

that is consecrated, and the altars on which is offered the Immaculate Lamb in holy sacrifice are given to God only after long and solemn prayers. A church may be blessed or dedicated in a few minutes, but hours are required for its consecration. A simple priest may bless a church — but none but a Bishop can consecrate it. The work is so sacred in the mind of Holy Church, that she requires it to be prepared for by both the Bishop and flock with solemn fast the day before.

When Solomon's temple was built, all Israel assembled at its opening and amidst the greatest solemnity, the ark was placed in triumph in the Holy of holies under the wings of the cherubin. Voice and harp, and psaltery, cymbal and trumpet blended in sweetest harmony, and when the priest chanted forth the psalm, "Give glory to the Lord for He is good, and His mercy endureth forever," the whole audience fell on their faces, for the house was filled with the cloud of God's majesty, and fire shot down from the heavens and consumed the welcome holocausts.

But what were the ark and temple but shadows of what was to come? What the sacrifices of the Old Law in comparison to the One Law Sacrifice of the new? A mighty, an infinite change has been wrought; the figure has given place to the substance; the shadow to the reality. Our Lord has brought in His sacred person the God from the clouds to reign with us on our altars to the end of time. When an altar is consecrated relics of the saints are placed in it to teach us to what perfection we may reach if, like them, we partake of the Body and Blood of our Lord and all the graces He is prepared to give us. It makes more practical also the Communion of the Saints, when we have their honored bones with us on our altars. As angels are our Lord's bodyguard and adore Him round every tabernacle, we must feel that greater, proportionately, must be their number when the church is consecrated.

Oh, if we could but lift the mystic veil that surrounds our altars, how many bright spirits would we see crowded round their Lord prostrate in adoration before Him! And if we could be so happy as to hear their heavenly