Hebdomada Sancta

HOLY SATURDAY
EASTER VIGIL
INTRODUCTION

The Christ on the Cross, Good Friday, is covered in malediction for us; having died on an infamous gibbet, Who was left as guilty to the irrevocable justice of God, and no less to the wrath of hell and to the hatred of His enemies. He is dead, and all of humanity is dead with Him, for which, as death came in the beginning to original justice and innocence through the contamination of Adam’s sin, so now in Christ and through Christ sin and the old Law die, making themselves, by means of the Faith, participants of the expiation and of the Sacrifice of Jesus. Therefore, He is dead, as the Apostle teaches, because of our sins, and is Risen in order to destroy its effects, reestablishing us in grace, in justice and in the rights of the Glory of Heaven. The Easter of Jesus, therefore is our Easter, because if in the evening of the Parasceve all of us die with Him on the Cross, this night in Him we rise to new life according to God.

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The tradition of keeping the vigil from Saturday evening to the Sunday morning of Easter is very ancient. Tertullian speaks of it as a law above all else, so that no one could be excused from it. It was only in the late Middle Ages that the ceremonies were finally anticipated in the afternoon, and then to the morning of Holy Saturday until finally being brought back to the evening.

The most ancient description of the Easter Vigil occurs in St. Justin Martyr in his *Apology*, in which Baptism and the Mass that followed are identical to the rites described here. They followed a solemn and public fast, by both the Catachumens and the entire Christian community. A fast that in that time, could not be identified with anything other than that fast which preceding the Solemnity of the Lord’s Resurrection.

The sacred ceremony which is about to unfold before our eyes, express with astonishing brilliance and colors the tremendous sacred reality of Christ Resurrection and of the Church, and consists of five distinct parts: the Blessing of the New Fire and the Grains of Frankincense; the Paschal Candle; the Prophecies; the Litany and the Solemn Mass of the Easter Vigil.

Originally, except for Baptism, the ordinary *Pannuchis* (Vigil), which in the 3rd century sanctified weekly the night between Saturday and Sunday, did not have to include rites very different from what the Roman Missal prescribes for the Easter Vigil. Before the 5th century when monastic piety created what is now know to us as the Night Office or Matins in the Breviary, only the Vigil Office of the Solemnity of the Easter was used in vigils for Sunday, anniversaries of Martyrs in the cemetery crypts, and in the Titular Churches of Rome. Therefore the ceremonies that are today found in the Missal for the Easter Vigil represent and preserve intact the primitive form of the Night Office or Matins according to ancient Roman usage.
PART I: THE NEW FIRE & THE GRAINS OF INCENSE

BRIEF HISTORY

The first part of today's ceremony focuses on the blessing of the fire and then of the Paschal Candle. It is, however, nothing but an alteration of the primitive Eucharistía lucernáris, which was introduced in the Roman liturgy in the Carolingian era.

It was customary of the first centuries to obtain fire from a flint every day before Vespers, for the purpose of lighting the lamps and the candles that would burn during the Office, and would remain lit in the church until Vespers of the following day. The Church of Rome practiced this custom with greater solemnity on the morning of Holy Thursday; on that day the new fire received a special blessing. Following an instruction which Pope St. Zechariah sent by letter to Saint Boniface, Archbishop of Mainz in the eighth century, three lamps were lit by the fire, which were then carefully guarded in a secret place. Then from these would come the light to be used on the night of Holy Saturday. That light, lit at the beginning of the Sunday vigil in memory of the Resurrection of Jesus, immediately suggested the idea that the shining lamp symbolized Christ. In the following century, under Pope St. Leo IV, in 847, the Church of Rome extended the custom of the other days of the year also to Holy Saturday, which consisted in obtaining new fire from a stone.

It is therefore right that this mysterious fire, destined to provide light to the Paschal Candle, and later to the altar itself, receives a special blessing and is to be received triumphantly by the Christian people.

The extinguishing of every light, at this moment, signifies the abrogation of the ancient Law, which ceased when the veil of the Temple was torn in two; the stone from which the new fire is derived is Christ, which in many places of Scripture is called "stone," from which they came out - because of the hard and obstinate hearts of the Jews who struck him until he died - of the fiery furnaces of love, which were his five Wounds, from which a "new fire" comes, a symbol of the merciful promulgation of the new Law that Jesus Christ has brought, dissolving all shadows of the First Covenant.

It followed, although later, that the light became more closely united to the offering of incense suggested by Psalm 140, destined by the early Christians for the evening Office, where the vespertine sacrifice of Golgotha is compared to the vapor of incense rising to the throne of God.

In essence, it is a Jewish ceremony which since the first Christian faithful has acquired a subtle Christian meaning, that of Christ's resurrection from death and dispelling the darkness of humanity; in fact, the vespertine syntax has been the starting point of all Christian ritual, when in Jerusalem the Apostles, after the afternoon sacrifice in the Temple, at the decline of the day, gathered at the house of one of the more affluent members, and there, lighting the ritualistic lamps, preached, prayed and celebrated together the Eucharist Agape.

With the passage of time and the definitive triumph of the Roman Liturgy, the rite of the ancient lighting of lamps (Lucerna) disappeared surviving only in the Easter Vigil.
Before the start of the function, outside of the church, or if the weather doesn't permit, in the vestibule, a table is covered with a white cloth and on it is placed a white dalmatic, maniple and stole, and a missal covered with purple, taper and splinter of wood or some paper. Also something to place the blessed coals into the thurible. (The rubrics of this particular Mass prescribes that a new fire be lit to bless, stating: "Interim excititur ignis de lápide foris ecclésiam, et ex eo ascenduntur carbónes." Likewise the Memoriále Rituum (Chapter VI, chap. II § 1, No. 1) states: "Extra ecclésiam excititur novus ignis and sílice, et ascenduntur carbónes in fóculo." Also in the first prayer, with which the new fire is blessed, the words "prodúctum e sílice, .. novum hunc ignem sanctífica ").

Near the table, the trident reed is adorned with flowers, at the top of which there are three white candles, at first being united and then branched outward.

At the appointed hour, the Celebrant and the Sacred Ministers vest in purple vestments without maniple; the Suddeacon takes up the Cross, while two Acolytes carry the holy water vessel and the tray with the grains of incense, and then all process for the blessing of the new fire. The Celebrant and the Deacon stand with their hands clasped and with heads covered. The celebrant says with hands joined, and without singing; Dóminus vobíscum and the three following Prayers ordered for the blessing of the fire. This blessing can not be left out. At the end of each Prayer, all answer Amen.

**COMMENTARY**

The light, the heat of the fire, especially the fire, this force so necessary for life, so beautiful, yet so terrible, was considered among the ancient peoples to be the symbol of, or even divinity itself. God speaks to Moses through a burning bush; the fire of Yahweh descends from heaven at the prayers of Elijah and consumes the victim on the altar; in the case of Prophets, fire forms almost a wall of defense around the throne of God; the Cherubs of Ezekiel and the Angels of Daniel are of fire; flames, lightning and thunder make up the terrible seat of the meek Lamb of God, who in the Apocalypse, is inmolated for the sins of the world. God is "a devouring fire", the Scripture tells us, and like His word, so everything around Him take part in nature, so much so that not only are the Angels described as flames of fire, but even Moses' face is irradiated by the divine splendors on Sinai, as a consequence of the long conversation with God.

The stone from which the new fire is made is a symbol of Christ, whose Passion had already been glimpsed by the Psalmist, when he wrote that "the stone, rejected by the builders, would become the head of the corner" (cf Ps. 117,22). Jesus during his Passion was "rejected" by the Jewish people who did not accept Him as the true Messiah and Redeemer, but rather put Him cruelly to death outside the walls of the city of Jerusalem. But then, with his glorious Resurrection, he became the "corner stone," Conqueror of death and the invisible Head of His Church.

The word stone (rock) reminds us also of those other words from Holy Scripture spoken by the divine Savior, when, turning to St. Peter in the region of Caesarea Philippi, he says: "And I tell you: you are Peter and on this rock I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"(Mt 16:18). The stone, therefore, reminds us of the birth of the Church, on which it rests and from which the sacraments spring forth, like darts infused with love.

This most high symbolism, in which the infinite holiness of Yahweh is represented, could not be neglected in the golden centuries of the primitive Catholic liturgy.
Dóminus vobíscum.
Et cum spíritu tuo.

Orémus.

O Deus, qui per Fílium tuum, angu-lárem scílicet lápidem, claritátis tuæ ignem fidélibus contulísti: produéctum e sílice, nostris profútúrum úsibus, novum hunc ignem sanctíifica: et concéde nobis, íta per hæc festa paschália cœléstibus desidériis intámére. Per eúndem Christum. Dómi-
num nostrum.
Amen.

Orémus.

Dómine Deus, Pater omnípotens, lu-
men indefíciens, qui es cónditor ómnium lúminum: béne dic hoc lu-
men, quod a te sanctificatúm, atque be-
edictum est, qui illumínásti omnem mundum: ut ab eo lúmine accendámur, atque illumínémur igne claritátis tuae: et sicut illumínásti Móysen exéun-
tem de Ægýpto, ita illumines corda, et sensus nostros; ut ad vitam, et lucem aetérnam perveníre mereámur. Per Christum Dóminum nostrum.
Amen.

Orémus.

Hóly Lord, eternal Father, almighty God, vouchsafe Thy co-operation with us while we bless this fire in Thy name, and the name of Thine only-begotten Son, our God and Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit; and aid us against the fiery darts of the enemy, and illuminate us with Thy heavenly grace. Who livest and reignest with the same, Thine Only-begotten and the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.
Amen.
Véniat, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus, super hoc incénsum larga tuæ bene dictiónis infúsio: et hunc noctúrnum splendórem invisíbilis re-generátor accénde; ut non solum sacrí-fícium, quod hac nocte litátum est, ar-cána lúminis tui admixtióne refúlgeat; sed in quocúmque loco ex huius sanctificatiónis mystério áliquid fúerit de-portátum, expúlsa diabólicæ fraudis nequítia, virtus tuæ maiestátis assístat. Per Christum Dóminum nostrum.

R. Amen.

The celebrant blesses the five grains of incense to be placed in the Candle, and says the fourth prayer without singing, while the thurifer places blessed coals in the censer.

**COMMENTARY**

In addition to the new fire, Holy Church today also blesses incense. This incense represents the perfumes that Magdalene and other holy women had prepared to embalm the body of the Redeemer. It is in five grains, recalling the five wounds of the Savior. The Prayer that the Celebrant pronounces on these grains of incense teaches us about the relationships they has with the light; while at the same time instructing us on the power of these different sacred elements against the insidious snares of the spirits of darkness.

Upon this incense, we beseech Thee, O almighty God, may there come a plentiful outpouring of Thy benediction and do Thou, O invisible Regenerator, kindle this splendor of the night, that not only the sacrifice, happily consummated this night, may be refulgent with the secret mingling of Thy light, but into whatsoever place anything be brought from the mystery of this sanctification, the malice of the diabolical deceits may be driven thence, and the power of Thy majesty may be present. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

After the Prayer is over, the Celebrant places the incense in the thurible as usual. Then he sprinkles the five grains of incense and the fire three times with holy water, saying: Aspérges me, Dómine, without singing or saying the Psalm. Meanwhile the lights of the church are extinguished, so that they may be lit, from the new fire. After the Celebrant has incensed the five grains of incense and the fire, the first Acolyte lights the small candle from the blessed fire.

