

The Charlottetown Herald.

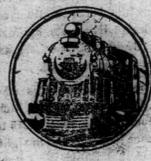
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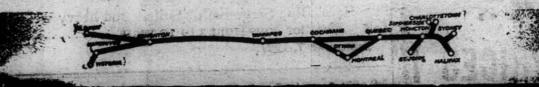
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Sermons On Catholic Worship
In the sixteenth Sermon of the series on Catholic Worship, the subject considered is the Offertory. The Sermon appearing below was prepared by the Rev. Jas. M. Nolan, Pastor of St. Mary's Church, Helena, Mont.

At the Last Supper, Christ, Our Blessed Lord, took bread, and blessed and broke and gave to His Disciples, and said: "Take ye and eat. This is My body." And taking the Chalice He gave thanks, and gave to them saying: "Drink ye all of this. For this is My blood." This do ye for the commemoration of Me." (S. Math. 26, 1 Cor. xi.) Such is the record from Holy Scripture of the first offering of the all-embracing sacrifice of the new law.

The essential matter, therefore, of the holy sacrifice of the Mass is bread and wine. They are presented at the offertory, changed into the body and blood of Christ at the consecration, and consumed at the communion. The offertory follows immediately after the gospel, or, if said, after the creed. The prayers and ceremonies up to and including the creed form the preparatory part of the Mass, as those which follow the communion form its conclusion.

The present instruction is to explain the offertory, and, in particular, the matter which is offered.

The offertory consists in the preparation and offering of the sacrificial elements by the ministers, accompanied by the singing of psalms. These elements are bread and wine. Into the wine a little water is poured.

SERVICE OF THE CHURCH.
In past centuries, during the celebration of the divine mystery, the Christians offered not only the bread and wine of the sacrifice, but also whatever might be necessary for the service of the church, the maintenance of the clergy and the help of the poor. Thus they offered corn, fruit, grapes, milk, honey, wax, oil, and later on money also. Originally it was assigned to the deacon of the Mass to present the offerings of the faithful at the altar, and especially the bread and wine for the sacrifice, and to pronounce the names of those who had contributed. From apostolic times until about the eleventh century there was always a procession at the offertory. Until about the twelfth century, when this ancient custom at the offertory disappeared, antiphons and verses from the Psalms were sung alternately; but since the offering of private gifts was discontinued the antiphon only has been retained, and is called Offertorium. Thus, while the rite of the offertory has differed in the course of the centuries, yet as to its essential nature and the matter offered for the Mass, it neither has nor can be changed. The example and mandate of our Divine Lord at the Last Supper is supreme.

SACRIFICE AND SACRAMENT.
At the first celebration of the eucharistic sacrifice, Christ consecrated bread and wine and prescribed the use of these elements for the accomplishment of the unbloody sacrifice in His church for all future times. (S. Math. 26.) The Eucharist is not only a sacrifice but also a sacrament; under both of these aspects bread and wine are eminently proper.

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for their exalted purpose. That bread and wine are elements most apt for the eucharistic sacrifice and sacrament is seen in this: First, the completion of the sacrifice is effected through its consumption by the celebrant. And again, as water is taken in baptism as the matter of the sacrament by which we are spiritually washed from sin, so fittingly are bread and wine, most common articles of food taken as the matter from which is consecrated the greatest possible spiritual nourishment of our souls. Furthermore, even as in the passion of Christ the blood was separated from the body, so likewise in the Mass, which is the unbloody renewal of the sacrifice of Calvary, the bread is consecrated and consumed as the sacrament of the body, and the wine as the sacrament of the blood of Christ. Another reason adduced by St. Ambrose in commenting upon this subject, has regard to those who receive Holy Communion. This sacrament is for the benefit of both soul and body, and therefore the body of Christ under the form of bread is offered for the health of the body, and the blood under the form of wine is offered for the welfare of the soul. Finally, the eucharistic sacrifice is offered to effect a blessing upon the entire body of the faithful throughout the world, and their membership in the church and union with Christ is symbolized in this, that, as bread is formed from many grains of wheat and wine flows from many grapes, so we, being many, are bread, one body, all that partake of one bread. (1 Cor. 10.)

VARIOUS CUSTOMS.
For the celebration of Mass it is necessary that bread from wheat on flour be used, but it is not essentially required that the bread be unleavened or leavened. In this regard there are various customs in the church. According to the Roman rite unleavened bread is used, and according to the Greek rite fermented bread. This is a matter regulated by the laws of the church regarding that which is not essential to validity. The use of unleavened bread is founded chiefly upon the following reasons: Christ celebrated the Pasch with His disciples on the first day of unleavened bread at a time in which the Jews, according to the ordinance of the law, were obliged to have nothing leavened in the house or to partake of it. Again, unleavened bread is free from the decomposition and corruption effected by fermentation, and it is therefore a more fitting symbol of the immaculate purity of Christ's body, which was not to be subject to corruption. Furthermore, unleavened bread not only symbolizes the immaculate purity of Christ's body, but it also reminds the faithful of that purity of soul with which they must approach this divine sacrament. Accordingly, St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Christ our Pasch is sacrificed; therefore let us feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

DISCIPLINE OF CHURCH.
The custom of mingling water with the wine to be consecrated is according to apostolic ordinance and the strict discipline of the church. It is mentioned in the writings of St. Justin, martyr in the second century. It is most probable that Christ at the Last Supper instituted this sacrament with wine tempered with water, as was the custom of that country. It naturally reminds us of

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the blood and water which flowed from the pierced side of our Divine Redeemer. The effect also of the sacrament, as St. Cyprian says, is more perfectly indicated in this, that the mingling of water with the wine symbolizes the union of the faithful with Christ. This inferior element united to the superior represents mankind united to the perfect Godman, Jesus-Christ.

As to the particular form and color of the bread, history tells us that customs have been different through the course of the centuries which have elapsed since the institution of this greatest gift of God to man. The Paschal bread used by the Saviour was round in shape, and hence the round form had, even at a very early period, the preference, and this the more as it is regarded as a symbol of perfection. The color of the bread is of the purest white, for such is befitting that which is destined for the cleanest oblation, and, in symbolic language, bespeaks the greatest purity of soul.

Such is the explanation of the first essential part of the sacrifice of the Mass with regard to the elements, bread and wine, which are offered, and through which the oblation of Calvary is perpetuated in order that Christ's purpose may be accomplished in the souls of men; that He may cleanse to Himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works.

Don't's For Sermon Hearing.
Don't fail to read with the celebrant the Epistle and Gospel of the Sunday. You will find them in most prayer books.
Don't make language in which the sermon is preached a thing to tickle your ears and flatter your race prejudice. God's word is God's word in any language.
Don't believe the strength of the sermon depends upon the loudness of the speaker's voice.
Don't think your neighbor is getting hit. Be to your own imagined virtues very blind; to your neighbor's faults, very very kind.
Don't clear your throat for the speaker.
Don't imagine the sermon is over when the speaker is through speaking. A sermon should last as long as the hearer's life.

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