

This cupola is shaped like a quarter of a sphere. Four ribs, richly chased and gilt, meet at the summit, where they lose themselves in a lovely rosace (centre-piece) formed of golden leaves. The whole surface of the cupola is in open-work, blending elegant gold decorations with the virginal brilliancy of the marble. The two outside columns of the façade of the baldacchino support each an adoring angel likewise in white marble.

This is indeed the tabernacle of God with men. The consecrating Pontiff is about to accomplish those rites of the New Law which are far holier and more perfect than those of the Jewish law, which were but a faint figure of the splendor of the new Jerusalem. As at the dedication of Solomon's Temple, the Majesty of God is about to fill this place which has already witnessed so many miracles worked by the right hand of the Highest.

—With the above-mentioned mixture of salt, water, wine and ashes, the Pontiff traces five crosses on the altar-slab, one of them in the centre, and two at each end, whilst the singers alternate the verses of the psalm *Judica*, which the Priest recites always at the commencement of the Mass, with the strophe *Introibo*: "I will go unto the altar of God, to God who giveth joy to my youth."

Seven times the Pontiff proceeds round the altar, asperging it, whilst the singers repeat: *Asperges me*, after each verse of the *Miserere*.

The solemn moment has arrived when the relics of the Saints are to be placed in the sepulchres of the altars. A resting-place has been hollowed out, which is to be covered with a slab of marble to be cemented in its place by the hands of the Pontiff.

All the clergy, followed by the Bishops, descend the nave of the Basilica and proceed processionally to the sacristy where the relics have reposed. Four priests in red vestments, bear on their shoulders the rich receptacle containing the precious relics, and the