

McNeill, Charles J
The Sacramentals
ADU 0575

THE CATHOLIC ACTION SERIES
OF
DISCUSSION-CLUB TEXTBOOKS

THE SACRAMENTALS

A Study of the Origin, Nature, and Proper Use of
the Sacramentals of the Church

BY

CHARLES J. McNEILL, A. B., Jour. M.
ASSOCIATE EDITOR, THE REGISTER
DENVER, COLORADO

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
REV. LEON A. McNEILL, M. A.
DIOCESAN SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION
WICHITA, KANSAS

PUBLISHED BY THE
CATHOLIC ACTION COMMITTEE
424 NORTH BROADWAY
WICHITA, KANSAS

VOL. 1, No. 4

PRICE 25 CENTS

To

THE RIGHT REVEREND MONSIGNOR MATTHEW SMITH
Editor in Chief of The Register

*whose twenty-five years as a Catholic editor have
proved the value of modern journalistic tech-
niques in spreading the ancient truths of
Christ and whose labors have brought
new glories to Catholic journalism
in America.*

Nihil Obstat

RICHARD J. DEI

Censor Librorum

Imprimatur

✠ AUG. J. SCHWERTNER

Bishop of Wichita

Wichita, June 29, 1938

COPYRIGHT, 1938, CATHOLIC ACTION COMMITTEE

FIRST PRINTING, AUGUST, 1938

832354

CONTENTS

Introduction	2
The Religious Discussion Club	3
I. The Sacramentals in General	5
II. The Sign of the Cross, The Cross	8
III. The Crucifix, The Stations of the Cross, Veneration of the Cross ..	11
IV. The Rosary—A Crown of Roses	14
V. Holy Water	17
VI. Palms, Ashes, Incense	20
VII. Blessed Candles	23
VIII. Agnus Deis, Medals, Scapulars, Blessed Cords	26
IX. The Church, Its Furnishings, Holy Oils	29
X. Liturgical Books	32
XI. Popular Devotions	35
XII. Sacred Images	38
XIII. Blessings of Persons	41
XIV. Sacramentals in Agriculture	44
XV. Sacramentals in Industry	47
XVI. Family Sacramentals	50
Reference List	Inside Back Cover

Introduction

The study of the origin, nature, and proper use of **The Sacramentals** of the Church, as presented in this booklet, is the fourth unit in a series of courses for religious discussion clubs published by the Catholic Action Committee of the Diocese of Wichita. **Altar and Sanctuary**, an exposition of the externals of the Mass; **Praying the Mass**, a study of the prayers and ceremonies of the holy Sacrifice; and **The Liturgical Year**, an explanation of the cycles, seasons, and feasts of the ecclesiastical year, are the first three units in the Catholic Action Series, and their widespread acceptance in the field has demonstrated their usefulness with study groups which follow the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine's method of informal discussion.

Our Catholic people are more or less familiar with those "sacred objects and actions" which the Church employs to obtain favors, especially those of a spiritual nature, through her intercession. Very few of the faithful, however, know the precise nature and proper use of the sacramentals, and few realize how "the saving influence of the sacramentals is extended over the whole field of human life and activity." The object of this booklet on the sacramentals, therefore, is to render helpful service to members of cooperative study groups, who not only wish to fulfill their more essential religious obligations, but who also have a desire to know their religion better, to deepen their inward conviction, and to bring the "inner splendor of a right and unsullied conscience" into conformity with the external observances of their daily lives.

This manual has been developed in strict adherence to suggestions for preparation of discussion-club texts issued by the National Center of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. The subject is presented in a series of sixteen brief lessons adapted to the knowledge and experience of the average lay group. At the end of each chapter will be found suggested religious practices and an outline for discussion based exclusively on the content of the chapter. The textbook contains material for two semesters, and is, therefore, designed to serve during a complete discussion-club season.

To His Excellency, the Most Reverend Aug. J. Schwertner, D. D., Bishop of Wichita, who has omitted no opportunity to encourage the development of suitable materials for discussion clubs; to the Most Rev. A. J. Muench, D. D., Bishop of Fargo, who suggested a treatment of the sacramentals for use of discussion clubs; to C. J. McNeill, author of **The Sacramentals**, to whom we are closely united by fraternal bonds of blood and of faith; to Rt. Rev. Msgr. Matthew J. Smith, editor in chief of *The Register*, Denver, Colorado, Rev. F. Gregory Smith, national chairman of discussion clubs in the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Rev. Clarence G. Issenmann, S. T. D., of *The Catholic Telegraph-Register* staff, Cincinnati, Ohio, Rev. Roger Schoenbechler, O. S. B., Collegeville, Minnesota, Rev. Richard J. Dei, Censor Librorum, Wichita, and Mrs. C. J. McNeill, wife of the author, for patient and helpful examination of copy; to our esteemed coworker, Angela A. Clendenin, for assistance in editing the manuscript for publication; and to a host of generous souls, clerical, religious, and lay, who are active in the extensive program of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in the Diocese of Wichita, we express our heartfelt gratitude and deep appreciation.

We pray the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Whose solemn feast the Mystical Body is now celebrating, to bless the mission of this booklet among His beloved brethren here on earth.

(Rev.) Leon A. McNeill, M. A.

Diocesan Superintendent of Education

Wichita, Kansas
June 24, 1938

The Religious Discussion Club

ORGANIZATION

1. A discussion club should ordinarily consist of from eight to twelve members. If a greater number of persons are interested, two or more groups may be formed.

2. In addition to a leader, a secretary should be elected by the members or appointed by the presiding officer of the organization within which the club is being formed.

3. The parish priest or some other member of the clergy should be invited to act as spiritual director or moderator of the club.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. The leader should preside at all meetings.

2. The leader, or some member of the club appointed by the leader, should guide the informal discussion, using the outline which appears at the end of each chapter. He should keep the discussion within the limits of the day's study, and at the close of the session give a summary of the points covered in the lesson.

3. The secretary should call the roll, keep a brief record of the meetings, and perform other duties belonging to the office.

4. The spiritual director or moderator need not attend all the meetings, but he may encourage the members and show his interest by occasional visits. When a question arises which cannot be answered correctly by the members of the club, it should be referred to the spiritual director.

MEETINGS

1. Meetings should be held weekly in homes of members, in the parish hall, or in a classroom of the parish school.

2. Meetings should start promptly and close on time, begin and end with prayer, and continue not longer than an hour and a half.

3. Order of meeting: Prayer, roll call, secretary's report, discussion, summary by leader, assignment for next meeting, adjournment with prayer.

HOW TO USE THE TEXTBOOK

1. Every member of the club should be provided with a textbook and should read the lesson selected for study before the meeting.

2. The material is presented in sixteen brief chapters, sufficient for a year's cooperative study by a discussion club. It is suggested that the first eight lessons be covered during the fall term, and the remaining eight lessons during the spring term.

3. Members should be encouraged to adopt the religious practices suggested at the close of each chapter.

4. Special attention should be given to the discussion outlines which follow the chapters. They will be found helpful both in the preparation of the lessons and in the actual discussion by members of the club.

5. Books, magazine and newspaper articles, pictures and other illustrative materials which have a bearing on the lesson ought to be brought to the attention of the club. It is suggested that clippings and pictures be preserved in a club scrapbook.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

1. A suitable name should be selected for the club. The practice of placing religious studies under the patronage of the saints is in keeping with Catholic ideals.

2. Occasional lectures or informal talks by members of the clergy or the laity on certain phases of the liturgy, or on any of the subjects touched upon or suggested in the text, will stimulate interest and widen the field of study. These activities should not, however, be promoted at the expense of the regular club programs.

3. At the close of the club season, a joint meeting of the discussion groups of the parish or of several parishes may be arranged. Pageants, plays, tableaux, illustrated lectures, travel talks, or any other suitable form of entertainment may be planned by a central committee composed of representatives of all the groups taking part.

REFERENCES

1. The books, pamphlets, and magazines included in the reference list are recommended to those who wish to make a more intensive study of the sacramentals, or who may wish to do supplementary reading in the general field of the liturgy.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY GHOST

“Come, Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of the faithful:
and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.

V. Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created

R. And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray

Oh God, Who hast taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Ghost, give us by the same Spirit a love and relish of what is right and just, and the constant enjoyment of His comforts. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

Hail Mary

I

The Sacramentals in General

By His death on the cross, Christ atoned for man's sins and merited a superabundance of grace for all men in all times. Christ's merits are dispensed by the Church, which He founded to sanctify men. The principal means of grace are the sacraments, outward signs instituted by Christ to give grace. Only the essential elements of the sacraments were determined by Christ. As time went on, certain rites and formulas became fixed and are now prescribed for their administration. These ceremonies came to be known as sacramentals because of their connection with the sacraments.

Besides the ceremonies used in administering the sacraments, the Church has always used other ceremonies and objects to increase the religious fervor of her members and to convey grace to souls. These other objects and actions are called sacramentals because of their resemblance to the sacraments.

DEFINITION OF SACRAMENTALS: "Sacramentals are sacred objects and actions which the Church, in a certain imitation of the sacraments, employs for the purpose of obtaining especially spiritual favors through her intercession."¹ Thus a sacramental is anything set apart or blessed by the Church to excite good thoughts and to increase devotion, and, through these movements of the heart, to produce grace and to remit venial sin or the temporal punishment due to sin.

DIFFERENCE FROM SACRAMENTS: The sacramentals differ from the sacraments in these ways: The sacraments were instituted by Christ Himself, the sacramentals by Christ's Church. The sacraments are forever limited to the seven instituted by the Redeemer (Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony). The sacramentals are subject in number and kind only to the determination of the Church, acting through the Holy See, which alone can constitute, interpret, and abolish or modify the sacramentals.² The sacraments produce grace directly in the soul if there is no obstacle on the part of the recipient. The sacramentals do not produce grace infallibly, but, by inciting pious dispositions, they prepare the soul to receive grace and thus indirectly produce it. The prayers used in the sacramentals merely ask God to grant certain graces or to produce certain effects. The formulas used in the sacraments, except in Extreme Unction, positively declare that God is producing certain effects in the soul. The effects of the sacramentals depend on the prayer of the Church and the dispositions of the recipient. Finally, the sacraments give or increase sanctifying grace; sacramentals give actual graces.

KINDS OF SACRAMENTALS: The official law of the Church says that sacramentals include: 1. Sacred objects. 2. Actions. Some fall under both classes; for instance, the rosary and the Stations of the Cross. Sacramental objects include all things which the Church has blessed or consecrated in a special way to the service of God—the cross, the crucifix, holy water, palms, ashes, incense, candles, medals, scapulars, sacred vestments and vessels, church bells, holy oils, and sacred images. Sacramental actions include the prayers and ceremonies connected with but not essential to Mass and the sacraments; other prayers, especially the Divine Office and common prayer in families; devotions such as litanies and novenas; exorcisms, and blessings and consecrations of persons or things. Blessings of persons include those for abbots and other religious, those for the sick, and those intimately connected with Christian family life. Blessings of things include those of religious objects like rosaries and sacred vessels, also those connected with agricultural, industrial, and family life.

1. Canon 1144. 2. Canon 1145.

BLESSINGS AND CONSECRATIONS: Blessings are prayers drawing down God's favor on a person or thing. Any priest can perform the common blessings not specifically reserved to the pope, the bishops, or members of certain religious communities. There are two kinds of blessings: constitutive and invocative. A constitutive blessing renders an object, such as a rosary, or a person, such as an abbot, permanently sacred and devoted in a special way to God's service. Constitutive blessings are called consecrations if holy chrism is used in imparting them. Only a bishop can consecrate objects unless the power to consecrate is specifically given to a cleric of lower rank. Invocative blessings merely ask God's favor on a person or object, such as an infant or an article of food. Blessings are real if given to things, personal if given to human beings.

EXORCISMS: An exorcism is a command given in the name of God, ordering the devil to depart from a person, place, or thing. Scripture proves that God sometimes permits demons to exercise influence over men and things. The influence may include inhabitation of a body by a devil. This is called diabolical possession. The purpose of exorcisms is to compel devils to cease their evil interference in human affairs. In using exorcisms, the Church follows Christ's own example and fulfills His commission to expel devils in His name.³ Exorcisms are included in some ordinary functions, such as in blessing holy water or sick persons. Others are used to drive the devil out of things or persons subjected to real diabolical possession. The minor order of exorcist confers on the cleric the power to exorcise, but no clergyman is allowed to use the solemn ceremony without special permission of the bishop.

EFFICACY OF SACRAMENTALS: Sacramentals are not to be used with any superstitious reliance on their efficacy. Blessed objects have no power in themselves. Their whole value lies in their designation by the Church for sacred purposes, in the efficacy of the Church's prayer, and in the merits won by Christ and translated to us through the Church. In using any sacramental, the individual unites himself with the whole Church and acts as a living member of the Mystical Body, of which Christ is the head and all the faithful are members. Thus the sacramentals have an efficacy beyond that of mere private devotions, for they partake of the Church's activity as a living organism that carries on the very life and work of Christ Himself. As such they are invaluable aids to salvation.

BENEFITS ATTACHED: Not only does the Church set aside or bless objects for sacred usage; she also attaches determined benefits to certain of these objects and to specified good works. In blessing some sacramentals, she asks God to grant specific favors and to protect the faithful from specific dangers or evils. The favors attached to many sacramentals are expressed in terms of indulgences. An indulgence is the remission, outside confession, in whole or in part of the temporal punishment due to sin that is already forgiven. As the administrator of God's grace, the Church has the power to remit the penalty attached to offenses against the law of God. An indulgence is not a license to sin nor a forgiveness of sin. An indulgence can be gained only by those who have already obtained forgiveness of the sins whose temporal punishment is to be remitted. The recipient must be in the state of grace and must perform the works prescribed by the Church.

GOODNESS AND BEAUTY: Since God is supreme goodness and beauty, it is fitting that the things used in His service should have in themselves goodness and beauty. Sacramental prayers and ceremonies are beautiful in both form and language. Sacramental objects should likewise be things of beauty. In choosing sacred objects, the man who truly loves God, the source of all beauty, should be satisfied only with those things which are really artistic and which best illustrate the aims of the Church in blessing articles for God's service.

3. Mark XVI, 17.

USE OF SACRAMENTALS: The sacramentals are to be used with reverence due to the things of God, with a disposition to accept and use well the graces God may grant as a result of the good works. Objects rendered sacred by the Church's prayer must never be used for profane purposes nor for ends other than those intended by the Church.

AIDS TO SALVATION: The sacraments are necessary for salvation. Sacramentals are not necessary for salvation and their use is not commanded. They are, however, very useful in gaining salvation, and their use has always been recommended by the Church. They can never supplant the sacraments or the central act of worship, the Mass. While being kept in their subordinate place as means of grace, the sacramentals should be employed constantly for the graces which follow from their use. Nothing that will further the salvation of the soul can safely be neglected, and the saving influence of the sacramentals is extended over the whole field of human life and activity.

WHAT THE HOLY FATHER SAID: In his encyclical on **Atheistic Communism**, Pope Pius XI wrote: "There are too many who fulfill more or less faithfully the more essential obligations of the religion they boast of professing, but have no desire of knowing it better, of deepening their inward conviction, and still less of bringing into conformity with the external gloss the inner splendor of a right and unsullied conscience, that recognizes and performs all its duties under the eye of God." Use of the sacramentals promotes both that better knowledge and that deeper inward conviction of the religion which we profess.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Develop a right attitude toward the sacramentals by knowing more about them, and rely on their efficacy, not because of any power they may possess of themselves, but because of the prayer of the Church and the merits of Christ.
2. Use the sacramentals to increase your knowledge and love of God and to aid in your eternal salvation.

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

1. What are the principal means of grace? What name was given to the ceremonies used in administering the sacraments?
2. Why is this same name given also to other ceremonies and objects?
3. What is a sacramental?
4. How do the sacramentals differ from the sacraments: in institution? in number? in effecting grace? in the prayers used?
5. What are the two principal classes of sacramentals? Give examples of some sacramentals which fall under both classes.
6. Name some of the principal sacramentals.
7. What are blessings? Who is the ordinary minister of common blessings? What are the two general classes of blessings? How do they differ?
8. What are consecrations? Who is the ordinary minister of consecrations?
9. What is an exorcism? On whose authority do priests conduct exorcisms? May a priest conduct solemn exorcisms of possessed persons at will?
10. Do the sacramentals possess any power in themselves? Whence do they derive their value?
11. How are the favors attached to many sacramentals expressed? What is an indulgence? What is necessary for a person to gain an indulgence?
12. Why should sacramental objects be things of beauty? Why should they be treated with reverence?
13. Is the use of the sacramentals necessary for salvation? If not, why should we bother about them?
14. Discuss Pope Pius XI's remarks on those who do no more than fulfill the more essential obligations of religion.

II

The Sign of the Cross, The Cross

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.” These words and the action that goes with them form the most common sacramental—the sign of the cross. By it, we profess our Christianity and signify the chief mysteries of our faith. The sign of the cross brings to mind the unity and trinity of God, the incarnation and death of our Lord. It is an act of faith, hope, and love. It obtains grace for its user, repels evil spirits, and wards off spiritual and temporal dangers. It is much used in the liturgy, and indulgences are attached to it.

FORMS OF THE SIGN OF THE CROSS: The earliest form was made with the thumb by tracing a small cross on the forehead, on other parts of the body, or on objects. This type is still used in the Mass, in which the priest traces a cross on the book of the Gospels or on the Missal, then makes it on his forehead, lips, and breast. This triple cross is found also in some other rites, and should be used by the faithful at the beginning of the Gospel at Mass.

In another form, the priest or bishop traces the sign in the air. This cross recurs often in the liturgy and in blessings.

The principal type is the large form made thus upon ourselves: Placing the left hand on the breast, we raise the right hand to the forehead, saying, “In the name of the Father”; then move the hand down to the breast, saying, “and of the Son”; proceed to the left shoulder, saying, “and of the Holy Ghost”; then to the right shoulder, saying, “Amen.” The process is not jerky nor divided into such sharp divisions as must be made in explaining it. This large form developed gradually from the smaller. It signifies the dedication of one’s entire being to God. An old custom of Spain and some other nations, that of kissing the thumb after completing the sign, may still be seen among persons of Spanish descent in this country.

SANCTIFIED BY CHRIST: When Christ redeemed fallen man by His death, the ancient symbol of the cross was sanctified. That it should be used from the beginning as a mark of His followers was only natural. By it, the first Christians made themselves known to one another. Today it remains the sign of the follower of Christ, for outside the true Church it has been discarded.

GREAT MYSTERIES SIGNIFIED: By the words “In the name,” we call to mind the unity of God. “Of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” express the mystery of the trinity. The very form of the action symbolizes our redemption by Christ on the cross. We touch the forehead first and name God the Father, then name the Son, to show that Christ proceeds from the Father. We touch the breast and then the shoulders to show that the Holy Ghost proceeds from both the Father and the Son. St. Ambrose says we touch our foreheads also to profess belief in God, our hearts to show love for Him, our shoulders to prove that we will work for Him.

ASKS EVERY BLESSING: The sign of the cross shows our desire to win every blessing merited by Christ. By it, we dedicate ourselves to Christ, place ourselves under His protection, and ask to partake in all His graces.

IN ALL OUR ACTIONS: We should use the sign of the cross constantly in our daily lives. Tertullian (160-230) wrote: “In all our travels and movements, in all our coming in and going out, in putting on our shoes, at the bath, at the table, in lighting our candles, in lying down, in sitting down, whatever employment occupieth us, we mark our foreheads with the sign of the cross.”¹ So should the sign be used by Christians today.

1. *De Corona Militis*, iii.

