

McCarthy, John C.
The Divine drama
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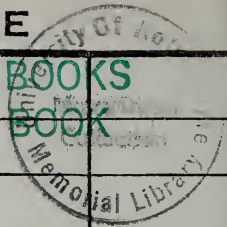
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THE DIVINE DRAMA

by

Rev. John C. McCarthy

Holy Redeemer Church,
Ennis, Texas.



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*Benedictine Convent of Perpetual Adoration
Clyde, Missouri*

THE object of this composition is to encourage souls to penetrate into the "hidden mystery of Christ's Love" — the Holy Eucharist, and thus to provide a devotional meditation on the work of our Redemption, which, as St. Thomas says, 'is renewed each time the Mass is offered.' The poem is intended to convey, in metrical garb, the hidden lore of Holy Writ and the doctrine of the Real Presence, with a minor reference to the other 'fountains of salvation.'

While the books of Sacred Scripture and various tracts on theology were the principal sources, the works of Father Faber also furnished inspiration.

The metre was suggested by Dante's **Divine Comedy**. To accommodate the poem to the methods of hymnology, the stanza form was used, rather than the unbroken succession of blank verse lines of an irregular length and form. Since the number seven is considered a mystical number in theology, and the sacraments, centering about the Holy Eucharist, are seven, this number of lines was given to each stanza. The five metrical feet or beats to each line pay tribute to the Five Holy Wounds of our Crucified Savior.

Preface

THIS labor of love is directed to the honor of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. In the Divine Gift He dwells, a living Fountain of grace for pilgrims on earth. He is the Source of consolation to the suffering souls in purgatory, and of joy to the elect in paradise.

Upon the Cross our holy Redeemer merited all grace and won for mankind an inexhaustible treasury of merits. Through the Mass and the other *vases of His Precious Blood*, — the sacraments — He has designed our greater sharing in the fruits of His Redemption.

In His greatest Gift, the Holy Eucharist, the love and grace of Christ are found as in their Source. Herein abides the very Author of life and grace Himself.

He chose a silence so deep in the Eucharist, it would seem, that He might offer us a strong challenge of faith, and yet speak to our hearts in the language of His love.

For, as —

On a calm clear night the heavens seem nearer and pulsing with life, so in the Eucharistic calm the clear light of faith reveals Him in the nearness of those Divine pulsations of His mighty, still so tender, love.

The same Divine and human charity which was revealed at Bethlehem and manifested in the humiliations of Calvary, is here. Realizing that we find all in the Blessed Sacrament, Rev. Father Lukas Etlin often exclaimed,

Behold the Sacred Host, — It is the Ocean into which all God's gifts of grace and mercy flow.

Proem

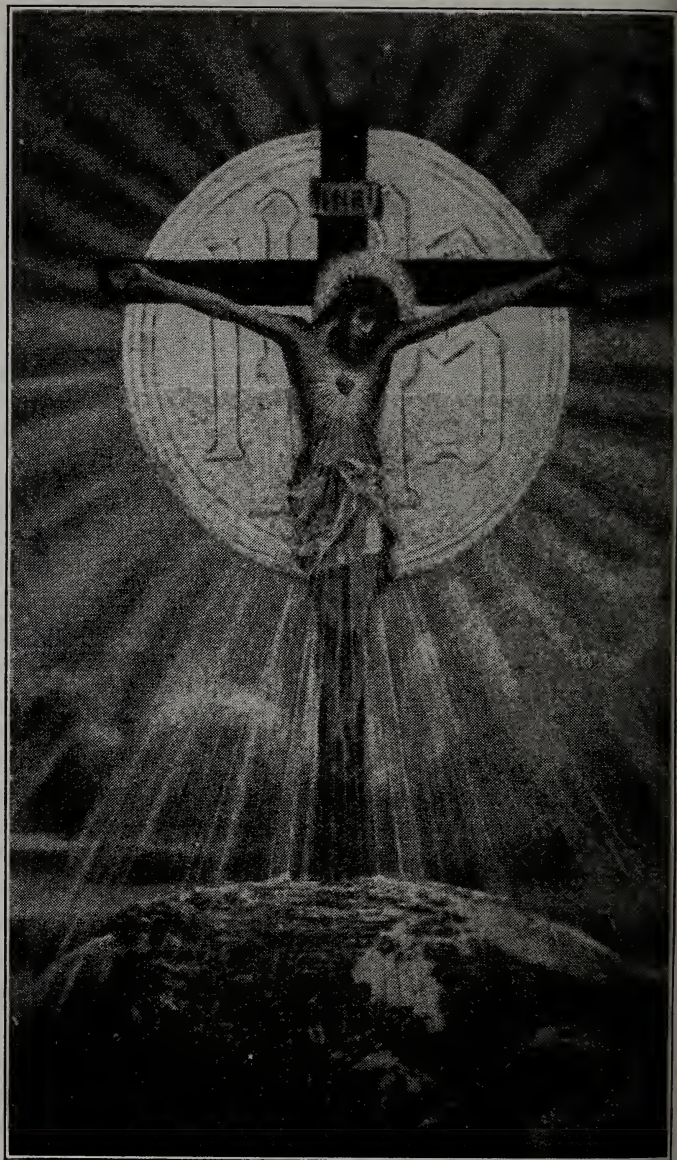
THE Mediator of the New Covenant of grace and charity perpetuates His greatest act of charity for His Mystical Body in a mystical manner. The Mass is, therefore, called a commemoration of Him, because it is offered together with and by the united acts of His Mystical Body.

As the members of that Body, of which Christ is the Head, we are called by the gift of the true faith to be participants in the Mystery of Faith. In the homage of the Blessed Sacrament, we are conformed to the image of His death and risen life.

For we have, through the grace of Christ, a mystical death and resurrection, in order that by our worshipful remembrance of the Memorial of His Passion, we may die the more to self, and live the more to Him, who is our life.

And He who strengthens the life of grace that sanctifies the members of His Mystical Body, abides with us. In His true life, communicated to souls, the hope of glory is increased. For in Him, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are"

(1 John iii. 1).



Christ, Our Mediator on the Cross and in the Host

The Divine Drama

The King of kings in death's abandonment,
When tree of life that richest harvest bore
Of priceless treasure for our ransoming,
Envisaged centuries and places far
And in deep throbbing ardors of His Heart
Was comforted in souls so sore redeemed,
Who through the Mass such love commemorate.