The Deacon puts off the purple vestments and, wearing a white dalmatic, takes the trident reed with two hands, at the end of which three separate candles are placed in a triangle, symbol of the Three Divine Persons. The thurifer leads, who lightly swings the thurible, having on his right the second Acolyte, carrying the tray with the five grains of incense; followed by the Subdeacon with the Cross and the Choir standing two by two; then comes the Deacon with the trident reed, having on his left the first Acolyte with the lighted candle; and finally the Celebrant, with his hands joined, and the Master of Ceremonies near him. All go with heads uncovered, except the Celebrant. When the Celebrant enters the church, the Deacon lowers the trident reed and the first Acolyte lights, with the new fire, one of the three candles on the reed. Then the Deacon, raising the trident reed, kneels on one knee, with all doing likewise, except for the Subdeacon who carries the Cross; as the Celebrant, genuflects he will uncover his head. The Deacon then sings Lumen Christi and everyone answers, Deo grátias. After that all rise and the procession moves forward.
Holy Week

**COMMENTARY**

The Deacon vests in a white dalmatic, which seems to contrast the purple cope of the Celebrant. This ornament of joy is explained by the function, so full of joy, with which the Deacon is charged.

The reed is a reminder of the Savior's Passion and the weakness of nature to which he has deigned to unite with the Incarnation. It is capped by a triple candle which is called to signify the glorious Trinity in which the Incarnate Word participates.

\[ \text{V. Lumen Christi.} \quad \text{R. Deo grátias.} \quad \text{V. Light of Christ.} \quad \text{R. We thank thee, O God.} \]

**COMMENTARY**

This first apparition of light proclaims the divinity of the Father who has manifested himself to us through Jesus Christ: "No one knows the Father - Jesus said - except the Son and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal him" (Mt 11:27).

The Deacon advances to the center of the church, he lights the second candle placed on the reed, and kneeling again as above, sings in a higher tone:

\[ \text{V. Lumen Christi.} \quad \text{R. Deo grátias.} \quad \text{V. Light of Christ.} \quad \text{R. We thank thee, O God.} \]

**COMMENTARY**

This second exposition of light speaks to us of the divinity of the Son who manifested himself to men in the Incarnation, revealing to them his equality of nature with the Father.

For the third time the Deacon advances to the Altar, he lights the third candle, and, kneeling as before, sings with an even higher tone:

\[ \text{V. Lumen Christi.} \quad \text{R. Deo grátias.} \quad \text{V. Light of Christ.} \quad \text{R. We thank thee, O God.} \]

**COMMENTARY**

This third exposition of light proclaims the divinity of the Holy Spirit revealed to us by Jesus Christ when he imposed on the Apostles the solemn precept which the Church is about to put into practice this night: "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father. and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). Through the Son who is "the light of the world," men have known the Most Holy Trinity.
PART II: THE PASchal CANDLE

BRIEF HISTORY

The lighting of the vigil candle is the office of the deacon; therefore the declamation which, accompanies this symbolic rite of the sabbatical sunset is reserved to him. Needless to say that this rite of the Lucernario derives from the practice in the Synagogue.

This diaconal office has a very special character, and the liturgical tradition wanted the text to be recited from a scroll of parchment, which the Deacon unrolled little by little from above the ambo. It was generally decorated with depicted scenes, which were turned upside down, so that, while unrolling the scroll, they could be seen by the people.

The majesty of this rite is so great that Holy Church employs all the magnificence of its inspired language, so to excite devotion within the faithful.

In the fifth century, Pope Saint Zosimus extended the privilege of blessing this Candle to all churches in the city of Rome, although Baptism was administered only at the baptistery of the Lateran. It is by the same privilege that the ceremony of the Paschal Candle can be performed today in all churches, even in those that do not possess a baptismal font.

The Deacon hands the reed to the first Acolyte, who in the meantime has extinguished his candle, and goes to the Epistle corner, allowing the Celebrant to pass going up to the Altar. The Celebrant kisses the altar in the middle moving to the Epistle side. Then the Deacon, receiving the Missal from the MC and genuflecting on the edge of the predella, without saying the Munda cor meum, asks for the Blessing from the Celebrant as at the Gospel, although with kissing his hand. Then the Celebrant says:


The Lord be in thy heart and on thy lips, that thou mayest worthily and competently declare His paschal proclamation, in the name of the Father and the Son, ☩ and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

The Deacon ascends the pulpit (or lectern) in the Gospel corner, places the missal there and incenses it. To the right of the Deacon stand the Subdeacon with the Cross and the Thurifur; on his left the two Acolytes: the one carrying the reed and the other holding a tray with the five grains of incense. All rise, standing as for the Gospel, while the Deacon sings the Exúltet with folded hands. The Candle will have already been placed prior to this on the Gospel side, where the Exúltet will be sung.

COMMENTARY

This large "torch" in the shape of a column represents Christ. Before being lit, it symbolized the column of cloud that enveloped the Jews at their departure from Egypt, and Christ in the tomb, dead and buried. When it receives the flame, we will see in it the
pillar of fire that will illuminate the steps of the holy people: it is the likeness of
Christ, radiant with the splendor of his Resurrection. In fact, as in the Candle there is
the wick, the wax and the light, so is found in Christ the soul, the body and the divinity.

The Candle is placed in a prominent spot to signify that the Lord has reached
eternal life supra all mortality; it is lit to show that He is alive in Glory; it is blessed,
because by its nature alone it could not signify the risen Christ.

The Deacon, in the moment when he sings Exsúltet, represents Mary Magdalen and
the other pious women, who first had the honor of being meet by Jesus after his
Resurrection and were commissioned by him, in spite of the inferiority of their sex, to
tell the Apostles that He had come forth from the tomb and would preceded them to
Galilee.

**Exsúltet**

**Exsúltet iam Angélica turba cæló-
rum: exsúltent divína mystéria: et
pro tanti Regis victória, tuba ínsonet
salutáris. Gáudeat et tellus tantis irra-
diáta fulgóribus: et ætérni Regis
splendóre illustráta, totíus orbis se
séntiat amisísse calíginem. Lætétur et
mater Ecclésia, tanti lúminis adornáta
fulgóribus: et magnis populórum vó-
cibus hæc áula resúltet. Quaprópter
adstántes vos, fratres caríssimi, ad
tam miram huius sancti lúminis clari-
tátem, una mecum, quæso, Dei omni-
poténtis misericórdiam invocáte. Ut,
qui me non meis méritis intra Levitá-
rum númerum dignátus est aggregá-
re: lúminis sui claritátem infúndens,
Cérei huius laudem implére perfíciat.
Per Dóminum nostrum Iesum Chri-
stum Fílium suum: qui cum eo vivit et
regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti Deus.

*Per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.*

Ré. Amen.

V. Dóminus vobíscum.

Ré. Et cum spiritu tuo.

V. Sursum corda.

Ré. Habémus ad Dóminum.

V. Grátias agámus Dómino Deo no-
stro.

Ré. Dignum et iustum est.

**N**ow, let the angelic host of heaven
exult the mysteries divine; and for the
victory of so great a King sound the trumpet
of salvation. Let earth rejoice, irradiated by
such mighty beams, and being lighted up
with the splendor of the eternal King, let her
feel the shadows gone from all her sphere.
Let Mother Church also rejoice, adorned
with the effulgence of so great a light; and let
this place ring with the voice of many.
Wherefore, do ye here present, O most dear
brethren, in the wondrous brightness of this
holy light, join me, I pray, in invoking the
mercy of almighty God, that He, Who, for no
merits of mine own, hath deigned to number
me among the levites, may shed upon me the
brightness of His light and make me
perfectly perform the praise of this candle.
Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, His Son,
Who with Him liveth and reigneth in the
unity of the Holy Spirit, God.

*Forever and ever.*

Ré. Amen.

V. The Lord be with you.

Ré. And with thy spirit.

V. Lift up your hearts.

Ré. We have them lifted up to the Lord.

V. Let us give thanks to the Lord, our
God.

Ré. It is meet and just.
Vere dignum et iustum est, invisíbi-
lem Deum Patrem omnipoténtem, Fi-
líumque eius unigénitum, Dóminum
nostrum Iesum Christum, toto cordis
ac mentis afféctu, et vocis ministério
personáre. Qui pro nobis aeterno Patri
Adæ débitum solvit: et véteris piáculi
cautiónem pio cruóre detérsit. Hæc
sunt enim festa paschália, in quibus ver-
rus ille Agnus occíditur, cuius sángui-
ne postes fidélium consecrántur. Hæc
nox est, in qua primum patres nostros
filios Israël edúctos de Ægýpto, Mare
Rubrum sicco vestígio transíre fecísti.
Hæc ígitur nox est, quæ peccatórum té-
nebras, colúmnæ illuminatione purgá-
vit. Hæc nox est, quæ hódie per uni-
vérsum mundum in Christo credéntes,
a vitís sæculi, et calígine peccatórum
segregátos, reddít iníngenté sáciat
sancti-
táti. Hæc nox est, in qua destrúctis vín-
culis mortis, Christus ab ínferis victor
ascéndit. Nihil enim nobis nasci pró-
fuit, nisi rédimi profuísset. O mira cir-
cá praedam tuei pietátis dignátio! O inæsti-
mábilis diléctio caritátis: ut servum re-
dímeres, Fílium tradidísti! O certe ne-
cessárium Adæ peccátum, quod Chri-
sit morte delétum est! O felix culpa,
qua talem ac tantum méruit habére
Redemptórem! O truly necessary sin of Adam, that is
wiped out by the death of Christ! O happy
fault, that was worthy to have such and so
great a redeemer!  O truly blessed night,
which alone was worthy to know that time
and the hour when Christ rose again from
the dead. This is the night of which it is
written: And the night shall be enlightened
like day; and the night is my enlightening
in my pleasures. The sanctification of
this night, therefore, driveth away evil deeds,
cleanseth offences, restoring innocence to the
fallen and gladness to the mournful. It
driveth out hatred, it produceth concord and
curbeth tyrannies.

It is truly meet and just, that with all
the powers of heart and mind, uplifting, too,
our voices, we sing the God invisible, that
Father almighty, and His only begotten
Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ; Who paid for
us unto the eternal Father the debt of
Adam, and hath wiped out with His dear
blood the reckoning of the ancient offense.
For these are the paschal rites wherein the
true Lamb is slain with Whose blood the
doors-posts of the faithful are consecrated.
This the night on which Thou didst cause
our fathers, the children of Israel, to cross
dryshod the Red Sea, leading them out of the
land of Egypt. This, then, is the night that
hath purged away the darkness of sins with
the illumination of the pillar of fire. This is
the night which now, throughout all the
world, doth separate believers in Christ from
the iniquities of the world and the gloom of
sins, doth restore them to grace, and join
them unto holiness. This is the night on
which, bursting the bonds of death, Christ
came victorious from the grave. For it
profited us nothing to be Born except that
we might be redeemed. O wondrous
condescension of thy great kindness in our
regard! O inestimable affection of charity:
to redeem the slave, Thou didst give up the
Son! O truly necessary sin of Adam, that is
wiped out by the death of Christ! O happy
fault, that was worthy to have such and so
great a redeemer! O truly blessed night,
which alone was worthy to know that time
and the hour when Christ rose again from
the dead. This is the night of which it is
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this night, therefore, driveth away evil deeds,
cleanseth offences, restoring innocence to the
fallen and gladness to the mournful. It
driveth out hatred, it produceth concord and
curbeth tyrannies.