WEAPON AGAINST EVIL: In time of temptation, the sign of the cross is man's best weapon against Satan. St. John Chrysostom (347-407) says: "If you thus engrave it on your forehead, no impure spirit will dare to stand before you. He sees the blade with which he has been wounded, the sword with which he has received his death blow." The very sign of Christ's death repels evil spirits and is a protection against both spiritual and temporal evils.

USE IN LITURGY: The Church's regard for this sacramental is proved by its use in the Mass, in the sacraments, in all public and private ceremonies and prayers. For example, at Mass it is used about fifty times; in the administration of Baptism, it is made fourteen times; in Extreme Unction, seventeen times; in the blessing of holy water, twelve times.

INDULGENCES GIVEN: In 1863, Pope Pius IX attached an indulgence of fifty days to making the sign of the cross. In 1876, he granted an indulgence of 100 days for making the sign with holy water.

THE CROSS

"A sign of shame became a sign of glory"

REGARD OF ANCIENTS: Ancient peoples almost universally regarded the cross as a mystic or religious symbol. In Egypt and Assyria, it typified creative power. In India, Mexico, and Peru, it had the same meaning. Many nations, however, used it for the execution of criminals. The Romans, to whom the Jews were subject at the time of Christ, used the cross only in executing the lowest criminals—insubordinate slaves, common brigands, and the like. The Romans had no regard for the cross as a mystic symbol. For them it was merely an instrument of torture.

AN IGNOMINIOUS DEATH: Hence Christ's death on the cross was an ignominious one; His, the death of the lowest malefactor. Yet His dying sanctified this shameful tree and gave to His followers a common sign of their faith and their Master. The early Christians, to protect themselves from the savage treatment of the Roman emperors, did not use the cross openly, but disguised it under various forms—the Greek letter X, the trident, the anchor, and several monograms.

"WORSHIPPERS OF THE CROSS": So universal was the use of the cross as a Christian symbol that the pagans called followers of Christ "worshippers of the cross." They added that the Christians "deserve that which they worship." The proud Romans considered the Christians worthy of the same shameful death their Master had died. The Emperor Constantine, who found victory in the sign of the cross, abolished the cross as an instrument of capital punishment and promoted its use as an object of veneration.

TRUE CROSS DISCOVERED: After St. Helena's discovery of the true cross at Jerusalem in the fourth century, devotion to the cross increased rapidly and its use became more open. Particles of the true cross were distributed over Christendom, and today these particles, many in churches of our own country, are still venerated. A particle of the true cross is placed in all pectoral crosses worn by bishops and abbots. A relic of the true cross is also necessary to give the blessing of St. Maurice over the sick, as described in the Roman Ritual.

USE IN CHRISTIAN ART: More widespread now is devotion to the crucifix, but the plain cross is still used as a symbol of our faith. Throughout the centuries it has been employed in Christian art. It is a frequent ornament on churches and other institutions, on vestments and sacred vessels. It is worn by many devout persons.

MAY BE BLESSED: The simple cross or the crucifix may be blessed and used as a powerful sacramental. For instance, the indulgences granted for making the Stations of the Cross are actually attached to the wooden crosses that must surmount the images or pictures representing the scenes of the

passion. The apostolic indulgences, those conferred by the blessing of the pope himself, can be attached to a cross. The power to confer these indulgences is now held by many priests. The benefits can be conferred by the priest's mere act of making the sign of the cross over the object.

VARIOUS FORMS: Various forms of the cross have always been used. The one most common today is the Latin cross, the kind on which Christ died. In it the upright beam extends above the crossbar. Others are the Greek cross, having four limbs of equal length; St. Andrew's cross, formed like the letter X; the Maltese cross, having four equal triangular limbs; the Celtic cross, whose arms are connected by a circle; the Tau cross, resembling the Hebrew or Greek letter T; the Egyptian ansated cross, with a circular handle at its top. One with two crossbars is sometimes called an archiepiscopal or patriarchal cross and is used in the heraldic arms of archbishops and patriarchs.

FEASTS IN THE LITURGY: Several days are dedicated to the cross in the Church's liturgy. The feast of the Invention (Finding) of the True Cross is celebrated on May 3 in the Western Church; the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, on September 14. The Eastern rites have various other festivals. The veneration of the cross is an important part of the Good Friday ritual. Crosses are carried at the head of liturgical processions and are worn by bishops and by members of many religious orders.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. When making the sign of the cross, recall the mysteries of faith which this sacramental signifies.
2. Keep a blessed cross in your home, and take part in services honoring the true cross.

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

1. The sign of the cross is the Church's most common sacramental. What does it signify and what ends does it serve?
2. Discuss the earliest form of the sign of the cross. What other form is used by priests and bishops?
3. How do we make the common sign of the cross? What pious old custom is preserved by Spanish-Americans in the United States?
4. What use did the early Christians make of the sign of the cross? Does it serve the same purpose today?
5. What great mysteries are signified by the sign of the cross? What does St. Ambrose say of the reasons for touching forehead, heart, and shoulders?
6. What blessings are desired by those who devoutly use the sign of the cross? What did Tertullian say about making the sign of the cross?
7. What of the sign of the cross as a weapon against evil?
8. How is the sign of the cross used in the liturgy? What indulgences are attached to its use?
9. How did the Romans differ from other ancient peoples in their attitude toward the cross?
10. After the cross was sanctified by Christ's death, why did not the early Christians use it openly as a sign of their faith? How did they disguise it? What did the Romans call the Christians?
11. What events led to the more open use of the cross? How has the cross been used since these happenings?
12. What indulgences may be attached to a cross?
13. Discuss some of the forms of the cross that have been used.
14. When does the Western Church keep feasts of the cross? What about its other uses in liturgical functions?

III

The Crucifix, The Stations of the Cross Veneration of the Cross

The painter, C. Bosseron Chambers, stepped into New York's Church of the Holy Innocents one evening. Huddled before a great crucifix was a man marked by a dissolute life but marked too by an overpowering contrition. The penitent that evening was converted from his life of sin, and the artist conceived his great picture, "The Return." That crucifix is known as the famous "Return Crucifix." Before it many sinners have found salvation. There America's soldier poet, Joyce Kilmer, found his way to Christ—through the crucifix.

If the cross, the symbol of redemption, has been a source of strength to Christians, the crucifix, the actual representation of the act of redemption, has been a source of even greater strength. A crucifix is a cross to which is attached an image of our Lord's body.

SYMBOLS WERE USED: As the early Christians were afraid to use the cross openly, they were also afraid to use the crucifix openly. They, therefore, used symbols of the crucifixion—the lamb reclining beside an anchor, the dolphin twined about the trident.

IDEALIZED REPRESENTATION: After the sixth century, the image of Christ on the cross was used openly. The crucifix was at first an idealized representation of Christ's death. The Savior was shown robed in a tunic and ruling from the cross as Master of the universe, as Christ the King. This type was generally used until about the thirteenth century, when it was replaced by the more realistic type with which we are now familiar. But in our time, with the liturgical revival, has come a return to the ancient symbolic crucifix, showing a radiant and glorious Christ reigning from the cross. The great Benedictine liturgical center, Maria Laach Abbey in Germany, is the source of many beautiful modern crucifixes of this style.

A SUFFERING CHRIST: The common crucifix portrays the torn body of Christ, wearing a loincloth, nailed to the cross. The word crucifix is from the Latin "cruci fixus," "fixed to a cross." Above Christ's head is a tablet inscribed I. N. R. I., the first letters of the words Pilate had written for the cross—"Jesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum," "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." (The Latin I and J are the same.) At the foot of the cross are often a skull and crossbones to typify Calvary, or Golgotha, which means skull.

ON EVERY ALTAR: The Church requires a crucifix on every altar at which Mass is offered. The crucifix is also used as a processional cross in solemn ceremonies. The faithful are urged to display the crucifix in their homes, especially in their bedrooms. It is generally attached to the rosary.

INDULGENCES: To all who, after worthy Communion, recite before a crucifix the prayer, "Look down upon me, good and gentle Jesus," a plenary indulgence is granted. To a crucifix may also be attached the apostolic indulgences and the Bona Mors (Happy Death) plenary indulgence given in the hour of death; and with a crucifix blessed for the purpose a priest can confer the blessing "In Articulo Mortis" (In the Moment of Death), which also carries a plenary indulgence for the dying.

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

PILGRIMS MADE STATIONS: Devotion to the passion of Christ reaches its height in the Stations or Way of the Cross. This devotion grew out of the practice of the faithful to follow Christ's path to death when they visited Jerusalem as pilgrims. When the holy places fell to the Moslems, it was no longer

safe to make the Way of the Cross there, and representations of the incidents of the passion were set up in churches of Europe. It is said that the first to encourage this practice was Blessed Alvarez, a Dominican of Cordova, Spain. About 1350 the devotion was adopted by the Franciscan Minorites. It was soon approved and indulgenced by the Holy See, and so popular did it become that one man, St. Leonard of Port Maurice, erected 572 sets of Stations himself, one in the Colosseum in Rome and the others in various parts of Italy.

FOURTEEN STATIONS: The number of Stations varied at first, but Pope Clement XII in 1731 fixed the number at fourteen. They are: 1. Jesus is condemned to death. 2. Jesus takes up His cross. 3. Jesus falls the first time. 4. Jesus meets His Mother. 5. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross. 6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus. 7. Jesus falls the second time. 8. Jesus speaks to the weeping women of Jerusalem. 9. Jesus falls the third time. 10. Jesus is stripped of His garments. 11. Jesus is nailed to the cross. 12. Jesus dies on the cross. 13. Jesus is taken down from the cross. 14. Jesus is laid in the sepulcher.

CROSSES ARE ESSENTIAL: In most places where the Stations are erected there are paintings or images illustrating these fourteen scenes. These are not, however, actually the Stations, which are the crosses (not crucifixes) that surmount the representations. To these crosses the indulgences are attached. The crosses must be wooden and must be erected by the bishop or by a priest who has been given this privilege. This power was formerly reserved to the Franciscans. The Stations may begin at either the Gospel or the Epistle side of the church. They may also be erected out-of-doors. When so erected, they should begin or end in some holy place, such as a church or chapel. The magnificent outdoor Way of the Cross on the Carmelite monastery grounds at Holy Hill, Wisconsin, is a popular place of devotion.

MEDITATION NECESSARY: To gain the indulgences one need not recite any vocal prayers, even for the pope's intention. It is necessary to meditate on the passion of Christ and to move from Station to Station, or, when making the Way of the Cross in a crowded church, to turn toward the Stations or make some movement to symbolize the going about.

PROVISIONS FOR THE SICK: The sick and those who cannot go to church may use a special crucifix in making the Stations. Those who do this are required to say the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be to the Father twenty times, once for each Station, five times in honor of the five wounds of the crucified Savior, and once for the intention of the Supreme Pontiff. It is customary, but not necessary, for those who make the devotion in the regular way to say these prayers.

PIUS XI FIXED INDULGENCES: Pope Pius XI in 1931 abrogated all previous indulgences attached to the Stations and declared new ones as follows: A plenary indulgence as often as the Stations are made. A plenary indulgence for those who make the Stations on the day they receive Communion or for those who make them ten times within a month and receive Communion. For those who begin the Stations without completing them, an indulgence of ten years and ten quarantines (40 days) for each Station made.

VENERATION OF THE CROSS

ORIGIN OF THE PRACTICE: After St. Helena's discovery of the true cross, it was exposed for public veneration, and thousands journeyed to Jerusalem to honor Christ by honoring the instrument of His death. When particles of the cross were distributed to churches in other parts of the world, these too were venerated, and where there was no relic of the true cross a simple blessed crucifix was used in the devotion.

GOOD FRIDAY LITURGY: This devotion has become an important part of the Good Friday liturgy. The devotions on this day consist of: (1) an in-

struction and prayer service which preserves the ancient form of the Mass of the Catechumens; (2) the Collects or prayers for the needs of the Church and of mankind; (3) the uncovering and veneration of the cross; and (4) the Mass of the Presanctified.

“COME, LET US ADORE”: In the third ceremony, the crucifix, which has been veiled since Passion Sunday, is taken from the center of the altar by one of the ministers and given to the celebrant, who gradually unveils it, three times intoning: “Behold the wood of the cross on which hung the Savior of the world.” All except the celebrant kneel at each intonation, and the choir responds: “Come, let us adore.” When the cross is completely uncovered, it is placed on a cushion at the foot of the altar.

“ADORATION” OF THE CROSS: After removing their shoes, the celebrant and the other clergy kneel and kiss the cross. The faithful then make their veneration. This ceremony is often called the “adoration” of the cross. This name is justified by long usage, but all understand that no real adoration is paid to the crucifix but only to Christ.

“REPROACHES” CHANTED: While the veneration is taking place, the “Improperia” (“Reproaches”) are chanted by the choir. These are the complaints addressed to the Jews by Jesus, Who chides them for their ingratitude. And to all who have ever sinned, the Reproaches may be applied. Hence, all the faithful, for all are sinners, should show their contrition and their love and their gratitude to Christ by venerating the crucifix and treasuring it in their homes.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Hang a blessed crucifix in a prominent place in your home, and thus identify yourself as a member of the true Church.
2. Develop the habit of making the Way of the Cross frequently.

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

1. Tell the story of the “Return Crucifix.”
2. How does the crucifix differ from the cross? What symbols of the crucifix were used in the first ages of Christianity?
3. Discuss the development of the crucifix toward its most common form today. What famous abbey is making idealized crucifixes such as were used in the early centuries of the Christian era? Describe the common form of the crucifix. What is the meaning of I. N. R. I.?
4. How does the Church use the crucifix in its ceremonies? Where should the faithful have it?
5. Discuss the indulgences that may be attached to a crucifix.
6. Tell about the origin of the Stations of the Cross.
7. When was the number of Stations settled? Name the Stations.
8. What is the essential part of the Stations to which the indulgences are attached? Who can erect Stations? In what direction should the Stations proceed? Where can one see a fine set of outdoor Stations in this country?
9. Must one say vocal prayers to gain the indulgences? What is necessary? How may the sick make the Stations?
10. When did Pope Pius XI declare new indulgences for making the Stations? Name the indulgences he granted.
11. How did the practice of the veneration of the cross originate?
12. Tell of the place of this practice in the Good Friday liturgy. What are the parts of the liturgy on this day?
13. Describe the veneration of the cross. What can be said of the name “adoration” of the cross?
14. How should we consider the “Reproaches” which are chanted while the cross is being venerated?

IV

The Rosary—A Crown of Roses

Members of the Mystical Body have always honored Christ by honoring His Mother. No devotion to Mary is more popular or more powerful than the rosary. The word "rosary" comes from the Latin "rosarium," which means a garden or a wreath of roses. In the Middle Ages noble persons were accustomed to wear crowns of flowers called chaplets. The rosary is a triple chaplet, a crown of roses, offered to Mary, noblest of our race. The devotion is called the Psalter of Mary because its 150 Hail Marys correspond to the Bible's 150 Psalms.

ORIGIN OF THE ROSARY: Centuries ago the faithful used to repeat prayers, especially 150 Ave Marias, counted on pebbles, beads, or embossed belts. A form of the rosary was popularized by St. Dominic, who used it successfully in fighting the Albigensian heresy, which threatened the life of both Church and State in the twelfth century. This devotion was recommended to him by Mary herself.

WHAT THE ROSARY IS: The entire rosary includes 150 Hail Marys in fifteen sets (decades) of ten each. The fifteen decades form three groups (chaplets) of five decades each. A chaplet is familiarly called the rosary. Each decade is prefaced by an Our Father and is usually followed by a Glory Be to the Father. Each chaplet is devoted to one of three groups of mysteries: joyful, sorrowful, or glorious. The mysteries cover the principal events in the lives of Jesus and Mary. In them we honor Mary—joyful with Christ in His birth and in His life at Nazareth, sorrowful with Him in His passion and death, glorious with Him after His resurrection.

JOYFUL MYSTERIES: The joyful mysteries are the Annunciation, Visitation of Mary to her Cousin Elizabeth, Nativity of Christ, Presentation of the Infant in the Temple, and Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple. These are recited on all Mondays and Thursdays, and on Sundays from the beginning of Advent until Lent, when the liturgy commemorates these events.

SORROWFUL MYSTERIES: The sorrowful mysteries are Christ's Agony in the Garden, Scourging, Crowning with Thorns, Carrying of the Cross, and Crucifixion. These are said every Tuesday and Friday, and on Sundays in Lent, when the liturgy recalls the sorrows and death of our Lord.

GLORIOUS MYSTERIES: The glorious mysteries are Christ's Resurrection, His Ascension, the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, the Assumption of Mary, and her Coronation as Queen of Heaven. These are recited on all Wednesdays and Saturdays, and on Sundays from Easter to Advent, when the liturgy celebrates these mysteries.

THE CHAPLET OF BEADS: The chaplet usually contains fifty-nine beads—six large for the Our Fathers, fifty-three small for the Hail Marys. There are five decades consisting of an Our Father and ten Hail Marys each, with another Our Father and three Hail Marys appended. There are no beads for the Glory Be to the Fathers. On the chain is a crucifix or a medal stamped with a cross for the Apostles' Creed. Only the fifty Hail Marys and five Our Fathers are essential. The complete chain of fifteen decades is rarely used except by religious. The beads must be of a substance not easily broken.

ORIGIN OF FEAST: When the Turks were pounding at Christendom's Eastern frontiers in 1571, Pope Pius V ordered that rosary devotions be held to ask heaven for a Christian victory. On October 7, Don John of Austria, Christian commander, defeated the Turks at Lepanto. To commemorate that day, Pius V instituted the feast of Our Lady of Victory. This became the feast of the Most Holy Rosary under Pope Gregory XIII in 1573. The feast was extended

to the Universal Church by Clement XI in 1716, and was made a double of the second class, with a new Mass and Office, by Leo XIII in 1888.

THE ROSARY IN THE LITURGY: The feast of the Most Holy Rosary "is a summary of the liturgical year, as we meditate on the mysteries, and also of the breviary, as we recite hundred-fifty Ave Marias corresponding to hundred-fifty psalms."¹ As a private devotion, the rosary consists of prayers from the liturgy. The feast of the Most Holy Rosary is part of the liturgical cycle.

MENTAL PRAYER: The Collect in the Mass for October 7 shows that the rosary is mental prayer. It begs God to grant "that, meditating on these mysteries in the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may both imitate what they contain, and obtain what they promise." Meditation is essential for all who are able to meditate. By considering the joys, sorrows, and triumphs of Christ and Mary, we share their experiences and make progress in the life of virtue.

VOCAL PRAYER: The Gospel of the Mass contains part of the Hail Mary and shows that the rosary is also vocal prayer. Christ Himself composed the Our Father for His disciples. It glorifies God and asks for all needs of body and soul. The Hail Mary begins with the angel's salutation to Mary and ends by begging her help "now and at the hour of our death." No more excellent vocal prayers could be desired.

MONTH OF THE ROSARY: Because of the date of the feast, October is the Month of the Rosary. Pope Pius XI, in his encyclical letter on the holy rosary, wrote: ". . . the holy rosary should be recited in a special manner in the month of October and with increased devotion both in the churches and in homes." Many families say the rosary in common daily in October, when the devotion carries special indulgences.

"STIMULUS AND SPUR": "The holy rosary, besides," said Pius XI, "not only serves admirably to overcome the enemies of God and religion, but is also a stimulus and spur to the practice of evangelic virtues which it injects and cultivates in our souls. Above all, it nourishes the Catholic faith, which flourishes again precisely in opportune meditation of the sacred mysteries, and raises minds to the truth revealed to us by God."