Now His prophetic vision is fulfill'd
With slow unfolding of the Christian years,
As captives of Love's purchasing increase
Like trophies from its victory foreseen
Through vista of the ages there embrac'd
And gathered in those other Cenacles
Where wealth of heavenly Croesus is dispensed.

Consider then the work of Love Divine
Recalling what the sacring bell declares,
In that transcending Mystery of Faith

And drama of the sacrificial acts
Of burning furnace of the Sacred Heart,
Enacting there fulfilment of desire
That souls may share the more in Life Divine.

Through eyes of faith behold this Mystery
Enacted by the King's own whispered words,
Which, breathed upon the gifts of bread
and wine,
Fulfil a wondrous course of miracles
More swiftly than the fingers sweep a harp,
To strike a harmony that is unite
With the angelic sanctus heard on high.

For here the selfsame Person of the Word
Who in the incarnation's blessed hour,
When night divine crown'd dying day with
stars
Came down from heaven and His royal
throne,
Doth change the substances of bread and
wine
Into His very Body and His Blood
That work of our redemption be renewed.

By two-edged sword of consecration's words
The spectacle of Calvary is proclaimed,
Diffusing merits from that holocaust
Through this supreme renewal whence they
 come

Unto those souls more richly, who in faith
Draw nigh unto the thrice all-holy place
To be renewed in spirit in Christ's love.

How great the inspiration unto prayer
There opened in the elevation's act,
Where souls, as did Zacheus once of old
Amidst the branches of the sycamore,
Lift up their eyes to catch a fleeting glimpse
And in this humble vision of their faith
Pay homage unto their Salvation here.

'Tis culmination of God's secret ways
In coronation of immortal power,
Sublimest wisdom and redeeming love
Which manifests Omnipotence in bonds,
Whose wise concealment guards the gift of
 faith,

The substance of those things to be hoped for
And evidence of things appearing not.

To praise, to reverence and to serve our God
We were unto this earthly tenure sent,
But ne'er the sum of all just acts compares
With this one act of faith in worship giv'n
Throughout the sacred Canon of the Mass
With which true hope and charity is join'd
Through union with the spotless Victim here.

Though all the hosts of heaven be unite
In honor of the Blessed Trinity,
And at their head Christ's Virgin=Mother
 come
Surrounded with angelic hierarchies
Fast followed by that saintly retinue,
Their sum of glorious worship ne'er could
 reach
The worth empyreal of a single Mass.

For King of meekness as a Lamb here dwells
With eloquence of speechless helplessness
Propitiating still the Sovereign Good,
And with such grace enriches fervent souls
Where all the kindness of their Savior waits,
That grand prerogative of mercy seems
To compromise His royal dignity.

Celestial grace rills forth abundantly
And God's dominion is acknowledged still,
As Love implores the light and peace of
heav'n

In impetration for our every need,
Whilst steadfast hope of future life redounds
From Him who holds within His hand all
power
True greatness and the empire of all things.

A new and living way within the veil
Of the eternal tabernacle shown,
Yet corporal vision ne'er can penetrate
Unto those mysteries of Charity —
Through which bright pearl He is reveal'd to
faith,
Who dwells here unto mortal eyes unseen
Applying glorious riches of His grace.

What fertile power perennial emanates
From out these silences of Love Divine,
Which strongly draws the soul into the
depths

Of everlasting tenderness, whose choice,
By grace's calling unrepentantly,
Shall lead it through this vale of banishment
Unto the vision of the Trinity.

Lo! Christ, true God and man, so mutely
dwells

Thy King, who cometh to thee lowly, meek,
Our only Mediator, peacefully
Upon this covenanted Mercy-seat,
Compassionating each soul tenderly
And staying blaze of glory to be met
In dazzling splendor of the great Assize.

Here He abides with majesty concealed
In might of Love's redeeming energy,
And as the heavens high above the earth
Or depths of ocean far beneath our feet
So is His mercy quite beyond our ken,
That lives and beats within that pierced
Heart

Whence ran the crimson tides of Precious
Blood.

Such condescension nigh unutterable
Is an abyss of glory unto God,
Where grace in an exhaustless torrent wells
From out unmeasur'd depths beneficent,
And with unwearied equanimity
Reveals in wondrous vision unto faith
The grandest, mightiest work of all-wise
Love.

How beautiful thy tabernacles are
O Jacob, and thy tents, O Israel,
Where dwells the glorious Fountainhead
of grace
That maketh glad the city of our God,
Through those inebriating tides that flow
And rise majestically to widen far
From ocean of the Uncreated grace.

Ought not our hearts here open as the
flowers
Before their King in hidden loveliness,
Where dwells the Heart which has so lov'd
all men
And for their sakes in charity abides,

That would in blest response to His designs
Envelop there the sanguine souls of all,
Increasing twofold their beatitude.

Upon the altars of this Covenant
He is salvation to the faithful soul,
Which neither Cherubim nor Seraphim
Can fully understand or comprehend,
Though God regards with true complacency
All those who shall direct attention liege
With contrite hearts unto its Victim King.

Ah! wondrous forethought of so deathless
love

Bequeathed in lavish legacy of One
Whose Bloody Death is represented now
With all the gathered store of its effects
And dispensation of vast merits won,
By that tremendous Ransom gladly paid
That souls may be enfranchised ever more.

Here Kingly virtue in omnipotence
Oblate in immolation mystical
Perpetuating state of sacrifice,

Doth veil its glory in abasement grand
Unto annihilation's seeming verge,
Through fondest yielding of immortal life
Unto the acts of consecration's power.

Earth has no scales to measure love so great
Which every trembling balance would
escape

Save only one, His Heart so sensitive,
Each beat of which the Father glorifies
In zeal of justice for the sovereign Good,
And pulses with such love for sinful man
That here indeed he finds the Mercy Seat.

As signet=ring with which the Almighty
seal'd

His promise to the remnant of our clay
Which shrank before Him to remotest time,
Once burst an arch of wondrous radiance
forth

To span the vaulted skies with peaceful scroll,
There shone a presage that is here fulfill'd
In Ark of Covenant which cannot fail.

Fair Ark of the Divine fidelity
Proclaiming clear the amnesty of Heav'n,
Thou givest access here in confidence
That in Thy light we may see blessed light,
In whose redeeming and renewing love
We live and move and have our being now
Adorn'd with garments of celestial grace.

Not sense with blinded eye can hang the
thought
Upon the branches of this wondrous Tree
Containing promise of immortal life,
Nor even glorious reason may be taught
To stretch her potent arm so truly high,
As faith that mounts on firmer wing shall do
To bare the soul to every hidden thing.

