

UNIT 20

PROPER OF CORPUS CHRISTI

The Sacrifice (of the Mass) is celebrated with many solemn rites and ceremonies, none of which should be deemed useless or superfluous. On the contrary, all of them tend to display the majesty of this august Sacrifice, and to excite the faithful when beholding these saving mysteries, to contemplate the divine things which lie concealed in the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

(Catechism of the Council of Trent issued by order of Pope Pius V)

The traditional liturgy of the feast of Corpus Christi ranks among the most memorable of those 'high days and holy days' not only for the dignity and beauty of its celebration (it was in fact a liturgical masterpiece) but because it enshrines and proclaims even to saturation point the doctrine of the Real Sacrifice of the Mass and the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Those who participated saw in it the eternal and unchanging Church giving expression to the traditional Faith in a way that inspired them to believe in the sacred mysteries and moved them to a deep devotion to the Mass. This is the testimony of those who witnessed those events, now discontinued, which nevertheless are close enough to our day as to be still within living memory.

THE SACRED TEXTS

Note how the traditional liturgy, in celebrating the institution of the Blessed Eucharist as Sacrifice and Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, is wholly taken up with the Passion of Our Lord. For that reason the texts of Sacred Scripture as well as the prayers of the Proper present in the most striking manner **the identity of the Sacrifice of the Mass with that of Calvary** and the doctrine that Christ's merits in suffering and dying on the Cross are applied to the souls of the living and the dead. They make absolutely clear to us that the Mass is really and truly the Sacrifice of the Cross, which is how every Catholic, while attending the traditional Latin Mass, could be easily brought to believe that he or she was really assisting at the Sacrifice of the Cross mystically re-enacted on the altar. There can therefore be no question of the Mass being construed as a commemorative meal performed simply in order to recall the Last Supper.

INTROIT : Ps. lxxx. 17

<i>Cibavit eos ex adipe frumenti, alleluia : et de petra, melle saturavit eos, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.. Exsultate Deo adjutori nostro ; jubilate Deo Jacob. Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper. Amen</i>	He fed them with the fat of wheat, alleluia ; and filled them with honey out of the rock, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Rejoice to God our helper ; sing aloud to the God of Jacob. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.
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The Introit is a verse from the Psalms or the Old Testament and varies according to the feast celebrated or the season of the year. It expresses the spirit of the feast or the mystery being celebrated and the sentiments which ought principally to animate the hearts of the faithful. In this Introit we rejoice in the great gift of the Holy Eucharist (*Exsultate...jubilate...*).

COLLECT

<i>Deus, qui nobis sub Sacramento mirabili passionis</i>	O God, Who in this wonderful sacrament hast left
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<i>tuae memoriam reliquisti : tribue, quaesumus, ita nos Corporis et Sanguinis tui sacra mysteria venerari ; ut redemptionis tuae fructum in nobis jugiter sentiamus : Qui vivis et regnas...</i>	us a memorial of Thy passion, grant us, we beseech Thee, so to reverence the sacred mysteries of Thy Body and Blood, that we may ever perceive within us the fruit of Thy redemption. Who livest and reignest etc.
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The Collect is the collective prayer of the faithful which sums up all the needs of the Church and her children, both spiritual and temporal, which are laid before God by the priest. Every Collect may be divided into three parts :

- the invocation
- the subject or matter which we desire through the prayer
- the pleading that through the merits of our Saviour we may obtain what we ask

The first part of this Collect calls upon God (*Deus qui nobis...*). Then follows the petition beseeching Christ that we may venerate the Blessed Sacrament (*sacra mysteria venerari*) in such a manner as to obtain the fruits of the Redemption, namely pardon for our sins, an increase in grace, and the reward of eternal life. Lastly we pray that this grace may be obtained by His merits.