FORMULA OF BLESSING: The blessing for chaplets used by members of the Dominican Confraternity of the Rosary asks God to "bless and sanctify these beads . . . that whosoever shall carry them and shall reverently keep them in his house, and shall devoutly pray, dwelling on the divine mysteries . . . may abound in true and lasting piety . . . be kept safe from every foe, visible and invisible, and in the hour of death, abounding in good works, be found worthy to be presented unto Thee by the same most Blessed Virgin Mary."

INDULGENCES OF ROSARY: Four kinds of indulgences may be attached to the rosary: Dominican, Apostolic, Crosier, and Bridgettine. All may be attached to one chaplet and may be gained in one recitation. There is another simple blessing which attaches no indulgences to the beads.

DOMINICAN INDULGENCES: The Dominican indulgences are attached in the blessing mentioned above. They are primarily for associates of the confraternity. Confraternity members' names must be entered on the Dominican register and their beads must be blessed by a Dominican or another authorized priest. The blessing confers an indulgence of five years and five quarantines for saying five decades; 100 days for every Our Father and Hail Mary when at least five decades are said; a plenary indulgence on any one day in the year for saying five decades every day for a year; ten years and ten quarantines once a day for five decades said with others; a plenary indulgence on the last Sunday of every month for saying five decades with others three times a week; 100 years and 100 quarantines once daily to confraternity associates who devoutly carry a rosary with them.²

1. Saint Andrew Daily Missal. Page 1411.

OTHER INDULGENCES: The apostolic indulgences may be attached to a rosary by any priest who can confer these favors.

Members of the Canons Regular of the Holy Cross and others duly authorized can confer the Crosier blessing, granting an indulgence of 500 days for each Our Father and Hail Mary said with a rosary thus blessed.

The indulgences attached to the Rosary of St. Bridget, comprising six decades and three extra Hail Marys for the sixty-three years Mary is said to have lived, may be gained by reciting five decades and may be conferred on the regular chaplet.

CONDITIONS FOR GAINING INDULGENCES: To gain these indulgences one must use a rosary properly blessed and must recite five decades in one day. Those who, because of physical disability, manual labor, or other reasonable cause, cannot hold the beads in their hands, can gain the indulgences so long as the beads are on their person. When the rosary is recited in common, only the person leading the recitation need have beads.

USE IN THE HOME: Pope Pius XI called the recitation of the rosary in the home "a beautiful and salutary custom." He wrote: "When very frequently We receive newly-married couples in audience and address parental words to them, We give them rosaries, We recommend these to them earnestly, and We exhort them, citing Our own example, not to let even one day pass without saying the rosary, no matter how burdened they may be with many cares and labors."

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Endeavor to recite the rosary every day, and especially during the month of October.
2. Develop the habit of meditating on the mysteries of the rosary.

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

1. Why have members of the Church always honored Mary? How does the rosary rank among devotions honoring the Mother of God?
2. Why is the rosary called Mary's "Crown of Roses"? What other name is used for it? Why?
3. How did the custom of using pebbles or beads as aids to devotion begin? Who popularized a devotion like the rosary?
4. How many decades of Hail Marys does the rosary include? How are these decades grouped?
5. Name the joyful mysteries. When are they recited?
6. Name the sorrowful mysteries. When are they recited?
7. Name the glorious mysteries. When are they recited?
8. Describe the chaplet on which the prayers are counted. Which prayers are essential to the rosary? What others are usually said? What kind of substance may be used for making the beads?
9. Tell the story of the origin of the feast of the Most Holy Rosary.
10. How is the feast of the Most Holy Rosary a summary of the liturgical year and of the breviary?
11. Discuss the quality of the prayers used in the rosary.
12. Why do we meditate on the mysteries? Is this meditation necessary?
13. Discuss the vocal prayers used in the rosary.
14. How should the month of October be observed?
15. What purposes does the rosary serve?
16. How many kinds of indulgences are attached to the rosary? Discuss the Dominican, the Apostolic, the Crosier, and the Bridgettine indulgences.
17. What did Pope Pius XI say of using the rosary in the home?

V

Holy Water

Water, the natural and universal cleansing agent, has been used from very ancient times to signify the purification of the soul just as it actually cleanses the body. The ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans used water in purification ceremonies. The Law of Moses in the Old Testament called for the use of water in liturgical sprinkling of the people, the sacrifices, the sacred vessels, etc. Likewise in Christian times, water has been used for sacred purposes, as in Baptism from the very time of Christ, and as a powerful sacramental from early in the Christian era.

HEALTH OF BODY AND SOUL: As water cleanses the body, so holy water, through the blessing of the Church and the good dispositions of those who use it, purifies the soul. And as the drinking of water is necessary for the health of the body, so holy water promotes the health of the soul.

AN ANCIENT CUSTOM: The use of water as a sacramental, apart from the administration of Baptism, dates, at least in the East, from the second century. In the West the blessing of water can be traced to the period from the sixth to the eighth century. For the use of the faithful in blessing themselves, fountains and basins to contain the sacred water were placed, first on the outside walls of churches, then inside the doors, that all might bless themselves as they entered the house of God. Catholics still dip their fingers in holy water and make the sign of the cross as they enter a church so that they may come into God's presence with pure souls.

IN CHURCH AND HOME: Formerly the water was used only on entering the church to denote that purification was necessary before but not after Mass. Today we use it both on entering and on leaving to gain the indulgence attached to making the sign of the cross with holy water. Catholics also keep holy water in their homes to use with reverence upon rising in the morning, going to bed at night, leaving or entering the house, or going from one room to another.

KINDS OF HOLY WATER: There are four kinds of holy water: 1. Ordinary holy water. 2. Easter water. 3. Baptismal water. 4. Gregorian water.

ORDINARY HOLY WATER: The ordinary kind is usually blessed just before the principal parish Mass on Sunday, but may be blessed at any other time. Salt is mixed with the water, and both are given a double blessing, one an exorcism to free them from all power of the Evil One and the other a positive blessing to sanctify them for the good of souls. Salt, symbol of wisdom and of preservation from corruption, is fittingly mingled with water, the purifier.

BLESSING OF THE SALT: The blessing of the salt begins with a solemn exorcism: "I exorcize thee, created substance of salt, by the living God . . . that thou mayest be for the healing of soul and body to all those receiving thee, and that there may be banished from the place in which thou hast been sprinkled every delusion and wickedness of the devil, and every unclean spirit . . ." The second prayer asks God to bless the salt that "it may be unto all who take it, for health of mind and body; and that whatsoever is touched or sprinkled with it may be freed from all uncleanness . . ." ¹ If the salt has been blessed previously, this part of the ceremony is omitted.

BLESSING OF THE WATER: The water is exorcized "for the banishment of every power of the enemy." The second prayer over the water is a beautiful exposition of the purposes for which the water is blessed. The prayer asks God that the water "may be endowed with divine grace to drive away devils

1. Translations of the Latin prayers given in this chapter are taken from the **Saint Andrew Daily Missal**. The E. M. Lohmann Co., St. Paul, Minn.

and to cast out diseases; that whatever in the houses or possessions of the faithful may be sprinkled by this water may be freed from everything unclean and delivered from whatsoever is hurtful. Let no spirit of pestilence or baleful breath abide therein; let all the snares of the enemy who lieth in wait be driven forth that everything threatening the safety or peace of the dwellers therein may be banished by the sprinkling of this water; so that the health which they seek by calling upon Thy holy Name may be guarded from all assault."

MINGLING OF THE ELEMENTS: After this prayer, the priest puts the salt into the water three times in the form of a cross. He prays again that God will bless the mixture for the purposes mentioned in the prayers already recited.

INDULGENCE GIVEN: To the use of this ordinary holy water, there is attached an indulgence of 100 days when one makes with it the sign of the cross.²

USES OF THE WATER: Ordinary holy water is used in the "Asperges" or sprinkling of the faithful before the main parish Mass, usually a high Mass, on Sunday; is kept in churches and homes for the use of the faithful, and is employed in most blessings, in the ceremonies of Matrimony and Extreme Unction, in taking Holy Communion to the homes of the sick, and in the services for the dead.

EASTER WATER: Of the three other kinds of holy water, that which is blessed on Holy Saturday morning for use in the Easter season is much like the ordinary holy water. This is blessed with a different formula, but its value and use are much the same. When the Easter water has been blessed on Holy Saturday, part of it is placed in the baptismal font. Of the rest, some is used for sprinkling the people immediately after the blessing. Later the water is distributed to the faithful for use in their homes until Pentecost.

BAPTISMAL WATER: After the blessing of the faithful with the new Easter water on Holy Saturday, some of this water is poured into the baptismal font and the priest mixes oil of catechumens and holy chrism with it to form baptismal water. After this, Baptism is conferred on any who are present to receive the sacrament. The water is then kept in the font for use in future Baptisms. This same kind of water is blessed on the eve of Pentecost, because Holy Saturday and the eve of Pentecost were the traditional days for Baptisms in the early Church.

GRÉGORIAN WATER: At the consecration of churches Gregorian water is blessed for use in the ceremony. After being mixed with wine, ashes, and salt and receiving its blessing, this water is sprinkled on the walls of the church by the celebrant, usually the bishop. This water is so named because its use was ordered by Pope Gregory IX. It is also called water of consecration.

TWO CONCERN THE FAITHFUL: While all these forms of blessed water are used for sacred purposes by the Church, only ordinary holy water and Easter water directly concern the faithful and are provided for their use. Many Catholics who take home containers of Easter water on Holy Saturday preserve this water for use throughout the year. Easter water, however, is blessed for use only in the Easter season, that is, until the feast of Pentecost. Ordinary holy water should be used in homes at all other times of the year.

THE ASPERGES: Since the eighth century it has been the custom for the celebrant to sprinkle the faithful with holy water before the principal Mass each Sunday. After he has blessed the water in the sacristy or at the Epistle side of the altar, he puts on a cope, goes to the foot of the altar, and intones the antiphon, "Asperges me." The "Asperges" says: "Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, O Lord, and I shall be cleansed; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." He sprinkles the altar, then passes through the church sprinkling the faithful, who genuflect and bless themselves as the water falls on them or as the priest passes. It is not necessary that the water touch every

person. As the priest sprinkles the people, he recites in a low voice the first verse of Psalm 50, the "Miserere," of which the "Asperges" is a verse. The Psalm begins: "Have mercy on me, O God."

THE VIDI AQUAM: In the Easter time, the "Asperges" antiphon and the "Miserere" are replaced by the "Vidi Aquam"—"I saw water flowing from the right side of the temple, alleluia; and all to whom that water came were saved."

BAPTISM RECALLED: The "Asperges" or the "Vidi Aquam" is intended to renew in the faithful each Sunday the memory of their Baptism and to purify them of all distractions during the Mass that is to follow.

PROCESSION OUTSIDE CHURCH: In former times, the "Asperges" procession moved outside the church, and the celebrant blessed not only the people but the cemetery, the graves, the monastery or other ecclesiastical buildings in the neighborhood, and the houses of the faithful. This custom is recalled in the prayer the priest recites at the conclusion of the sprinkling ceremony: "Hear us, O holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God: and vouchsafe to send Thy holy angel from heaven to guard, cherish, protect, visit, and defend all that dwell in this house."

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Always make the sign of the cross with the holy water provided at the entrance to church.
2. Keep holy water in the home. Use it with reverence in making the sign of the cross upon rising in the morning, going to bed at night, leaving or entering the house, or in going from one room to another, and sprinkle it about in times of storms or other dangers.

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

1. Why has water always been used as a symbol of interior purification? How was it used in the Old Testament?
2. Compare the action of water on the body and that of holy water on the soul.
3. How old in the Church is the custom of blessing water as a sacramental? Why is holy water placed at the entrance to churches? Why do we now bless ourselves with the water when leaving church?
4. How many kinds of holy water are there? Name them.
5. What is mixed with the water that is blessed to provide ordinary holy water? What is the symbolism of salt?
6. Discuss the two prayers used in blessing the salt. When are these prayers omitted in the blessing of holy water?
7. According to the prayers used in the blessing, what purposes is holy water meant to serve?
8. What indulgence is attached to making the sign of the cross with holy water?
9. When is Easter water blessed? How is it used?
10. Tell about the blessing of baptismal water on Holy Saturday and on the eve of Pentecost. Why is baptismal water blessed on these two days?
11. What is Gregorian water? Why is it so named? By what other name is it known?
12. Which of the kinds of holy water are for the use of the faithful? Through what period is Easter water to be used?
13. Describe the "Asperges" ceremony.
14. When is the "Vidi Aquam" used in place of the "Asperges"?
15. How is the old procession outside the church recalled in the present ceremony of the "Asperges"?

VI

Palms, Ashes, Incense

“Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” This was the cry of the multitudes who strewed palms before Christ as He entered Jerusalem in triumph a few days before His death. The palm branch has been a sign of high joy and of great victory from time immemorial. As the Jews paid tribute to Jesus on the first Palm Sunday, so the Church renews the triumphal procession “to give public homage to the Savior, the ‘King of glory,’ before turning our attention to a remembrance of His Passion.”¹

PROCESSION AT JERUSALEM: In the fourth century at Jerusalem a joyous procession was held in the very place where the events of the first Palm Sunday occurred. A bishop accompanied by people carrying palms and singing hymns rode on an ass to the Church of the Resurrection on Mount Olivet. The procession followed the reading of the Gospel that tells of Christ’s entry into Jerusalem.² After many years in which it was not performed, the procession was revived in the Holy Year of 1933, nineteenth centenary of Christ’s death.

PARADE OF TRIUMPH: The blessing of the palms grew out of this procession, which became a great social event in all Christian lands of Europe. The blessing was introduced at Rome about the eleventh century. In the Middle Ages, the clergy and people joined in the triumphal parade from the principal church to another, usually outside the city’s walls. Sometimes the Blessed Sacrament was carried. In Catholic England the Eucharist was enshrined in a beautiful tent in the churchyard before the procession.

THE “DRY MASS”: The blessing of palms is a long and solemn rite. In form it resembles the Mass itself, having an Introit, Collect, Epistle, Tract, Gospel, Preface, and Sanctus. It is sometimes called a “dry Mass.” Centuries ago at Rome the blessing took place at a special Mass in the Church of St. Mary Major. It is part of this Mass that is preserved in the present ceremony.

THE BLESSING: The Church asks God to “let Thy manifold mercy descend upon us, and let these branches of palm trees or olive trees be blessed . . . that into whatever place they may be brought, those who dwell in the place may obtain Thy blessing, and all adversities being removed, Thy right hand may protect those who have been redeemed . . . grant that what Thy people this day bodily perform for Thy honor, they may perfect spiritually with greatest devotion by gaining a victory over the enemy . . .”

DISTRIBUTION OF THE PALMS: After the blessing the branches are distributed to clergy and laity. During the distribution the choir chants the “Pueri Hebraeorum” antiphons: “The Hebrew children, bearing branches of olive, went forth to meet the Lord, crying out, and saying: Hosanna in the highest.” The people are to hold the palms while the Passion is read in the Mass that follows, and also in the procession, if the laity take part in this rite.

THE PROCESSION TODAY: Usually today, only the celebrant and other ministers join in the procession after the palms are given out. They proceed out of the church and the door is closed. On coming back, the subdeacon knocks at the door with the staff on the crucifix. The door is reopened and the procession enters the church to signify that Christ’s death reopened the gates of heaven, which had been closed by sin. The hymn, “Gloria, Laus” (“Glory and Praise to Thee”), and the antiphons sung during the procession recall Christ’s entry into Jerusalem.

TO BE KEPT IN HOMES: The faithful should preserve the palms in their homes that they may receive the blessings asked by the Church. Palms are

1. Stapper-Baier, *Catholic Liturgics*. Page 108.

2. Matthew XXI, 1-9.

sometimes put in the hands of the dying or the dead to show the Christian's victory over sin. Where palms are not available, as in many parts of the United States, branches of other trees, usually evergreens, are blessed.

FROM JOY TO PENANCE: The palms of joy and victory on Palm Sunday are burned to provide the ashes of penance given to the faithful on the following Ash Wednesday, first day of Lent. This "reminds us that we cannot bear the palm of victory over Satan, sin, and death unless by the practice of humility and mortification during life, and by paying the debt of sin in giving our bodies to the dust at the close of our earthly existence."³

SIGNS OF MORTIFICATION: Ashes, universal symbol of the perishability of earthly things, have always been signs of penance. The repentant David cried out: "For I did eat ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping."⁴ The Ninivites, touched by Jonas' preaching, did penance in sackcloth and in ashes. Like these ancient penitents, the Church puts ashes on the heads of her children to remind them that they must give themselves to penance and fasting.

EARLY CHRISTIAN PENITENTS: In early Christian times, only those who had committed grave sins and were obliged to do public penance received the ashes. On Ash Wednesday, the bishop blessed hairshirts for the penitents and sprinkled them with ashes. Then, as the seven penitential psalms were chanted, the penitents were turned out of the church, not to return until Holy Thursday. In the meantime they gave themselves to acts of mortification to win forgiveness of their sins. On Holy Thursday they went to confession and received absolution.

ASHES IMPOSED UPON ALL NOW: In the eleventh century, "the Council of Beneventum ordained that all the faithful without distinction should be urged to receive the ashes on Ash Wednesday."⁵ By receiving the ashes, the faithful signify their sorrow for sin and prepare themselves for Lenten penances.

"A WHOLESOME REMEDY": In blessing the ashes before Mass on Ash Wednesday the priest prays: "O almighty and eternal God . . . sanctify these ashes, that they may be a wholesome remedy to all who humbly implore Thy holy name, and accuse themselves . . . deploring their crimes before Thy divine clemency, or humbly and earnestly beseeching Thy sovereign mercy; and grant . . . that all who may be sprinkled with them may receive health of body and safety of soul." The ashes are incensed and sprinkled with holy water.

"THOU ART DUST": Then the ashes are placed on the heads of the people. To each, the priest says: "Remember, man, that thou art dust, and into dust thou shalt return." This advice from the Book of Genesis reminds the recipient that he will receive no benefits from wearing the badges of penance unless he have real contrition and humility. The ashes are outward signs of inward sorrow.

THE SYMBOL OF PRAYER: As the palms and ashes have their meaning in the liturgy, so incense is a sacred symbol. The "burning incense sending forth its sweet odors heavenward is a natural symbol of prayer ascending to God."⁶ In the 140th Psalm, the sacred writer begs God: "Let my prayer be directed as incense in Thy sight."⁷ St. John in his vision of heaven saw an angel "having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God."⁸

GOD PRESCRIBED INCENSE: As God commanded Moses to place incense "before the tabernacle of the testimony,"⁹ so the Church prescribes its use in her ceremonies. "Because of its close relationship to pagan worship, incense was not used liturgically by the Church in the early centuries."¹⁰

USE TO HONOR MARTYRS: Later incense was used to honor the martyrs. As martyrs' bodies were carried in procession to be buried beneath the

3. Lambing, *The Sacramentals of the Holy Catholic Church*. Page 242. 4. Psalm CI, 10.

5. McNeill-Clendenin, *The Liturgical Year*. Page 34. 6. Stapper-Baier, *Catholic Liturgics*. Page 42.

7. Psalm CXL, 2. 8. Apocalypse VIII, 3. 9. Exodus XXX, 36. 10. Butler-Clendenin, *Praying the Mass*. Page 20.

altars, small vessels of incense burned in niches along the way. Later the gums and spices were burned in containers hanging from chains. From these developed the modern swinging censers. Even today, when relics of martyrs are entombed in altars and altar stones, incense grains are placed with them.

SIGN OF RESPECT: Incense is made of aromatic resin from trees of Arabia and India. Spices are mixed with the resin to make it more fragrant and to produce more smoke. These sweet resins and spices are signs of respect. As the Magi gave the Infant Jesus frankincense to show their adoration, so we use it to show our respect for God and His martyrs.