It is the Sabbath of the works of God
Wherein His power and love and wisdom
rest,
In contemplation of creation crown'd
Through graces of Redemption sorely bought,
And where the King makes conquest mightily
Inviting creatures unto prayer of praise
That swells extrinsic glory ever more.

All-holy Lord of limitless high realm
Such service of our free allegiance asks,
Since He hath made this Covenant of peace
Remembrance of His works so wonderful,
Who is a merciful and gracious King
Now sitting at God's right hand in all power,
Supremest wisdom and primeval love.

Our hearts' affections then the noblest act
Of our return of love for such as His,
Who hath lov'd us with everlasting love
And drawn us with a yearning fond and true,
Returned in lively faith of creatures call'd
To praise and bless, adore and glorify
The Lord our God and Christ the Lamb
of God.

All we would seek for, God in sympathy
Of Love's own slighted goodness humbly
mask'd,
Is chiefly found within these human acts
In Mystery of the Incarnate Word;
Still by His Presence, — sacred, silent, still,
Enlightening from the Uncreated light
And kindling with the Holy Spirit's fire.

When angels offer prayers of ours to God
As incense in their golden thuribles,
There are none that rise up before His throne
In sweeter fragrance, than those here unite
To prayers of His, who once in crimson robes
And cypress crown'd upon the Tree of Life,
Sighed for our meriting in Precious Blood.

O Fount of Love! O living Source of Light!
'Tis thy strange uttermost abandonment
In this sublimest Mystery of Faith,
That stirs the soul unto its inmost depths
To marvel at beneficence so great,
From rising to the setting of each sun
Throughout the wide expanse of Christen=
dom.

What save intense desire can such explain
Untiring in vast efforts to enrich
With treasures of exhaustless grace acquired
By Thine own Bloody Sacrifice of yore,
Accomplished in Thy reconciling work
That superabundance of its merits might
Be brought into our hearts and minds always.

'Twas virtue of the Precious Blood alone
Once pour'd entirely from Love's wounds
agape

That purchased our humanity from death,
Triumphing o'er the powers of darkness all,
That we in fond attendance at this rite
May e'er recall its signatory Seal
As we are steeped within those ruddy depths.

Ah! what should such stupendous love avail
Did we not seek its surging channels true,
And graces of that reservoir whose wealth
Is ope'd in each commemoration's hour,
To inundate the waste land of our hearts
With that transforming and most secret
power

Which makes earth's desert blossom as the
rose.

Here hidden love continues to reveal
The sweetness of its goodness in disguise,
Where wise concealment doth but hinder
fear

That would be servile in unveil'd delight,
While sovran angels camp around, about
Those souls, who fill'd with nobler filial fear
Discern by faith Love's presence 'neath the
veils.

Is this not best disclosure of God's love
Unto the farthest reach of Love's emprise,
For though the Cross and spear hath seem'd
excess

In His Incarnate Son's obedience
To seal this testamental love supreme,
Here in the Blessed Sacrament is found
A love that was victorious over death.

Hail we death's Vanquisher who makes us
free

In triumph of the glory of such grace,
Which now the Lamb of God here nourishes
Through joyful union with His very Self,
Imparting there the virtues of His Heart
To those who in true love approach to lean
Upon His breast at banqueting of joy.

The largess of that action emanates
From the perennial Spirit's quickening,
That these unto Christ's love may be con-
form'd,

As it confirms them in those wondrous bonds
Which now exalt His Headship over all,
Who are as members unto Him unite
Within His own true body mystical.

Must every human heart not be alert
Responding to the King's own beckoning,
Where full tide of redeeming mercy flows
And He is yearning for the souls He loves
To captivate them through His Sacraments,
Which make of each the centre of a world
Of spiritual grandeurs though invisible.

Of all perfections manifest of God
These channels ever serve to represent
Love's attribute of true benevolence,
Accomplishing their own determined end
In intimate relationship with Him,
Who so ordained them to the Eucharist
That their own Primal Fount might be
reveal'd.

Until the Day Star dawns resplendently
Our utmost efforts here ought joyfully tend
To render worthy homage unto God,
And resting in the Sacrament of Love —
Triumphal car of holy charity, —
We shall adore in spirit and in truth
While sharing actions of the Infinite.

Vast firmament magnificently spread
Is e'er a spectacle to charm our hearts
Delighted by its loveliness revealed,
But faith unlocks such panorama fair
As pales the radiant glories of the sky,
Where dawn the fulgent beams of Charity
In emanation from the Sacred Host.

Do not all lights go out in these bright rays,
All truths to this seem satellites grown pale
And shining with a borrowed radiance
Around the Word made flesh for love of us
Upon the altars of this Covenant, —
Renewing still a worship deep and high
As e'en the very Charity of God.

Who can proclaim Thy bounteous goodness
here

When angels round Thy tabernacle know
How far too short eternity would prove
To tell the glory of this Mystery
Par=excellent of the Almighty will,
Where to evince Thy blessed bounty more
The deepest love of Love is silentest.

O blest abode of heavenly secrecies
And fair unnamed abysses cloaked in white,
One deepening into still another depth
Or leading to the vision of Thy Soul,
Reveals to faith our own humanity
Anointed by its union with the Word,
In the espousals of Divinity.

Primeval world of angels once were tried
And made an irremediable choice,
Rejecting e'en the spark that radiates
From the Eternal Truth effulgently,
When in the madness of their liberty
They so outraged paternal Majesty
That naught could stay the malediction
hurl'd.

Unnumber'd legions of that countless throng
Exquisite with first sanctifying grace,
Aspiring to Divine similitude
Inordinately in their dire despite,
Were thrust from out the parapets on high
Without a gesture of forbearance shown
Into the bottomless pit of woe.

For even God's first attribute of love
Could not endure the pride accepting not
The Word all clothed within our human
flesh,
Revealed in ages ere it came to pass
Unto those countless hosts of angels prov'd
By that blest vision of His only Son
In lineaments of our mortality.

What then must be His sorrow at a race
Partaking of this nature of His Son
Yet passing by as though they knew Him not,
Low hid in such humility and love
Within the snowy palliament that veils
His charm of puissant mercy for all there,
To urge them by the ties of faith and hope.

Short of the Beatific Vision's joy
The Eucharist is an image and transcript
In which God doth reflect His very self,
And gather His perfections as in one
Most gracious copy of divinest mold,
Desiring with the might of Love Divine
Diffusion of His goodness ever more.

