

The elevation denotes the raising up of our Saviour on the cross. It thus also exhibits to the faithful the object of their faith, hope and love; who is no longer exposed as on Mount Calvary, to the derision and blasphemy of the public; but to the adoration, praise, and invocation, of the grateful creatures whom he has redeemed.

The apparently lifeless state in which this divine Victim lies on the altar, with his blood seemingly separated from his body, under the distinct species of the bread and wine, represents his state of death upon the cross, after having poured out the last drop of his sacred blood for our ransom.

The priest then beseeches Almighty God to look down with a propitious countenance on this our sacrifice, as he did on that of the just Abel, of Abraham and of his high priest Melchisedech. Then, bowing down, and kissing the altar, he prays that he, and all who participate with him in the body and blood of Jesus Christ, may be replenished with all heavenly grace and benediction.

Next follows the *Memento* for the dead, in which are recommended to the special mercy of God the souls of those, for whom the priest intends more particularly to intercede, and next the souls of all the faithful departed.

In the *Nobis quoque peccatoribus* he returns to his supplications in his own behalf, and that of all sinners; beseeching Almighty God, in the multitude of his mercies, to vouchsafe to grant us a portion and association with his saints, not from any consideration of our merit, but from that of his own mercy and readiness to forgive, through Jesus Christ our Lord, &c. Then, uncovering the chalice, and kneeling, he takes the host, and makes with it three crosses over the cup, and two towards himself and the people, saying, *By whom* (viz. Jesus Christ) *thou createst, sanctifiest, vivifiest, bleasest, and givest to all of us these good things; through him, with him, and in him, to thee, O God the Father, together with the holy Spirit, (here he puts the host over the chalice, and, elevating them both together continues) is all honor and glory. Then laying down the host on the altar, he kneels, and rising covers the chalice, concluding the ceremony with these words: Per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen? World without end. Amen.* Here Almighty God is acknowledged as the Creator, sanctifier, and vivifier of the elements now changed into the heavenly bread of life, who has given us, together with all other good things, this most precious of all his gifts: to whom therefore all glory and honor is rendered as his due.

By the descent of the host upon the chalice, and the three crosses made over it, a mystical allusion is made to the descent of the 2nd person of the blessed Trinity upon our earth in Judea in form of man, and his preaching there first to the Jews the mystery of the Trinity and the cross; from whence this faith proceeded forth towards us, the Gentiles. Yet only two crosses are made on our side, to intimate that the great end of revelation is not completed, till both Jews and Gentiles are finally united in the same church: which,

according to the prophecies, must happen before the end of the world; and ere the church has rendered to God *all that honor and glory*, and paid to him the full measure of that homage which he expects from her, before the final consummation of this universe. Therefore is the host returned back to the chalice, and both are elevated together, with these words: *Omnis honor et gloria. All honor and glory.* When after kneeling, as was said, he rises and covers the chalice with the words *per omnia, &c.* signifying that all true believers, Jews and Gentiles, shall in the end be united and raised up with Christ, and shall reign with him for ever and ever.

The Lord's prayer is now solemnly recited. After which, having prayed that God would deliver us from all evils past, present, and to come; and, through the intercession of his saints, would propitiously grant us peace in our days; that, aided by his mercy, we may be ever preserved from sin, and secured against all trouble, the priest takes up the host, and, breaking it, to shew that our Saviour's body was bruised and broken for us, puts a small portion of it into the chalice, with these words: *may this mixing and consecration redound to the life everlasting of us, who receive it!* Meaning, that now is mixed and consecrated, spread out and prepared for us, our celestial banquet, to the worthy participation of which eternal life is annexed; and to the participation in which the *Little ones*, and the *unwise*, or those who are simple enough to believe it, what wisdom has declared it to be, are invited—Prov. ix, John vi, 44. It is to this banquet that the royal prophet alludes, as follows: "Thou hast prepared before me a table against those who afflict me."—Ps. xxii, 5.

Next is repeated the *Agnus Dei*, or *Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us, &c. Grant us peace!* In masses for the dead, *grant them rest!* After which the celebrator prays in secret, that God would not have in view his sins, but only the faith of his church; and, that he who said, *my peace I leave you; my peace I give you*, would, as he sees best, grant her peace and unity; and that, having in concurrence with the will of the Father, and the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, by his death given life to the world; he would also deliver him, (the celebrator) by means of this holy sacrament of his body and blood, from sin and all evil, and make him so to abide by the divine commandments, as never more to be separated from his God. Kneeling then, he rises and takes the host into his hands, with these words: *I will receive the bread of heaven, and invoke the name of the Lord.* Then striking his breast thrice, he repeats, (adapting them to his own case,) the words of the humble centurion, mentioned in the gospel: *Domine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum; sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea.* "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof: but say only the word, and my soul shall be healed." He signs himself then with the host, and receives it, saying: "May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ pre-

serve my soul unto life everlasting!" Uncovering the chalice, he then takes it up saying: "What shall I render to thee, Lord for all that he has given to me? I will take the chalice of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord, and I shall be saved from all mine enemies"—Ps. cxv. 3. Then, signing himself in like manner with the cup, he takes it, praying, also, "that the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ may preserve his soul unto life everlasting." After which he purifies, or washes out the chalice, repeating other prayers to the like purpose. The ablative water and wine at the end of the sacrifice, reminds us of the water mixed with blood, which flowed from the Saviour's wounded side, at the conclusion of his bloody sacrifice on the cross.

