] But it would be very difficult to make up one’s mind finally as to which is the finest plainsong melody. Holy Week, especially, abounds in beautiful plainsong. Perhaps we might choose the “*Hosanna filio David*,” “*Gloria laus*,” *Lamentations*, “*Christus factus est*,” V. Fortunatus’s “*Pange lingua*,” “*Vexilla regis*,” “*Exsultet*,” first *Alleluia*, “*Vespere autem sabbati*,” as the ideal melodies, each expressing its own feeling perfectly.

[43] Thurston, p. 418.

[44] The grains of incense apparently began through a misunderstanding of “*Incensi huius*” in the text (Thurston, p. 422; but cf. p. 424)

[45] Thurston, pp. 426-427.

suggest that to us. It began in the Gallican rites, and was then adopted by Rome. The main purpose of the fire lit outside the doors on Holy Saturday morning is that from it the great paschal candle may be lighted. This paschal candle Fr. Thurston thinks is a safe instance of pure symbolism, not merely to give light during the night vigil, but from the beginning, a symbol of the glory of our Lord at his Resurrection, of him as the light of the world.<sup>[38]</sup> The fire is lit outside the church for obvious reasons. It would cause too much heat and smoke to be safe or pleasant inside. The prayers at the blessing of the fire are an admirable example of the ideas the Church reads into these symbolic ceremonies. In all cases the best explanation of our ceremonies is to read the prayers, which accompany them. The fire is brought up the church from outside with a triple candle or torch. It seems that this was at first only a precaution against its being blown out on the way. There are early cases in which two, not three, lights were lit.<sup>[39]</sup>

With every possible solemnity the blessing of the paschal candle follows. There is a curious detail about this ceremony. We always speak of it as the “blessing” of the candle; indeed, we have the best possible authority for doing so, since the term is used in the missal.<sup>[40]</sup> Yet this must be almost the only case where a deacon blesses.<sup>[41]</sup> The deacon, already vested in the Easter white, although the others still wear Lenten purple, asks the celebrant’s blessing and incenses the book, as before the Gospel. Everyone standing, he begins that magnificent chant, the “Exsultet.” Perhaps nowhere in our rite have we so splendid an example of emotional poetry as this. Its music, too, first herald of the Easter joy, is unequalled. Competent musicians have described this as the most beautiful plainsong melody of all.<sup>[42]</sup> The “Exsultet,” strikingly unlike our usual liturgical texts, is full of emotion about spring, the bees, and even about the deacon who sings it. Plainly it is not originally Roman. It is certainly very old; we can trace it from the fourth century. There is a not very well founded tradition that it was composed by no less a person than St. Augustine himself.<sup>[43]</sup> While it is sung the great candle is lighted, and then the lamps in the church.<sup>[44]</sup> So we have back our lights, brought from the first Easter fire and hallowed by all this ritual. Then follow those twelve long prophecies, which, to many people, are the wearisome part of the Holy Saturday office. The deacon takes off his white dalmatic; his proclaiming of Easter was that of a herald before the event; we have still the last remnant of Lent to carry to its end. It is tempting to consider these lessons from the Old Testament as the final instruction of the Catechumens now waiting for baptism. Fr. Thurston, however, does not think this probable. He sees in them rather a relic of the old days when the vigil service consisted of many long lessons alternating with psalms.<sup>[45]</sup> The psalms have disappeared, unless we consider the three Tracts to be what is left of them.

Although these Prophecies take long to chant, there is much to be said for

[46] Our other blessing of the font, on Whitsun Eve, seems to be, originally, a non-Roman alternative. The whole service of Whitsun Eve is a most curious reduplication of that of Easter Eve, including even the bells at the “Gloria in excelsis.” St. Augustine mentions a night vigil, like that of Easter (Sermo, 272, M.P.L. XXXIX, col. 1246). Martene quotes from a Pontifical of Besancon (c.600) the Whitsun Eve rites, which include a blessing of the candle and “Exsultet” (De antiquis Eccl. Ritibus, L. IV. cap 28, col. 541-545). It may be that in certain local Churches the Easter Eve functions were transferred to Whitsun Eve (in the North, because Holy Saturday was a cold day for baptism?); that then, finally, as so often happens, Rome adopted both alternatives.