Through such propinquity true hearts decline
Alluring pleasures of a tempting world,
To pledge their fealty to Christ the Lamb
In His white robes of innocence array'd,
On altars where the Eucharistic Guest
Rejoices in the homage God receives
From souls who grasp this challenge of strong
faith.

Christ here regards them with a Father's love
Outstripping their least generosity,
And hides them in the secret of His face
As higher Vision rises on and on —
Till they be shelter'd safe in fadeless light,
Where just shall reign and live forevermore
To shine as brightness of the firmament.

Now wherefore was it that He chose them so,
Except they should be holy in His sight
And e'en unspotted in true charity,
Since in the consummation of such choice
The Lamb will be united to their souls,
In operations far transcending grace
Where plenitude of Beauty softly glows.

Eternal Beauty, planned for aye and aye
To gladden them forever, even when
The former things shall all have pass'd away;
Joys past compare, gladness unutterable,
Imperishable life of peace and love
Rejoicing in the countenance of God
And mysteries of glory countless there.

Its multitudes in nine=choir'd hierarchy
Are sweeping now in instant, wondrous flight
Of that world's swiftness so incredible,
Where Seraphim in arduous raptures fail
The inaccessible to penetrate,
Immersing them in glory's light supreme
In highest radiation from its Source.

Another while in adoration bent
Within the sight of God's perfections grand,
They rise again to scatter gladness round
In those refreshing showers of purest light
Which fall incessantly about the throne,
And sapphire pavements stretching far away
Among the many mansions of the blest.

Or once again returning through the gates
Of glistening pearl and every precious stone,
Like laborers who wend their homeward way
At eventide when their day's work is done,
They bring fresh troops of ransomed human
souls

From out the chastening purgatorial state
Or safely through their tribulations pass'd.

There are so many harmonies within
Diversities of their unnumbered acts
That out of all is concord sweet and strong,
Without a taint of even venial fault
Amid their lightning-like activities
Exuberant of sanctity confirmed, —
In their unflagging praise of God on high.

Sweet Spirit, breathing where it listeth Thee
To orient our actions towards their end,
Point us unto our Father, God on high,
Who loves us with an everlasting love,
And by Thy pure refining beams direct
Upward to Him, first Perfect and first Fair
In Trinal light transporting each soul there.

Vouchsafe Thine aid to breast the storm
below

Where fretted with our own endeavors weak,
We are consoled by those angelic deeds
And feed ourselves upon their fragrance full;
Yet here must lean upon our human acts
In Love's own drama through Thy power
renewed

As compensating worship adequate.

Help us to grasp our undeserved lot,
To dwell amidst God's mysteries of grace
Familiarly made conversant with them,
As if it were renewal of that walk
At Vesper time in Eden long ago,
In the unfathomable privilege
Of our first parents still unfall'n there.

Of such our festivals an image are
Though quite imperfect of that feast on high,
When we are in their spirit here refreshed,
Renewed in fear and taught to love our God
And bless the saints, whom He hath
magnified,

Whilst we in these perceive the excellence
Of that first state of holy innocence.

Then pausing on the thought of that bright
world

In its magnificent tranquillity,
There comes a foretaste of the soul's true joy
With satiation of all longings pent,
When God possessed as its own property
Ineffably, communicated there —
Will be its crown attain'd triumphantly.

There, face to face with Him, not transiently
Nor as a glorious flash of light renewed
In passing wise, once every space prolonged,
The blest abide the everlasting joy
With ecstasy of keen intelligence,
And rapture marvelous of wills confirmed
Beyond our fondest expectation here.

They view the marvels of creative love
As mystery deepens into mystery,
And at each stage reveals those treasures deep
Of tenderness and great benignity
Which brought them to that vast eternal
 shore,
Where in the fadeless light of their true land
Their Maker's glory is fore'er revealed.

For now that kingdom is the theatre
Of God's own recompense for grace well
 spent
And crown'd with perseverance in the end,
While such enrichment of their souls re=
 dounds
In blest attention of activity,
As doth enhance the fullest meed of joy
Which here benumbed conceiving ne'er can
 glean.

Yet unto this beholding all in God
Are those united acts of heavenly love,
Where steeping fervid minds and wills in
 Him

With all affections purified of stain,
And such enrapturing intensity
As safeguards still their contemplations' joy
While girding up and strengthening with
 bliss.

Discerning with unfathoming gaze the sight
Of endless generation of the Son
Distinct in splendors still unsearchable,
They are partakers in the jubilee
Of the proceeding Holy Spirit where
O'ershadowing of the Eternal Three
Embraces all within the Light of light.

Does not the thought of such engender here
A holy eagerness of joining in
That canticle its sainted hosts now sing,
All clad in robes of white, through Precious
 Blood
Of that same Lamb, whom they triumphant
 hail
In glorious rendering of those heav'nly
Hosannas which through courts eterne now
 ring.

Oh, what the peace of that society
With its communion of these other souls
All wrapt in a communion so sublime
That lacks a full similitude on earth,
Except through that one prayer part infinite
Of Holy Mass and our close union there
With those who seek the things that are
above.

Now Mary reigning gloriously on high,
Alone most perfect in exalted height
Where ransomed creatures' strivings culmi-
nate,
There finds the breathless silence of her heart
And of her more than an angelic mind,
Scarce fitting worship of the Majesty
Or incomparability of God.

So she who sang the blest Magnificat
Is there in unimagined sanctity
Of wisdom and affections unsurpassed,
Engaged forever unconsumingly —
Like frankincense of creatures all combin'd,
In fragrant worship, ravishingly sweet,
Before the Holy Undivided Three.

Our Lady Mediatrix of Grace enthron'd
Brings souls unto the joy of bliss eterne,
Who overcoming in the Precious Blood
Of God's own Lamb and her now reigning
Son,

Find graces of the Way and Truth and Life
Whence come salvation and renewing
strength

And kingdom of our God in power of Christ.

Must not the measure of earth's hope be filled
To know that as He rose from Olivet,
As that bright cloud received Him out of
sight,

When ripening grain the fields was swaying
o'er

And vineyards flourished in the fruitful earth,
So heaven holds Him as they saw Him last,
Familiar and unchanged and glorified.

Surrounded now by spotless sanctity
Angelic, human and the Uncreate,
He leans unto the sinful souls of earth

As angels catch the spirit of His Heart,
And worship there the Holy Trinity
In our own name, and for our exiled race
E'en condescend unto this lower depth.