EPISTLE : 1 Cor. xxiii, 29

<p><i>Lectio Epistolae beati Pauli apostoli ad Corinthios.</i> <i>FRATRES : Ego enim accepi a Domino quod et tradidi vobis, quoniam Dominus Jesus in qua nocte tradebatur, accepit panem et gratias agens fregit, et dixit : Accipite, et manducate : hoc est corpus meum, quod pro vobis tradetur : hoc facite in meam commemorationem. Similiter et calicem, postquam cenavit, dicens : Hic calix novum testamentum est in meo sanguine.. Hoc facite, quotiescumque bibetis, in meam commemorationem. Quotiescumque enim manducabitis panem hunc, et calicem bibetis, mortem Domini annuntiabitis, donec veniat. Itaque quicumque manducaverit panem hunc, vel biberit calicem Domini indigne, reus erit corporis et sanguinis Domini. Probet autem seipsum homo : et sic de pane illo edat et de calice bibat. Qui enim manducat et bibit indigne, iudicium sibi manducat, et bibit : non dijudicans corpus Domini.</i></p>	<p>Lesson from the Epistle of blessed Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians. BRETHREN, I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said : Take ye and eat, this is My Body which shall be delivered for you ; this do for the commemoration of Me. In like manner also the chalice, after He had supped, saying : This chalice is the new testament in My Blood ; this do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of Me. For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink this chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until He come. Therefore whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink of the chalice unworthily shall be guilty of the Body and the Blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself; and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord.</p>
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St Paul reminds us of the necessity of purifying our hearts before venturing to receive the most pure Body and Blood of the Lord. With these words, now dropped from the liturgy, the Church issues a solemn warning to anyone who may have dared approach the Holy Table in the state of mortal sin.

GRADUAL : Ps. cxliv. 15, 16

<p><i>Oculi omnium in te sperant, Domine : et tu das illis escam in tempore opportuno. Aperis tu manum tuam : et imple omne animal benedictione.</i></p>	<p>The eyes of all hope in Thee, O Lord, and Thou givest them meat in due season. Thou openest Thy hand, and fillest every living creature with Thy blessing.</p>
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The Gradual, together with the Introit and the Collect, expresses the correct dispositions which the Epistle should produce in our souls. After exhorting us to trust in God's providence (*Oculi omnium in te sperant...*) and gratitude for His benefits (*tu das illis escam...*), the Gradual of Corpus Christi ends with those beautiful words of Our Lord's which tell us of the inestimable privilege and dignity of being united with Him in the Eucharist.

ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA : John vi. 56-57

<i>Caro mea vere est cibus, et sanguis meus vere est potus : qui manducat meam carnem, et bibit meum sanguinem, in me manet, et ego in eo.</i>	My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed : he that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me, and I in him.
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SEQUENCE : LAUDA SION

On certain days the Church wished to prolong the joy of the Alleluia, or the sorrow and penance expressed in the verses of the Tract which sometimes replaces it, and so a hymn or psalm called the Sequence was added. There are five Sequences in the 1962 Missal which are as follows :

Victimae Paschali for Easter Sunday thought to have been composed about 1048
Veni Sancte Spiritu for Pentecost, to Pope Innocent III about 1198
Lauda Sion for Corpus Christi composed by St Thomas Aquinas about 1274
Stabat Mater for the Feast of the Sorrowful Mother composed about 1306
Dies Irae in Masses for the Dead (*Missae Defunctorum*) composed about 1250.

These Sequences, hallowed by centuries of continued use, abound in poetic beauty and doctrinal orthodoxy, as we can see from reading the incomparable *Lauda Sion* reproduced in full below. Their disappearance from the liturgy of the Mass is a loss to the Church which has never been made good.

For many Catholics today the Corpus Christi procession, accompanied by the chanting of *Lauda Sion*, the beautiful hymn to the Blessed Sacrament, was an unforgettable highlight of the feast day. It still brings back memories of the lengths to which the Church was prepared to go to lavish praise and honour on the Blessed Sacrament which is to be adored in the most solemn manner. We recall the priest carrying the Host under a richly ornamented canopy, the path before him strewn with flowers over which the Son of God was to pass, the seemingly endless procession of the faithful following behind, and the strains of *Lauda Sion* surging heavenwards.

Sequence

<i>Lauda Sion Salvatorem; lauda ducem et pastorem in hymnis et canticis</i>	Praise thou, Sion, praise thy Saviour ! Praise thy Prince with all thy fervour ! Anthems to thy Shepherd sing.
<i>Quantum potes, tantum aude quia major omni laude, nec laudare sufficis.</i>	All thou canst, do thou endeavour, Yet thy praise can equal never Such as merits thy great King.
<i>Laudis thema specialis Panis vivus et vitalis,</i>	Duty this today thou'rt owing, Bread the living, life-bestowing,