USE IN LITURGY: Incense is burned at Benediction, Exposition, and during processions of the Blessed Sacrament. At solemn Masses, the crucifix, altar, and bread and wine are incensed, as are the priest, ministers, and people. As he incenses the bread and wine at the Offertory, the priest says: "May this incense which Thou hast blessed, O Lord, ascend to Thee, and may Thy mercy descend upon us." Blessed grains of incense are placed in the paschal candle on Holy Saturday, and incense is burned at the consecration of churches and altars, and in certain other blessings.

USE AT FUNERALS: At funerals, the body of the deceased is incensed to honor it as a temple of the Holy Ghost destined to live forever in glory with God.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Display the blessed palms in the home in some appropriate manner, remembering the words of the blessing: ". . . that into whatever place they may be brought, those who dwell in the place may obtain Thy blessing . . ."
2. When you see incense being burned in church and smell its sweet odors, ask God to accept your prayers as He receives the rising incense.

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

1. What does the palm branch signify? What great event in the life of our Lord does the Church commemorate on Palm Sunday?
2. Describe the fourth-century Palm Sunday procession in Jerusalem. When was it revived in very modern times?
3. How did the blessing of palms originate? Tell about the procession in the Middle Ages.
4. Why is the blessing ceremony called a "dry Mass"? What benefits are asked for those who dwell where the blessed palms are kept?
5. Describe the present-day procession.
6. What are the faithful to do with the palms which they receive? What kind of branches may be used where palms are not available?
7. What is symbolized by the burning of palms to obtain the ashes used on Ash Wednesday? Tell instances showing the use of ashes as signs of penance in the Old Testament.
8. Describe the Ash Wednesday ceremony in the early Church. What was the ruling of the Council of Beneventum regarding the distribution of the ashes? What dispositions do the faithful show by receiving the ashes?
9. How do the prayers used in the blessing show the purpose of the ashes?
10. What is said as the ashes are placed on the heads of the people? What does this signify?
11. What is the symbolism of incense? Tell of scriptural references to incense.
12. Why was incense not used by the Church in very early Christian times?
13. Tell of the use of incense to honor the early martyrs. How is this custom continued today?
14. What is incense made of? How is it used by the Church in her liturgy? Why is it burned at funerals?

VII

Blessed Candles

The New Jerusalem "hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it. For the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof," says St. John in describing heaven.¹ The Church uses light to symbolize the Lord, the lamp of heaven and light of the world. Moses was commanded to burn a lamp "in the tabernacle of the testimony."² The Church always burns a lamp in the sanctuary to show that Christ is there. She employs candles to symbolize the body, soul, and divinity of Christ; His love and supreme sacrifice for men; the love of men for God, and their need to consume themselves as candles in His service. Candles may also be used as powerful sacramentals in the homes of the faithful.

LIGHTS IN ANCIENT TIMES: The ancient Jews and pagans used lights in their ritual, and the early Christians followed their custom. There is little evidence that in earliest Christian times lights had any special liturgical significance. The holding of services in the dark corridors of the catacombs made lights necessary. Nevertheless, many terra-cotta lamps found in the catacombs bear religious symbols, and some have symbolic shapes, like that of the fish, emblematic of Christ.

"A TOKEN OF JOY": By the time of St. Jerome (d. 420) lights were certainly used for purely liturgical purposes. St. Jerome wrote that candles were burned "not indeed to dispel darkness, but to exhibit a token of joy." Candles were burned at Mass, at Baptisms on Holy Saturday and the eve of Pentecost, and at funerals. As the liturgy developed, candlesticks were placed on the altar instead of on the floor, as had been the earlier custom.

RICHNESS OF SYMBOLISM: The candle is one of the richest religious symbols. The wax, produced by virgin worker bees, is a beautiful symbol of the body of Christ, born of a virgin. The wick is an emblem of His soul; the flame, a sign of His divinity. The lighted candle symbolizes Christ's Gospel, which dispels the darkness of sin and ignorance, and "the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."³ For the individual Christian, the candle's flame signifies the faith that makes us "children of the light," its warmth, the Pentecostal fire "which does not consume but enlightens."⁴ Candles given to the Church signify Christian self-sacrifice. As the burning candle consumes itself, so the Christian should consume himself in serving God. Thus the candle especially symbolizes the priesthood.

MASS OF THE CANDLES: On February 2, the Church commemorates the purification of Mary and the presentation of the Infant Jesus in the temple. She also blesses candles in a ceremony that gives the feast the name Candlemas (Mass of the Candles). In a solemn procession, the clergy and the faithful (if they take part) carry lighted candles "to signify that they intend to bear within themselves the Christ-life throughout the journey of their earthly existence."⁵ The procession recalls the holy family's journey to the temple and signifies Christ's coming as "a light to the revelation of the Gentiles."⁶

BLESSING OF THE CANDLES: Five beautiful prayers are used in blessing the candles. God is asked to "sanctify these candles for the use of men, and the health of bodies and souls," that "being worthily inflamed with the holy fire of Thy most sweet charity, we may deserve to be presented in the holy temple of Thy glory . . . O Lord Jesus Christ, the true light, who enlightenest every man coming into this world, pour fourth Thy blessing" that "our hearts, il-

1. Apocalypse XXI, 23. 2. Exodus XXVII, 20-21. 3. I Timothy III, 15. 4. Studený, "Symbolism of the Candle." *Ave Maria*, Aug. 14, 1937. 5. Diekmann, "Light and Life." *Orate Fratres*, Jan. 25, 1936. 6. Luke II, 32.

luminated by invisible fire . . . may be free from the blindness of every vice." The priest sprinkles the candles with holy water and incenses them three times. The choir sings Simeon's beautiful canticle, "Dismiss Thy servant, O Lord." There is also a simple blessing for candles at other times of the year.

OFFERINGS OF THE FAITHFUL: After the blessing on February 2, the candles are distributed and the procession follows. Later the faithful give blessed candles to the Church to recall the gift of turtle doves to the temple by Mary and Joseph. At Rome representatives of most religious houses offer candles to the pope in a magnificent ceremony in one of the Vatican throne rooms. Pious persons and associations in the Middle Ages endowed lights to burn before shrines or altars. In England and France it was customary to offer a number of candles or one large candle equalling the donor's height or weight. This custom, called "measuring up" to a saint, has grown into the modern practice of burning vigil lights or votive candles. Since these are not blessed, they are not sacramentals, but they do symbolize the prayers of those who provide them. The faithful are constantly warned not to use these offerings superstitiously and not to allow them to detract attention from the Mass and other devotions.

COMPOSITION OF CANDLES: Blessed candles must be made, at least in greater part, of beeswax. There are white or bleached candles, made of refined wax, and yellow or unbleached ones. The reddish-yellow unbleached candles are burned at funerals and Holy Week services, though the bleached are permissible.

ELECTRICITY NO SUBSTITUTE: Electric lights are never to be substituted for candles and are not to be burned on the altar. In cases of extreme necessity the bishop may allow the use of an electric light as a sanctuary lamp.

USE IN HOMES: Catholics keep candles in their homes to gain the blessings asked by the Church. Candles are burned to ward off danger from storms. The Czechs call these "thunder candles" and while they burn pray for divine protection against the elements. Candles are burned when the Eucharist is brought to the sick, are placed in the hands of the dying, and burned around the biers of the dead.

NUMBER TO BE USED: The number of candles prescribed for liturgical functions depends on the solemnity of the service. At a priest's low Mass, two are lighted; four at a bishop's Mass. At a sung Mass, there are six, though four suffice for a Requiem. A solemn Mass requires six; a pontifical high Mass seven, unless the Mass is a Requiem or the bishop is outside his own diocese, when six suffice. From the Sanctus until after the priest's Communion, an additional candle may be burned. At private Benediction (when the tabernacle is opened but the Host not taken out), at least six are needed. Twelve are required for solemn Exposition or Benediction. Six burn at Vespers on solemn feasts; four suffice on ordinary days.

SPECIAL USE IN THE LITURGY: Candles play a particularly significant part in the liturgy at certain times. On the feast of St. Blase, February 3, a special blessing is given the crossed candles used in blessing throats. In Holy Week, the candle's symbolism is especially dramatic. At Tenebrae ("darkness") services on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, the fifteen tapers on the triangular candlestick and the six on the altar are extinguished one by one to suggest Christ's abandonment by apostles and people. The last candle is not extinguished but only hidden behind the altar for a short time to signify that the light of Christ was temporarily hidden from the world between His death and His resurrection.

"LUMEN CHRISTI": On Holy Saturday no lights burn as the ceremonies begin. Outside the church the priest kindles the "new fire." At one time a fire was made at the church door every day, then only on Saturday, finally on Holy Saturday alone. From the new fire, the deacon lights a taper. Entering the

church, he lights the triple candle, symbolizing the Trinity. As each branch is lighted, he chants, "Lumen Christi" ("The Light of Christ").

THE PASCHAL CANDLE: The large and ornate paschal candle is blessed by the deacon during the chanting of the "Exultet"—"Let now the angelic hosts of heaven rejoice." Five incense grains are sealed into the candle in the form of a cross, to recall Christ's five wounds. The candle is dipped into the Easter water at the water's blessing. From it the other tapers and lamps are kindled. Before being lighted, the candle symbolizes the dead and buried Christ. When burning, it signifies the gloriously risen Savior. For forty days it burns to commemorate Christ's forty days on earth after His resurrection. The paschal candle also symbolizes the pillar of fire that guided the Israelites on their journey out of Egypt. It burns at the Gospel side of the altar at Mass until Ascension Thursday.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. On the feast of the Purification, February 2, procure blessed candles for use in the home, also for lighting during storms. Make a practice of giving two or more candles to the Church to be burned during divine services, keeping in mind the gift of the holy family to the temple.
2. Have your throat blessed on the feast of St. Blase.

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

1. How can we be sure that the use of candles and lights in the liturgy is pleasing to God?
2. Discuss the use of candles in pre-Christian and early Christian times.
3. By what century were candles used with a purely liturgical meaning and not just to provide light? According to St. Jerome, why were the candles used?
4. Discuss the rich symbolism of the candle: as applied to Christ; to the faithful themselves; to the priest particularly.
5. What feasts are kept on February 2? What does the procession on this day recall?
6. How many prayers are used in the blessing of the candles? What does the Church ask in these prayers? May candles be blessed with another formula at other times of the year?
7. What event in the life of the holy family does the faithful's offering of candles to the Church recall? What event takes place in Rome on February 2? What was "measuring up" to a saint? What may be said of the use of vigil lights?
8. What substance is used in making liturgical candles? When are unbleached candles used? What about the use of electric lights to substitute for candles? for the sanctuary lamp?
9. How are candles used in the homes of the faithful?
10. What of the use of candles in the liturgy? Tell the number to be used at different liturgical ceremonies.
11. Name some of the times when candles are used with special significance in the liturgy. What is the symbolism of the Tenebrae service?
12. Tell of the first services on Holy Saturday. What is the symbolism of the paschal candle? When is it burned?

VIII

Agnus Deis, Medals, Scapulars, Blessed Cords

In the Middle Ages the faithful used fragments of the paschal candle as sacramentals. It is thought that Agnus Deis, small pieces of wax impressed with the figure of the Lamb and blessed by the pope, originated from this practice. About the ninth century, the popes began to bless and send Agnus Deis to prominent persons.

AGNUS DEIS NOW: Today Agnus Deis are blessed on the Wednesday of Holy Week in the first year of a pope's reign and every seventh year thereafter. On Holy Saturday they are distributed by cardinals and others. The Agnus Dei may be round, oval, or oblong and may vary in size. The reverse side may bear the name and coat-of-arms of the pope or some other suitable emblem. The Agnus Dei is usually carried in a small case. The wax symbolizes Christ's body, and the banner of the Lamb signifies His victory over sin and death. The Agnus Dei's blessing asks God's protection against evil spirits, storms, pestilence, fire, flood, and difficulties of childbirth.

HISTORY OF MEDALS: Of the sacramentals worn by the faithful, none are more numerous than medals, pieces of metal resembling coins and marked with religious figures. Amulets worn by the early Christians and found in catacombs often bear the chrisma, a Greek monogram of Christ's name, or figures of saints. Evidently, common coins were sometimes used as medals since many coins of the later Roman empire bore religious markings. Medals were less frequent in the early Middle Ages, but by the twelfth century leaden tokens were used as souvenirs of shrines and places of pilgrimage. These "pilgrim's signs," worn on the hat or on the breast, showed that the pilgrim had reached his destination. Other forms of medals were counting discs, many of which bore pious inscriptions. About 1475 medals were cast to commemorate the papal jubilee years. It was only in the sixteenth century that indulgences were first attached to medals.

PURPOSES OF MEDALS: Medals today are almost innumerable, but in general they serve to increase devotion, commemorate religious events or places, protect the wearer, or identify members of pious societies. Medals are not charms; in themselves they have no power. Only through the Church's prayer do they gain any efficacy. A general formula is used in blessing all except the Miraculous medal and the medal of St. Benedict, special blessings being provided for these two in the Roman Ritual.

KINDS OF MEDALS: Among the many medals are: (1) those honoring Christ, such as Savior of the World and Holy Childhood medals; (2) those honoring Mary, such as Mother of Sorrows, Mount Carmel, Perpetual Help, Lourdes, and Miraculous medals; (3) those honoring saints, such as Saints Joseph, Dominic, Francis, Agnes, Anne, Benedict, and Christopher (St. Christopher medals are placed in automobiles to implore the aid of the Christ-bearer, patron of travelers); (4) those commemorating events such as papal jubilees, miracles, church consecrations, First Communions, canonizations, anniversaries, etc.

THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL: The Miraculous or Immaculate Conception medal owes its origin to a Sister of Charity, Blessed Catherine Laboure, who had visions of Mary in Paris in 1830. Mary appeared standing on one globe, with another in her hand. Rays of light shone from her hands. Surrounding the vision was an oval frame which bore the words: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee." Sister Catherine was ordered to have medals modeled after the vision. On the reverse was to be the letter M, surmounted by a cross, with a crossbar and the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary below.

ORDER BLANK

Indicate number of copies wanted on lines at left

CATHOLIC ACTION SERIES OF DISCUSSION-CLUB TEXTBOOKS

_____Altar and Sanctuary_____Angela A. Clendenin
An Exposition of the Externals of the Mass

_____Praying the Mass_____Rev. John J. Butler and Angela A. Clendenin
A Study of the Prayers and Ceremonies of the Mass

_____The Liturgical Year_____Rev. Leon A. McNeill and Angela A. Clendenin
An Explanation of the Cycles, Seasons, and Feasts of the Church Year

_____The Sacramentals_____Charles J. McNeill
A Study of the Origin, Nature, and Use of the Sacramentals

Orders of less than 50 copies, 25c per copy (postpaid if cash accompanies order)

Discounts on quantity orders: 50 copies, 10%; 100 copies, 20%; 500 copies, 30%;
1000 copies, 40%; plus carrying charges

CATHOLIC ACTION LEAFLETS

A series of seven leaflets, each containing a simple explanation of one of the sacraments

_____Baptism; _____Confirmation; _____Holy Eucharist; _____Penance;
_____Extreme Unction; _____Holy Orders; _____Matrimony
50c per hundred, plus postage

Name_____ Address_____

FIRST CLASS

Permit No. 648

(Sec. 510 PL&R)

WICHITA, KANSAS

BUSINESS REPLY CARD

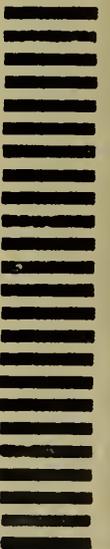
NO POSTAGE STAMP NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY

CATHOLIC ACTION COMMITTEE

424 North Broadway

WICHITA, KANSAS



FIRST CLASS

Permit No. 648

(Sec. 510 PL&R)

WICHITA, KANSAS

BUSINESS REPLY CARD

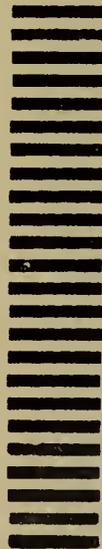
NO POSTAGE STAMP NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY

CATHOLIC ACTION COMMITTEE

424 North Broadway

WICHITA, KANSAS



THE CATHOLIC ACTION SERIES
of
DISCUSSION-CLUB TEXTBOOKS

Enclosed herewith is a complimentary copy of The Sacramentals, a textbook for religious discussion clubs published by the Catholic Action Committee of Wichita, Kansas. The author is Charles J. McNeill, A.B., Jour. M., associate editor of The Register, Denver, Colorado.

This study of the origin, nature, and use of the sacramentals of the Church has been developed in strict adherence to recommendations made by the National Center of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. The subject is presented in a series of sixteen brief lessons adapted to the knowledge and experience of the average lay group. At the end of each chapter will be found suggested religious practices and an outline for discussion based exclusively on the content of the chapter. The textbook contains sufficient material to serve the needs of a discussion group during both fall and spring terms of the year.

The Sacramentals is the fourth booklet in the Catholic Action Series of discussion-club textbooks. Previous numbers in the series are Altar and Sanctuary, an exposition of the externals of the Mass; Praying the Mass, a study of the prayers and ceremonies of the holy Sacrifice; and The Liturgical Year, an explanation of the cycles, seasons, and feasts of the ecclesiastical year. Thousands of copies of these textbooks have been used successfully in all parts of the United States and Canada.

The price of any booklet in the series is twenty-five cents per copy. Orders for less than fifty copies, when accompanied by cash, are sent post-paid. On quantity orders the following liberal discounts are allowed: 50 copies, 10%; 100 copies, 20%; 500 copies, 30%; 1000 copies, 40%; 5000 copies, 45%; 10,000 copies, 50%; plus carrying charges. These discount prices make it possible for central offices to order in large quantities and to cover overhead expenses on local distribution.

Any cooperation which you may give us in making these discussion-club textbooks better known to the group for which they are intended will be appreciated. If we, in turn, are given an opportunity to serve you in any way, we shall consider it a privilege to do so.

CATHOLIC ACTION COMMITTEE
424 North Broadway
Wichita, Kansas

September 1, 1938

Statement of Type

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
I, _____, Clerk of the County of Los Angeles, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the _____ as the same appears from the records of the County of Los Angeles.

Witness my hand and the seal of the County of Los Angeles at Los Angeles, California, this _____ day of _____, 19____.

Clerk of the County of Los Angeles

DEVELOPMENT OF DEVOTION: After the first medals were made in 1832, the Miraculous medal devotion grew rapidly. In 1894, Pope Leo XIII instituted the feast of the Miraculous Medal, November 27, with special Office and Mass. In many places perpetual novenas honor Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. Those who wear this medal may gain 100 days' indulgence by saying the brief prayer inscribed on it.¹

MEDAL OF ST. BENEDICT: The medal of St. Benedict was indulgenced in 1741 by Pope Benedict XIV. In 1877, Pius IX confirmed these indulgences and granted others for the jubilee medal cast by the Archabbot of Monte Casino in Italy to mark the fourteenth centenary of St. Benedict's birth. This medal shows the saint holding a cross and the book of his monastic rule; the other side bears a cross and letters standing for the words of an exorcism over Satan.

PURPOSES OF BLESSING: "The efficacy of the Medal of St. Benedict can be seen from the words of the blessing pronounced over it. God is implored to preserve those who wear it from all the snares and temptations of the devil; to protect them from lightnings and tempests, from pestilences, sicknesses, and poisons; and to bestow upon them His blessings, both temporal and spiritual."²

INDULGENCES GRANTED: Those who wear the medal of St. Benedict may gain plenary indulgences on fourteen days each year, by performing certain good works, and in the hour of death. They may also win many partial indulgences and those granted by the pope's blessing on Holy Thursday and Easter Sunday. Special favors are attached to the jubilee medal.