On tens of thousands altars now He dwells
To beautify the world in sight of God
And win for it unthought-of blessings here,
Confirming pledges for that parting hour,
When, a Companion, through Viaticum,
The promise of His love shall be fulfill'd
In bringing souls across the darkening gulf.

Life's menacing shoals of self-love overpass'd
Through love of God and neighbor for His
sake,

Its meed of glory in that hour will bring
When those who having known and honored
God

Shall hear the sentence of such virtue passed,
Since loving Him, all else in Him was lov'd,
Who set in order charity in them.

What shall their entrance into heaven be
But greater triumph of Incarnate God
Attended by His mighty choir of Thrones,
Rewarding mercy in that pageant high
Of rapturous love and true ecstatic joy,
Whose special source of happiness shall be
Unveiling of the Blessed Sacrament.

Cleave then unto the Pledge of fullest life
Where God shall be the end of all desire,
Fulfill'd within the amaranthine bliss
Of that deliverance free from weariness,
With such steadfast delight in Love's reward
As shall preserve the soul immortal, bright,
Firm fixed in undeclinable First Joy.

There shall God's mercies endlessly be sung
Unto the praise of that redeeming grace,
Which made earth's very trials less toilsome
seem

In stretching towards the soul's supernal prize
Of vast beatitude with sovereign Lord,
Who shall be all in all forever more
In everlasting freedom without end.

Appendix

SO tender was Christ's love, that when about to undergo death, He gave as His most precious Legacy the living Memorial of our Redemption. It was in order that the same ministry our holy Redeemer was to exercise on Calvary might be continued upon the Christian altars. But on the Cross He offered His *actual* Death, while on the altar He offers the Death *already suffered*. For so He ordained to perpetuate the one offering with which the Mass is the same.

As "He dies now no more" and is delivered from the dominion of death, He comes sacramentally upon the altar as He truly is, — impassible and glorified. But He comes to us under the aspect of the Victim slain. Thus He offers Himself anew, and in a sacrificial manner, but under a mystical immolation. Hence, the Mass is rightly called "the Mystery of Faith," and the Church has decreed, in the Council of Trent, that these two Sacrifices are one and the same, and differ only in the manner in which they are offered.

It is in the very moments of the con-

secrations that we behold the most striking representation of what passed on Calvary. This is because He is then offered under the appearance of death, as is evidenced by the separate consecrations. In this the essential nature of the Sacrifice consists, in which the words of consecration, by His command, are like a two-edged sword which immolates the Victim. According to the same Council of Trent, He who offered Himself upon the Cross offers Himself now also through the ministry of His priests.

Since a gift ought to be worthy of him who offers it, and of him who receives the offering, Christ, who here is the invisible *Priest* as well as the *Victim*, offers Himself to God in our behalf. Thus the same Divine and human natures which were manifested in the humiliations of Calvary are here, even though His human nature has been glorified. The gift of faith acknowledges Him, while the Mystical Body of His Church prolongs within itself the life He purchased there. We see Him in the lives of others who are governed by His grace and charity. He lives amongst us, through them, in His robes of sacrifice

and pain. He toils in the vesture of holy men, and is clothed with the garments of pure women. The limpid eyes of little ones mirror some of His deathless beauties to us. In many *other Christs* we behold Him every day.

On the Cross, Christ's Deity alone was hid, but in the Mass His Humanity also is veiled. He is in deeper abnegation, through His charity and humility, under the mystical immolation. The Sacrifice of the Cross was offered once, outside Jerusalem; the Sacrifice of the Mass continues His immolation "from the rising to the setting of the sun." The earth itself is like a great sanctuary in which the ever-living Lamb is now immolated on countless altars. The Sacrifice of the Cross endured but a few hours; the Sacrifice of the New Covenant of grace endures throughout the centuries. On the Cross, Christ was as He had been on earth; in the Mass He is as He dwells in heaven, but with His glory also concealed.

He offered Himself upon the Cross as the *Sacrifice of Redemption*, through which He *merited all the graces* which He wished to grant until the last day. But He offers

Himself in our churches as a *sacrifice of commemoration* and of the *application of His merits*. Therein He applies to us the fruits of His Redemption, and places under our eyes its living and touching representation.

There is no virtue, then, in the Sacrifice of the Mass, except that which emanates from the Cross. The *Cross* is the *source*, and the *altar* is the true *channel* of its grace. Hence, St. Thomas Aquinas says, "Every Mass has, for the benefit and salvation of mankind, *all the efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Cross.*"

Therefore, the action of Holy Mass looks backward to Calvary as the action of the Last Supper looked forward to it. In the Mass the one eternal Sacrifice of our great High Priest is perpetuated for us in the changing stretches of time, as it is ever present to God in the changeless moments of eternity. In the Eucharist, as on the Cross, Christ is the Mediator between God and man, *in a new and living way*, having entered into the heavenly tabernacle, where *He sitteth at the right hand of God*, a priest forever. "Whereby He is able to save forever them that come to God

by Him, always living to make intercession for us" (Hebr. vii. 25).

To assist at the Sacrifice of the true God is to be present at the most holy and august act of religion. In the Liturgy this Sacrifice is called the *act*, while the words of the Canon, 'within the action,' signify nothing else than 'within the sacrifice.' It seems as if the Church would thereby remind us that sacrifice should also be the great act of our life.

Above all, it is the act of rendering to God the worship "in spirit and in truth" which is due to His infinite perfections. Thus it fulfils all the true ends of religion through adoration, thanksgiving, satisfaction and petition. In the corporate worship and public prayer of the Church, if these are well fulfilled, united to the many mysteries which are represented therein, the Mass becomes an abridgment, a summary, and the centre of all religion.

Through faith, hope and charity, united with the acts of Christ, it honors all the Divine perfections. Towards God, the formal acknowledgment we make of our absolute dependence, in presence of His infinite power and greatness, is the very

essence of *adoration*. And the Mass has the twofold advantage of kindling in our souls the beautiful sentiment of *thanksgiving* to God, and of enabling us to fulfil worthily the duties which it imposes. It moreover sanctifies souls by obtaining for them those actual graces which aid them in the means of *reconciliation*. Our prayers also are united with the *petitions* of Our Lord, who offers as a prayer for us His Blood, His Wounds, and the abyss of His humiliations.

Thus the faith of historic Christianity unites in sublime and mystic rite, which has been the supreme and sacrificial expression of the Christian worship since Christ gave it on the night before He died for our Redemption. The Eternal Gift is, therefore, the Sacrifice by which we draw near to God, through the cleansing and enlightening of the soul and its union with Jesus in our lives. And so it is the chief source of renewing the Christian spirit. The devotion to the Blessed Sacrament flows as a corollary, and the altar on which Christ dwells is like another fireside, where the supernatural favors of the Lord are cherished.

