

## THE TRUE WITNESS

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1898

## THE MASS.

When we enter a Catholic Church the first object that attracts our attention is the Cross upon the Altar. It is surrounded by candlesticks in which are lighted tapers, beneath it is the tabernacle, with its small veiled door. It is unnecessary to state to a Catholic the reasons why the grand emblem of Christianity—the Cross—is placed upon the altar. It occupies the highest place on the exterior of the temple as it holds the most conspicuous position inside the walls. It is ever present to the Catholic, reminding him of the Passion of Our Lord, and telling him of the price that was paid for our salvation. That cross brings back to mind the story of our redemption—the sufferings of Christ—the blotting out of man's iniquity—the opening of the gates of heaven—the love deep, endless, powerful of the Son of God—the awfulness of sin—the ingratitude of humanity—the dangers of the past—the hopes of the present—and the eternal promises of the future!

As in days of old there was a spot in the Temple called the Holy of Holies, into which the High Priest entered once in each year, and where the sacred vessels, the ark, the golden candlesticks and so forth, were kept, so in the Catholic Church, we have the tabernacle, that depository wherein the Host is kept, and which is always locked. It is the most sacred spot in all the sacred edifice. It rests upon the altar, just in front of the priest, in order that he may, when circumstances require, open the door and take out the Blessed Eucharist, whether to use it on the altar or to give it to the faithful in sacramental form. In front of the tabernacle there burns continually a small lamp.

In the use of lights and incense—a practise sneered at by the Protestant as pagan,—we but read the touching story of the early Church, when her children, hunted by the persecutor, held their religious meetings either at night, or in subterranean places, whose gloom, of course, rendered the light of tapers necessary, and where the fumes of the censor, besides being familiar to the people among whom Christianity sprung into existence, were resorted to as a means of dissipating unwholesome odours. In sprinkling the holy water on the forehead, we call to mind the far period—as early as the beginning of the second century—when salt began to be mixed with the blessed water, in memory of Christ's death; or, as others will have it, as a mystic type of the hypostatic union of the two natures in the Redeemer. According to Tertullian, the sprinkling of the holy water was "in memoriam dedicationis Christi."

An Irish gentleman in search of a religion, states in his exquisite little work

on the Church, that there occurred to him a proof of the high antiquity, of the religious observances of the Catholics, which struck him more forcibly inasmuch as it related to one of the most ridiculed practices, that of beating the breast with the clenched hands, at the Confiteor and other parts of the service; a practice which, in Ireland, drew down on the Papists the well-bred appellation of *craw thumpers*. "When I looked around, however," says the author, "upon the humble Christian, thus nick-named, and remembered that St. Augustin himself, the pious and learned St. Augustin, was also a *craw thumper*, I felt that to err with him was, at least, erring in good company, and proceeded to join the *tundentes pectora*, as the saint describes them, with all my might."

We will now speak of the sacred vessels and ornaments. Firstly the chalice: it is a cup of gold or silver or both, that the priest uses for the consecration and reception of the precious blood. The chalice was in use long before the days of Christianity. Our Lord made use of it when he performed the first grand consecration at the last supper. He put wine into the chalice, and telling His apostles that it was His blood, He gave them the same to drink. For a long time, in the first ages, the faithful received Holy Communion under both forms. But owing to the inconveniences that naturally arose, the danger of spilling the contents, and the great increase in the number of Christians, the Church wisely deemed it better to do away with the Communion in that form. The chalice, however, was retained for the priest, and it, in itself, tells of the Divine origin of the sacrifice of the Mass. The patena is a small plate of gold or silver, that covers the chalice, and upon which the priest places the Host which he offers up and consecrates.

The ciborium is a species of covered chalice that is kept in the tabernacle, in which the Holy Eucharist is deposited. There is also a portable tabernacle, in which the Sacred Host is exposed for the adoration of the faithful: it is called the ostensorium. It is used during the service of the benediction, and upon public occasions when, in procession, the Host is taken out. Such are the principal vessels used by the priest, and they have each a special purpose, while they all date back to the dawn of Christianity. In no other church are they all to be found; they are sacred because, being consecrated by the bishops, they are destined to be used in the temple for the worship of God and for no other purposes. If, of old, Baltazar was stricken down in the banquet of his glory while abusing of the sacred vessels from the temple, what may he not expect who respects not the sacred vessels that have been consecrated under the new dispensation?

The Church makes use of different colors in the various ornaments and vestments, in order to excite the required dispositions in the breasts of the faithful according to the occasions and festivals celebrated. There are five colors used—white, red, purple, green and black. The white reminds us of innocence and is made use of on all grand and imposing festivals such as Easter, Christmas, the feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and upon all solemn and special occasions. Red reminds us of charity, and is used especially upon the feasts of saints who are martyrs—the red also recalling to mind the blood that they shed for their faith, the great loving sacrifice of their lives which they willingly made, in order, in some way, to merit the still greater sacrifice of the life of Christ for them. The purple reminds us of penance and hope; it is used during Advent and