ORIGIN OF SCAPULARS: The name scapular comes from the Latin word for shoulder. A scapular consists of two pieces of cloth connected by cords, to be worn over the shoulders. Members of some religious orders, like the Benedictines, wear scapulars hanging from the shoulders almost to the ground. In the Middle Ages lay persons were permitted to wear scapulars as associates of religious orders. These lay members participated in the order's devotions and shared in its spiritual benefits. Later smaller scapulars were made for the laity to wear under the clothing.

LARGE AND SMALL: Today lay associates of the religious communities wear scapulars about five by two and a half inches in size. These are called "large" scapulars. Others use "small" scapulars, about two by two and a quarter inches. Scapulars must be made of woolen cloth. They may be decorated with pictures or religious emblems.

WHO CAN WEAR SCAPULARS: All Catholics, even infants, may be invested in the scapular. It must be worn so that one part hangs on the breast, the other on the back, with a cord over each shoulder. Only one investiture is necessary for each scapular. Worn-out scapulars are simply replaced by new ones. They should be worn constantly.

NUMBER AND KINDS: The Church approves eighteen scapulars. Five are often worn together on one set of cords. These are the brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, red Scapular of the Passion, black Scapular of the Seven Dolors, blue Scapular of the Immaculate Conception, and white Scapular of the Most Blessed Trinity bearing a red and blue cross. Other scapulars are those of Our Lady of Ransom, the Most Precious Blood, the Passion (black), Mary Help of the Sick, Immaculate Heart of Mary, St. Michael the Archangel, St. Benedict, Our Lady of Good Counsel, St. Joseph, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, St. Boniface, and the Holy Face.³

SCAPULAR OF MOUNT CARMEL: The widely used Mount Carmel Scapular originated with St. Simon Stock, a thirteenth-century English Carmelite. Formerly only Carmelites could invest in this scapular; now priests having ordinary faculties may give it. The priest says: "Receive this blessed habit, be-

1. *Raccolta*. Page 234.

2. Deutsch, *Manual for Oblates of St. Benedict*. Page 270.

3. *Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. XIII. Pages 510 ff.

seeing the Most Holy Virgin that by her merits you may wear it without stain; may she keep you from all evil and lead you to eternal life."

FAVORS ATTACHED TO SCAPULAR: It is piously believed that the Blessed Virgin promised two privileges to wearers of this scapular: 1. Those who die wearing it will gain salvation. 2. Those who practice certain good works will be released from purgatory on the first Saturday after death. There is much doubt particularly about the second (Sabbatine) privilege, supposed to have been revealed to Pope John XXII. The important thing is that the Church has approved the scapular and granted favors to its wearers, as follows: They share in good works of the Carmelites and of all Catholics. After death they share in prayers and weekly Masses offered by Carmelite priests. A plenary indulgence is granted on the day of investiture and at the hour of death.

SCAPULAR MEDAL: Pope Pius X in 1910 permitted substitution of a medal for one or more of the "small" scapulars. The scapular medal shows on one side Christ and His Sacred Heart; on the other, Mary. One medal may replace any or all "small" scapulars in which a person has been invested, but it must be specially blessed for each. When a medal is replaced, the new one must be blessed. It may be worn or carried in any manner.

BLESSED CORDS: Blessed cords, like scapulars, are worn by members of pious associations. These four are approved and indulgenced by the Church: 1. The belt of Sts. Monica, Augustine, and Nicholas of Tolentino. 2. The cord of St. Francis. 3. The cord of St. Joseph. 4. The cord of St. Thomas Aquinas.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. If you have an Agnus Dei, wear it or carry it with you in order that you may obtain the benefits asked in its blessing.
2. Be enrolled in the scapulars, at least in the five that are often worn together.

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

1. What is an Agnus Dei? Tell of the origin of the Agnus Dei. When are Agnus Deis blessed? By whom? For what purpose?
2. What are medals? Tell of their use in early Christian times.
3. Discuss the development of medals in the Middle Ages—"pilgrim's signs," counting discs. When did the papal jubilee medals originate? When were indulgences first attached to medals?
4. What purposes do medals serve? Have they any power in themselves? Where do they get their value?
5. Name some kinds of medals. Why is the St. Christopher medal placed in automobiles?
6. How did the Miraculous medal originate? What other name is given to it? Describe the Miraculous medal.
7. Tell of the growth of devotion to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. What indulgence is attached to this medal? What prayer must be said to gain the indulgence?
8. How many kinds of St. Benedict medals are there? For what purpose is the medal of St. Benedict blessed? Tell some of the indulgences granted for wearing or carrying this medal.
9. How did scapulars originate? What are "large" scapulars? "small" scapulars? Of what material must scapulars be made?
10. Who may be invested in the scapular? How are scapulars to be worn?
11. Name the five scapulars often worn together. What are the others approved by the Church?
12. Discuss the Scapular of Mount Carmel. What favors are granted to those who wear the Scapular of Mount Carmel?
13. Who allowed the substitution of a medal for a scapular or for a number of scapulars? When? Describe this medal.
14. What four blessed cords are approved by the Church?

IX

The Church, Its Furnishings, Holy Oils

The Catholic church building is "the house of God and the gate of heaven." As the eucharistic Christ's home and the place of divine Sacrifice, it holds a unique position in Christian life. In it the faithful "surround the table of sacrifice, they participate in the sacrifice by the performance of various duties, they receive the sacraments, pray in common and listen attentively to lessons and sermons."¹ The church must have the dignity and beauty of a "house of God" and must also be physically adapted to accommodating crowds of worshippers.

"SOCIAL" SACRAMENTALS: If the Church provides sacramentals for the use of individuals, how much more fittingly does she bless "social" sacramentals, the things used by all the faithful. Thus the cornerstone, the church itself, altar, sacred vessels, vestments, linens, bell, organ, and some other furnishings are given special blessings. The things used in the liturgy are important sacramentals for they serve in the Church's official life as the Mystical Body of Christ and are closely associated with the Mass and the sacraments. These things not only serve a practical purpose in the liturgy; they are visible signs of invisible graces, and they increase the devotion and religious fervor of the faithful.

DIGNITY AND BEAUTY: The things dedicated to God should be of the highest artistic quality and should conform with the careful requirements of the Church. Thus, the building should focus attention on the altar, the center of the divine Sacrifice; should combine dignity and beauty, and should symbolize the spiritual purposes it serves. Thus, the sacred vessels should be first of all fitting receptacles for Christ's body rather than intricately decorated works of profane art. Thus, the linens and vestments should be made of real linen or good silk and should be decorated in a dignified manner symbolic of the ends they serve.

BLESSING OF CORNERSTONE: When a church is being built, the bishop or a delegated priest blesses its cornerstone, which represents Christ. St. Paul says Christ is "the chief cornerstone: In whom all the building, being framed together, groweth up into an holy temple in the Lord."² God is asked to bless the church and purify it from all defilement; to give health and salvation to all who contribute toward it. The proper place for the cornerstone is inside the church, in the wall at the Gospel side of the sanctuary, the most hallowed part of the building. This placement is not always used.

CONSECRATION OF CHURCHES: The completed building is blessed or, if it fulfills certain requirements, consecrated. Consecration must be performed by a bishop, but the simple blessing or dedication may be done by a priest delegated by the bishop. A church may be consecrated only when it is a permanent house of worship. Buildings temporary in construction or designed to serve religious ends for a time only may not be consecrated. The building should be free from debt, so that no human power may exercise any claim that might turn it to non-religious uses. Rarely is a consecrated church sold, though the building may be razed.

CONSECRATION CEREMONY: Holy water is blessed, and the outer walls are sprinkled. At the church door, the bishop knocks with his crozier, saying: "Lift up your heads, ye portals; and be lifted up, ye ancient gates, that the King of glory may enter in." This is repeated three times. Between knockings, bishop and people proceed around the church. After the third knocking they are admitted by the deacon. A cross is traced on the threshold, prayers are recited, and several symbolic rites are performed. Then Gregorian water is

1. Stapper-Baier, *Catholic Liturgics*. Page 59.

2. Ephesians II, 20-21.

blessed, and peace and virtue are asked for all who visit the church. The interior walls and floor are blessed, and the walls are anointed with chrism at twelve places where crosses have been painted or carved to show that this is a consecrated church.

CONSECRATION OF ALTAR: The bishop says: "I will go in unto the altar of God: Unto God, Who giveth joy to my youth." Going to the altar, he makes five crosses on its top, sprinkles it with Gregorian water, and seals sacred relics within it. The altar is anointed with oil of catechumens and chrism. This ceremony may be held separately from the consecration of a church, for altars are sometimes consecrated in churches that are merely blessed, and altar stones are consecrated for use in tables that are not fixed and hence cannot be consecrated as a whole. A fixed altar is a slab of natural stone, permanently attached to its base. Altar linens and other furnishings are blessed when the church is consecrated.

SACRED VESSELS: The principal sacred vessels are consecrated or blessed. The chalice and paten, which hold the body and blood of Christ at Mass, are consecrated by a bishop, who anoints them with chrism and says prayers of blessing over them. The chalice represents the tomb in which Christ's body was placed; the paten, the stone that closed the tomb. These vessels must be made of gold or at least of silver, gold-plated on the surfaces that come into contact with the sacred Species. The ciborium and the pyx, in which the Eucharist is reserved, and the luna, in which It is held when displayed in the monstrance at Benediction or Exposition, are blessed.

SACRED LINENS: The most important linens used at Mass are sacramentals. The corporal, on which the Host rests, and the pall, which covers the chalice, are considered as one and are blessed in a single ceremony. A number of unblessed linens are also used.

SACRED VESTMENTS: The vestments of the priest and other ministers serve not only as distinctive garments but also as incentives to devotion and reminders of Christ's passion and death. The important ones are blessed. The vestments used by the priest at Mass are the amice, alb, cincture, stole, maniple, and chasuble, all of which are blessed. These and the other vestments have developed from what were once ordinary garments. Each has its special symbolism.

LITURGICAL COLORS: The five principal colors used in the vestments have a rich symbolism. The color worn at Mass is determined by the season of the liturgical year or by the feast being celebrated. The principal colors are: white, for purity or innocence; red, for fire and blood; purple, for penance; black, for mourning; green, for hope. Gold cloth may be substituted for white, red, or green. Rose may be worn on the third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete) and the fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare).

CHURCH BELLS: The bells which "serve to call the faithful to divine service, to admonish them to participate in certain prayers (the Divine Office, prayer for the deceased, the Angelus, during storms, etc.), to add to the solemnity of festivals,"³ receive a special blessing. As sacramentals they are intended to avert evil and to call down God's blessing on the people. The blessing is performed by a bishop or an authorized priest. Many psalms and prayers are recited; the bell is washed with holy water and anointed with oil of the sick and chrism. The ceremony is often called a "baptism" because the bells are washed with water and given the name of a patron saint. "Baptism of bells" is a quaint and interesting, but not strictly accurate, term, for there can be no question of conferring a sacrament upon a mere thing. The patron's name is not mentioned when the bell is washed with water, but when it is anointed with oil.

HOLY OILS: In this chapter and in those preceding it, the use of oil in the liturgy has often been mentioned. Holy oils are used in administering cer-

3. Stapper-Baier, *Catholic Liturgics*. Page 85.

tain sacraments and in various blessings and consecrations. The three kinds, blessed by the bishop every Holy Thursday and distributed to all churches, are oil of catechumens, holy chrism, and oil of the sick. They are mostly olive oil, a natural source of strength, food, and light. The Church's oils symbolize spiritual strengthening, nourishment, and enlightenment. They are preserved in the ambry, a locked box on the sanctuary wall. Oil of catechumens and holy chrism are also kept at the baptismal font. For use on sick calls, every priest has a metal oilstock, containing a compartment for each oil.

OIL OF CATECHUMENS: Sometimes called simply "holy oil," this is used in Baptism, in blessing baptismal fonts, consecrating churches and altars, ordaining priests, and crowning kings or queens.

HOLY CHRISM: This is the essential substance in Confirmation. In it balsam is mixed with the oil. Chrism is used not only in Confirmation, but also in Baptism, in consecrating bishops, churches, chalices, and patens, and in blessing baptismal water and bells.

OIL OF THE SICK: This is the matter of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction and is used in blessing bells. In the Latin rite it is pure oil; in certain Eastern rites it contains a little wine or ashes.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Visit your parish church and observe how it fills the requirements of "the house of God and the gate of heaven." Look for the cornerstone, and for the twelve crosses if it is consecrated.
2. If you have a chance to attend the dedication or the consecration of a church, do so and pay close attention to the ceremonies.

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

1. Why should the church building be a place of particular dignity and beauty?
2. What are "social" sacramentals? Name some of them.
3. Do the church and its furnishings serve only a practical purpose in the worship of God? If not, what other ends do they serve?
4. What does the cornerstone represent? Where should it be placed in a church?
5. What conditions must be fulfilled for the consecration of a church? Tell something about the ceremony.
6. Describe the consecration of an altar. Must this ceremony be performed when a church is being consecrated?
7. Which are the most important sacred vessels? Which are consecrated? Which blessed?
8. Name the two most important linens used at Mass. Are they blessed?
9. What are the distinctive vestments worn by the priest at Mass?
10. Discuss the liturgical colors.
11. Who may bless a church bell? Discuss the ceremony. Why is it sometimes called a "baptism"? Is this designation accurate?
12. Name the holy oils. When are they blessed? What is their symbolism? Where are the oils kept?
13. When is the oil of catechumens used? holy chrism? oil of the sick?

X

Liturgical Books

"The liturgy, taken in the fullness of its organic complexity, forms a vast sacramental," says Dom M. Festugiere.¹ We may include, therefore, under sacramentals everything found in the official liturgical books of the Church but not essential to the Mass and the sacraments. Most important of these books are the Missal, that is, the Mass book, and the Breviary, containing the Divine Office or the Church's Hour Prayers.

DEVELOPMENT OF MISSAL: As the parts of the celebrant and other ministers in the liturgical drama of the Mass developed, they were written down in various books: the priest's part in sacramentaries, deacon's in Gospel-books, subdeacon's in lectionaries, choir's in antiphonals and graduals. Between the seventh and the sixteenth centuries, these books were gradually brought together to form the Missal. The Roman Missal was first printed at Milan in 1474. Nearly 100 years later, in 1570, Pope St. Pius V made the use of the official Missal obligatory throughout the Church.² Revisions and additions have been made by popes since that time, the latest being that of Benedict XV in 1920.

CONTENTS OF MISSAL: The Missal contains the prayers common to all Masses, those proper to different Masses of the liturgical seasons or saints and to Masses for special occasions such as weddings and funerals. Besides these prayers, it includes a list of feasts of the church calendar and rules to guide the priest in celebrating Mass.

UNION WITH CHRIST: Since the Mass continues the sacrifice of Calvary and carries on Christ's redemptive work, it is by participating as actively as possible in the Mass that the faithful can play their full part as living members of Christ's Mystical Body, the Church. To bring himself into intimate union with Christ in the holy Sacrifice, one can find no better medium than the Missal, containing the prayers with which the Church has clothed the Mass. In the Missal, the faithful say the beautiful prayers right with the priest. Thus they gain a deeper understanding and love of the Mass, hence, of its sacred victim, Christ Himself, and they function as active members rather than mere lifeless appendages of the Mystical Body.

"PRAY THE MASS": That all are intended to participate in the Mass is shown by the very prayers of the Sacrifice. Always they say "we, our, us." "Wherefore, O Lord, we Thy servants, as also Thy holy people . . ." "And now, most gracious Father, we humbly beg of Thee . . ." By using the Missal the faithful really "pray the Mass" instead of passively witnessing the drama of Calvary. Many of the prayers are the word of God, taken directly from Scripture; all are the words the Church has chosen as best expressing man's relationship to God.

THROUGH THE CENTURIES: Before the so-called Reformation, the Mass books, the Breviary, and the Bible were known to religious and laity alike, the source of instruction and of love. Later the laity lost their familiarity with the Mass, but this century's liturgical revival is bringing many back to active participation in the holy Sacrifice through use of the Missal. English translations are available for those who cannot follow the Mass in Latin. In some places the "Missa Recitata" has been introduced with success. In this the faithful answer the prayers at Mass aloud along with the server, and also say the **Gloria, Credo, Sanctus**, and **Agnus Dei** together with the priest; at Communion they say the

1. *Qu'est-ce que la Liturgie?* Pages 79-80.

2. Because of the antiquity of their liturgies, churches or religious orders having Mass customs dating back at least 200 years were exempted from the obligation to adopt the revised Missal and were allowed to retain their customs.

Confiteor together, and then the **Domine, non sum dignus** three times with the priest.

CONTENTS OF BREVIARY: As the Missal contains the prayers for Mass, the Breviary contains those of the Divine Office, which priests and most religious must recite daily. The term Breviary, from the Latin *breviarium*, abridgment or compendium, is used because it contains the Office as shortened by Pope Gregory VII and newly revised in the eleventh century. The Breviary includes four books, one for each season: winter, spring, summer, and autumn. Each volume contains these principal parts: 1. Ordinary, elements that recur daily and determine the Office's general pattern. 2. Psalter, the 150 Psalms distributed over the seven days of the week, with their antiphons. 3. Proper, parts for each separate day divided into the Temporal, for the liturgical seasons, and the Sanctoral, for saints' days. 4. Common of saints, parts assigned to different classes of saints. 5. Appendix, Offices and prayers not frequently used but said on special occasions and in special places.

HOUR PRAYERS: The Office is divided into eight parts to be said at the different hours: 1. Matins, originally said during the night, about 2:00 a. m., and consisting of psalms, Scripture selections, a homily on the Gospel, and a short biography of the saint or history of the feast of the day. 2. Lauds, which greets Christ in the rising sun and is devoted entirely to praise of God. 3. Prime, the morning prayer asking God's protection through the day. 4. Terce, commemorating the Holy Ghost's descent upon the apostles. 5. Sext, said at noon to ask God to "extinguish the flames of strife . . . give health of body and true peace of heart." 6. None, which asks God to bestow His light in the evening. 7. Vespers, the official evening song of praise. 8. Compline, the night prayer begging God's protection against the spirits of darkness.

BREVIARY AND LAITY: In the Middle Ages, when the laity recited the Office publicly with the religious or privately in their homes, excerpts from the Breviary were familiar and generally accepted forms of prayer for the faithful. But the Office, like the Missal, was forgotten by the people until our own day, when they are slowly returning to it. The individualistic spirit of the Reformation, which affected Catholics as well as Protestants; the decline in familiarity with Latin, and changes in the Breviary were responsible for its gradual neglect and final abandonment by the people.

OFFICIAL PRAYER: As the Mass is the official act of worship, the Office is the Church's official prayer—obligatory for clergy and for most religious, recommended for all. "It is composed of psalms, canticles, hymns; lessons from the Scripture, the lives of the saints, and the homilies or sermons of the Fathers; prayers, versicles and responses, with the frequent repetition of the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, and the Apostles' Creed."³ Though individual devotions are not to be discouraged, they can never compare with the Office in which the individual joins his prayers to those of the whole Mystical Body. St. Alphonsus Liguori said: "Many private prayers do not equal in value only one prayer of the Divine Office, as being offered to God in the name of the whole Church, and in His own appointed words."

MISSAL NOT ENOUGH: To those who would say that the Missal gives them enough part in the Church's official life, Dom Rodolphe Hoornaert replies: "No, the Missal is not enough . . . The Missal and Breviary go together and each completes the other. If those who love the Mass wish to carry their devotion to its logical conclusion, they must inevitably take up the Breviary. The Office is at once a preparation for the Mass and a prolongation of it."⁴ The theme of the Office follows that of the Mass, stressing the liturgical season and the same mystery or saint's day as the Mass.