The Deacon places in the Paschal Candle the five grains of blessed incense, in the form of a cross, following
this order:

1
4—2—5
3

The Clergy sit, but not the Celebrant.
The number of these grains of incense, fixed as they are in the wax, represents the five wounds of Christ on the Cross; and at the same time indicates the use of the perfumes that Mary Magdalen and her companions had prepared, while Jesus lay in the tomb.

In thanksgiving, then, for this night, O holy Father, receive the evening sacrifice of this incense, which most holy Church rendereth to Thee by the hands of her ministers, in this solemn oblation of wax, from the labors of the bees. And now we know the glories of this column which the flickering fire both kindle in God’s honor.

The Deacon goes to light the Candle with one of the three candles of the reed, then returns, and the chant continues.

This symbolic act reproduces the instant of the Resurrection of Christ, when the divine virtue suddenly came to reanimating his body, re-uniting His most holy soul which death had separated. The torch is now inaugurated, as an image of Christ the Light. Holy Church rejoices at the thought that soon she will see her heavenly Spouse who is the triumphant victor over death.

The Deacon stops while the first Acolyte lights his candle either from the reed or the Paschal Candle. The lights of the church are turned on (and all the other lights). This lighting takes place after that of the Easter Candle, because the knowledge of the Resurrection of the Savior spread later, until all the faithful were enlightened. This sequence shows us that, after having died like Our Lord in the tomb, our resurrection will be the continuation and imitation of Jesus Christ, who re-opened the way to immortality.

Which fire, though it be divided into parts, yet knoweth no diminution of its light. For it is nourished by the fluid wax which the mother bee hath produced for the material of this precious torch.

The lamps are lit, then the Deacon continues the chant.

O truly blessed night that despoiled the Egyptians and enriched the Hebrews! Night in which heavenly are joined with earthly things, divine with human! We therefore pray Thee, O Lord, that this candle, consecrated

*Per eúndem Dóminum nostrum Iesum Christum, Fílium tuum: Qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti Deus: per ómnia sæcu-la sæculórum. R. Amen

The words regarding the Roman Emperor are left out. (Decr. 1827, II, et 3103, III).

PART III: THE PROPHECIES

BRIEF HISTORY

Having finished the Eucharistía lucernáris, which corresponded in part, in its meaning and likeness of a canonical hour, to the prelude of Vespers, which immediately follows the Vigil, while during the first three centuries at Rome it consisted exclusively of a series of scriptural passages, interspersed with Collects and responsorial chants of the Psalms. Only later, did monastic influence give a completely different structure and format to the Divine Office.

Also a most ancient tradition reserved to the morning Office was the singing of a series of Prophetic odes derived from the Synagogue and this is the reason why today, in the Easter Vigil, after the lessons, the responsorial chants are not taken from the Psalter, but rather from the ancient collection of morning odes. Definitively, the Easter Vigil described in the Roman Missal is of paramount importance, since it still retains almost wholly intact the primitive form of a Roman Sunday Vigil, followed by the Eucharistic Sacrifice, as it was done in the early centuries of the Church.

St. Gregory reduced the number of the Lessons or Prophecies to six; but after some time the ancient traditional twelve readings of the Gelasian Sacramentary, which was so widespread in France and Italy, also prevailed in Rome. The Collects that follow the Lessons are very important, do to there sculpturesque brevity in expressing there mystical meaning.
At the end of the blessing of the Paschal candle, the Deacon lays aside the white dalmatic to resume the purple vestments, takes his place next to the Celebrant, who, after removing the cope, puts on the maniple and the violet chasable. The Prophecy now begins without title and without answering Deo grátias at the end. The Celebrant reads these in a low voice, at the Altar, from the Epistle side. While the Propheties are sung, the Clergy sits, and rising at the Prayers sung by the Celebrant, with his hands outstretched, in the ferial tone. The Propheties must be completely sung.

**COMMENTARY**

The whole function presents a air of austere gravity: the hour when Christ will resurrect us, his faithful, has not yet struck. The frequent genuflections dark color of the sacred vestments continue to contrast with the splendor of the mysterious Paschal Candle, which silently spreads its light on the assembly, still stirred by the the Deacon's triumphant declaration, eager to see the hour when Christ will rise. The Propheties are twelve, recalling the twelve Apostles who preached this doctrine; they are said without title because our Head and Redeemer has not yet risen from death.

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The first Prophecy is taken from Genesis, and in it the work of creation is described. The cosmos is the masterpiece of the Wisdom of God, and all things are beautiful because they have come forth from His hands. The world therefore has become an immense temple that God Himself has erected for His glory, and we, being given use of the inferior creatures by God, must do so with great care and respect using all things in accordance with the end in which God has intended.

The redemption can be compared to a second creation, since by it man, who had become a slave to the devil, has been returned to his original dignity of a child of God.

**PROPHETIA PRIMA**
*Gen. 1,1-31 et 2,1-2*


**FIRST PROPHECY**
*Gn. 1,1-31 ; 2,1-2*

In the beginning God created heaven and earth: and the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God moved over the waters. And God said: Be light made. And light was made. And God saw the light that it was good; and he divided the light from the darkness. And he called the light Day, and the darkness Night; and there was evening and morning one day. And God said: Let there be a firmament made amidst the waters: and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made a firmament, and divided the waters that were under the firmament, from those that were above the firmament, and it was so. And God called the firmament, Heaven; and the evening and morning were the second day. God also said: Let the waters that are under the heaven, be gathered together into one place: and let the dry land appear. And it was so done.
locum unum: et appareat arida. Et factum est ita. Et vocavit Deus aridam, Terram: congregationesque aquarum appellavit Maria. Et vidit Deus quod esset bonum. Et ait: Germinet terra herbam viramentem, et facientem semen, et lignum pomerorum faciens fructum iuxta genus suum, cuius semen in semetipsa sit super terram. Et factum est ita. Et protulit terra herbam viramentem et facientem semen iuxta genus suum,ignumque faciens fructum, et habens unumquodque semem secundum speciem suam. Et vidit Deus quod esset bonum. Et factum est vespere, et mane, dies tertius. Dixit autem Deus: Fiant luminaria in firmamento cæli, et dividant diem, ac noctem, et sint in signa, et tempora, et dies, et annos: ut luceant in firmamento cæli, et illument terram. Et factum est ita. Fecitque Deus duo luminaria magna: luminare magius, ut præset diæ: et luminare minus, ut præset nocti: et stellas. Et post eas in firmamento cæli, ut lucerent super terram, et præset diæ ac nocti, et dividerent lucem, ac tenebras. Et vidit Deus quod esset bonum.  And God called the dry land, Earth; and the gathering together of the waters, he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.  And he said: Let the earth bring forth the green herb, and such as may seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, which may have seed in itself upon the earth. And it was so done. And the earth brought forth the green herb, and such as yieldeth seed according to its kind, and the tree that beareth fruit, having seed each one according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day. And God said: Let there be lights made in the firmament of heaven, to divide the day and the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years: To shine in the firmament of heaven, and to give light upon the earth. And it was so done. And God made two great lights: a greater light to rule the day; and a lesser light to rule the night: and the stars. And he set them in the firmament of heaven to shine upon the earth. And to rule the day and the night, and to divide the light and the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And the evening and morning were the fourth day. And God also said: Let the waters bring forth the creeping creature having life, and the fowl that may fly over the earth under the firmament of heaven. And God created the great whales, and every living and moving creature, which the waters brought forth, according to their kinds, and every winged fowl according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And he blessed them, saying: Increase and multiply, and fill the waters of the sea: and let the birds be multiplied upon the earth. And the evening and morning were the fifth day. And God said: Let the earth bring forth the living creature in its kind, cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the earth, according to their kinds. And it was so done. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds, and cattle, and every thing that creepeth on the earth after its kind. And God saw that it was good. And he said: Let us make man to our image and

The reading finished, the Celebrant says: Orémus; the Deacon: Flectámus génua; and the Subdeacon: Leváte. And in like manner for the other prayers.

Orémus.
Flectámus génua.
R. Leváte.

Oratio

D eus, qui mirabíliter creásti hómi-nem, et mirabílius redemísti: da nobis, quaésümus, contra oblectamén-ta peccáti, mentis ratióne persístere; ut mereámur ad ætérna gáudia perveni-re. Per Dóminum nostrum.

likeness: and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth. And God created man to his own image: to the image of God he created him: male and female he created them. And God blessed them, saying: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth. And God said: Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed upon the earth, and all trees that have in themselves seed of their own kind, to be your meat: And to all beasts of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to all that move upon the earth, and wherein there is life, that they may have to feed upon. And it was so done. And God saw all the things that he had made, and they were very good. And the evening and morning were the sixth day. So the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the furniture of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made: and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done.

Let us pray..
Let us Kneel.
R. Arise.

Prayer

O God, Who hast wonderfully created man and more wonderfully redeemed him, grant us, we beseech Thee, to withstand by strength of spirit the allurements of sin, that we may be worthy to reach everlasting joys. Through our Lord.
COMMENTARY

The second Prophecy is intimately related to the first, and therefore with the work of Redemption. As in the beginning God had drawn the universe out of nothing, so now, through Noah's ark, He recreates it, though a conserved reserve of creation. As the ark of the patriarch Noah renewed the life of the whole world, so now holy Baptism comes to submerge and put to an end an intolerable state of affairs, inaugurating the New Testament of peace and of love.