Hence, the Holy Eucharist is also reserved in our tabernacles, as It is exposed on our altars, for our sakes. Therein also we worship the Real Presence of Him who abides with us sacramentally in a manner that is, 'real, true, and substantial.' As the Divinity is united to Our Lord's Sacred Humanity, it is the Real Presence of Him who is whole and entire under each Host. In what is then the most consoling mystery of the true Faith, the Holy Eucharist enshrines the Presence of the whole Christ, — in all the blessed traits of His glorified Humanity and the infinite power of His ever-glorious Divinity.

Jesus Christ, true God and true man, dwells where every flickering tabernacle light reminds us of His humble abiding. His holiness, His power, His justice and His love, but above all, His mercy, shine therein in all their splendor. His Divinity 'not only hedges us round, but dwells veritably in our midst.' As we remember this most excellent Object of our faith, must not the very nearness of His sacred Presence give us increase of hope and joy? And what ministers more to our spiritual good than the *Supreme Good*, which is so

near that it may be possessed? In possessing Him we possess all that constitutes the essential glory of the saints in heaven. The differences are only accidental. For, if by some stupendous miracle our eyes were suddenly opened, we should find that we were really in heaven; or rather, that heaven itself had come down to us, and entered into our souls.

Wherefore the Psalmist says, "The children of men shall put their trust under the covert of Thy wings. They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure. For with Thee is the fountain of life: and in Thy light we shall see light" (Ps. xxxv. 8-10). The Divine Gift of our Savior's greatest love, wisdom and power is the silent witness of His silent charity. Beneath this veil that safeguards our faith, He is there "for our sakes, and for our salvation." To pay our tribute of honor, and give expression to our loyalty and homage to our King, "we have access by faith."

When shall we be able to exhaust the praise which such a King deserves? Who shall praise beyond worth? "Fear not to

praise thy Eucharistic Savior, O Sion, all that thou art able," are the words of the *Lauda Sion*, which continues, "thou shalt not praise too much, for He surpasseth all praise." Even though they are veiled under the lowly species of bread, in Him are contained all the attributes of a glorious Kingship.

Were the eyes of our soul opened, we would behold innumerable angels ministering to their King and their God hidden in the Sacred Host. St. John Chrysostom beheld myriad celestial spirits hovering round the tabernacles — 'where angels are servants, where heaven is open, where Jesus sits upon His throne, and where the whole edifice is filled with invisible spirits.' Ah, yes, the angelic adorers never weary of offering their homage, yet it is not for angels, but for *us*, that Jesus is present in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Truly, the Holy Eucharist is so great and so rich in all manner of blessings that It can never be extolled as It deserves, nor adequately worshiped. The Divine Eucharist is the inexhaustible source of consolations and supernatural comforts, which soothe the sorrows and sufferings of

mankind better than any other remedy. Abundantly and consolingly the rays of love and mercy from the Sacred Host fall also upon the suffering souls in purgatory. In this as well as through the suffrages of the Church they receive 'refreshment, light and peace.'

Because the Blessed Sacrament also represents "the unity of the Mystical Body of Christ," says St. Thomas, "It is called *communion*." Explaining that the Holy Eucharist produces in the soul the treasures of grace which are ordained to our salvation, the same holy doctor enumerates the causes. "It contains the presence of the Author of grace, that leads to salvation. It is the Sacrament of the Passion of Our Lord, which is the cause of salvation. It nourishes the life of sanctifying grace, and unites the soul with the charity of Christ. To these causes it is owing," he says, "that the attainment of the heavenly reward is the special effect of this Sacrament, because Jesus Christ died that we might reach heaven, — and the Eucharist is a figure of heaven's banquet."

Of these hopes the closing lines of the *Lauda Sion* tell: —

Jesu, Shepherd of the sheep!
Thou Thy flock in safety keep.
Living Bread! Thy life supply;
Strengthen us, or else we die;
Fill us with celestial grace:
Thou, who feedest us below!
Source of all we have or know!
Grant that with Thy saints above,
Sitting at the feast of love,
We may see Thee face to face.

Each of the countless Hosts consecrated all over the world is destined to be received into a human soul. In the words of St. Thomas, who traced out as with a pencil of light the traditional, true, Catholic, and Apostolic doctrine of the Holy Eucharist: "Let them come to the altar-rails in crowds: men, women and children; let the floods of countless communicants come streaming up. . . Each is to receive his Lord, whole and entire, undivided, — and not only undivided, but *indivisible*. Not only is His Body like a *single* flame, whose hearth is one place, and which miraculously spreads its heat everywhere, and vivifies all that lives; but the same identical flame is lit up in far distant spots all over God's earth, on the mountain top and in the valley, in

the forest and the plain, in the solitude and in the city. There is no Jerusalem, no Holy of holies for it. It is confined to no favored zone. Its object is the *union of the Body of Jesus with all beings of the race of men, and wherever there is a single human heart, there must also reach the Blessed Sacrament; and this not for one generation, but to the end of time.*”

A Messenger of Eucharistic Love

Until the end of time, then, the Gift of God awaits us, as one generation succeeds another. The nearer souls approach It, the more they experience the warmth of Its vivifying rays of love. Some souls approach so near that a spark from the Divine Furnace Itself seems to glow in their hearts. To such a spark of Eucharistic love, burning in the heart of Rev. Father Lukas, can be ascribed the publication, **Tabernacle and Purgatory.**

Rev. Father Lukas, O.S.B., it was, who urged the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration at Clyde, Missouri to publish a magazine devoted to the honor of the Holy Eucharist and the consolation of the souls in purgatory. He saw the Sisters devoting their lives to the adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament, carrying on day and night the hidden apostolate of intercessory

prayer by their uninterrupted worship of the Lord of Hosts on their altar. He felt that if an exterior means of drawing the faithful in the world to the love and knowledge of the Holy Eucharist were joined to the Perpetual Adoration, a most fruitful apostolate for Eucharistic devotion would result.

Unto his holy memory, then, we leave these final words, since it was to his memory that we dedicated this work... It had long been a cherished wish of the great and humble Benedictine to see the number of subscribers to the magazine **Tabernacle and Purgatory** increase. He yearned to see this monthly messenger of Eucharistic love enter every Catholic home. It was because he realized that we find **all** in the Most Blessed Sacrament, as he often exclaimed,

“Behold the Sacred Host, — It is the Ocean into which all God’s gifts of grace and mercy flow.”