3. Lambing, *The Sacramentals of the Holy Catholic Church*. Page 44.

4. Hoornaert, *The Breviary and the Laity*. Page 24.

LEAGUE OF DIVINE OFFICE: As the Missal has brought the people into union with the Church's life and hence the very Christ-life itself, it has drawn them also toward the Breviary. In 1936, the League of the Divine Office was organized by the Benedictine Fathers of St. John's Abbey at Collegeville, Minnesota. Members devote themselves to recitation of the Office in whole or in part. In chapters of seven, they divide the Office so that all the Day Hours (excluding Matins) are recited daily. The part said by each member is rotated weekly so that in seven weeks he says all the Day Hours in succession. Members of the league share in the fruits of the monthly solemn Mass offered at St. John's for the intention of the liturgical apostolate.

THE RITUAL: Every educated and devout Catholic should also be acquainted with the Ritual, which contains all ordinary services performed by priests but not included in the Missal or Breviary. The Ritual is used in administering most of the sacraments and in giving many blessings. It contains the formulas used in blessing almost innumerable sacramentals. The treasures of the Ritual will be made clear when the various blessings of persons and things are considered in later chapters.

OTHER LITURGICAL BOOKS: The Church's other official books are the Pontifical, which describes functions reserved to bishops; the Ceremonial of Bishops, which contains other directions for episcopal rites; the Martyrology, which gives the names and brief biographical sketches of saints honored on each day of the year, and the Memorial of Rites, a sort of small Ritual for use in smaller churches, especially during Holy Week. Lay Catholics are little concerned with these because the ceremonies contained in them are so seldom witnessed by the faithful. Not an official liturgical book but an important volume for anyone interested in the sacramentals is the *Raccolta*, which lists prayers and actions indulged by Rome, the indulgences granted for each, and the conditions for gaining the favors.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Form the habit of using a Missal at Mass.
2. If it is possible, organize a chapter of the League of the Divine Office; or try to pray some part of the Divine Office each day, especially Prime and Compline.

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

1. Which are the most important liturgical books?
2. Discuss the development of the Missal. When was it first printed? When did St. Pius V make its use obligatory?
3. What is contained in the Missal?
4. Why should all the faithful develop the habit of using the Missal at Mass? How do the prayers indicate that all are to take an active part in the Sacrifice?
5. What is the "Missa Recitata"? When did the laity lose their familiarity with the Mass? When did they start regaining it?
6. What is contained in the Breviary? How many books? What are the principal parts of each book?
7. What divisions are there in each day's Office?
8. What can be said of the relations between the Breviary and the laity? What did St. Alphonsus say of the value of the official prayers of the Breviary?
9. Is the use of the Missal enough for the Catholic who wishes to play his full part as a member of the Mystical Body?
10. What is the League of the Divine Office? How does it function?
11. What is the Ritual? Name the other liturgical books. What is the *Raccolta*?

XI

Popular Devotions

“Where there are two or three gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them,”¹ Christ told His apostles. Relying on Christ’s promise to be “in the midst of them,” the faithful gather to hold special religious services apart from the Mass, the sacraments, and the Divine Office. These devotions, such as Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the Forty Hours’ adoration, public recitation of litanies, novenas, tridiums, and the like, serve to increase religious fervor. To many of them generous indulgences are attached.

ORIGIN OF BENEDICTION: When the elevation of the sacred Host was introduced into the Mass to counteract heretical theological opinions being spread in the early part of the thirteenth century, the people developed a great desire of having the Host exposed for adoration. After the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi in 1246, eucharistic processions and exposition services became popular. So eager were the faithful to see their eucharistic King that in Spain a black velvet screen was held behind the altar at the Elevation of the Mass to make the Host stand out in sharp relief. In some places it was customary to hold the Blessed Sacrament before the eyes of dying persons who were physically unable to receive the Viaticum. In Germany especially, the Host was continuously exposed in “sacrament houses,” huge tabernacles in which the Eucharist was kept behind a lattice-work door, where it could be dimly seen by people in the church. In England and France the Eucharist was exposed at evening services honoring the Blessed Virgin. These ended with a blessing such as is now given at Benediction.

BENEDICTION TODAY: In our time Benediction retains features that recall its history: 1. Direct veneration of the Eucharist. 2. Devotion to Mary that often shows itself in the singing of hymns or the recitation of the Litany of Loreto. No hymns are prescribed except the “Tantum Ergo,” which must immediately precede the actual blessing. In this country it is customary to sing the “O Salutaris” or another appropriate hymn at the beginning of the service and to follow it with litanies or prayers preceding the final hymn. Only the “Tantum Ergo” and the actual Benediction are regarded as strictly liturgical. Usually the Benediction is followed by the recitation of the Divine Praises (“Blessed Be God,” etc.).

EXPOSITION OF BLESSED SACRAMENT: A principal feature of the Benediction service is the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance. In a simpler form of the devotion, the monstrance is not used, but the blessing is given with the Hosts in the ciborium, which has been exposed by having the door of the tabernacle opened. Benediction “is a suitable means of giving adoration to the incarnate Son of God, of strengthening faith in the presence of Christ in the most Blessed Sacrament, and of intensifying the dispositions of the faithful.”²

ORIGIN OF FORTY HOURS’: Another eucharistic devotion is the Forty Hours’ adoration, in which the Sacrament is exposed publicly for forty hours, recalling the time Christ spent in the tomb. It too grew out of the eucharistic processions of the late Middle Ages. No one knows just when the period of forty hours was adopted for the exposition, but it became a practice in some places to expose the Host for forty hours to make reparation to God for the excesses of the pre-Lenten carnival. The modern custom of transferring the devotion from one church to another so as to keep public adoration of the Eucharist in progress throughout the year was proposed at Milan in 1537 by a barefoot Capuchin friar, Father Joseph Plantanida of Ferno. Two years later, Pope Paul III granted the first indulgences attached to the devotion.

1. Matthew XVIII, 20. 2. Stapper-Baier, *Catholic Liturgics*. Pages 178-9.

DEVELOPMENT OF DEVOTION: Pope Paul III's document granting indulgences for the Forty Hours' stated the purposes of the devotion as follows: "To appease the anger of God provoked by the offenses of Christians and in order to bring to naught the efforts and machinations of the Turks." Pope Clement VIII in 1592 established the devotion in Rome, and in 1731 Pope Clement XII issued a detailed code of instructions which still regulate the carrying out of the devotion. The Forty Hours' was brought to the United States about 1854, probably by Bishop John Neumann, C.S.S.R., of Philadelphia. Now it is usually in progress somewhere in each diocese at all times of the year.

FORTY HOURS' TODAY: The devotion today opens with a Mass of Exposition, followed by a eucharistic procession. On the second day, a Mass for Peace is said, and on the third the devotion closes with a Mass of Reposition and another procession, at the end of which the people are blessed with the sacred Host. In our country the actual period of adoration is seldom continuous for forty hours, but is interrupted at night. In churches where the Forty Hours' cannot be held, a one-day devotion, the 'Thirteen Hours,' sometimes takes its place.

INDULGENCES: The Forty Hours' is among the Church's most richly indulgenced devotions. A plenary indulgence may be gained once each day by visiting the church where the Eucharist is exposed and praying for the pope's intention. Another plenary indulgence is granted for taking part in the processions and assisting at a full Holy Hour during the devotion. All these are subject to the usual conditions of confession and Communion. There are also a number of partial indulgences.

THE "ANGELUS": The "Angelus," a devotion honoring Christ's incarnation and His Blessed Mother, is held at the sound of the church bells morning, noon, and evening. It consists in the triple recitation of the Hail Mary, together with three introductory versicles and a concluding versicle and prayer. The devotion takes its name from the opening prayer, which recalls the message of Gabriel to Mary: "The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary." "Angelus" is the Latin word for angel. The "Angelus" should be said kneeling, except on Saturday noon and evening and on Sunday. The "Regina Coeli," substituted for the "Angelus" during the Easter time, consists of three versicles and their responses, followed by a prayer. Its name comes from the opening words, "Regina Coeli, laetare," "Oh, Queen of Heaven, rejoice." This prayer should be recited standing. Both the "Angelus" and the "Regina Coeli" bring an indulgence of 100 days for each recitation and a plenary indulgence once a month for those who say them habitually.³

NOVENAS AND TRIDUUMS: Novenas are devotions held for nine consecutive days or weeks, usually for the purpose of asking special favors or graces. The nine days the apostles spent in prayer between Christ's ascension and the descent of the Holy Ghost may be regarded as a prototype of novenas. A popular form of novena is the reception of Communion on the first Fridays of nine consecutive months in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, usually to gain the favors promised to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in a series of visions. In some churches perpetual novenas, which the faithful may begin in any week, are held in honor of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, or certain saints. A triduum is a three-day devotion similar to a novena.

LITANIES: A litany is a prayer in which salutations and petitions are repeated again and again in varying forms. In early Christian times, prayers with set responses were used in the Mass. A trace of this practice remains in the Kyrie Eleison of the holy Sacrifice today. From this practice developed a large number of litanies, and at one time as many as eighty were in use. In 1601, Pope Clement VIII forbade the public recitation of any except the Litany of the Saints and that of the Blessed Virgin. Three others, those of the Holy Name of Jesus, the Sacred Heart, and St. Joseph, have since been approved for public use.

3. Sullivan, *The Visible Church*. Page 164.

LITANY OF THE SAINTS: The Litany of the Saints, most ancient of those still in use, was prescribed much as it is used today as early as 590 by Pope St. Gregory the Great. It is recited in three forms: 1. The most common form is recommended for private devotion, though no indulgence is attached to its recitation, and is said at the blessing of a church or cemetery, at the Forty Hours' adoration, on the feast of St. Mark, April 25, and on the Rogation days, the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension Thursday. It was approved as a blessing for the fruits of the earth in 816 by St. Leo III. 2. A shorter form is used on Holy Saturday and on the Vigil of Pentecost. 3. The third form is the "Litany of the Dying," given in the Ritual as part of the "Commendation of a Soul Departing."

OTHER LITANIES: The Litany of the Blessed Virgin is also called the Litany of Loreto, because of its origin at Loreto in Italy. The titles by which Mary is addressed are mostly from sacred Scripture. An indulgence of 300 days may be gained each time it is said, and those who recite it daily may gain a plenary indulgence, under the usual conditions, on the feasts of the Immaculate Conception, the Nativity, the Annunciation, the Purification of Mary, and the Assumption.⁴ An indulgence of 300 days is granted once a day for reciting the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus,⁵ which was approved in 1862 by Pope Pius IX and was extended to the whole Church in 1886 by Leo XIII. The Litany of the Sacred Heart, approved in 1899 by Leo XIII, also carries an indulgence of 300 days, which may be gained once a day.⁶ It contains thirty-three invocations in memory of Christ's thirty-three years on earth. The Litany of St. Joseph, latest one approved for public use, was sanctioned by Pope Pius X in 1909. It also carries an indulgence of 300 days once a day.⁷

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Cultivate the habit of attending Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament whenever it is given in your parish church.
2. Make a habit of reciting regularly the "Angelus" or the "Regina Coeli," according to the season.

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

1. Name some of the devotions that are popular with the faithful.
2. How did Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament originate? Tell some of the means used in the Middle Ages to allow the people to gaze on the sacred Host.
3. What two features in the Benediction service today recall the history of this devotion?
4. How is the simpler form of Benediction given?
5. How did the Forty Hours' adoration begin? When did it take on the form in which it is practiced today?
6. Tell of the development of the devotion and discuss the manner in which it is usually conducted in our country today.
7. What are some of the indulgences attached to the Forty Hours'?
8. What is the "Angelus"? What other devotion is substituted for it in the Easter time? What indulgences are attached to these devotions?
9. What are novenas and triduums?
10. What litanies are approved for public recitation?
11. How many forms of the Litany of the Saints are used? Discuss the use of this litany in the liturgy of the Church.
12. What is another name for the Litany of the Blessed Virgin? What indulgences are attached to this litany?
13. Discuss the other approved litanies. Tell what indulgences are granted for their recitation. Which was the most recently approved?

4. *Raccolta*. Pages 167 ff.

5. *Raccolta*. Pages 50 ff.

6. *Raccolta*. Pages 140 ff.

7. Sullivan, *The Visible Church*. Page 218.

XII

Sacred Images

The First Commandment says: "Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them."¹ This would seem to forbid any representations of men or other creatures, but a proper understanding of the commandment shows that the real force of the prohibition is in the words: "Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them." What God forbids is not the use of images, but their worship. Such is the age-old doctrine of the Church.

HISTORY OF IMAGES: This interpretation of the First Commandment must be correct, for God Himself ordered Moses to place two cherubim of beaten gold upon the Ark of the Covenant² and to set up a brazen image of the fiery serpent in the desert.³ Many Jews were, nevertheless, bitterly opposed to images, and some early Christians too feared that images might lead to idol-worship. But the Roman catacombs contain many sacred pictures and statues, and archeologists have proved that in the East also images were frequently used by the first Christians.

IMAGE-BREAKERS: By the eighth century, images, called "icons" in the East, were universally used, and some abuses had crept in. There were images everywhere. "They hung in a place of honor in every room, over every shop; they covered cups, garments, furniture, rings; wherever a possible space was found, it was filled with a picture of Christ, our Lady, or a Saint."⁴ The Church officially fought abuses in image-worship, but certain fanatics in the East began a violent reaction against all effigies. In the middle of the eighth century, the Iconoclasts, or "image-breakers," began a drive to wipe out all images. In a violent persecution of those who followed the traditional doctrine, monasteries and churches were destroyed, sacred statues smashed, relics of the saints desecrated, priests and monks brutally murdered. The Church's doctrine had always been clear, and the Second Council of Nice in 787 made explicit once and for all the principles governing the use of images. Iconoclast disorders continued until the middle of the ninth century. Some violent followers of the Protestant Revolt in the sixteenth century repeated the excesses of the Iconoclast age. An English royal decree of 1548 ordered that all crucifixes and sacred statues be taken down and that the royal arms of the Lion and Unicorn be put up in their place.

RIGHT DOCTRINE: The Council of Nice declared: "We define with all certainty and care that both the figure of the sacred and life-giving cross, as also the venerable and holy images, whether made in colors or mosaic or other materials, are to be placed suitably in the holy churches of God, on sacred vessels and vestments, on walls and pictures, in houses and by roads; that is to say, the images of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, of our immaculate Lady, the holy Mother of God, of the honorable angels and all saints and holy men. For as often as they are seen in their pictorial representations, people who look at them are ardently lifted up to the memory and love of the originals and induced to give them respect and worshipful honor but not real adoration, which according to our faith is due only to the Divine Nature."⁵ Nothing has since been added to these principles, which were reaffirmed by the Council of Trent in 1543.

BLESSING OF IMAGES: The blessing of images shows clearly the purposes they are to serve. The blessing says: "Almighty eternal God, who dost

1. Exodus XX, 4-5. 2. Exodus XXV, 18. 3. Numbers XXI, 8-9. This brazen serpent was a figure of Christ crucified. 4. *Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. VII. Page 668. 5. *Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. VII. Page 671.

not forbid the sculpturing or painting of the images of Thy saints, so that, as often as we gaze upon them with our bodily eyes, we may, with the aid of our memory, meditate upon their holiness of life for the purpose of modeling our own upon theirs: we humbly beseech that Thou wouldst deign to bless and sanctify these images made unto the honor and memory of Thy only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and grant that, whosoever shall suppliantly worship and honor Thy only-begotten Son in the presence of these images, may by His merits and satisfaction obtain grace from Thee in this life and eternal glory in the next. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen." ⁶ This blessing shows that images serve the highest aim of the entire liturgy: ". . . the process of transfiguration by which the fallen race of mankind is progressively assimilated to God." ⁷

MOTHER OF ARTS: The Church has always been the mother of the arts, and her use of sacred images has inspired artists of every type to do their best work. The finest mosaics of the early Christian era, the best metal work of the Middle Ages, the greatest productions of the Renaissance painters and sculptors, the most magnificent stained-glass windows of all time—all these are the products of inspired sons of the Church. Religious art reached its highest development in works like the Last Supper, painted by Leonardo da Vinci on the refectory wall of a Dominican convent in Milan; the Madonnas by Raphael, and Michelangelo's sculpture, such as the Pieta in St. Peter's at Rome. Copies of many famous religious art works can be found in museums and books available to everyone.

SINCE THE PROTESTANT REVOLT: Reformation fanaticism almost stifled religious art, and no age since Protestantism's rise has produced anything to rival the work of Catholic geniuses in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. After an era of near stagnation, there is now a revival of the craftsmanship and artistry that marked the Age of Faith. Monks at the Abbey of Maria Laach in Germany are making crucifixes and images worthy of the sacred subjects they represent. In this country promoters of the liturgical revival are producing really artistic images to replace the unsightly pictures and statues that were foisted on the faithful for years. At Monterey, California, a group of artisans, working in barnlike buildings, are beating out metal images and carving wooden statues that rival works of the Middle Ages.

THROUGHOUT THE WORLD: Sacred images have found their place, not only in the highly developed art of Europe, but in the art of every Christianized race. Primitive tribes of Africa and South America have fashioned their own crude statues, like the weird crucifix, made from a cross-like fishbone by Indians of Dutch Guiana, brought to this country and displayed in 1937 by a Denver art collector. Chinese and Japanese have developed a Christian art with all the delicacy of the Orient's best workmanship. Indians and Spanish-Americans of the Southwest have painted on rough slabs of wood or on bits of metal from tin-cans the likenesses of their favorite santos. From small blocks of wood they have formed crude statues, the *bultos* that adorn their humble adobe huts. These may be seen in many art shops of the West.

USE IN HOMES: Every Catholic home should have its sacred images, pictures, and statues to increase the devotion of the family and to create an atmosphere that will better the lives of all who dwell within its walls. In every home there should be at least a crucifix and pictures or statues of Christ and His Mother. If possible, every bedroom should have its crucifix, if only a small one. The presence of sacred images tends to make those who live in the house think of those virtues of Christ and the saints which everyone should imitate. There is no better protection against temptation than contemplation of the crucifix, which recalls the sufferings of Christ for the sins of men. In some homes, devout Christians set up small shrines of the Sacred Heart, our Lady,

6. *Orate Fratres*. Jan. 23, 1938. Pages 107-8. (Bold face ours.)

7. Herwegen, *The Art-Principle of the Liturgy*. Page iv.

or some favorite saint. Before them flowers are placed, lights or candles sometimes burn, and family devotions are held. Especially in May, many families honor Mary by erecting shrines for daily prayer. These customs bring rich blessings to those who practice them. Not the images or the shrines, but the holy thoughts they inspire, the prayers they provoke, and the transformation they effect are the things that merit bountiful spiritual rewards.

GIANTS OVER THE WORLD: Not only in homes but in public places do sacred images find their proper use. Wayside shrines all over Europe and in some places of America remind the faithful of Christ and His saints. Over both American continents tower huge statues of the Savior. High in the range that separates Chile and Argentina stands the Christ of the Andes, a sacred symbol of Christian peace. In Colorado's mountains is the great Christ of the Rockies, hand outstretched in benediction over the whole United States. The statues are giant symbols of Christian faith, constant invitations to those outside the Church. They beckon all to live in the shadow of Christ, Whose blessing is for all the people.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. If you do not have a crucifix or a sacred image of some kind in your bedroom, obtain one and be sure to have it blessed; also have one in a prominent place in the dining room of your home.
2. Examine the images in your parish church and seek to imitate the virtues of the saints shown in these images.