PROPHETIA SECUNDA
Gen. 5; 6; 7 et 8

And Noe, when he was five hundred years old, begot Sem, Cham, and Japheth. And after that men began to be multiplied upon the earth, and daughters were born to them, The sons of God seeing the daughters of men, that they were fair, took to themselves wives of all which they chose. And God said: My spirit shall not remain in man for ever, because he is flesh, and his days shall be a hundred and twenty years. Now giants were upon the earth in those days. For after the sons of God went in to the daughters of men, and they brought forth children, these are the mighty men of old, men of renown. And God seeing that the wickedness of men was great on the earth, and that all the thought of their heart was bent upon evil at all times, It repented him that he had made man on the earth. And being touched inwardly with sorrow of heart, He said: I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, from man even to beasts, from the creeping thing even to the fowls of the air, for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noe found grace before the Lord. These are the generations of Noe: Noe was a just and perfect man in his generations, he walked with God. And he begot three sons, Sem, Cham, and Japheth. And the earth was corrupted before God, and was filled with iniquity. And when God had seen that the earth was corrupted (for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth,) He said to Noe: The end of all flesh is come before me, the earth is filled with iniquity through them,
nis venit coram me: repléta est terra iniquitáte a fácie eórum, et ego dispérdam eos cum terra. Fac tibi arcam de lignis lævigátis: mansiúnculas in arca fácies, et bitúmine línies intrínsecus et extrínsecus. Et sic fácies eam: Trecétórum cubítórum erit longitúdo arcæ, quinquagínta cubítórum latitúdo, et trigínta cubítórum altitúdo illíus. Fenéstram in arca fácies, et in cúbito consummábis summitátem eius: óstium autem arcæ pones ex látere: deórsum cœnácula et trístega fácies in ea. Ecce ego addúcam aquas dilúvii super terram, ut interfíciam omnem carnem, in qua spíritus vitæ est subter cælum. Univérsa quæ in terra sunt, consuméntur. Ponámque fœdus meum tecum: et ingrediéris arcam tu, et fílii tui, uxor tua, et uxóres filiórum tuórum tecum. Et ex cunctis animántibus universæ carnis bina indúces in arcam, ut vivant tecum: masculíni sexus, et feminíni. De volúcribus iuxta genus suum, et de iuíméntis in génere suo, et ex omni réptili terræ secúndum genus suum: bina de ómnibus ingrediéntur tecum, ut possint vívere. Tolles ígitur tecum ex ómnibus escis, quæ mandi possunt, et comportábis apud te: et erunt tam tibi, quam illis in cibum. Fecit ígitur Noë ómnia, quæ præcéperat illi Deus. Erátque sexcentórum annórum, quan-do dilúvii aquæ inundavérunt super terram. Rupti sunt omnes fontes abys-si magnæ, et catarácctæ cæli apértæ sunt: et facta est plúvia super terram quadragínta diébus, et quadragínta nóctibus. In artículo diéi illius ingrés-sus est Noë, et Sem, et Cham, et Iapheth, filii eius, uxor illius, et tres uxóres filiórum eius cum eis in arcam: ipsi, et omne animal secúndum genus suum, universáque iuménta in génere suo, et omne, quod movétur super terram in génere suo, cunctúmque voláti-and I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of timber planks: thou shalt make little rooms in the ark, and thou shalt pitch it within and without. And thus shalt thou make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits: the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. Thou shalt make a window in the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish the top of it: and the door of the ark thou shalt set in the side: with lower, middle chambers, and third stories shalt thou make it. Behold I will bring the waters of a great flood upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, under heaven. All things that are in the earth shall be consumed. And I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt enter into the ark, thou and thy sons, and thy wife, and the wives of thy sons with thee. And of every living creature of all flesh, thou shalt bring two of a sort into the ark, that they may live with thee: of the male sex, and the female. Of fowls according to their kind, and of beasts in their kind, and of every thing that creepeth on the earth according to its kind; two of every sort shall go in with thee, that they may live. Thou shalt take unto thee of all food that may be eaten, and thou shalt lay it up with thee: and it shall be food for thee and them. And Noe did all things which the Lord had commanded him. And he was six hundred years old, when the waters of the flood overflowed the earth. All the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the flood gates of heaven were opened: And the rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. In the selfsame day Noe, and Sem, and Cham, and Japheth his sons: his wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, went into the ark: They and every beast according to its kind, and all the cattle in their kind, and every thing that moveth upon the earth according to its kind, and
le secúndum genus suum. Porro arca ferebátur super aquas. Et aque præva-
luérunt nimis super terram: opertíque
sunt omnes montes excélsi sub univér-
so cælo. Quíndecim cúbitis áltior fuit
aqua super montes, quos operúerat.
Consumptáque est omnis caro, quæ
movebátur super terram, vólucrum,
animántium, bestiárum, omniumque
reptílium, quæ reptant super terram.
Remánsit autem solus Noë, et qui cum
eo erant in arca. Obtinuerúntque aque
terram centum quinquagínta diébus.
Recordátus autem Deus Noë, cuncto-
rúmque animántium et ómnium iu-
mentórum, quæ erant cum eo in arca,
addúxit spíritum super terram, et im-
minútæ sunt aquæ. Et clausi sunt fon-
tes abýssi, et cataráctæ cæli: et prohíbi-
tæ sunt plúviæ de cælo. Reversæque
sunt aquæ de terra eúntes, et redeún-
tes: et cœpérunt mínui post centum
quinquagínta dies. Cumque transís-
sent quadragínta dies, apériens Noë fe-
néstram arcæ, quam fécerat, dimísit
corvum, qui egrediebátur, et non re-
vertebátur, donec siccaréntur aquæ su-
per terram. Emísit quoque colúmbam
post eum, ut vidéret, si iam cessássent
aquæ super fáciem terræ. Quæ cum
non invenísset ubi requiésceret pes
eius, revérsa est ad eum in arcam:
aquæ enim erant super univérsam ter-
ram: extendítque manum, et ap-
prehénsam íntulit in arcam. Exspe-
tavit autem ultra septem diébus álíis,
rursum dimísit colúmbam ex arca. At
illa venit ad eum ad vésperam, portans
ramum olívæ viréntibus fóliis in ore
suo. Intelléxit ergo Noë, quod cessás-
sent aque super terram. Exspe-
tátisque nihilóminus septem álíos
dies: et emísit colúmbam, quæ non est
revérsæ ultra ad eum. Locútus est au-
tem Deus ad Noë, dicens: Egréder e de
arca, tu, et uxor tua, fílii tui, et uxóres
every fowl according to its kind. And the
ark was carried upon the waters. And the
waters prevailed beyond measure upon
the earth: and all the high mountains
under the whole heaven were covered.
The water was fifteen cubits higher than
the mountains which it covered. And all
flesh was destroyed that moved upon the
earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of
beasts, and of all creeping things that
creep upon the earth. And Noe only
remained, and they that were with him in
the ark. And the waters prevailed upon
the earth a hundred and fifty days. And
God remembered Noe, and all the living
creatures, and all the cattle which were
with him in the ark, and brought a wind
upon the earth, and the waters were
abated. The fountains also of the deep,
and the flood gates of heaven were shut
up, and the rain from heaven was
restrained. And the waters returned from
off the earth going and coming: and they
began to be abated after a hundred and
fifty days. And after that forty days were
passed, Noe, opening the window of the
ark which he had made, sent forth a raven:
Which went forth and did not return, till
the waters were dried up upon the earth.
He sent forth also a dove after him, to see
if the waters had now ceased upon the face
of the earth. But she, not finding where
her foot might rest, returned to him into
the ark: for the waters were upon the
whole earth: and he put forth his hand,
and caught her, and brought her into the
ark. And having waited yet seven other
days, he again sent forth the dove out of
the ark. And she came to him in the
evening, carrying a bough of an olive tree,
with green leaves, in her mouth. Noe
therefore understood that the waters were
ceased upon the earth. And he stayed yet
other seven days: and he sent forth the
dove, which returned not any more unto
him. And God spoke to Noe, saying: Go

Orémus.

Flectamus genua.

R. Leváte.

Oratio

D Deus, incommutábilis virtus, et lu-

men ætérnum: réspice propítius

ad totíus Ecclésiae tuae miráble sacra-
méntum, et opus salútis humánæ, per-
pétuae dispositiónis efféctu tranquíl-
lius operáre; totúsque mundus expe-
riátur et vídeat, deiécta érigi, inveterá-
ta renovári, et per ipsum redire ómnia
in intégrum, a quo sumpsère principi-
pium: Dóminus nostrum Iesum Chri-
stum Fílium tuum: Qui tecum vivit.

Let us pray.

Let us kneel.

R. Arise

Prayer

O God, unchangeable virtue, and light
eternal, look mercifully upon the won-
derful sacrament of Thy whole Church, and
perform in peace the work of human
salvation, and let the whole world feel and
see the things lifted up that were cast
down, the worn out things renewed, and
that all things are made whole through
Him from Whom they had their origin,
Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who
with Thee liveth and reigneth.

COMMENTARY

The third Prophecy tells us the moving events of Abraham who sacrifices his son Isaac, and who, for his faith merits to become the prototype and the Patriarch of an immense people of believers. The sacrifice of Isaac symbolizes that of Jesus, whom the Eternal Father delivers to death for love of us.

PROPHETIA TERTIA

Gen. 22,1-19

In diébus illis: Tentávit Deus Abraham, et dixit ad eum: Abraham,

THIRD PROPHECY

Gn 22,1-19

A after these things, God tempted Abraham, and said to him; Abraham, Abraham. And he answered him: Here I am. He said to him: Take
Holy Saturday - The Prophecies


to Abraham a second time from heaven, saying: By my own self have I sworn, saith the Lord: because thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared thy only begotten son for my sake: I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that is by the sea shore: thy seed shall possess the gates of their enemies. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice. Abraham returned to his young men, and they went to Bersabee together, and he dwelt there.

Let us pray.

Let us kneel.

R/. Arise.

O God, the supreme Father of the faithful, Who dost multiply Thy children throughout the world by spreading abroad the grace of adoption, and Who, through the paschal sacrament, dost make Thy servant Abraham the Father of all the nations, as Thou didst swear, grant that Thy people may worthily enter into the grace of Thy vocation. Through Our Lord.

COMMENTARY

The fourth Prophecy, taken from Exodus, was placed here, both as a preface to the Canticle of Moses, which in ancient times was part of the Odes to be sung in the Morning Office, and also because of the prodigious passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea being one of the symbols of holy baptism, since it recalls the most precious Blood of the Divine Redeemer, through whom man has been saved.

PROPHETIA QUARTA

Ex. 14,24-31 et 15,1

In diébus illis: Factum est in vigília matutína, et ecce, respíciens Dómini super castra Ægyptiórum per colúmnam ignis, et nubis, interfécit exércitum eórum: et subvérít rotas cúrruum, ferebantúrque in profúndum. Dixérunt ergo Ægyptii: Fugiámus I-

**COMMENTARY**

The famous Canticle of Moses follows, intoned as the Jewish people came forth from the Red Sea. The terrible hand of God manifested itself against the idolatrous and obstinate Egyptians, while He maintained a truly maternal tenderness towards the people entrusted to Him.

**Tractus**


**Tract**

*Let us sing to the Lord: for he is gloriously magnified: the horse and the rider He hath thrown into the sea: He is become my helper and protector unto salvation. V. He is my God, and I will glorify Him: the God of my Father, and I will exalt Him. V. The Lord crushing wars; the Lord is His name.*

**Orémus.**

Flectámus génua.

Rx. Leváte.

**Tract**

*Let us pray.*

*Let us kneel.*

Rx. Arise.
Oratio

Deus, cuius antiqua miracula etiam nostris sæculis coruscáre sentímus: dum, quod uni pópulo, a persecutione Ægyptiaca liberándo, dexteræ tuae potentia contulísti, id in salútem génitum per aquam regen rationis operátis: præsta; ut in Ábrá hæ filios, et in israéliticam dignitatem, totius mundi tráneat plenitúdo. Per Dóminum nostrum.

Prayer

O God, of Whose wondrous works of old we feel the splendor even in our days, when Thou dost perform for the salvation of all peoples, through the water of regeneration, that which Thou didst for one people, delivering it from the Egyptian persecutions by the power of Thy right hand, grant that the fullness of all the world be shared by the sons of Abraham and with the dignity of Israel. Through Our Lord.

COMMENTARY

The fifth Prophecy is taken from Isaiah and refers to the vocation of the Gentiles, thanks to the faith and the baptismal washing. To attain it, it is not necessary, as in the Old Testament, to observe legal justice and consanguinity with Israel, but only the living faith in Christ the Redeemer suffices.

PROPHETIA QUINTA
Is. 54,17 et 55,1-11


FIFTH PROPHECY
Is. 54,17; 55,1-11

This is the inheritance of the servants of the Lord, and their justice with Me, saith the Lord. All you that thirst, come to the waters: and you that have no money make haste, buy, and eat: come ye, buy wine and milk without money, and without any price. Why do you spend money for that which is not breed, and your labour for that which doth not satisfy you? Hearken diligently to me, and eat that which is good, and your soul shall be delighted in fatness. Incline your ear and come to me: hear and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, the faithful mercies of David. Behold I have given him for a witness to the people, for a leader and a master to the Gentiles. Behold thou shalt call a nation, which thou knewest not: and the nations that knew not thee shall run to thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel, for he hath glorified thee. Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found: call upon him, while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him
suas, et revertátur ad Dóminum, et mi-
serébitur eis, et ad Deum nostrum:
quóniam multus est ad ignoscéndum.
Non enim cogitatiónes meæ, cogitatió-
nes vestræ: neque viæ vestræ viæ
meæ, dicit Dóminus. Quia sicut exalt-
tántur cæli a terra, sic exaltátæ sunt
viæ meæ a viis vestris, et cogitatiónes
meæ a cogitatióribus vestris. Et quó-
modo descéndit imber, et nix de cælo,
et illuc ultra non revértitur, sed iné-
briat terram, et infúndit eam, et ger-
mináre eam facit, et dat semen serénti,
et panem comedénti; sic erit verbum
meum, quod egrediétur de ore meo:
non revertétur ad me vácuum, sed fá-
ciet, quæcúmque vólui, et prosperábi-
tur in his, ad quæ misi illud: dicit Dó-
minus omnípotens.