For the love of Jesus on our altars, and to procure an accidental joy in eternity for the saintly founder, who passed to his eternal reward on December 16, 1927, become a subscriber to the most devotional of our devotional magazines. In this way you will help to perpetuate a noble work, and bring increase to your faith and love in Jesu Hostia.

The Author

Glossary

Page 1

Stanza 1.

Tree of life — The Cross upon which Our Savior died for our redemption.

Through the Mass such love commemorate
The Mass is a memorial of the Passion and Death of Jesus.

Stanza 2.

Captives of Love's purchasing — Having been redeemed by the Blood of Christ, shed out of pure love for mankind, all Christians are, as St. Peter says, "a purchased people," belonging by right of purchase to Him who bought us at a great price.

Other Cenacles — Catholic Churches, likened to the Upper Room where Our Lord ate the Last Supper with His Apostles and instituted the Blessed Sacrament.

Croesus — A king of Lydia in the 6th century, B.C., having vast wealth; hence used to designate one possessed of great riches, as in this instance, God in the Blessed Sacrament.

Stanza 3.

Sacring bell — The bell rung at the consecration of the sacred elements.

Page 2

Stanza 1.

King's own whispered words — The words of consecration, though spoken by the

lips of the priest, are in reality the words of Christ Himself.

Angelic sanctus — The unceasing song of praise sung by the angels: "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts, all the earth is full of His glory" (Isaias vi. 3).

Stanza 2.

The Word, who in the incarnation's blessed hour... came down from heaven and His royal throne — Compare Wisdom, xviii. 14, 15: "For while all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, Thy almighty Word leapt down from heaven from Thy royal throne." This refers to the sacred moment at which the Son of God, the "Word," was "made flesh" in the bosom of the Virgin Mary.

Page 3

Stanza 1.

Two-edged sword of consecration's words— The separate consecration of the bread and wine, by which is signified the separation of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Crucifixion, symbolizes the Death on the Cross.

Holocaust — A sacrificial offering, the whole of which is consumed by fire; the complete destruction or consummation of the victim. Here, Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross.

This supreme renewal — The holy Sacrifice of the Mass, by which the merits of the

Sacrifice of the Cross are applied to souls.

Stanza 2.

Zacheus — A rich publican, who, — desirous of seeing Jesus as he passed through Jericho, but being short of stature, was prevented by the crowd, — climbed a sycamore tree to catch sight of Him. (Luke xix. 1-10.)

Stanza 3.

Omnipotence in bonds — Almighty Power seemingly rendered impotent by the sacramental forms.

Faith, the substance of those things to be hoped for, and evidence of things appearing not — A reference to Scripture: "Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that are not seen" (Heb. xi. 1). The sense is: **Faith** is a firm confidence of receiving something which one hopes to receive, and a conviction that something exists though it cannot be seen. As St. Paul says in another verse: "He who comes to God must believe that God exists and is a rewarder to those who seek Him" (Heb. xi. 6).

Page 4

Stanza 2.

Empyrean — Celestial; sublime; beyond all computing.

Page 6

Stanza 1.

Great Assize — Day of Judgment.

Page 6

Stanza 2.

Ken — Comprehension; understanding.

Page 7

Stanza 2.

Jacob; Israel — Used figuratively for the Holy Catholic Church. A reference to a passage in the Book of Numbers, xxiv. 5.

Fountainhead of grace — Our Lord, who is the Source of all grace.

City of our God — The Holy Catholic Church.

Uncreated grace — The essence of God; in other words, God Himself.

Page 8

Stanza 1.

Covenant — The Christian dispensation as distinguished from the Old or Jewish law.

Liege — Devoted; loyal; faithful.

Stanza 2.

Enfranchised — Set free; liberated from the slavery of sin and endowed with the right to heaven.

Stanza 3.

Oblate — Offered up.

Page 9

Stanza 2.

Signet-ring — A ring containing a signet or seal by which a document is authenticated.

Remnant of our clay — The eight survivors of the deluge.

Arch of wondrous radiance — The rainbow by which God made a covenant of peace, promising never again to destroy the whole world by flood. See Genesis, ix. 12-17.

Ark of Covenant — Figuratively, the Blessed Sacrament.

Page 10

Stanza 1.

Amnesty — An act of sovereign power granting a general pardon.

That in Thy light we may see blessed light
Compare Psalm xxxv. 10: "And in thy light we shall see light." Only in the light of heavenly glory, which as St. John tells us in the Apocalypse proceeds from Our Lord Himself, shall we be able to gaze upon the dazzling splendor of God, the Eternal Light.

We live and move and have our being now
Compare Acts, xvii. 28: "For in Him we live and move and have our being." As God is everywhere by His omnipresence, so even here below we live in Him, and cannot exist without His ever watchful Providence.

Stanza 3.

It is the Sabbath of the works of God — On the seventh day of the creation of the world, God rested from His labors. **Sabbath** means "rest." All the works of God are consummated, and, as it were, rest in the Holy Mass.

Extrinsic glory — The glory which God derives from His creatures. His intrinsic glory, which is inherent in His Divine Nature, cannot be increased.

Page 11

Stanza 2.

Who hath loved us with an everlasting love, etc. — Compare Jer. xxxi. 3: "Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee." The Church applies this text to Our Lord, in the Mass of the Sacred Heart.

Page 12

Stanza 2.

From rising to the setting of each sun — The Sacrifice of the Mass, as prophesied by Malachy (i. 11): "From the rising of the sun even to the going down thereof, My Name is great among the gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My Name a clean oblation."

Page 13

Stanza 1.

Signatory seal — A device bearing a design which imparts an impression in relief on paper or wax by means of which documents are authenticated; hence, the Precious Blood is spoken of as the **Seal of our Redemption**. Each time we assist at Mass this Seal is impressed anew upon our souls.

Stanza 2.

Surging channels — The Mass, the sacraments and the other means instituted by God to impart grace to souls.

Which makes earth's desert blossom as the rose — Isa. xxxv. Refers to the flourishing of Christ's kingdom, the Church. A similar transformation takes place in our hearts each time we worthily assist at Holy Mass.

Page 14

Stanza 1.

Emprise — Enterprise; undertaking (Archaic). Also, the qualities which prompt one to undertake difficult and dangerous exploits.