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

1. How is the use of images restricted by the First Commandment?
2. Cite instances in which God Himself commanded the use of images in the Old Testament. How do we know that the first Christians made pictures and statues of Christ and the saints?
3. Discuss the Iconoclasts. How long did the Iconoclast disorders continue? Cite an example of "image-breaker" tactics used in the time of the Protestant Revolt.
4. What was the teaching of the Second Council of Nice on the proper use of images? In what council was this teaching reaffirmed?
5. What purposes are images intended to serve, as shown by the blessing?
6. What is the meaning of "transfiguration" as applied to the function of the liturgy, including sacramentals like images?
7. How has the Church been "the mother of the arts"?
8. What is the history of religious art since the Protestant Revolt?
9. Discuss the creation of sacred images by all races of the world. What are *santos* and *bultos* among the Indians of the Southwest?
10. Why should every Catholic home have its sacred images? What should be the smallest number of images in each home? Discuss the setting up of home shrines and their use for special devotions.
11. Tell about the two huge statues on the continents of North and South America.

XIII

Blessings of Persons

Through the sacramentals the Church extends her saving influence into every department of daily life. She not only blesses things for the use of the faithful, she has special blessings for persons themselves. Some are for those in the religious life, such as abbots and nuns. Others are for the ordinary Christian, to bring him God's graces in all the actions of his life, particularly in times of trial.

BLESSING OF ABBOTS: The blessing of an abbot is performed at Mass by a bishop, assisted by two other abbots. The abbot receives the symbolic insignia of his office as father of the monastic community—the mitre, special gloves, symbolic shoes and stockings, a pectoral cross, a ring, and the crozier. Near the end of the ceremony, the monks embrace their new father, kiss his ring, and pledge obedience and reverence to him. "These outward marks of honor are more than mere ornaments; they stand for something; they are heavy with the prayers and blessing of Holy Church; they drip graces"¹ which the abbot will need in exercising his office.

CONSECRATION OF VIRGINS: The consecration of virgins in religious communities is a beautiful and impressive ceremony. In the ceremony for the consecrating of virgins or the solemn profession of nuns, as described in the Roman Pontifical, the bishop says: "We choose these virgins, to bless and consecrate them and to wed them to our Lord Jesus Christ." The women are vested in clothes blessed as garments of salvation and of eternal joy. Veils, rings, and wreaths are blessed. After the vesting, the bishop puts a ring on the finger of each, saying: "I betroth thee to Jesus Christ . . ." Placing the wreath on the virgin's head, the bishop prays that she may deserve to be crowned with glory and honor by Christ in heaven. At the Offertory of the Mass, each new religious offers a burning candle to symbolize the oblation of herself to God.

SACRAMENTALS OF THE SICK: Some blessings for lay persons are intimately connected with the Christian home and family life. These will be considered in chapter XVI. Others are for every person, and among them none are more beneficial than the "sacramentals of the sick." The Church blesses not only the sick themselves but also their bed, linens, bandages, and ambulances. The blessing of the sick-bed linens asks that those who are covered with these cloths and linens may merit health of mind and body. The ambulance's blessing mentions Christ's healing every ailment and infirmity of the people, and asks that the sick to be carried in the ambulance may arrive safely at the place of cure.

BLESSING OF THROATS: Catholics often neglect the sacramentals of the sick, but many receive the blessing of the throat on February 3, feast of St. Blase. Because he saved the life of a child who had choked on a bone, St. Blase is recognized as the healer of all throat diseases. Two candles are used in imparting the blessing, intended to protect those who receive it from all throat disorders and other ills.

RITUAL PROVISIONS: One whole division of the Ritual is devoted to the sick. Besides the ceremonies of Extreme Unction, it contains numerous other rites—a blessing for a sick child, another for adults, the formal pastoral visitation of the sick, the last blessing, the recommendation of a departing soul, and prayers for the dying. The next section deals with Christian burial. The Missal contains a votive Mass for the sick, the Collect of which begs God: "Hear us

1. Abbot Martin Veth, O. S. B., at blessing of Abbot Leonard Schwinn, O. S. B., in Canon City, Colo., Aug. 10, 1937.

on behalf of Thy servants who are sick, for whom we humbly crave the help of Thy mercy, that, being restored to health, they may render thanks to Thee in Thy church."² There is also a Mass for a happy death.

BLESSINGS FOR THE SICK: The blessing of a sick child recalls Christ's raising of Jarius' daughter from the dead³ and asks God: "Extend Thy right hand upon this Thy servant, who at this tender age is ill, that being restored to health and vigor he may come to fullness of age, and all the days of his life ever thank and serve Thee faithfully." The blessing for a sick adult says: "May the Lord Jesus Christ be with you to defend you; within you to preserve you; before you to guide you, behind you to protect you, and above you to bless you."⁴

PASTORAL VISITATION: The pastor's formal visit to the sick is an impressive ceremony. After the blessing of the house and sickroom, the priest recites certain prayers over the sick person. He may then, if he think fit, read certain passages from holy Scripture which are indicated in the Ritual, e. g., the healing of St. Peter's wife's mother, and that of the paralytic at the pool of Siloe. Both physical and spiritual benefits are asked for the sick person: "Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord God, that this Thy servant may enjoy perpetual health of mind and body; and, by the intercession of the blessed Mary ever Virgin, may be delivered from present sorrow, and obtain eternal joy."⁵

LAST BLESSING OF THE DYING: In the prayer that precedes the last, or apostolic, blessing, to which is attached a plenary indulgence "in articulo mortis" ("at the moment of death"), the Church asks God: "Graciously grant unto him the pardon and remission of all his sins, that his soul at the hour of its departure may find in Thee a most merciful judge; and being cleansed from every stain in the blood of Thy same Son, may be worthy to pass to everlasting life." The Confiteor is recited, another prayer is said, and the priest asks: "Through the most sacred mysteries of man's redemption, may God almighty remit to thee all penalties of the present and the future life, open to thee the gates of Paradise, and bring thee to everlasting joys."⁶ The actual blessing follows.

RECOMMENDATION OF SOUL: The recommendation of a departing soul includes many prayers, some of them very ancient, such as the Litany of the Saints. This ceremony is contained in a ninth-century Ritual used by Prudentius, Bishop of Troyes, but the prayers are much older than this Ritual. When no priest is present, relatives or friends of the dying should recite the prayers. The prayer of the Passion of Christ should be said by the dying person or repeated for him by another.

"INTO THY HANDS": When death draws near, all should kneel to pray for the departing soul. A crucifix should be placed in the hands of the dying, and, if he is unable to speak, the name of Jesus should be whispered to him time after time. Such formulas as this should be repeated in his ear: "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit." After the death, the prayers include these words: "To Thee, O Lord, we commend the soul of thy servant (name), that being dead to the world he may live to Thee."⁷ The Psalm "De Profundis" ("Out of the Depths") should be recited, and prayers should continue about the bier until time for the funeral.

CHRISTIAN BURIAL: The Church continues to pray for her children after their death, and the liturgy of the dead is among her most beautiful and consoling rites. When time for the funeral arrives, the body should be taken to church in procession. In our country this procession is usually held only from the church doors up the middle aisle. After the body is placed before the high altar, the recitation of the Office for the Dead, or a part of it, and the Mass for the day of burial should follow. After Mass, a final absolution is pronounced over the body, still in the church. This absolution includes the celebrated re-

2. *Saint Andrew Daily Missal*. Page 1762. 3. Luke VIII, 41-56. 4. Scholz, "Sacramentals for the Sick." *Orate Fratres*. Vol. V. Pages 158-62. 5. *Layfolks' Ritual*. Page 65. 6. *Ibid.* Pages 81-2.
7. *Ibid.* Page 108.

sponsory "Libera Me" ("From everlasting death, deliver me, O Lord"). The bier is sprinkled with holy water and is incensed. In the cemetery, the grave is blessed and final prayers are recited over the corpse. Besides the funeral rites, the liturgy includes three Masses for all the departed on All Souls' Day, November 2; the Mass on the anniversary of a person's death or burial, and a common Mass of the dead. There are commemorations of the dead in the Mass and Office of every day.

ATTITUDE TOWARD DEATH: The Church's funeral rites are not marked by despair or terror, for the thought of the eternal glories of heaven runs all through them, but "it cannot be denied that they express, sometimes in heart-rending accents, the realization of human corruption and the horrors of death."⁸ The thought of the Church on death is probably best expressed in the Preface of the Mass for the Dead, which says that we should ever praise God "through Christ our Lord. In whom the hope of a blessed resurrection hath shone upon us, that those whom the certainty of dying afflicteth, may be consoled by the promise of future immortality."⁹

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. When someone in your family is seriously sick, be sure that a priest is called in time to provide the last rites of the Church for him.
2. Often make the resolution to accept without question any sufferings that God may give you in this life, but do not fail to make use of the sacramentals in which the Church asks God to give health to His servants.

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

1. Name two sacramentals for persons in religion. What about blessings for ordinary lay persons?
2. Discuss the blessing of an abbot.
3. How is the spiritual wedding of religious women to Christ symbolized in the consecration of virgins?
4. How does the Church show her deep sympathy for the sick? Discuss the blessing of sick-beds and linens; of ambulances.
5. Why is St. Blase considered the patron of those who have throat ailments? When is the blessing of throats given?
6. What are some of the ceremonies contained in the Ritual section dealing with the care of the sick?
7. Discuss the blessing for a sick child; for a sick adult.
8. What are some of the ceremonies connected with a pastor's formal visitation of the sick?
9. How do the prayers connected with the last blessing show the purpose of the Church in providing the blessing?
10. What should be done when a person is dying and there is no priest present?
11. What ceremonies are included in the burial rites of the Church? What is the attitude of the Church toward death?

8. *Ibid.* Page xxxi. 9. *Saint Andrew Daily Missal.* Page 997.

XIV

Sacramentals in Agriculture

Christ taught His followers to pray for the fruits of the earth when He included in the Lord's Prayer this petition: "Give us this day our daily bread." Never forgetting man's physical needs, the Church constantly repeats this petition. Until recent times, agriculture was everywhere the principal occupation of men. Even today it occupies millions of persons. Hence it is natural that the Church should give particular attention to the farmer's needs and should unceasingly ask God to bless his lands, seeds, harvests, and animals.

EMBER DAYS: The Ember days at the beginning of each season grew out of nature festivals held by the pagan Romans in June, September, and December. The Church gave the festivals a Christian character and added the Lenten Ember days to the others. On these days of fast and abstinence the seasons are dedicated to God and abundant crops are prayed for. Ember days are the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday in the weeks after the first Sunday of Lent, after Pentecost, after the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, September 14, and after the feast of St. Lucy, December 13.

ROGATION DAYS: The Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension Thursday are known as the Rogation¹ days. They fall in the sixth week after Easter, in the spring growing season. The public procession held everywhere on these days in times past and still observed in Catholic rural communities, was prescribed in the fifth century by St. Mamertus, Bishop of Vienne, France, whose diocese had suffered many calamities. He ordered the procession to appease God's anger and to ask His protection of people and crops. These are still the purposes of the devotions. In 511, the Rogation days were adopted all over France. In 816, Pope Leo III introduced them to Rome, and soon they were extended throughout the Church.

LITANIES: On Rogation days, called the "Lesser Litanies," the Litany of the Saints is recited during the procession. At certain places, the litany is interrupted and the fields are blessed: "We beg of Thy goodness, O almighty God, that the fruits of the earth . . . may be penetrated by the dew of Thy blessings; grant also to this people always to thank Thee for Thy gifts; that the fertility of the earth may enrich the hungry . . . and that the poor and the needy may celebrate Thy glory . . . May the blessing of almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, descend in plenty on the fields and on all these good things, and remain there forever." April 25 is the feast of the Greater Litanies,² introduced at Rome in the fourth century to replace a pagan corn festival. In this day's procession, the Litany of the Saints is recited and the Church asks God to protect people and crops.

OTHER CEREMONIES: Besides these seasonal ceremonies, there are many other agricultural sacramentals, such as blessings of seeds and fruits, fields and farm buildings, animals and food stuffs.

GRAINS: In the growing of grains, there is no time for which the Church has not her special benediction. Formerly no Christian farmer would sow un-blessed seed. At planting time in both spring and fall, God was asked to protect the seed and make it fertile. The fall ceremony was held on the feast of Our Lady's Nativity, September 8. In the special blessing of seeds, the Church prays: "We beg of Thee, O Lord, deign to bless these seeds, to foster them with the mild breath of a serene heaven, to render them fertile by dew from above, and to bring them unharmed to fullest maturity for the use of souls and of

1. Rogation means supplication or petition. It is derived from the Latin verb, *rogare*, which means to ask or to beseech.

2. April 25 is also the feast of St. Mark, but there is no connection between the two observances.

bodies." For growing crops, the Church prays: "Bless, O Lord, the growing fruits and grant that we who eat of them in Thy holy Name may enjoy health of body and mind."³ Another prayer asks God's protection from "mice, grasshoppers, bugs, worms or other pests." Before harvest, crops are solemnly dedicated to God. The Sixty-fourth Psalm, a hymn of thanksgiving for bountiful crops, is recited. "Thou hast visited the earth, and hast plentifully watered it," the Psalm says. "Thou shalt bless the crown of the year of Thy goodness . . . the vales shall abound with corn." The first fruits are offered to God, and He is asked to preserve the crops from evil. The grain is sprinkled with holy water and is incensed. The benediction for the granary and its contents asks God to preserve the stored grain and to protect its owners from any such attachment to temporal goods as might endanger their salvation. The mill also has its blessing: "Omnipotent and eternal God, Who, because of the punishment of sin, hast said 'in the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat thy bread,' bless this mill which has been constructed to grind grain in order to make bread for our sustenance; deign to appoint for it an angel of light and defense."⁴

ANIMALS: Farm animals, their quarters, and even their food may be blessed. In blessing the stable, the Church recalls the ox and the ass in the manger at Christ's birth. Salt and hay for animals have special blessings, and there are others for pasture lands. The blessing of animals in Italy on the feast of St. Anthony the Abbot, January 17, attracts cabmen with their horses, children with their pet dogs and cats, housewives with canaries, parrots, or monkeys. The ceremony received prominence in the Catholic press in 1938, when two circus elephants were among the animals blessed in Rome.

BEEES AND SILKWORMS: The blessings of bees and silkworms are of particular interest. The prayer for bees recalls the use of beeswax candles in divine worship. It asks God to bless "these bees and this apiary . . . so that their fruits may be dispensed unto Thy glory, and that of Thy Son and of the Holy Ghost, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary." The use of silk in the modern world is almost unlimited, and the cultivation of silkworms is the sole support of many people. The blessing of the worm, formulated when silk was introduced to Europe, asks God, Who has given to animals the power of propagating their species, "to bless these silkworms, to foster and multiply them by Thy kindness," so that His altars and His faithful, adorned with silk, may glorify Him.

FOODS: The Ritual contains numerous blessings for food products of agriculture—bread, fruits, eggs, oil, butter, cheese, lard; for drinks such as beer and wine. On Easter Sunday there are special blessings for the paschal lamb, for bread, meat, eggs, and eatables in general. All ask health of both soul and body for those who eat the food. The blessing of the lamb points to Christ: "O God, Who didst command Thy people Israel . . . to kill a lamb, as a type of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . vouchsafe . . . to bless and to sanctify this meat which we Thy servants are about to eat." Another Easter blessing for meat asks that "all who eat thereof . . . may always rejoice in corporal and spiritual well-being." The blessing for bread says: "O Lord Jesus Christ . . . Thou living Bread of eternal life, deign to bless this bread . . . that all who partake thereof may obtain the desired health of body and of soul." There is a special benediction for the colored Easter eggs that have been the delight of children for centuries. The liturgy looks on these eggs as symbols of creation and resurrection.⁵ The blessings or grace at meals will be considered in the chapter on family sacramentals.

RELIANCE ON GOD: In an article on "Sacramentals in Agriculture," from which we have quoted freely in this chapter, the Rev. Bede Scholz, O. S. B., wrote:

3. Scholz, "The Sacramentals in Agriculture." *Orate Fratres*. Vol. V. Pages 323-6. 4. Scholz, *op. cit.*

5. These blessings for Easter are considered at some length by Goeb in his article on "Easter Blessings." *Orate Fratres*. Vol. V. Pages 216-20.

“Every farmer must undergo many hardships and much fatigue to prepare the ground for the seed and plant the grain . . . he must leave the rest to the providence of God . . . What farmer does not desire to see his labors blessed, to obtain a plentiful harvest? . . . Farmers should be told about these blessings and encouraged to ask for these various benedictions.”

REVIVAL OF AGRICULTURAL SACRAMENTALS: The peasants of Europe centuries ago appreciated and used the agricultural sacramentals. It is a sign of a revitalized Christian spirit that these ceremonies are now being revived in agricultural regions of the United States. Plagued by locusts and by drought, farmers in recent years have turned to God for relief. Many a drought-cracked field has been the scene of solemn liturgical processions asking God to bless the thirsty soil and its cultivators. In rural churches, farmers have repeated day after day the prayers for rain ordered by their bishops. The Missal contains a Collect, Communion, and Postcommunion asking God for rain. The Postcommunion says: “Grant us, O Lord, we beseech Thee, beneficial rain and deign to pour out showers from heaven upon the parched face of the earth.”⁶ The calamities that have led bishops to prescribe these prayers and influenced farmers to seek God’s blessing herald a widespread revival of the agricultural sacramentals.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. When you observe the Ember days and the Rogation days, remember the purposes for which the Church set these days aside, and pray that God will bless the fields and their fruits.
2. If you are engaged in agriculture, have your fields and crops blessed so that God will protect your lands and give abundance to your harvests.

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

1. How did Christ show that men should pray for their food and the other necessities of human life? How does the Church follow out His example?
2. Tell the origin of the Ember days. When are they observed? For what purposes?
3. When are the Rogation days? What was their origin? Discuss the Lesser Litanies; the Greater Litanies. When is the feast of the Greater Litanies observed?
4. Tell how the Church asks God’s blessing on the grains of the fields from before their planting right on up to the time of their consumption. Quote from some of the blessings used.
5. How does the Church show solicitude for the animals used on the farm? Tell of the blessing of animals on the feast of St. Anthony the Abbot.
6. Show how the blessing of bees indicates the use to which their product will be put.
7. Discuss the blessing of silkworms.
8. What are some of the foods for which there are special blessings? Discuss the blessings of the paschal lamb, meat, bread, and eggs on Easter.
9. Why should farmers avail themselves of the Church’s agricultural sacramentals?
10. Why is there reason to believe that the sacramentals will be used more frequently in the future?

6. *Saint Andrew Daily Missal*. Page 1726.

XV

Sacramentals in Industry

Anyone accusing the Church of not keeping up-to-date would find nothing to support his argument in the Ritual. This book contains blessings for the latest and most intricate modern inventions. As the Church provides her benediction for the farmer, she extends it also to the machines that have promoted industrial progress. In these recently formulated blessings she shows her understanding of the people with whom she now has to deal—people who have lost their appreciation for things spiritual in their concern over wordly things. In an age of rank materialism the Church asks God to give her children the spiritual light needed to avoid the pitfalls of worldliness.

MARKS OF PROGRESS: Among the greatest marks of modern progress are the advances in communication, transportation, and manufacture. In communication, modern times have brought the printing press, telephone, telegraph, and radio. Transportation employs the automobile and the railroad on land, the powerful steamship in the water, the airplane in the air. The industrial revolution has also developed power machinery for use in manufacture. Most of this machinery is run by steam and electricity. For all of these inventions, the Church has blessings. Thus she brings the influence of her prayer into all kinds of modern endeavor.