Lent, those seasons when we are expected to prepare for the great festivals of Christmas and Easter by fasts, vigils, prayers and penance; and it tells of the hope that we have held out to us by the coming into the world and the death and resurrection of Christ. The green represents faith, evergreen and lively, and is used from the Octave of the Epiphany to Septuagesima, and from the Octave of Pentecost to Advent when there is no reason for any other color. The black, the sign of mourning, recalls the thought of our destiny upon earth, the grave. It is used in all services for the dead, and upon Good Friday. It bespeaks the union beyond the grave, the power of prayer, the communion of saints, the temporal punishment after death, the darkness of the tomb, the hopes beyond it. The sombre pomp of the funeral service gives to the Catholic rites a special meaning, tells the mourners of their own last end, warns the erring that Divine mercy has yet reserved for them moments for repentance and preparation, proclaims to the thoughtless that they, too, sooner or later, must be brought to the same spot, for them, also, one day, the priest must don the vestments of black, and chant the *Libera*. Yes, everything in the Catholic Church speaks. The ornaments, the very colors of the vestments and those vestments themselves.

In closing this second article upon the Mass, we will give the meaning of the priest's vestments, and in the next article we can commence the study of the Mass itself.

1st. The *Amict*: a piece of white linen which the priest passes over his head to cover his shoulders. It reminds us of the moderation to be used in our words, and the care we should have to cover ourselves (so to speak) in order not to be distracted during Mass.

2nd. The *Alb*: a white robe, full and reaching to the feet. It is a symbol of purity which the priest should carry to the altar, and which the people should have while at the sacrifice.

3rd. The *Cord*: a cincture to confine the Alb. It represents the cords with which Christ was bound during His passion, and it is an emblem telling us that we must become detached from a sensual life and attached to things of heaven, the Church and God.

4th. The *Maniple*: an ornament which the priest wears on his left arm. It was formerly a handkerchief used to wipe the tears and perspiration from the face. It tells us of our duty of labor, of good works and their future reward.

5th. The *Stole*: an ornament which the priest passes over his neck and crosses upon his breast. It is the symbol of dignity and power. It reminds us of the position occupied by the priest, of the respect due to him, and of the sacredness of his office.

6th. The *Chasuble*: this was formerly a large mantle, full and round, with an opening in the centre through which to pass the head. Laymen as well as ecclesiastics wore it. However, the former laid it aside, but the Church retained it for her priests. It reminds us of the mantle of charity with which we should cover ourselves, and it recalls to mind the early days of the Church when the priests wore those vestments almost continually.

There are also the ornaments used by the deacons, the subdeacons and those of the bishops. Now that we know the meaning of the lights, the decorations, the incense, the vessels, the vestments and all the colours used, we will commence with the priest, at the foot of the altar, and follow him on through the Mass, reflecting upon each part and studying the dread sacrifice in all its

perfections. Remember that each Mass is a sacrifice, and yet every Mass is but the perpetuation of the bloody sacrifice of Calvary, in an unbloody manner, throughout the ages, for the salvation, redemption, future happiness and glory of mankind.

## AT IT AGAIN.

Despite its reduced influence the Canada Revue keeps on getting worse and worse in its abominable attacks upon the Church and upon all things sacred. As in the case last year, so again this year, while its productions were confined to its own pages and to the French language we always allowed it to pass unnoticed; but when the English press sees fit to fill columns with translations of the very worst specimens of anti-Catholic and anti-Christian effusions from that uncompromising opponent of all that we hold in veneration, then it is time for us to have our say in the matter. In the Daily Witness of Saturday we find a lengthy quotation from the Canada Revue in which—to the delight of the Witness—that organ not only openly assails the Church and the clergy, but, by means of vile insinuations, low assertions, the raking up of a dead issue that when living the partisans of anticlericalism could not maintain, and by remarks that could only emanate from seekers after scandal, strives to sow the evil seeds of that corrupt plant—irreligion—imported here from the hot-beds of European infidelity. The Witness has a bonanza these days; between comments upon Father Lacasse's new work, and copious extracts from the Canada Revue our "only religious daily" has a splendid opportunity of displaying its Christian spirit and putting into practice—after its own fashion—the commandment that forbids "bearing false witness against our neighbour." If we are to believe that "bearer of false witness" there are several actions to be taken by individuals—names unmentioned—against the publishers of the splendid work in which the Oblate Father shows up the real enemies of Catholicity. Probably the Witness is pleased to know that it is not the only exponent of thought that is subjected to libel suits when it seeks to individualize in its attacks upon either religious or political principles.

This is becoming quite a trick on the part of those enemies of Catholicity. The moment they are devoid of any arguments to sustain their contentions, and that they find they have gone beyond their depth, they rush to the Prothonotary's office and issue writs to the amount at which they value their own reputations and opinions. When this is not a proceeding too certain of success it becomes necessary to get up a little sensationalism therewith. At an hour when no person is around to either corroborate or disprove a fact, on a day and at a time when no man could reasonably be supposed to be in an office writing, an attempt to murder a leading actor in the drama is reported. Every precaution is taken that no person is in the way of the terrible bullet, but traces of its fearful course are left on the walls. It is passing strange how suddenly this sensation collapsed; how little effort was made to detect the abominable criminal; how carefully the veiled innuendoes were penned; and how nicely it all corresponded with the approaching trial of a case in which the intended victim was to measure swords—before the courts—with a distinguished and venerable prince of the Church. Deeply as France's Liberal-Catholicism has implanted itself in certain portions of our social garden, still we are not yet prepared to "take