The priest now passes to the right hand side of the altar, to which again the book is restored: and here reads the communion sentence, commonly some text of the scripture; and then returning to the middle of the altar, he bowing kisses it; and turning round towards the people, wishes now the Lord to be with them, to make them benefit by the holy sacrifice, at which they have just assisted.

The restoration of the book to its former place indicates the restoration of the faith and the gospel to the Jews before the end of the world. He returns to the book and reads from it the Post-communion prayer; after which he repeats from the middle of the altar the *Ite, missa est*, which is the formal announcement that the mass is now concluded. Again bowing before the altar, the priest begs of the holy Trinity to receive our oblation, see that it may prove advantageous to all present, and to the whole of mankind. Then raising up his hand to heaven, and turning round to the hearers, he makes the sign of the cross towards them, pronouncing over them the words of the benediction. *Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus, Pater, Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus! May the Almighty God bless you, the Father the Son, and the Holy Ghost!* The whole service is concluded with the gospel, commonly taken from the first chapter of St. John, in which the divinity and incarnation of Jesus Christ are so sublimely and clearly announced.

It were endless to give all the other mystical meanings and particular allusions to the passion of our Lord, which Catholics attach to the ceremonies of the Mass. But this plain and simple exposure of it may suffice to shew how free it is from anything savouring of idolatry or superstition; and how very replete, on the contrary, it is with the most fervent and humble supplication, and with the most sublime acts of praise and homage to the Deity.

But why, one will ask, is it constantly said in Latin, and not in the vulgar idiom of each country, which is best understood by the generality of the hearers?—The reasons assigned for this custom, are the following.

1° Because it is an act of prayer and adoration directed to God alone: not a discourse or exhortation made to the understanding of the hearers which are otherwise taught from their earliest infan-

cy how to assist devoutly at mass, and to join in the common intention, for which it is offered up. The Jews often did not so much as see the priest, while he offered up sacrifice for them: much less did they hear and understand the prayers he said at the time, as appears by what is related in the gospel of Zacharias, the Father of St. John the Baptist.—Luke 1, 21.

2° Because Catholics do not consider their Church as a *national*, but as a *Catholic* or universal one. They, therefore, use in this, the greatest act of their worship, as well as in the administration of the sacraments, a *Catholic* or universal language; which, withal, is most generally understood; and is, like what they consider their Church to be, one and *unchangeable*.

3° Because it is one of the three languages consecrated on the tree of the cross in the inscription hung over the head of our Saviour; which, as the evangelist thinks it worth while to remark, was written in *Greek, in Hebrew, and in Latin*; part of all which are admitted into the Mass. These also, having become dead languages, are thereby no more liable to change, and seem best calculated to preserve in all its original and primitive meaning the sacred Liturgy of the Christian Church.

The bread used in this sacrifice, is not common and leavened, but unleavened bread: such as our Saviour must have used at his last supper. For it was death by the law of Moses for any one to eat, or even to keep in his house leavened bread at the paschal time. Of such a breach of the Mosaic law our Lord was never once accused by his enemies, who sought every opportunity of bringing him in guilty of some capital crime.

The shape itself of this bread is determined; and the form is not undesignedly given it. For the circle was considered by most nations as the emblem of perfection and perpetuity, the most peculiar attributes of the Deity.

This bread is also considered as an emblem of the mystical body of Christ, the Church. 1 Cor. v. For, as the bread is one whole, composed of many particles cohering together, and amalgamated by means of water, and confirmed by fire; so the Church is but one whole, composed of many members adhering together and united with their supreme head Jesus Christ, by means of the water of Baptism and the fire of charity; as also by their participations in his other sacraments, but above all in this Sacrament of the Altar; which unites us so closely to our Lord, that as he himself expresses it, *we may be in him and he in us.*—John 14, 20. It is also worth remarking, with what propriety, in so solemn and sacred a service every gesture and motion is regulated, so as to leave as little as possible to personal awkwardness or affectation.

I should think it not easy to find in so short a service as this, which lasts no more than half an hour, such variety of most appropriate prayer, put up for ourselves and all mankind; such sublime and fervent acts of humility and repentance, of faith, hope, and love of God and man, of supreme homage and adoration to the