[47] For this parallel see W. C. Bishop: The primitive form of Consecration (Church Quarterly Review, July, 1908; vol. lxvi., pp. 385-404).

[48] Fortescue: The Mass, chap. V., 5(2 ed. 1913, pp. 235-236).



their arrangement. It is good advice to the congregation to read them at the same time in their books; they form a wonderful account of God's dealings with his people before Christ came. The Prophecies are Roman; or, rather, they go back to that oldest period of all when long lessons from Scripture were an integral part of all such services everywhere. The blessing of the font that follows is Roman too. This is a characteristic place for it, and for the baptisms that should follow, in the local Roman order.<sup>[46]</sup> It is to be noted that what is blessed is really the water of the font. We have no blessing for a font as an ornament of a church. It seems not to be considered as a thing apart at all; it shares the blessing of the waters it contains. The new water is blessed with as much solemnity as the new fire. So, in the Paschal vigil, we have a solemn blessing of these two fundamental elements of life, both suggesting, besides the ideas of Easter, also spring that brings back new life after winter. The font is blessed with a long prayer in the form of the Mass preface; it has interesting parallels with the Canon of the Mass, only with the differences for the other chief sacrament.<sup>[47]</sup> It has an Epiklesis of the Holy Ghost, as the celebrant plunges the great candle into the waters while he sings thrice: "May the power of the Holy Ghost descend into the fullness of this font," truly a significant symbol.

As soon as the font is blessed, baptism should follow. It is not always possible to baptize on Holy Saturday. Now we baptize each child soon after its birth; yet, where possible, baptism should follow the blessing of the font, to complete the ceremony. That child is fortunate who is baptized on this day.

The procession goes back to the altar. The last remnant of Lent follows the Litanies. Here again we have what is really only an archaic survival from earlier days. Once there was some such litany as this before every Mass, of which our present "Kyrie eleison" remains as a relic.<sup>[48]</sup> Here, too, Holy Week keeps the earlier form once common to all days. The prostration before the altar, like that of Good Friday, was also once the common ceremony at the beginning of Mass. As the priest, deacon and subdeacon lie prostrate before the altar and the clauses of the Litany are chanted, the last edge of the great Lent cloud rolls away. For forty days the Church has been preparing for what will follow now. Liturgically, we have arrived at the end of the night watch; in the East already the first light of the grey dawn breaks; soon it will be sunrise, the rise of the Easter sun. Towards the end of the Litany they prepare the altar for Mass, for a festal Mass indeed—it will be the first Mass of Easter. The priest and his ministers go out to vest. As the Litany ends they come back in white. The usual preparatory prayers at the foot of the altar are said, while the Litany ends with the nine-fold "Kyrie eleison" and "Christe eleison." Almost insensibly the rite has become that of the beginning of Mass. The priest incenses the altar. Then he intones, "Gloria in excelsis Deo." This is the dramatic moment of the whole year. At this moment Lent ends, and it is Easter. As soon as he has intoned, the bells are rung, the organ, so long silent, peals out; from now on there is nothing but joy. Why is the "Gloria" the moment of this transformation? Obviously because it is the first element of the Mass. There is no Introit, because the priest is already at the altar, the "Kyrie eleison," in this case, remains rather the end of the Litany before Mass, the preparatory prayers are the priest's private devotion. The public Mass begins with the chant of the "Gloria." The Mass is very short after the long vigil service. It has many curious special features.<sup>[49]</sup> After the

epistle, solemnly the Alleluia, so long silent, is brought back. From now on, all through Paschaltide, it seems as if the Church cannot have enough of this word.<sup>[50]</sup> There is no creed and no offertory. The Easter preface is sung; but here, too, as in the "Exsultet," we are reminded that all this service should take place at night.<sup>[51]</sup> In the "Communicantes" prayer again the priest refers to the "most sacred night of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ." Then, during the Mass, we have the short Vespers of Holy Saturday. This is, of course, the last case of Lenten Vespers, said in the morning, as on the two former days. But the Vespers are all joyful, and full of Alleluia. Again, as the deacon dismisses the people, he sings: "Ite missa est, alleluia, alleluia." So the long vigil is over; it is Easter.

