

So far every rite and ceremony has been a preparation for the great mystery. Now the Offertory begins. The High Priest of the New Law takes bread into His sacred hands and lifting His eyes to heaven, giving thanks, He blesses; then lifting the Chalice, He offers it to the Father and blesses the wine. Then He cannot restrain His transports and His lips chant a hymn of praise and thus we have the Preface of the first Mass of the New Law.

The solemn moment of Consecration has arrived. Deep was the awe and reverence brooding over the souls of Mary and the kneeling Apostles as our Lord "took bread into His sacred hands and blessing, broke and gave to them, and said: Take ye. This is my Body? And having taken the Chalice.... He said to them: "This is my Blood of the New Testament which shall be shed for many."

Then taking the Sacred Host in His hands, raising His eyes that are filled with tears, and making the sign of the cross and murmuring the loving words: "with desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you," He will give Himself to each with His own hands. Was there ever such a Communion as that of the Blessed Mother and the kneeling Apostles?

But how can we picture Mary at the Holy Mass? The first communion day of His Mother is the First-Mass day of her Son. Thirty-three years ago at Nazareth she had given Him flesh and blood. Now that Son gives back that Body and Blood to His Mother. She will need all the strength and courage that comes from It to stand alone during all the coming days of loneliness and solitude when He is gone and when the Infant church will need her. Mary is immeasurably fuller of grace now than she was at Nazareth. The Blessed fruit of her womb, Jesus, is with her in a more marvelous manner, and as she has been growing in grace all these years her love is inexpressibly greater. How cold our hearts in Holy Communion! How timid our love! Let us draw near Mary and she will aid us to be grateful for so great a gift, thankful for so rich a blessing. We shall learn to say with her as we come from the altar: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

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