

CATECHICMS OF THE LITURGY

FOR YOUNG AND OLD

COMPILED FROM APPROVED SOURCES

BY

A RELIGIOUS OF THE SACRED HEART

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Foreword

This little work deserves a warm welcome from Catholic Schools and homes, for it gives in small compass the rudiments of a subject which has been too little studied amongst us, but which is happily regaining its lawful place. This growing appreciation is a matter for congratulation, for where the Liturgy of the Church is loved and lived, Christian principles are sure to be vigorous.

The Liturgy is the form of public worship prescribed and arranged by the Church. Theology teaches that the Church is a living body, an organism, which has the duty of offering, as a body, praise and sacrifice to Almighty God, and for the fulfilment of this duty the Church has designed a form of prayers and actions, which we call the Liturgy. The Liturgy, then, is the official prayer of the Church. In it she offers to God homage and expiation, draws down His blessings and renders Him thanks. Through it she sanctifies every part of the day and night, and converts the whole year into a continuous circle of prayer. This centre is formed by the Holy Mass, in which the Adorable Sacrifice is surrounded by a magnificent set of prayers and actions. Round the Mass, in a wider circle, we have the Canonical Hours, i.e., forms of prayer distributed over the hours of day and night. Then dividing the mystery of the divine work of the Redemption into its various phases, as the prism divides the light into colours, it establishes a series of festivities encircling the whole year. Through Advent, with its sombre but joyful

expectation, we are led to Christmas, which is followed by the austere periods of Septuagesima and Lent, preparation for the holiest seasons of Passiontide and Easter. Paschaltide gives us a long extension of the joy of the Resurrection, and ends with the crowning festival of Pentecost. Then, with new sets of offices, we are led on, week by week, to another Advent. With such inspiration the Christian life is nurtured, mentally and morally, and the true Catholic character is formed.

We can frame no better wish for this little catechism than that it may serve as an introduction to the Church's treasure-house.

Stanbrook Abbey, Worcester

Chapter 1

THE LITURGY**1. What is the meaning of the word Liturgy?**

Originally it meant a public duty, a service to the State, undertaken gratis by a citizen. The meaning is extended to cover general service of a public kind.

2. Where is the word first used in Scripture?

In the Septuagint it is used for the public service of the temple (Exodus 38). Thence it comes to have a religious sense as the function of the priests, the ritual service of the Temple (Joel).

3. What does the term Liturgy now include?

The whole complex order of official services, all the Rites, Ceremonies, prayers and Sacraments of the Church as opposed to private devotions.

4. How could you find out which services are Liturgical?

Those services are Liturgical which are contained in any of the official books of a Rite. For example, Compline is a Liturgical service, the Rosary is not.

5. In what sense is the word Liturgy used in the Greek Church?

The Greek Church restricts it to the chief official service—the Sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist which in our Rite we call the Mass. When a Greek speaks of the Holy Liturgy he means only the Eucharistic service.

6. What do you mean by Liturgical Books?

The Liturgical Books are all the Books published by the authority of the Church, that contain the text and directions for her official services.

7. Name the Liturgical Books.

The Liturgical Books are: The Missal, the Pontifical, the Breviary, the Ritual, the Bishop's Ceremonial, the Memorial of Rites, and the Martyrology.

8. When was the Roman Missal first published?

The Roman Missal as we now have it, was published by St. Pius V in 1570. It has been revised in several succeeding Pontificates, new Masses have been added according to need, but it is still that of Pius V.

9. What does the text of the Missal contain?

The first part contains the "Proper of the Season" from the first Sunday of Advent to the last after Pentecost. The proper of each Mass is given in order of the ecclesiastical year, that is the Masses of each Sunday and other days (vigils, ember days, etc.) that have a proper Mass. Certain rites not

Eucharistic, but connected closely with the Mass are in their place in the Missal, such as the blessing of ashes, candles, palms; all the morning services of Holy Week (except the Vespers of Thursday and Friday). After the service of Holy Saturday the whole Ordinary of the Mass with the Canon is inserted.

10. What is the Ordinary of the Mass?

The Ordinary is that part of the Mass which does not change except for the thirteen proper Prefaces and the few changes that occur in the Canon. After the Ordinary comes Easter Day and the rest of the year in order.

11. What does the second part of the Missal contain?

It contains the Proper of Saints, that is, the feasts that occur through the year. It begins with the Vigil of St. Andrew, which generally falls at the beginning of Advent.

12. What does the third part contain?

It contains the Common Masses, that is, general Masses for Apostles, Martyrs, etc. Masses for the dead, Supplements, i.e., a collection of Votive Masses, special Masses for certain dioceses.

13. What is the Pontifical?

The Pontifical is the Bishop's book, and contains the rites of Confirmation, Ordination, Blessing of Abbots, consecration of Churches, Altars, Chalices, etc.

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