<p><i>hodie proponitur.</i></p> <p><i>Quem in sacrae mensa cenae turbae fratrum duodenae, datum non ambigitur.</i></p> <p><i>Sit laus plena, sit sonora, sit jucunda, sit decora, mentis jubilatio</i></p> <p><i>Dies enim sollemnis agitur, in qua mensae prima recolitur hujus institutio.</i></p> <p><i>In hac mensa novi Regis, novum Pascha, novae legis, phase vetus terminat.</i></p> <p><i>Vetustatem novitas umbram fugat veritas, noctem lux eliminat.</i></p> <p><i>Quod in cena Christus gessit, faciendum hoc expressit in sui memoriam.</i></p> <p><i>Docti sacris institutis, panem vinum in salutis, consecramus hostiam.</i></p> <p><i>Dogma datur Christianis, quod in carnem transit panis et vinum in sanguinem.</i></p> <p><i>Quod non capis, quod non vides animosa firmat fides, praeter rerum ordinem.</i></p> <p><i>Sub diversis speciebus signis tantum et non rebus latent res eximiae</i></p>	<p>Full to honour with Thy praise.</p> <p>Same the bread that Christ in leaving To the twelve, each one receiving, Gave, no one doubt can raise.</p> <p>Let thy praise be loud and swelling, Be it joyous, loud and welling From a full, exulting heart.</p> <p>Mem'ry of that feast we render, Keeping rites in solemn splendour, When Christ did first Himself impart.</p> <p>This new Feast, the old repeating, Newer King and Pasch revealing, Usher in a newer rite.</p> <p>What is new to age succeedeth: Place to Truth the shadow cedeth; Radiance puts the gloom to flight.</p> <p>What He did, that eve reclining, Done anew He willed, assigning This a token of His love</p> <p>By His sacred precepts guided, Make we bread and wine provided, A saving victim from above.</p> <p>Christian truth uncontroverted Is that bread and wine converted Sacred flesh and blood become.</p> <p>Mind and eye whilst unperceiving What's beyond their own conceiving Strenuous faith to them brings home.</p> <p>Hidden under varied species, Signs, not things, the untold riches, Choice and rare beyond conceit.</p>
<p><i>Caro cibus, sanguis potus manet tamen Christus totus Sub utraque specie.</i></p> <p><i>Asumente non concisus, non confractus, non divisus: integer accipitur</i></p> <p><i>Sumit unus, sumunt mille : quantum isti, tantum ille : nec sumptus consumitur</i></p> <p><i>Sumunt boni, sumunt mali : sorte tamen inequali, vitae vel interitus.</i></p> <p><i>Mors est malis, vita bonis :</i></p>	<p>Flesh and Blood our life sustaining, Christ intact in both remaining, 'Neath each sign we greet.</p> <p>Christ, to whomsoever given, By Him is neither rent nor riven Each unparted Christ receives.</p> <p>Come there one, come there many, Each partakes as much as any, Nor the less for other leaves.</p> <p>Good and bad this banquet sharing Are an unlike lot preparing, Life or death to either falls.</p> <p>Life to those, to these perdition,</p>

<p><i>vide panis sumptionis quam sit dispar exitus.</i></p> <p><i>Fracto demum sacramento, ne vaciles, sed memento, tantum esse sub fragmento, quantum toto tegitur.</i></p> <p><i>Nulla rei fit scissura : signi tantum fit fractura, qua nec status, nec statura signati minuitur.</i></p> <p><i>Ecce panis Angelorum, factus cibus viatorum : vere panis filiorum, non mittendum canibus.</i></p> <p><i>In figuris praesignatur cum Isaac immolatur : Agnus Paschae deputatur : datur manna patribus.</i></p> <p><i>Bone pastor, panis vere, Jesu, nostri miserere : Tu nos pasce, nos tuere : tu nos bona fac videre in terra viventium.</i></p> <p><i>Tu qui cuncta scis et vales : qui nos pascis hic mortales : tuos ibi commensales, coheredes et sodales, fac sanctorum civium.</i></p> <p><i>Amen. Alleluia</i></p>	<p>Though to both the same fruition, How unlike the fate that calls.</p> <p>When the host in pieces breakest, If thou waver, thou mistakest, For each fragment thou partkest Holds no less than does the whole</p> <p>Of the substance no division, Signs alone admit partition, Whence unlesened the condition Of the symbol'd Body and Soul.</p> <p>Lo ! angelic bread reviving Pilgrims worn to heaven striving, Children from it strength deriving, Sacred bread to dogs denied.</p> <p>This the ancient types saluted, Isaac victim constituted, And the lamb for pasch deputed, Manna to our sins supplied.</p> <p>Jesu, bread of life, protect us ! Shepherd kind, do not reject us ! In Thy happy fold collect us, And partakers of the bliss elect us Which shall never see an end.</p> <p>Thou the wisest and the mightiest, Who us here with food delightest, Seat us at Thy banquet brightest, With the blessed Thou invitest, An eternal feast to spend.</p> <p>Amen. Alleluia.</p>
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GOSPEL : John vi, 56-59