Orémus.

Flectámus génua.

R. Leváte.

Oratio

Omnípotens sempitérne Deus,
multiplica in honórem nóminis
tui, quod patrum fidei spopondísti: et
promissiónis filios sacra adoptióne di-
láta; ut, quod prióres sancti non dubi-
tavérunt futúrum, Ecclésia tua magna
iam ex parte cognóscat implétum. Per
Dóminum nostrum.

Let us pray.

Let us kneel.

R. Arise.

Prayer

Almighty, eternal God, for the honor of
Thy name multiply what Thou didst
promise to the faith of the fathers, and
increase by holy adoption the sons of
promise, that, what the saints of old did
not doubt would be, Thy Church may
know to have been already in great part
fulfilled. Through Our Lord.

COMMENTARY

The sixth Prophecy is taken from Baruch and is among the most profound pages of
the Bible. It is like a careful examination of conscience. What has Israel gained
by relying on power, glory, and the pagan nations? It has collapsed.

PROPHETIA SEXTA

Audi, Israël, mandáta vitæ: áuribus
pércipe, ut scias prudéntiam. Quid
est, Israël, quod in terra inimicórum es?
Inveterásti in terra aliéna, coinquinátus
es cum mórtuis: deputátus es cum de-

SIXTH PROPHECY

Hear, O Israel, the commandments of
life: give ear, that thou mayest learn
wisdom. How happeneth it, O Israel, that
thou are in thy enemies' land? Thou art
grown old in a strange country: thou art
descendéntibus in inférnum. Dereliquísti fontem sapiéntiæ. Nam si in via Dei ambulásses, habitásses útique in pace sempitérna. Disce ubi sit prudéntia, ubi sit virtus, ubi sit intellectus: ut scias simul ubi sit longitúrnitas vitæ, et victus, ubi sit lumen oculórum, et pax. Quis invénit locum eius? et quis intrávit in thesáuros eius? Ubi sunt príncipes gén-tium, et qui dominántur super béstias, quæ sunt super terram? qui in ávibus cæli ludunt, qui argéntum thesaurízant, et aurum, in quo confídunt hómi-nes, et non est finis acquisitiónis eó-rum? qui argéntum fábricant, et sollíci-ti sunt, nec est invéntio óperum illó-rum? Extermináti sunt, et ad ínferos descendérunt, et álii loco eórum surre-xérunt. Íúvenes vidérunt lumen, et ha-bitavérunt super terram: viam autem disciplínae ignoravérunt, neque intellex-xérunt sémitas eius, neque filii eórum suscepérunt eam, a fácie ipsórum longe facta est: non est audíta in terra Chánaan, neque visa est in Theman. Filii quoque Agar, qui exqüirunt pru-déntiam, quæ de terra est, negotiatóres Merrhæ, et Theman, et fabulatóres, et exquisitóres prudéntiæ, et intellegéntiæ: viam autem sapiéntiæ nesciérunt, neque commemoráti sunt sémitas eius. O Israël, quam magna est domus Dei, et ingens locus possessiónis eius! Magnus est, et non habet finem: excélsus, et imménsus. Ibi fuérunt gigántes nomináti illi, qui ab inítio fuérunt, statúra magna, sciéntes bellum. Non hos elégit Dóminus, neque viam disciplínae invénérunt: proptérea periérunt. Et quó-niam non habuérunt sapiéntiam, inte-riérunt propter suam insipiéntiam. Qvis ascéndit in cælum, et accépit eam, et edúxit eam de núbibus? Qvis trans-fretávit mare, et invénit illam? et attu-lit illam super aurum eléctum? Non est qui possit scire vias eius, neque qui ex-defiled with the dead: thou art counted with them that go down into hell. Thou hast forsaken the fountain of wisdom: For if thou hadst walked in the way of God, thou hadst surely dwelt in peace for ever. Learn where is wisdom, where is strength, where is understanding: that thou mayst know also where is length of days and life, where is the light of the eyes, and peace. Who hath found out her place? and who hath gone in to her treasures? Where are the princes of the nations, and they that rule over the beasts that are upon the earth? That take their diversion with the birds of the air. That hoard up silver and gold, wherein men trust, and there is no end of their getting? who work in silver and are solicitous, and their works are unsearchable. They are cut off, and are gone down to hell, and others are risen up in their place. Young men have seen the light, and dwelt upon the earth: but the way of knowledge they have not known, Nor have they understood the paths thereof, neither have their children received it, it is far from their face. It hath not been heard of in the land of Chanaan, neither hath it been seen in Theman. The children of Agar also, that search after the wisdom that is of the earth, the merchants of Merrha, and of Theman, and the tellers of fables, and searchers of prudence and understanding: but the way of wisdom they have not known, neither have they remembered her paths. O Israel, how great is the house of God, and how vast is the place of his possession! It is great, and hath no end; it is high and immense. There were the giants, those renowned men that were from the beginning, of great stature, expert in war. The Lord chose not them, neither did they find the way of knowledge: therefore did they perish. And because they had not wisdom, they perished through their folly. Who hath gone up into heaven, and taken her, and brought her preferably to chosen gold? There is none that is able to know her ways, nor that can search out her paths: But he that knoweth all things, knoweth
†quirat sémitas eius: sed qui scit univér-
sa, novit eam, et adinvénit eam pru-
dentia sua: qui præparávit terram in
aetérno témpore, et replévit eam pecú-
dibus, et quadrupédiis: qui emíttit lu-
men, et vátit: et vocávit illud, et obóédit
illi in tremóre. Stellæ autem dedérunt
lumen in custódìis suis, et lætátæ sunt:
vocátæ sunt, et dixérunt: Adsumus: et
luxérunt ei cum iucunditàte, qui fecit il-
las. Hic est Deus noster, et non æstimá-
bitur álìus advérsus eum. Hic adinvé-
nit omnem viam disciplínæ, et trádidit
illum Iacob púero suo, et Israël dilécto
suo. Post hæc in terris visus est, et cum
hominibus conversátus est.

Orémus.

† Let us pray.

† Let us kneel.

† Arise

God, Who dost ever multiply Thy
Church by the calling of the nations,
mercifully grant that those whom Thou
dost wash with the water of baptism may
be guarded by Thy continual protection.
Through Our Lord.

**COMMENTARY**

The seventh Prophecy describes the tragic vision of Ezekiel. God through the Prophet
will infuse movement, spirit and life on those skeletons and build up a huge army that will
form the new people of his predilection: the people of God. This change has an
entirely spiritual meaning: God will restore the ruins of Zion through the Gentiles,
who in Baptism will receive the grace of the Holy Ghost and reassemble the spiritual
seed of Abraham. This mystical resurrection of peoples, due to the outpouring of the
gift of the Paraclete, in turn overshadows the miracle of the final resurrection of the dead.

the face of the plain, and they were exceeding dry. And he said to me: Son of man, dost thou think these bones shall live? And I answered: O Lord God, thou knowest. And he said to me: Prophesy concerning these bones; and say to them: Ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will send spirit into you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to grow over you, and will cover you with skin: and I will give you spirit and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord. And I prophesied as he had commanded me: and as I prophesied there was a noise, and behold a commotion: and the bones came together, each one to its joint. And I saw, and behold the sinews, and the flesh came up upon them: and the skin was stretched out over them, but there was no spirit in them. And he said to me: Prophesy to the spirit, prophesy, O son of man, and say to the spirit: Thus saith the Lord God: Come, spirit, from the four winds, and blow upon these slain, and let them live again. And I prophesied as he had commanded me: and the spirit came into them, and they lived: and they stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. And he said to me: Son of man: All these bones are the house of Israel: they say: Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost, and we are cut off. Therefore prophesy, and say to them: Thus saith the Lord God: Behold I will open your graves, and will bring you out of your sepulchres, O my people: and will bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall have opened your sepulchres, and shall have brought you out of your graves, O My people: And shall have put my spirit in you, and you shall live, and I shall make you rest upon your own land; saith the Lord almighty.
Orémus.
Flectámus génua.
R̄. Leváte.

Oratio

Deus, qui nos ad celebrándum paschále sacraméntum, utriúsque Testaménti páginis intríus: da nobis intelligere misericórdiam tuam; ut ex perceptióne præséntium múnerum, firma sit expectátio futurórum. Per Dóminum nostrum.

Let us pray.
Let us kneel.
R̄. Arise.

Prayer

O God, Who dost instruct us in the pages of both testaments how to celebrate the paschal sacrament, grant us to understand Thy mercy, that by the reception of the present gifts, our expectation of those to come may be confirmed. Through Our Lord.

COMMENTARY

The eighth Prophecy, taken from Isaiah, deals with the repudiation of the Old Covenant, and the promulgation of the New. The Lord will punish Israel, provoking and destroying the Kingdom, when the many nations begin to unite with a single Bridegroom, Jesus Christ. God will restore in a spiritual sense the ruins of the ancient dominion of Judah. He will wash the stains of his believers, and with the fire of the Holy Ghost he will purify them. With this, in expressive terms, Baptism and Confirmation are announced.

PROPHETIA OCTAVA
Is. 4,1-6


EIGHTH PROPHECY
Is. 4,1-6

In that day, seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, we will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, take away our reproach. In that day the bud of the Lord shall be in magnificence and glory, and the fruit of the earth shall be high, and a great joy to them that shall have escaped of Israel.  And it shall come to pass, that every one that shall be left in Sion, and that shall remain in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, every one that is written in life in Jerusalem. If the Lord shall wash away the filth of the daughters of Sion, and shall wash away the blood of Jerusalem out of the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And the Lord will create upon every place of mount Sion, and where he is called upon, a cloud by day, and a smoke and the brightness of a flaming fire in the night: for over all the glory shall be a protection. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shade in the daytime from the heat, and for a security and covert from the whirlwind, and from rain.
COMMENTARY

Here follows the Canticle of Isaiah concerning the vineyard of the Lord, a sterile and ungrateful vineyard, which, thanks to the diligence of the wine-maker in cultivating it, has responded by producing thorns and fruits of bitterness. This vineyard of reprobation is the house of Israel, but, in a broad sense, it can also be applied to every unfaithful soul.

Tract Is. 5: 1-2
The beloved had a vineyard on a hill, in a fruitful place. V. And he surrounded it with a wall, and dug round about it, and he planted the vine of Sorec, and built a tower in the midst of it. V. And he dug a wine-press therein; for the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel.

Let us pray.
Let us kneel.

Prayer
O God, Who by the voice of the holy prophets hast manifested, in all the Church and in every region where Thou dost hold sway, that Thou art a sower of good seed and dost make choice branches to grow, grant unto Thy people, who are reckoned before Thee both as vines and as cornfields, that, the disorder of thorns and brambles being cleared away, they may be made to bring forth worthy fruit. Through our Lord.

COMMENTARY

In the ninth Prophecy is described the mosaic rites of the immolation of the lamb and of the Easter banquet. The lamb symbolizes Jesus, who washes in his blood the sins of the world. The lamb is sacrificed and prepared in a religious banquet, signifying our incorporation and union with the Redeemer in the grace of the Sacrament. The attitude of the Jews, while they ate the lamb, was likened to those who were about to embark on a long journey, because the Eucharist is the viaticum of this mortal pilgrimage, which crosses the earth to reach Heaven.