LIBRARIES AND PRESSES: In the Middle Ages there was a benediction for the writing-rooms in which monks copied the Scriptures and other books by hand: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this workshop of Thy servants, that all which they write therein may be comprehended by their intelligence and realized by their work."¹ Today, when printing has reached a development never dreamed of by medievalists, the Church still blesses the men and machines engaged in publishing books. In the modern blessing, Christ is asked to "fill the writers, managers, and workmen with the spirit of knowledge, counsel, and fortitude, and imbue them with the spirit of Thy fear, so that . . . they may properly serve Thee and in a salutary manner also their neighbor. Bless . . . this place and grant that all dwelling therein may . . . happily arrive at the imperishable crown of glory." Then follows a blessing for the machines themselves. The prayer for libraries asks God to protect them from fire and other dangers and to increase their stock of books "so that all who come together here . . . may progress in the knowledge of both human and divine things and equally in Thy love."

TELEGRAPH AND SEISMOGRAPH: In blessing the telegraph instrument, the Church prays: "O God, who walkest upon the wings of the winds . . . grant that, when by the power given to this metal in the flash of an eye Thou dost transmit most swiftly things absent to this place and things present to another place, we, instructed by new inventions, may by the help of Thy grace more promptly and more easily come to Thee." Not an ordinary means of communication but a valuable instrument by which men learn what is happening in other parts of the world is the seismograph, which records earthquakes thousands of miles away. This scientific mechanism has a special blessing, which asks: "Almighty eternal God, who regardest the earth and makest it to tremble, flood this seismograph with Thy blessing: and grant that signs of the trembling earth be properly registered in it and correctly understood for the benefit of Thy people and for the greater glory of Thy name." At the end of this prayer, St. Emigdus, protector against earthquakes, is asked to defend both people and instrument.

1. Clendenin, *Altar and Sanctuary*. Page 15.

AUTOMOBILES: The universal means of modern transportation is the automobile, but few even know that there is a beautiful blessing for this almost indispensable vehicle: "O God! Vouchsafe to hear our prayers and bless this car with Thy right hand; bid Thy holy angels to stand by it; save and protect from all danger those who travel in it. Just as, through Thy levite, Philip, Thou didst grant faith and grace to the Ethiopian who was sitting in his chariot and reading Thy sacred words, show likewise to Thy servants the way of salvation, that, helped by Thy grace and ever striving to do good, they may, after all the vicissitudes of their life and journey here below, rejoice forever."² This blessing for cars was inaugurated as a regular part of the novena services in honor of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal at Assumption Church in Cincinnati early in 1938. Car owners should see that their automobiles receive this blessing and are supplied with a medal of St. Christopher, patron of travelers.

RAILROADS: For more than 100 years the railroad has been important in commerce. The Church asks God "to bless this railway and its instruments and ever to guard them with Thy kind providence; so that, while Thy servants go rapidly on the way, walking in Thy law, and running in the way of Thy commandments, they may happily arrive at the celestial home."

SHIPS: There is a blessing for the mighty ocean liner and another for the small fishing smack, but that for the fishing boat is a long and solemn rite while the other is a simple ceremony. The liner's blessing recalls how Noah's ark was protected and how Christ stretched out His hand to sustain Peter walking on the water. An angel of the Lord is asked to preserve the ship from danger and see it safely to port. Each year in September, the blessing of the devout Italian fishermen's fleet is a gala celebration at Monterey, California, where Santa Rosalia is honored as the fishermen's patron.

AIRPLANES: About 1920 the Church provided a blessing for a "machine for journeying in the air." The opening versicles recall that "our help is in the name of the Lord . . . who walkest on the wings of the winds." God is asked to bless "this machine destined for aerial journeys; that, every injury and danger being removed, it may serve to propagate more widely the praise and glory of Thy name, and to dispatch more promptly the affairs of men, and that it may foster heavenly desires in the hearts of those using this machine." The airplane is indeed being used by the Flying Missionary, Father Paul Schulte, O. M. I., to "propagate more widely the praise and glory" of the name of God. Through his Missionary Communications Association, Father Schulte, a German World War veteran, is supplying planes and other modern means of transportation to missions where communication is difficult.

DYNAMOS: The blessing for the electric dynamo, which supplies both power and light, resembles that of the telegraph. Both include the canticle "Benedictus," whose last verse is particularly applicable to the purpose the dynamo serves: "To enlighten them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death: to direct our feet into the way of peace." A Psalm follows in each case, and the antiphon for the blessing of the dynamo reads: "Light is risen to the just, and joy to the right of heart." The final prayer says: "Lord, God almighty, who art the founder of all lights, bless this machine recently set up for making light; and grant that after the obscurity of this world we may come to Thee who are the light unfailing."

OTHER BLESSINGS: There are other blessings for instruments used in industrial life. Limekilns and blast furnaces have been blessed for many years. The prayer over the limekiln asks that "by the fire's exerting the force of its strength may those engaged in this work receive by Thy bounty a good quality of lime, and grant to them also that at the same time an increase of Thy salutary grace may grow in them."

2. Scholz, "Sacramentals in Industry." *Orate Fratres*. Vol. V. Pages 268-71.

IMPORTANCE OF INDUSTRIAL SACRAMENTALS: So important does the Church consider some of the industrial blessings that they can ordinarily be administered only by a bishop. Among these are the blessings of the dynamo and the telegraph, and the more solemn formula for railroads. A priest can perform these ceremonies if he has the bishop's permission. The importance of the industrial sacramentals is increased by the fact that the changes brought about by the introduction of machinery have contributed to the weakening of faith in the modern age. But all the things of the world can be turned to good purposes—to the betterment of man and to the honor and glory of God. And the Church prays that the very things which have in some cases worked harm to her children may rather increase their faith in God and bring them to a better understanding and appreciation of things spiritual.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. If you own an automobile, have it blessed by a priest and provide it with a medal of St. Christopher.
2. When you use the machines of modern industry or their products recall that God is the first Author of all these wonders and that their complexity is a sign of His all-inclusive intelligence in creating the world.

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

1. Is the Church behind the times in her sacramentals? What light can the Ritual throw on this question?
2. How do the more recently formulated blessings show the Church's complete understanding of modern times?
3. What are the principal marks of modern industrial progress? How has the Church taken these into consideration in providing her sacramental blessings?
4. How does the blessing for a library indicate the purposes of libraries? Discuss the blessing of printing presses and their operators and managers.
5. Tell how the blessing for the telegraph instrument indicates the operation of the telegraph. What blessing is asked for those who use the instrument?
6. What saint is mentioned in the blessing of a seismograph? What special blessings are asked for people and instrument?
7. How does the blessing for a railroad show the Church's solicitude for both the physical and the spiritual needs of her children?
8. Which blessing is more solemn, that of a large ocean liner or that of a fishing boat? Describe briefly the blessing of the liner. Where in America is the blessing of the fishing fleet a customary observance?
9. Describe the prayer used in blessing airplanes. What priest and what organization are using airplanes to "propagate more widely the praise and glory" of the name of God?
10. How does the blessing of the dynamo indicate the purposes for which the dynamo is used?
11. Name two other industrial blessings.
12. How does the Church indicate the importance of the industrial sacramentals? What is the purpose of these blessings?

XVI

Family Sacramentals

"If we do not return to the ideals of our Catholic forebears . . . in what respect will our homes differ from those of the pagans?" asked Bishop Aloisius J. Muench of Fargo in a pastoral letter on the Christian home, issued at the beginning of Lent in 1937. In December, 1937, Bishop J. H. Schlarman of Peoria issued a letter on the liturgy and the home. "The interior life of every Christian should be the reproduction in his soul of the life of Christ," said Bishop Schlarman. This reproduction can be promoted by constant use of the family sacramentals. These include rites surrounding the marriage ceremony, blessings of persons and homes, family prayer and devotions, and sacramental objects.

NUPTIAL BLESSING: Important in the marriage ceremony, though not essentials of Matrimony itself, are the sacramental rites that surround the sacrament. These include the blessing of the ring, the priest's instructions to the couple, and above all the Nuptial blessing. This blessing is directed particularly to the woman. After the Pater Noster, the priest turns to the couple and prays over them. He prays that the woman's marriage may be a "yoke of love and peace," that she may be faithful, chaste, long-lived, virtuous, fruitful in offspring. The blessing asks that the couple may see "their children's children unto the third and fourth generation."¹

OTHER BLESSINGS: Carrying her influence into the most intimate family life, the Church provides a blessing for a pregnant woman whose health is in danger. Prayers are said over the woman, and she is blessed with holy water. God is asked to defend her from "all craft and injury," to grant that "her offspring may come prosperously to this light of day, and may be preserved for holy regeneration."² After a woman has brought forth a child, there is the ceremony of churching, an act of gratitude to God for the gift of motherhood. This recalls the Jewish purification ceremony, especially Mary's purification, but there is no idea of the woman's defilement in this Christian rite. Carrying a lighted candle, the woman is received by the priest at the church door. The priest leads her into the church, then prays over her as she kneels before the altar: "Almighty, everlasting God, who, through the delivery of the blessed Virgin Mary, hast turned into joy the pains of the faithful in childbirth, look mercifully upon this Thine handmaid . . . that . . . she may merit to arrive, together with her offspring, at the joys of everlasting happiness."³ There are also formulas for blessing children. That for an infant recalls Christ's becoming a babe. The blessing for an older child asks that, like the divine Child, this one may grow in wisdom, age, and grace. The blessing for sick children was discussed in chapter XIII.

FAMILY RELIGIOUS PRACTICES: A program of family prayer published in the Diocese of Peoria said: "Its (prayer's) absence marks the family of Catholics; its presence, the Catholic family."⁴ Common prayer is the most salutary of family religious practices. By it, parents and children daily acknowledge their dependence on God and give Him the adoration that is His due. For family devotions as for others, the official prayers from the Divine Office are best. Especially fitting for family recitation is Compline, the Church's official night prayer, which includes this petition: "Visit, we beseech Thee, O Lord, this habitation, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let Thy holy angels dwell in it, who may keep us in peace; and let Thy blessing be always upon us."

1. *Layfolks' Ritual*. Pages 162-4. 2. *Layfolks' Ritual*. Pages 168-72. 3. *Layfolks' Ritual*. Pages 165-7. 4. *The Register*, Peoria Edition. Jan. 7, 1938. Page 10.

PRAYER AT MEALS: The Church has her official table prayers, and these show the principal purpose of prayer, the praise and worship of God. Several versicles praising God precede the Our Father. Then follows the familiar: "Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen." A young member of the family addresses the father: "Pray, sir, a blessing," and the father replies: "May the King of eternal glory bring us to a share in the heavenly table." This is the blessing for noon. At night, the father says: "May the King of eternal glory lead us to the table of eternal life." The others respond, "Amen." The short form, using only the "Bless us, O Lord," is approved by the Church.

OTHER FAMILY DEVOTIONS: Other family devotions should include common recitation of the rosary, daily if possible, especially in October; devotions for particular feasts or seasons, such as in May, when our Lady should be honored in every home; sprinkling of beds with holy water, particularly in time of storms. Feasts of the children's patron saints and occasions such as their First Communion or Confirmation are fitting times for special devotions.

BLESSINGS OF HOMES: The several blessings for homes include one on the feast of the Epiphany, January 6; one on Holy Saturday, and the common blessing at any time. There is a special benediction for a new house.

ON THE EPIPHANY: In blessing chalk on January 6, the priest asks God to make the chalk "helpful to mankind; and grant that through the invocation of Thy holy name those who use it or who write with it over the doors of their homes the holy names of Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar may obtain health of body and safety of soul." With this chalk the priest marks the date of the year and the initials of the Wise Men on the house doors. Gold, incense, and myrrh are blessed to recall the Magi's gifts to the Christ-Child. The priest prays: "Bless, O Lord, Almighty God, this home that in it there may be health, chastity, strength of victory, humility, goodness, and industry, a fullness of law and the action of graces through God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that this blessing may remain on this home and on those who frequent it."⁵

ON HOLY SATURDAY: The priest, wearing surplice and white stole, visits the houses in his parish on Holy Saturday. He sprinkles the chief rooms with Easter water while reciting the "Vidi Aquam." The last prayer beseeches God: "Vouchsafe to send Thy holy angel from heaven to guard, foster, protect, visit, and defend all that dwell in this dwelling."⁶

AT OTHER TIMES: The common blessing for homes includes the sprinkling of the rooms with holy water, a number of antiphons, and a prayer like that on Holy Saturday. The blessing of a new house asks God to grant those who live in the house "the abundance of the dew of heaven, and food of the fatness of the earth, and let their desires and their prayers find fulfilment in thy mercy."⁷

SACRAMENTAL OBJECTS—FOR PERSONS: Each member of the family should have his own blessed rosary, and a prayerbook—or a Missal, if he is old enough to use the official Mass book. Every child should be introduced to the Missal as soon as possible. Those old enough to recite the Office might well have a copy of *The Day Hours of the Church*, the text used by members of the League of the Divine Office, or a copy of Prime or Compline. Children and adults alike should also have medals, scapulars, and such other sacramentals as aid in promoting their spiritual development.

SACRAMENTAL OBJECTS—FOR THE HOME: The Christian home should show forth its religious character in its furnishings and adornment. There should be a crucifix in each bedroom and in the dining room, and a statue or

5. *The Register*, Peoria Edition, Jan. 7, 1938. Page 10.

6. *Layfolks' Ritual*. Pages 183-4.

7. *Layfolks' Ritual*. Pages 182-3.

picture of Christ and an image of our Lady in every home. If possible, the home should include a shrine honoring Christ, our Lady, or some other saint, before which the family gathers for regular devotions. Some houses have private chapels, where Mass is sometimes celebrated. There should be the necessary equipment for a priest's visit in time of sickness or death. Holy water and blessed candles should always be available. And there should be a supply of Catholic literature—the diocesan newspaper, Catholic magazines for both children and adults, and a number of religious books.

“UNLESS THE LORD BUILD—”: The home that is so equipped will differ in every way from “those of the pagans.” It will be a home constantly blessed by Christ, a home modeled after that of the holy family at Nazareth. Realization of the need for real Christian family life is indicated by the formation in recent years of the Catholic Conference on Family Life, by the parent-educators' program of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, and by the many bishops' appeals for a return to the religious customs that marked the Catholic home in the past. The pastoral letters of Bishop Schlarman and Bishop Muench have already been quoted. At the beginning of Lent in 1938, Bishop Louis B. Kucera of Lincoln urged his people to revive family prayer. These bishops and all who know the needs of the Christian home realize that “unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.”⁸

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Institute the custom of having common prayer and common devotions in your home. Hold special exercises in such times as May and October.
2. Provide your home with religious pictures or images and if possible with a small religious shrine. See that Catholic reading material is always available for members of your family and for your guests.

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

1. What does Bishop Schlarman say the interior life of every Christian should be? Can the sacramentals contribute anything to this end? What are some of the family sacramentals?
2. Name some of the sacramentals connected with the marriage ceremony. Explain the Nuptial blessing.
3. What is asked in the prayer for a pregnant woman whose health is in danger? Discuss the churching of women.
4. What are some of the other blessings for members of the family? What is asked in the blessing of a child older than an infant?
5. Discuss the value of common prayer in the family. Give an example showing how parts of the Divine Office are especially fitting for family recitation.
6. How do the formulas of the official table prayers show the primary end of prayer? Describe the blessing to be used at noon.
7. What other family religious practices should be encouraged?
8. Discuss the blessing of homes on the feast of the Epiphany; on Holy Saturday; at other times.
9. With what sacramental objects should each member of the family be provided?
10. How should the furnishings and decorations of the home show its Christian character?
11. What signs are there that leaders in the Church are concerned over the necessity for a return to real Christian home and family life?

8. Psalm CXXVI, 1.

Reference List

- Breen, A Collection of Indulgenced Prayers. Keystone Printing Service, Milwaukee. 1931.
- Butler-Clendenin, Praying the Mass (discussion-club textbook). Catholic Action Committee, Wichita, Kansas. 1937.
- Catholic Encyclopædic Dictionary. General editor, Donald Attwater. Macmillan, New York. 1931.
- Catholic Encyclopedia. Universal Knowledge Foundation, New York.
- Ceremonies of Holy Week. The Paulist Press, New York. 1935.
- Clendenin, Altar and Sanctuary (discussion-club textbook). Catholic Action Committee, Wichita, Kansas. 1938.
- Connell, The Sacramentals—What They Are, What They Do. Paulist Press, New York. 1930.
- Deutsch, Manual for Oblates of St. Benedict. Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minn. 1937.
- Ellard, Christian Life and Worship. Bruce, Milwaukee. 1938.
- Gasquet, Sacramentals and Some Catholic Practices. Lohmann, St. Paul, Minn. 1928.
- Henry, Catholic Customs and Symbols. Benziger, New York.
- Herwegen, The Art-Principle of the Liturgy. Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minn. 1936.
- Lefebvre, Saint Andrew Daily Missal. Lohmann, St. Paul, Minn. 1937.
- Lambing, The Sacramentals of the Holy Catholic Church. Benziger, New York. 1892.
- Layfolk's Ritual, The. Burns Oates and Washbourne, Ltd., London. 1916.
- Liturgical Arts (quarterly). Liturgical Arts Society, New York.
- MacMahan, The Liturgical Catechism. Gill and Son, Dublin, Ireland. 1930.
- McNeill-Aaron, The Means of Grace. St. Anthony Guild Press, Paterson, N. J. 1937.
- McNeill-Clendenin, The Liturgical Year. Catholic Action Committee, Wichita, Kansas. 1937.
- Michel, The Liturgy of The Church. Macmillan, New York. 1937.
- Mullaly, Could You Explain Catholic Practices? Apostleship of Prayer, New York. 1937.
- New Catholic Dictionary. The Universal Knowledge Foundation, New York. 1929.
- Official Vatican Manual of Indulgenced Prayers. Translated and edited by Rev. Richard E. Power. Benziger, New York. 1931.
- Orate Fratres (monthly liturgical review). Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minn.
- Pius XI, Sixteen Encyclicals of His Holiness, Pope Pius XI, 1926-1937. N. C. W. C., Washington, D. C. 1937.
- Raccolta, The Collection of Indulgenced Prayers and Good Works. Burns Oates and Washbourne, Ltd., London. 1924.
- Roulin, Vestments and Vesture. Herder, St. Louis. 1931.
- Sacramental Liturgy, The (study-club outline). Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minn. 1936.
- Scholz, Sacramentals (series of five articles). Orate Fratres, Vols. IV and V.
- Stapper-Baier, Catholic Liturgics. St. Anthony Guild Press, Paterson, N. J. 1935.
- Sullivan, The Visible Church. Kenedy, New York. 1922.

CATHOLIC ACTION SERIES
of
Discussion-Club Textbooks
Vol. 1—THE LITURGY

No. 1

ALTAR AND SANCTUARY

An Exposition of the Externals of the Mass

No. 2

PRAYING THE MASS

A Study of the Prayers and Ceremonies of the Holy Sacrifice

No. 3

THE LITURGICAL YEAR

An Explanation of the Cycles, Seasons, and Feasts of
the Ecclesiastical Year

No. 4

THE SACRAMENTALS

A Study of the Origin, Nature, and Proper Use of the Sacramentals
of the Church

Similar textbooks on the doctrine and early history of the Mass,
and on the ecclesiastical arts are in course of preparation.

Copies of the above publications may be procured from

THE CATHOLIC ACTION COMMITTEE

424 North Broadway

Wichita, Kansas

Single copy.....	25¢
50 or more copies, each.....	22½¢
100 or more copies, each.....	20¢
500 or more copies, each.....	17½¢
1000 or more copies, each.....	15¢

Plus postage