A love that was victorious over death — Our Lord Himself said, "Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John xv. 13). This love He manifested for us by His Death on the Cross. And yet in the Blessed Sacrament He seems to have found a means of showing forth still greater love.

Stanza 2.

Lean upon His breast at banqueting of joy — Those who receive Holy Communion are privileged, like St. John, the beloved disciple, to lean upon our Savior's breast.

Stanza 1.

Largess — Liberal giving; a liberal gift.

Perennial — Unceasing; never failing.

Here, the Eternal Spirit, the Holy Ghost, who unites us with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament as members of His Mystical Body, the Church.

Stanza 3.

Channels — The Sacraments.

Stanza 1.

Until the Day Star dawns resplendently —

A reference to Scripture: "Until the day dawns, and the morning star rises in your hearts" (2 Pet. i. 19). The "day" refers to the second coming of Christ. The splendor of the morning star is an image of the glory in which Christ will come.

Adore in spirit and in truth — "God is spirit; and they who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth" (John iv. 23); that is, not only with external observances, but with the heart and according to God's will.

Stanza 3.

Satellites — Something attendant, accompanying, or related, but subordinate and secondary. A planet which revolves about another planet. Father Faber calls the Blessed Sacrament the "central devotion of the Church, around which all

others gather and group themselves as satellites."

Page 17

Stanza 1.

Par-excellent — Eminently good; of unsurpassed worth.

Evince — To make evident or manifest.

Page 18

Stanza 1.

Parapets — A protecting wall or rampart of a fortress.

Stanza 3.

Palliament — Poetic form for pall, which means a covering or a mantle. Its peculiar meaning here is the species of bread, or the Sacred Host.

Puissant — Mighty; powerful.

Page 19

Stanza 2.

Fealty — Fidelity; loyalty. In medieval times, feudal lords required of their subjects an oath of fealty. So now souls spurn the attractions of the world and pledge their fealty to Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

Stanza 3.

And hides them in the secret of His face — Compare Psalm xxx. 21: "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy face, from the disturbance of men," which refers to God's protection of those who trust in Him.

To shine as brightness of the firmament —

A reference to Scripture: "They that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament" (Dan. xii. 3), that is, they that are learned in the law of God and true wisdom, which consists in knowing and loving God.

Page 20

Stanza 2.

The former things shall all have passed away — Scriptural reference, Apoc. xxi. 4. After the last judgment, as theologians hold, the earth will be purified by fire and changed into a suitable abode for the saints in glory.

Stanza 3.

Nine-choir'd hierarchy — The nine choirs of angels.

Page 21

Stanza 2.

Gates of glistening pearl and every precious stone — The gates and walls of the Heavenly Jerusalem as described in the Revelations of St. John, Apoc. xxi. 19-21.

Page 22

Stanza 1.

Sweet Spirit, breathing where it listeth Thee — Compare: "The Spirit breatheth where He will" (John iii. 8). The inspirations of the Holy Spirit are not subject to any laws; He bestows them

freely on whomever, and whenever, it pleases Him.

Orient — To cause to face or be turned to the east. Specifically, to turn our actions to God, who in Scripture is called "the Orient from on high."

First Perfect and first Fair — God, the all-Perfect and all-Beautiful One.

Trinal — Threefold, that is a threefold light emanating from the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity.

Stanza 2.

Love's own drama through Thy power renewed — The act of redemption by Christ's Death on the Cross is renewed in Holy Mass, by means of which we can offer worthy adoration to God despite our human weakness and misery.

Stanza 3.

Renewal of that walk at Vesper time in Eden long ago — As God held familiar converse with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Paradise, so we are privileged to hold communion with Him and enjoy a foretaste of heaven by meditating on His mysteries. Especially can we do this by devoutly celebrating the feast days of the Church, as mentioned in the two following stanzas. The ensuing stanzas further describe the bliss of heaven, where, amid joys which man's mind can not conceive, the saints will forever mar-

vel at the goodness and mercy of God which wrought their salvation.

Page 23

Stanza 2.

When God, possessed as its own property—
The possession of God constitutes the eternal bliss of the saints and angels in heaven.

Page 24

Stanza 2.

Which here benumbed conceiving ne'er can
glean — “Eye has not seen nor ear
heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man what things God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Cor. ii. 9).

Page 25

Stanza 1.

Endless generation of the Son. . . jubilee of
the proceeding Holy Spirit — In heaven the Blessed behold clearly and fully understand the mystery, how the Son of God is “born of the Father before all ages” (Nicene Creed) and how the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son.

Light of Light — Credo of the Mass; St. John in his description of heaven says: “For the glory of God lights it up, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof” (Apoc. xxi. 23).

Stanza 2.

All clad in robes of white, through Pre-
cious Blood of that same Lamb — A

reference to Scripture, "These are they who have come out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb" (Apoc. vii. 14).

Eterne — Poetic for eternal.

Page 26

Stanza 1.

Communion of those other souls — This refers to the Communion of Saints which unites the faithful here below with each other, especially through Holy Mass, in a union comparable to the union of the saints with each other in heaven.

Page 27

Stanza 1.

Mediatress of Grace — As Mary was the physical Mother of the Redeemer, the Author of grace, so by grace she is the spiritual Mother of the redeemed. As all grace was merited for us by Christ, so all grace is distributed to us through Mary as the universal Mediatress.

Stanza 2.

As He rose from Olivet — The Acts of the Apostles (i. 12) say that Christ ascended into heaven from Mount Olivet.

Stanza 3.

Unto this lower depth — The earth; the angels, in loving condescension, visit the earth as God's messengers to minister to us.

Stanza 1.

Darkening gulf — The valley of death.

Choir of Thrones — The seventh choir of angels, who, as their name denotes, are said to form the throne of God in heaven.

Stanza 2.

Pledge of fullest life — The Blessed Sacrament. "He who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood has life everlasting and I will raise him up on the last day" (John vi. 55).

Amaranthine — Unfading; undying.

Undeclinable First Joy — God, the reward and unending bliss of the saints.

Stanza 3.

There shall God's mercies endlessly be sung — The remembrance of God's mercies will be realized and glorified. For "glory," as says St. Thomas, "consists in clear knowledge with praise."

Vast beatitude with sovereign Lord — The soul's highest aspirations are attained in God, the infinite and perfect Good, and the most perfect Object of the happiness of all the blessed.

Everlasting freedom without end — Perfect happiness is the possession of the infinite and eternal Good. It leaves nothing to be desired to which choice might tend. Such freedom is only in God, and only in Him is it to be found without end.

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