In all this wonderful pageant of ritual we notice especially how gradually, how naturally, it has come together.<sup>[52]</sup> There was at first no idea of deliberate dramatic effect. Such an idea would be foreign to the genius of the Roman rite. In only a few details, all originally not Roman, do we see a conscious symbolic motive. The great part of the Holy Week ceremonies are rather old rites, introduced originally for plain reasons of commonsense, then maintained because of their associations, at least on these greatest days, even if on others they have disappeared. That is the real explanation of so much that is now peculiar to these days. Indeed, in nearly all our ceremonies throughout the year the mystic emotion with which they are now undoubtedly filled is not so much the motive of their original use as rather the result of the associations of so many centuries. Beginning as practical expedients, they remain, long after they have ceased to be so, because of the associations they have acquired. It is in this way that the right kind of symbolism in church services occurs. No Passion play, no deliberately dramatic ceremonies invented now, could be so full of meaning as these old rites; no modern invention could so well represent, externally, the thoughts and memories of these days. Deliberate pageantry would rather repel us as being theatrical. Here we are in no danger of judging our rites to be that, since there is always so simple an explanation of their origin. Yet we have in them, with their age-long associations, dramatic symbols unequalled for beauty and suitability. To us, now, by long association all these rites have become a great drama, the yearly mysteries in which we express our undying remembrance of what these days mean. Our Lord told us not to forget him. We have the memory of his Passion, of course, in every Mass, yet never so vividly as in the ceremonies of Holy Week.

The Catholic who takes part in these rites will not be content merely to understand their immediate history and first explanation. He must look up beyond these outer symbols, and see the Upper Room, the Mount of Olives, the Hill without the city, the grave. The ceremonies of our churches are only the outer expression of the real religion of spirit and truth, the veil which

[49] The omission of the offertory chant, "Agnus Dei" and communion antiphon, is evidence of unchanged antiquity. All these are later elements. The only chants of the Mass (besides the "Gloria") are the gradual and "Sanctus," just the two oldest (cf. Duchesne: *Origines du Culte*, 2 ed. 1898, p 246).

[50] It is, of course, a pure convention in the West that "Alleluia" has become a cry of joy. There is no such idea in the East, where they sing it all through Lent and at funerals. Our convention is at least as old as St. Gregory (590-604; cf. his *Cap. IX., ii; M.P.L., LXXVII., col. 956*).

[51] In the "Exsultet": "Haec nox est," etc. In the preface: "In hac potissimum nocte."

[52] Much more about these rites, about all the liturgy of Lent and Holy Week will be found in the work often quoted above, Herbert Thurston, S.J.: *Lent and Holy Week*, Longmans, Green & Co., 1904. To read this carefully beforehand would be the best possible preparation for an understanding of the ceremonies.

covers without hiding the mysteries beyond. Behind the white Mass of Thursday and the procession, the altar of repose, behind the desolation of Friday, with its sudden burst of splendour, behind all the old rites of the Paschal vigil, we still see, after so many long centuries, the table of the Supper to which we owe our Lord's last gift to us, the hours of his pain, the silent grave on which the Paschal moon shone that night. The bells, the organ, the Alleluia tell us, each year again, of the glory of that Easter sun which never set.

*“Surrexit Christus de sepulchro, qui pro nobis pependit in lingo.”*

**LETCHWORTH, SEPTUAGESIMA, 1916.**

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