PROPHETIA NONA Ex. 12,1-11

In those days, the Lord said to Moses and Aaron in that land of Egypt: This month shall be to you the beginning of months: it shall be the first months of the year.

NINTH PROPHECY Ex. 12,1-11

In diébus illis: Dixit Dóminus ad Móysen et Aaron in terra Ægýpti: Mensis iste, vobis principium mén-sium: primus erit in ménibus anni.
Speak ye to the whole assembly of the children of Israel, and say to them: On the tenth day of this month let every man take a lamb by their families and houses. But if the number be less than may suffice to eat the lamb, he shall take unto him his neighbour that joineth to his house, according to the number of souls which may be enough to eat the lamb. And it shall be a lamb without blemish, a male, of one year: according to which rite also you shall take a kid. And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month: and the whole multitude of the children of Israel shall sacrifice it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood thereof, and put it upon both the side posts, and on the upper door posts of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh that night roasted at the fire, and unleavened bread with wild lettuce. You shall not eat thereof any thing raw, nor boiled in water, but only roasted at the fire: you shall eat the head with the feet and entrails thereof. Neither shall there remain any thing of it until morning. If there be any thing left, you shall burn it with fire. And thus you shall eat it: you shall gird your reins, and you shall have shoes on your feet, holding staves in your hands, and you shall eat in haste: for it is the Phase (that is the Passage) of the Lord.

Orémus.

Flectámus génua.

R/. Leváte.

Prayer

Omnipotens sempitérne Deus, qui in ómnium óperum túorum dispensatione mirábilis es: intelligént redémpti tui, non fuísse excelléntius quod inítió factus est mundus, quam quod in fine sæculórum Pascha nostrum immolátus est Christus: Qui te-cum vivit.
The tenth Prophecy, from the book of Jonah, is identical to the Lesson at Mass on Monday after Passion Sunday. Jonah, as was revealed by Jesus himself in the Gospel, is the symbol of the Savior buried in the heart of the earth, and then returned to life and light again. Jonah preaches penance to the Ninevites, who, believing the words of the Prophet, proclaim a collective fast, for the animals as well as the citizens. This paradoxical style is typical of the Semitic soul. However, it reveals to us that not only the individual but also the nation, must socially express their devotion to God; which is accomplished most excellently by means of the sacred Liturgy.

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**PROPHETIA DECIMA**

\[ \text{Ion. 3,1-10} \]


**TENTH PROPHECY**

\[ \text{Jonas 3,1-10} \]

In those days the word of the Lord came to Jonas the second time, saying, Arise, and go to Ninive the great city: and preach in it the preaching that I bid thee. And Jonas arose, and went to Ninive, according to the word of the Lord: now Ninive was a great city of three days' journey. And Jonas began to enter into the city one day's journey: and he cried, and said: Yet forty days, and Ninive shall be destroyed. And the men of Ninive believed in God: and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least. And the word came to the king of Ninive; and he rose up out of his throne, and cast away his robe from him, and was clothed with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published in Ninive from the mouth of the king and of his princes, saying: Let neither men nor beasts, oxen nor sheep, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water. And let men and beasts be covered with sackcloth, and cry to the Lord with all their strength, and let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the iniquity that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn, and forgive: and will turn away from his fierce anger, and we shall not perish? And God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil way: and the Lord our God had mercy upon His people.
Orémus.
Flectámus génua.
R. Leváte.

Oratio

D eus, qui diversitátem géntium in confessióné tuo nómínis adunásti: da nobis, et velle, et posse, quæ præcipis; ut, pópulo ad æternitátem vocáto, una sit fides méntium et piétas actionum. Per Dóminum nostrum.

Let us pray.
Let us kneel.

Prayer

O God, Who hast joined together the diversity of the people in the confession of Thy name, grant us both to desire what Thou commandest and the power to perform it, that they may be one faith in the hearts, and one piety in the deeds, of the people called to eternal life. Through Our Lord.

**COMMENTARY**

The Eleventh Prophecy contains a type of testament of Moses in which he seems to reject the Hebrew people because of their unfaithfulness to the Lord. He makes this protest in a very solemn way, in the presence of the elders and the scribes, and against them he curses every sort of evil. But what horrible crime had the Jewish people been guilty of? The whole scene is symbolic. Moses declares that he knows that infidelity will happen after his death, or rather, in extrémo témpore, that is, in the distant age of the world, when the Jews would deny Jesus Christ, the Prophet par excellence announced by Moses, who commanded Israel to listen to Him, just as they had listened to himself.

**PROPHETIA UNDECIMA**

**Deut. 31,22-30**


**Eleventh Prophecy**

**Dt. 31,22-30**

I n those days, Moses wrote the canticle and taught it to the children of Israel. And the Lord commanded Josue the son of Nun, and said: Take courage, and be valiant: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I have promised, and I will be with thee. Therefore after Moses had wrote the words of this law in a volume, and finished it: He commanded the Levites, who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord. Saying: Take this book, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God: that it may be there for a testimony against thee. For I know thy obstinacy, and thy most stiff neck, While I am yet living, and going in with you, you have always been rebellious against the Lord: how much more when I shall be dead? Gather unto me all the ancients of your tribes, and your doctors, and I will speak these words in their hearing, and will call heaven and earth to
cælum et terram. Novi enim, quod post mortem meam iníque agétis et declinábitis cito de via, quam præcépi vobis: et occurrent vobis mala in extrémo témpore, quando fecéritis malum in conspéctu Dómini, ut irritétis eum per ópera mánuum vestrárum. Locútus est ergo Móyses, audiénte univérso cœtu Israël, verba cárminis huius, et ad finem usque complévit.

witness against them. For I know that, after my death, you will do wickedly, and will quickly turn aside from the way that I have commanded you: and evils shall come upon you in the latter times, when you shall do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him by the works of your hands. Moses therefore spoke, in the hearing of the whole assembly of Israel, the words of this canticle, and finished it even to the end.

**COMMENTARY**

Here following the famous Mosaic canticle of Deuteronomy, which in the Jewish liturgy was destined for sabbatical solemnity. Moses calls on heaven and earth to witness to his curses, so as not to be in solidarity with a people who are about to commit deicide.

### Tractus

**Deut. 32,1-4**

Atténde, cælum, et loquar: et audiat terra verba ex ore meo. 

V. Exspectetur sicut plúvia elóquium meum: et descendant sicut ros verba mea. 

V. Sicut imber super grámen, et sicut nix super fænum: quia nomen Dómini invocábó. 

V. Date magnitúdinem Deo nostro: Deus, vera ópera eius, et omnes viæ eius iudícia. 

V. Deus fidelis, in quo non est iniquitas: iustus et sanctus Dóminus nostrum.

**Orémus.**

Flectámus génua. 

R. Leváte.

**Oratio**

Deus, celsitúdo humílium, et fortítúdo rectórum, qui per sanctum Móysen, púerum tuum, ita erudíre pópulum tuum sacri cárminis tui decantatióné volúísti, ut illa legis iterátio fieret étiam nostra diréctio: éxcita in omnem iustificatárum géntium pleni-túdinem poténtiam tuam, et da lætí-tiam, mitigándo terrórem; ut ómnium peccátis tua remissióne délétis, quod denuntiátum est in ultiónome, tránseat in salútem. Per Dóminum.

### Tract

**Dt. 32,1-4**

Hear, O heaven, and I will speak: and let the earth give ear to the words out of my mouth. 

V. Let my speech be expected like rain; and my words descend like dew. 

V. As a shower upon the grass, and like snow upon hay: because I will invoke the name of the Lord. 

V. Give ye magnificence to our God: God's works are true, and all His ways are judgments. 

V. God is faithful, in whom there is no iniquity: the Lord is just and holy.

**Let us pray.**

Let us kneel. 

R. Arise.

**Prayer**

O God, the exaltation of the lowly and the strength of the just, Who wast pleased so to teach Thy people, through Moses, Thy holy servant, by the chanting of Thy sacred hymn, that this repetition of the law might become our instruction also, put forth Thy power upon the whole body of the justified nations, and give them joy by allaying their fear, so that all their sins being wiped out by Thy forgiveness, that which was proclaimed for vengeance may turn into salvation. Through our Lord.
COMMENTARY

The twelfth Prophecy tells the story of the three children thrown into the furnace at Babylon for not having worshiped the golden statue of Nebuchadnezzar. The scene was very familiar to the artists of the catacombs, who reproduced it on the sarcophagi, because it symbolized the heroic strength of the Martyrs. The three children, freed from the flames, also symbolize the baptized, freed from the odor of concupiscence who, swearing fidelity to God through baptism, will be protected in danger, just like the three young men in the furnace.

PROPHETIA DUODECIMA
Dan. 3,1-24


T WELFTH PROPHETY
Dn. 3,1-24

In those days, King Nebuchadnezzar made a statue of gold, of sixty cubits high, and six cubits broad, and he set it up in the plain of Dura of the province of Babylon. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to call together the nobles, the magistrates, and the judges, the captains, the rulers, and governors, and all the chief men of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the statue which king Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Then the nobles, the magistrates, and the judges, the captains, and rulers, and the great men that were placed in authority, and all the princes of the provinces, were gathered together to come to the dedication of the statue, which king Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before the statue which king Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Then a herald cried with a strong voice: To you it is commanded, O nations, tribes, and languages: That in the hour that you shall hear the sound of the trumpet, and of the flute, and of the harp, of the sackbut, and of the psaltery, and of the symphony, and of all kind of music; ye fall down and adore the golden statue which king Nebuchadnezzar hath set up. But if any man shall not fall down and adore, he shall the same hour be cast into a furnace of burning fire. Upon this therefore, at the time when all the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the flute, and the harp, of the sackbut, and the psaltery, of the symphony, and all kind of music: all the nations, tribes, and languages fell down and...
Statimque in ipso témpore accedéntes viri Chaldæi accusavérunt Iudæos, dixerúntque Nabuchodónosor regi: Rex, in ætérnum vive: tu, rex, posúísti decrétum, ut omnis homo, qui audíerit sónitum tubæ, fistulæ, et cítharæ, sambúcæ, et psaltérii, et symphóniæ, et universi géneris musicórum, prostérnat se, et adóret státuam áuream: si quis autem non prócidens adoráverit, mittátur in fornácem ignis ardéntis. Sunt ergo viri Iudæi, quos constituísti super ópera regiónis Babylónis, Sidrach, Misach et Abdénago: viri isti contempsérunt, rex, decrétum tuum: deos tuos non co-lunt, et státuam áuream, quam erexísti, non adórant. Tunc Nabuchodónosor in furóre et in ira præcépit ut addúcérantur Sidrach, Misach et Abdénago: qui conféstim addúcti sunt in conspéc-tu regis. Pronuntiánsque Nabuchodó-nosor rex, ait eis: Veréne, Sidrach, Misach et Abdénago, deos meos non cólitis, et státuam áuream, quam con-stítiui, non adórantis? Nunc ergo si estis paráti, quacúmque hora audiéritis só-nitum tubæ, fistulæ, cítharae, sambúcæ, et psaltérii, et symphóniae, omnísque généris musicórum, prostérniti vos et adoráte státuam, quam feci: quod si non adoráveritis, eádem hora mittémini in fornácem ignis ardéntis: et quis est Deus, qui erípiet vos de ma-nu mea? Respondéntes Sidrach, Misach et Abdénago, dixérunt regi Nabuchodó-nosor: Non opóret nos de hac re responsére tibi. Ecce enim, Deus noster, quem cólimus, potest erípere nos de camíno ignis ardéntis, et de máni-bus tuis, o rex, liberáre. Quod si nolúe-rit, notum sit tibi; rex, quia deos tuos non cólimus, et státuam áuream, quam erexísti, non adorámus. Tunc Nabu-adored the golden statue which king Nabuchodonosor had set up. And presently at that very time some Chaldeans came and accused the Jews, And said to king Nabucho-donosor: O king, live for ever: Thou, O king, hast made a decree that every man that shall hear the sound of the trumpet, the flute, and the harp, of the sackbut, and the psaltery, of the symphony, and of all kind of music, shall prostrate himself, and adore the golden statue: And that if any man shall not fall down and adore, he should be cast into a furnace of burning fire. Now there are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the works of the province of Babylon, Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago: these men, O king, have slighted thy decree: they worship not thy gods, nor do they adore the golden statue which thou hast set up. Then Nabu-chodonosor in fury, and in wrath, commanded that Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago should be brought: who immediately were brought before the king. And Nabucho-donosor the king spoke to them, and said: Is it true, O Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago, that you do not worship my gods, nor adore the golden statue that I have set up? Now therefore if you be ready at what hour soever you shall hear the sound of the trumpet, flute, harp, sackbut, and psaltery, and symphony, and of all kind of music, prostrate yourselves, and adore the statue which I have made: but if you do not adore, you shall be cast the same hour into the furnace of burning fire: and who is the God that shall deliver you out of my hand? Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago answered and said to king Nabuchodonosor: We have no occasion to answer thee concerning this matter. For behold our God, whom we worship, is able to save us from the furnace of burning fire, and to deliver us out of the hands, O king. But if he will not, be it known to thee, O king, that we will not worship thy gods, nor adore the golden statue which thou hast set up. Then was