<p><i>Sequentia sancti Evangelii secundum Joannem.</i> <i>In illo tempore : Dixit Jesus turbis Judaeorum : Caro mea vere est cibus, et sanguis meus vere est potus. Qui manducat meam carnem, et bibit meum sanguinem, in me manet, et ego in illo. Sicut misit me vivens Pater, et ego vivo propter Patrem : et qui manducat me, et ipse vivet propter me. Hic est panis, qui de caelo descendit. Non sicut manducaverunt patres vestri manna, et mortui sunt. Qui manducat hunc panem, vivet in aeternum.</i></p>	<p>Continuation of the Holy Gospel according to St. John. At that time Jesus said to the multitudes of the Jews : My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This is the bread that came down from Heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead. He that eateth This Bread shall live for ever.</p>
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CREDO

<p><i>Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem caeli et terrae, visibilium omnium, et invisibilium.</i> <i>Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei</i></p>	<p>I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten</p>
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<p><i>unigenitum. Et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula. Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero. Genitum, non factum, consubstantialem Patri : per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem descendit de caelis. ET INCARNATUS EST DE SPIRITU SANCTO EX MARIA VIRGINE : ET HOMO FACTUS EST. Crucifixus etiam pro nobis: sub Pontio Pilato passus, et sepultus est. Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas. Et ascendit in caelum : sedet ad dexteram Patris. Et iterum venturus est cum gloria iudicare vivos, et mortuos : cujus regni non erit finis. Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum, et vivificantem : qui ex Patre Filioque procedit. Qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur, et conglorificatur : qui locutus est per Prophetas. Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum. Et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.</i></p>	<p>Son of God, born of the Father before all ages : God from God, light from light, true God from true God : begotten, not made : consubstantial with the Father : by Whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven AND WAS INCARNATE BY THE HOLY GHOST, OF THE VIRGIN MARY : AND WAS MADE MAN. He was crucified also for us, suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures : and ascended into heaven. He sitteth at the right hand of the Father : and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead : and His Kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, Who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified : Who spoke by the Prophets. And one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the remission of sins. And I await the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.</p>
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OFFERTORY : Lev. xxi. 6

<p><i>Sacerdotes Domini incensum et panes offerunt Deo: et ideo sancti erunt Deo suo, et non polluent nomen eius, alleluia.</i></p>	<p>The priests of the Lord offer incense and loaves to God, and therefore they shall be holy to their God, and shall not defile His name. Alleluia.</p>
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SECRET

<p><i>Ecclesiae tuae, quaesumus, Domine, unitatis et pacis propitius dona concede : quae sub oblatiis muneribus mystice designantur. Per Dominum...</i></p>	<p><i>We beseech Thee, O Lord, favourably grant to Thy Church the gifts of unity and peace, which are mystically designed beneath the gifts we offer. Through Our Lord...</i></p>
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PREFACE of Christmas Day

<p><i>Vere dignum et justum est, aequum et salutare, nos tibi semper, et ubique gratias agere : Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, aeterne Deus : Quia per incarnati Verbi mysterium, nova mentis nostrae oculis lux tuae claritatis infulsit : ut dum visibiliter Deum cognoscimus, per hunc in invisibilium amorem rapiamur. Et ideo cum Angelis et Archangelis, cum Thronis et Dominationes, cumque omni militia caelestis exercitus, hymnum gloriae tuae canimus, sine fine</i></p>	<p>It is truly meet and just, right and availing unto salvation, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto Thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty, everlasting God ; For when by the mystery of the Word made flesh the light of Thy glory hath shone anew upon the eyes of our mind : so that while we acknowledge Him as God seen by men, we may be drawn by Him to the love of things unseen. And therefore with the Angels and Archangels, the</p>
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<i>dicentes :</i>	Thrones and Dominions, and the whole host of the heavenly army we sing the hymn of Thy glory, saying again and again :
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COMMUNION

<i>Quotiescumque manducabitis panem hunc, et calicem bibetis, mortem Domini annuntiabitis, donec veniat : itaque quicumque manducaverit panem, vel biberit calicem Domini indigne : reus erit corporis et sanguinis Domini, alleluia.</i>	As often as you shall eat this Bread and drink the Chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until He come : therefore whosoever shall eat this Bread or drink the Chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord. Alleluia.
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POSTCOMMUNION

<i>Fac nos, quaesumus, Domine, divinitatis tuae sempiterna fruitione repleti : quam pretiosi Corporis et Sanguinis tui temporalis perceptio praefigurat : Qui vivis et regnat....</i>	Grant us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, to be filled with the everlasting enjoyment of Thy divinity, which is prefigured by the temporal reception of Thy precious Body and Blood. Who livest and reignest...
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