Holy Week
Nabuchodonosor filled with fury: and the countenance of his face was changed against Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago, and he commanded that the furnace should be heated seven times more than it had been accustomed to be heated. And he commanded the strongest men that were in his army, to bind the feet of Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago, and to cast them into the furnace of burning fire. And immediately these men were bound and were cast into the furnace of burning fire, with their coats, and their caps, and their shoes, and their garments. For the king’s commandment was urgent, and the furnace was heated exceedingly. And the flame of the fire slew those men that had cast in Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago. But these three men, that is, Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago, fell down bound in the midst of the furnace of burning fire. And they walked in the midst of the flame, praising God and blessing the Lord.

The *Flectámus génua* is not said, but only *Orémus.*

Orémus.

Omnipotens sempiternus Deus, spes unica mundi, qui Prophetarum tuorum praecónio praesentium temporum declarásti mystéria: auge pópuli tui vota placátus; quia in nullo fidélium, nisi ex tua inspiratióne, proveniunt quaráulibet increménta virtútum. Per Dóminum nostrum.
PART VI: THE LITANY

BRIEF HISTORY

In ancient times, during the long ceremony of Baptism, the congregation remained in church with the lower clergy and the Cantors, because there was not sufficient room in the baptistery. Moreover, since Baptism was administered by immersion, a certain reserve was required so that Christian modesty would not be offended. To sanctify the time, the Litanies were chanted three times. The first time each invocation was repeated seven times, then five and then finally three. This is the reason why even today, upon the return of the procession from the baptistery, the Litanies are sung, repeating each invocation twice.

The text of these *Litanies*, here described in the Missal, is somewhat shorter than that for the Rogations. The reason - besides the great liturgical freedom which, reigned in the Church until the thirteenth century - is that the *Litany* of Rogation is a genuine popular processional chant with refrains which can be lengthened in proportion to the duration of the procession, while the *Litany* of Holy Saturday, which even today the sacred Ministers recite prostrate on the ground before the Altar, is a real *supplicatio litánica*, and therefore ordinarily is not too verbose.

Where there is no baptismal font, after the last Prophecy and its Prayer, the Celebrant lays the chasuble aside and, with his Ministers, prostrates himself before the Altar, where three purple cushions have been placed at equal distance on the edge of the predella or on the second step of the altar. All the others kneel, while the two cantors in the middle of the choir sing the Litanies of the Saints in a double rite (that is, the Clergy repeating all that the Cantors say, until the end). At the words *Peccatóres*, the Celebrant and the Ministers stand up and, having given due reverence to the Cross, go to the sacristy, where they don white vestments to solemnly celebrate Mass.

LITANY


Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Christ hear us. Christ graciously hear us. Christ hear us. Christ graciously hear us. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. God the Father of heaven, have mercy on us. God, the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us. God the Holy Ghost, have mercy on us. Holy Trinity one God, have mercy on us. Holy Mary pray for us. Holy Mother of God, Holy Virgin of virgins, St. Michael, St. Gabriel, St. Raphael,
Omnes sancti Angeli et Archángeli, oráte pro nobis.

All ye holy angels and archangels, pray for us.

Omnes sancti beatórum Spirituum órdines, oráte.

All ye holy orders of blessed spirits,

Sancte Ioánnes Baptísta, ora pro nobis.

St. John the Baptist,

Sancte Ioseph, ora.

St. Joseph,

Omnes sancti Patriárchæ et Prophétæ, oráte.

All ye holy patriarchs and prophets,

Sancte Petre, ora.

St. Peter,

Sancte Paule, ora.

St. Paul,

Sancte Andréa, ora.

St. Andrew,

Sancte Ioánnes, ora.

St. John,

Omnes sancti Apóstoli et Evangelístæ, oráte.

All ye holy apostles and evangelists,

Omnes sancti Discípuli Dómini, oráte.

All ye holy disciples of Our Lord,

Sancte Stéphane, ora.

St. Stephen,

Sancte Laurénti, ora.

St. Lawrence,

Sancte Vincénti, ora.

St. Vincent,

Omnes sancti Mártýres, oráte.

All ye holy martyrs,

Sancte Silvéster, ora.

St. Silvester,

Sancte Gregóri, ora.

St. Gregory,

Sancte Augustíne, ora.

St. Augustine,

Omnes sancti Pontifices et Confessóres, oráte.

All ye holy bishops and confessors,

Omnes sancti Doctóres, oráte.

All ye holy doctors,

Sancte Antóni, ora.

St. Anthony,

Sancte Benedicte, ora.

St. Benedict,

Sancte Domínice, ora.

St. Dominic,

Sancte Francísce, ora.

St. Francis,

Omnes sancti Sacerdótes et Levítæ, oráte.

All ye holy priest and levites,

Omnes sancti Monáchi et Eremítæ, oráte.

All ye holy monks and hermits,

Sancta María Magdaléna, ora.

St. Mary Magdalen,

Sancta Agnes, ora.

St. Agnes,

Sancta Cæcilia, ora.

St. Cecily,

Sancta Agatha, ora.

St. Agatha,

Sancta Anastásia, ora.

St. Anastasia,

Omnes sanctæ Vírgines et Víduæ, oráte.

All ye holy virgins and widows,

Omnes Sancti et Sanctæ Dei, intercédite pro nobis.

Intercede for us.

Propítius esto, parce nos, Dómine.

Be merciful to us, Spare us, O Lord.

Propítius esto, exáudi nos, Dómine.

Be merciful to us, Hear us, O Lord.

Ab omni malo, líbera nos, Dómine.

From all evil, O Lord, deliver us.

Ab omni peccáto, líbera.

From all sin,

A morte perpétua, líbera.

From everlasting death,
Through the mystery of Thy holy incarnation,
O Lord, deliver us.

Through Thy coming,
Through Thy nativity,
Through Thy baptism and holy fasting,

Through Thy cross and passion,
Through Thy death and burial,
Through Thy holy resurrection,

Through Thine admirable ascension,

In the day of judgment,
We sinners, beseech Thee, hear us.
That Thou spare us,
That Thou vouchsafe to rule and preserve
Thy holy Church,
That Thou vouchsafe to preserve our apostolic prelate and all ecclesiastical orders in holy religion,
That Thou vouchsafe to humble the enemies of Thy holy Church,
That Thou vouchsafe to grant peace and true concord to Christian kings and princes,

That Thou vouchsafe to confirm and preserve us in Thy holy service,

That Thou render eternal good things to all our benefactors,
That Thou vouchsafe to give and preserve the fruits of the earth,
That Thou vouchsafe to give eternal rest to all the faithful departed,

That Thou vouchsafe graciously to hear us,
Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, graciously hear us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Christ hear us.
Christ graciously hear us.
PART V: THE MASS

BRIEF HISTORY

In ancient times this Mass was celebrated at midnight, because it was thought that this was the time when Jesus had risen from the dead. The Fathers also called it the "Mass of the Catechumens," because the neophytes had been baptized shortly before. White vestments are used to conform to the purity of the baptized Catechumens and also because of the angel dressed in white as described in the Gospel.

Unlike all other Masses, this Mass does not have an Introit. (The Introit as a standard feature of Mass was introduced in Rome around the time of Celestine I, when Mass was no longer ordinarily preceded by the Office of the Vigil). Today, after the litany and the morning hymn Glória in excélsis - which at Rome had a very clear Easter meaning - the Celebrant immediately sings the Collect, which serves as the natural conclusion of the whole preceding Vigil rite. All that follows is no longer of a Catechetical nature, but formally a Eucharistic one. Since the original relationship between the twelve Vigil Lessons and the two brief Epistle and Gospel passages no longer exists, those two passages were added, by the 7th century, to the Collect.

The echo of the Alleluia returns, which for so many centuries was entirely particular to the Easter solemnity in Rome. At the time of the fifth century Christian historian Sozomen, one who did not come to hear the Easter Alleluia was considered cursed. St. Augustine attests that in his time the Alleluia was repeated throughout all fifty days of Easter, up to Pentecost. In Rome it was probably St. Gregory the Great that extended this chant to all Sundays outside Lent. It is possible, however, that in the fourth century, even in Rome, the Alleluia followed the chanting of the Gospel, just like the Greeks, and that St. Gregory moved it to just after the Epistle, thanks to his evangelical homilies.

The Offertory is not sung, because the Mass on Easter Vigil is much older than the introduction of this chant at Rome; although the Host and the Chalice are prepared on the corporal, with the usual rites of incensation over the Oblation.

Neither the Agnus Dei nor the Psalm for Communion are recited, since they are of later origin. The absence of the verse dona nobis pacem, in the late Middle Ages, must have contributed to the suppression of the Kiss of Peace before Communion which had always, according to the Roman Rite, been applied to the Sacra Mensa.

Once the Litanies are finished, the Introit is not said, but rather the Cantors begin the solemn Kýrie, which is repeated three times. Meanwhile, the Celebrant with the Ministers, in white vestments, goes to the Altar and recites the Psalm lúdica me, adding the Glória Patri: then, after having incensed the altar, he solemnly intones the Glória in excélsis, during which the bells are rung and the organ is simultaneously played. The sacred images within the church are then uncovered, if this can be done in a convenient way; otherwise they will be uncovered after Mass.
The Lord be with you.
And with thy Spirit.

Let us pray.

O God, Who dost illuminate this most sacred night with the glory of the Lord’s resurrection, preserve in the new offspring of Thy family the spirit which Thou hast given, that, being renewed in body and mind, they may render Thee pure service. Through the same.

LECTIO EPISPOLÆ BEATI PAULI APOSTOLI AD COLOSSIÆNS

Fratres: Si consurrexistis cum Christo, quæ sursum sunt quaerite, ubi Christus est in dextera Dei sedens: quæ sursum sunt sápite, non quæ super terram. Mórtui enim estis, et vita vestra est abscondita cum Christo in Deo. Cum Christus apparuerit, vita vestra: tunc et vos apparebitis cum ipso in gloria.

When the Epistle ends, the Celebrant begins the Alleluia singing it three times, each time raising the tone; the Choir, standing, in turn repeats it in the same tone as the Celebrant. Then the Choir continues singing the Confitémini.

COMMENTARY

The Alleluia, which means "Praise God", is a song of jubilation and is repeated six times, to give praise to each of the Three Divine Persons, first by the Celebrant and then by the people. The reason for such joy is shown in the verse Confitémini which follows the Alleluia.
O praise the Lord, all ye nations; and praise Him together, all ye people. For His mercy is confirmed upon us; and the truth of the Lord remaineth forever.

Candlesticks are not carried for the Gospel but only incense; the rest as usual.

The candles are not brought for the Gospel, to which liturgists in the medieval period have attributed a symbolic meaning. It is certain that whatever the origin may be, the Paschal Candle, erected alongside the ambo, excused the need for other candles this night. However, the absence of Gospel candles also demonstrates how the Resurrection of the Lord has not yet been made public and that the women have come to the tomb with perfumes, but the faith of the Resurrection does not yet shine in their souls. The incense, in fact, represents their perfumes, while the absence of the torches means that they still did not possess this faith; though it was from the women that the Apostles received the first announcement of the Resurrection of the Lord. And this was good and just that this preference be accorded to those pious women for their affection and loyalty. In fact, since the woman had been the first to cry after the sin, so she had to be the first to enjoy; she, who had brought the announcement of death to Adam, had to be the first herald of the Resurrection to the Church.

And in the end of the sabbath, when it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalen and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. And behold there was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and coming, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. And his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow. And for fear of him, the guards

The Creed is not said. Once the Gospel is over, the Celebrant says: Dóminus vobíscum and Orémus, does not read the Offertory and at the Lavabo adds the Glória Patri.

**COMMENTARY**

The Creed is not said because not all the followers of Jesus Christ believed, as yet, in his divinity; rather they were hidden for fear of the Jews. The Offertory is also omitted, because the women had gone to the tomb in silence to anoint their Master and because, after already being in that place, they could not anoint him and offer him their ointments, since he was Risen.

**Secret**

Suscie, quæsumus, Dómine, preces pópuli tui, cum oblátionibus hostiárum: ut paschálibus initiáta mystériis, ad æternitátis nobis medélam, te operánte, profíciant. Per Dóminum.

**Commentary**

In a custom that goes back to apostolic times, the faithful, before approaching the Body and Blood of the Lord, reciprocally exchanged the fraternal kiss, uttering the words: "Peace be with you." In this first Easter Mass this custom is omitted, because it was on the evening of the day of the Resurrection that Jesus addressed those words to the gathered disciples. Holy Church, always obedient to the least circumstances of the life of her heavenly Spouse, loves to reproduce them in her gestures. For this same reason the Agnus Dei is omitted today, which, besides, was not included before the seventh century, and which presents the words "Give us peace" on the third repetition.

Once the Communion is over, the Allelúia Antiphon is sung, followed by the chanting of Psalm 116. The Allelúia Antiphon is repeated and then, immediately, the Antiphon Vésperae autem sábbati is sung with the Magnificat, at the end of which the Antiphon Vésperae autem sábbati is repeated.
VESPERS

Ant.: Allelúia, allelúia, allelúia.

Psalmus 116

Laudáte Dóminum omnes gentes: * laudáte eum omnes pópuli.

Quóniam confirmáta est super nos misericórdia ejus: * et véritas Dómini manet in ætérnum.


Amen.

Ant.: Allelúia, allelúia, allelúia.

Psalm 116

O praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.

For his mercy is confirmed upon us: and the truth of the Lord remaineth for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

Ant.: Allelúia, allelúia, allelúia.

Neither the Chapter, the Hymn nor the Versicle are said; but immediately the Celebrant intones the Antiphon to the Magnificat. During the Magnificat, the Celebrant incenses the Altar.

Ant.: Vésperae autem sábbati, * quæ lucéscit in prima sábbati, venit Maria Magdáléne, et áltera María, vidére sepúlcrum, allelúia.

Magnificat † ánima mea Dóminum:

Et exsultávit spíritus meus * in Deo, salutári meo.

Quia respéxit humilitátem ancillæ suæ: * ecce enim ex hoc beátem me di-cent omnes generationes.

Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est: * et sanctum nomen eius.

Et misericórdia eius a progénie in progénies * timéntibus eum.

Fecit poténtiam in brácchio suo: * dispérsit supérbos mente cordis sui.

My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

Because He hath regarded the humility, of his handmaid: for behold form henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

Because he that is mighty hath done great things to me: and holy is his name.

And his mercy is from generation unto generation, to them that fear him.

He hath shewed might in His arm: He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart.
Depósuit poténtes de sede, * et exaltávit húmiles.
Esuriéntes implévit bonis: * et divítes dimísit inánes.
Suscépit Israël páerum suum, * recordátus misericórdiæ suæ:
Sicut locútus est ad patres nostros,
* Abraham, et sémini eius in sæcula.
Amen.

Ant.: Véspere autem sábbati, * qua lucéscit in prima sábbati, venit María Magdaléne, et áltera María, vidére sepúlcrum, allelúia.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble.
He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He hath received Israel His servant, being mindful of His mercy.
As He spoke to our fathers; to Abraham and his seed forever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

Ant.: But, in the evening of the sabbath * when it began to dawn, towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalen, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. Alleluia.

The Magnificat Antiphon is repeated by the choir, the Celebrant then goes in the middle, kissing the Altar, and says Dóminus vobíscum, and then sings the following Oration:

V. Dóminus vobíscum.
R. Et cum spíritu tuo.

Orémus.
Spirítum nobis, Dómine, tuae caritátis infúnde: ut, quos sacraméntis paschálibus satíásti, tua fácias pietáte concórdes. Per Dóminum... in unitáte eiúsdem.

V. Dóminus vobíscum.
R. Et cum spíritu tuo.

Let us pray.

Prayer

Pour upon us, O Lord, the spirit of Thy love, to make us on one heart, whom, by Thy tender mercy, Thou hast filled with Thy paschal sacrament. Though Our Lord.

V. The Lord be with you.
R. And with thy spirit.
The Deacon sings the *Ite, missa est* with double *Allelúia*, and finally the Celebrant, having said the *Pláceat tibi, Sancta Trínitas*, gives the Blessing as usual and reads the Gospel of St. John, *In principio*.

**COMMENTARY**

The Easter Vigil is the symbol of the expectation of the Divine Judge. He has warned us that he will come as a thief in the night, and since the most important affair of our life is at stake - our eternal salvation - no precaution is to be considered excessive when it comes to disposing us to that tremendous instant on which our eternity depends. The ancients, during the Easter Vigil, awaited the fulfillment of the longed for *parousia* of the Redeemer.

We know nothing about the time when it will come; we only know that it will come when we least expect it. Though it is not only the *parousia* that is sudden; during a Christian's day, Jesus comes to us so many times, suddenly, with His graces: what misery to let them go unnoticed! They pass and do not return. A grace that God offers us today, and which we allow to go to waste, will be like a precious treasure that - because of our lack of response - is lost forever.
Once the Communion is over, the *Allelúia* Antiphon is sung, followed by the chanting of Psalm 150. The *Allelúia* Antiphon is repeated and then, immediately, the Antiphon *Et valde mane* is sung with the *Benedictus*, at the end of which the Antiphon *Et valde mane* is repeated.

**Lauds**

**Ant.**: Allelúia, allelúia, allelúia.

**Psalmus 150**

Laudáte Dóminum in sanctis eius: *
laudáte eum in firmámento virtútis eius.

Laudáte eum in virtútibus eius, *
laudáte eum secúndum multitúdinem magnitúdinis eius.

Laudáte eum in sono tubæ, *
laudá-te eum in psaltério, et cíthara.

Laudáte eum in týmpano, et choro: *
laudáte eum in chordis et órgano
Laudáte eum in cýmbalis beneso-nántibus: †
laudáte eum in cýmbalis iubilatiónis: *
omnis spíritus laudet Dóminum.


Amen.

**Ant.**: Allelúia, allelúia, allelúia.

**Psalm 150**

Praise ye the Lord in his holy places:
praise ye him in the firmament of his power.

Praise ye him for his mighty acts: praise ye him according to the multitude of his greatness.

Praise him with sound of trumpet: praise him with psaltery and harp.

Praise him with timbrel and choir: praise him with strings and organs.

Praise him on high sounding cymbals: praise him on cymbals of joy: let every spirit praise the Lord.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

**Ant.**: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Neither the Chapter, the Hymn nor the Versicolare said; but immediately the Celebrant intones the Antiphon to the *Benedictus*. During the *Benedictus*, the Celebrant incenses the Altar.
Ant.: Et valde mane * una sabbatório-
rum, véniant ad monumentum, orto
iam sole, allelúia.

Benedíctus † Dóminus, Deus
* quia visitavit et fecit redemptionem
plebis suæ:
   Et eréxit cornu salútis nobis, * in do-
mo David púeri sui.
   Sicut locútus est per os sanctórum, * qui a sæculo sunt, prophetárum eius:
   Salútem ex inimícis nostris, * et de
manu ómnium qui odérunt nos.
   Ad faciéndam misericórdiam cum
pátribus nostris: * et memorári testa-
ménti sui sancti.
   Iusiurándum, quod iurávit ad A-
braham patrem nostrum, * datúrum
se nobis:
   Ut sine timóre, de manu inimícó-
rum nostrórum liberáti, * serviámus
illi:
   In sanctitáte et iustítia coram ipso, * ómnibus diébus nostris.
   Et tu, puer, Prophéta Altíssimi vo-
cáberis: * præíbis enim ante fáciem
Dómini paráre vias eius:
   To give knowledge of salvation to His
people * unto the remission of their
sins.
Through the bowels of the mercy of
our God, * in which the Orient from on
high hast visited us,
   To enlighten them that sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death, * to direct
our feet into the way of peace.
   Glória Patri, et Fílio, * et Spiritui
Sancto.
   As it was in the beginning, is now
and ever shall be, world without end.
   Amen.

Ant.: And very early in the morning, the
first day of the week, they came to the
sepulchre, the sun being now risen, alleluia.

Blessed † be the Lord God of Israel: *
because He hath visited and wrought
the redemption of His people.
   And hath raised up a horn of salvation
to us, * in the house of David His servant.
   As He spoke by the mouth of His holy
prophets, * who are from the beginning:
   Salvation from our enemies * and from
the hand of all that hate us.
   To perform mercy to our fathers * and
to remember His holy testament.
   The oath, which He swore to
Abraham our father, * that He would
grant to us,
   That, being delivered from the hand
of our enemies, * we may serve Him
without fear,
   In holiness and justice before Him * all our days.
   And thou, child, shall be called the
prophet of the Highest: * for thou shalt
go before the face of the Lord to prepare
His ways,
   To give knowledge of salvation to His
people * unto the remission of their
sins.

Ant.: And very early in the morning, the
first day of the week, they came to the
sepulchre, the sun being now risen, alleluia.

The Benedictus Antiphon is repeated by the choir, the Celebrant then goes in the middle, kissed the
Altar, and says Dóminus vobiscum, and then sings the following Oration: