

UNIT 18

"THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING THIS SIDE OF HEAVEN"

It came forth out of the grand mind of the Church, and lifted us out of earth and out of self, and wrapped us round in a cloud of mystical sweetness and the sublimities of a more than angelic liturgy, and purified us almost without ourselves, and charmed us with celestial charming, so that our very senses seemed to find vision, hearing, fragrance, taste and touch beyond what earth can give.

Father Frederick

Faber

Nothing is so consoling, so piercing, so thrilling, so overcoming as the Mass, *said as it is among us*. I could attend Mass forever, and not be tired. It is not a mere form of words, it is a great action, the greatest action that can be on earth. It is, not the invocation merely, but, if I dare use the word, the evocation of the Eternal. He becomes present on the altar in flesh and blood, before whom angels bow and devils tremble. This is that awful event which is the scope, and is the interpretation, of every part of the solemnity. Words are necessary, but as means, not as ends ; they are not mere addresses to the throne of grace, they are instruments of what is far higher, of consecration, of sacrifice. (My emphasis)

John Henry Newman, *Loss and Gain*

In this Unit we will be looking at aspects of the **ORDINARY OF THE MASS** and the ways in which the traditional prayers of the Roman rite bring out to perfection the following points :

- the essential meaning of the Holy Sacrifice
- the Eucharistic doctrine of the Church as formulated in the Council of Trent
- the transcendent nature of the liturgy of the Mass

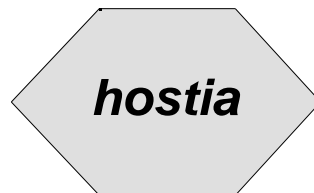
This is an opportunity to look more closely at certain key words and phrases in the Latin of the traditional Roman Missal, which has always been and still is the language of *Catholic* worship, the patrimony of every priest of the Roman rite, and to gain an insight into the reasons which inspired the Church to adopt them in the first place and wish to guard them as a treasure of inestimable value for all time. From that vantage point it becomes absolutely clear how indispensable they are in showing us the true countenance of the Mass by making it look like what it truly is and not like something else.

THE LANGUAGE OF SACRIFICE

Here we will be concentrating on the traditional Offertory prayers of the Roman rite which have been obliterated from official usage. Not only were they renowned for the outstanding beauty of their composition but, more importantly, they are saturated in language redolent of sacrifice and therefore provide a major contribution to the principle of *lex orandi, lex credendi*. With their disappearance and substitution by formulas which contain no reference to the Divine Victim, the concept of Sacrifice in the distinctively Catholic sense, which through the centuries had been made more and more explicit in the Mass, is muted and the way left open to contrary interpretations.

But those who have lived through "the changes" and have remained faithful to the traditional Latin Mass remember something different : that the Church had taught consistently and the liturgy had proclaimed in absolutely clear and unequivocal terms that the essence of the Mass is the Sacrifice of the Cross re-enacted on our altars and offered to God for our salvation.

Let us now examine the first of the Offertory prayers, *Suscipe Sancte Pater*, (given in full below) to see how the Church gave full liturgical expression to the Eucharistic doctrine of the Mass as formulated in the Council of Trent.



is used to denote the Divine Victim.

This prayer speaks with immense veneration of the bread even *before* the Consecration, making absolutely clear that it is the Divine Victim that is offered in the Mass. By referring to the unconsecrated bread as the *hostia*, the priest already has its destiny in mind. This is an opportunity to view the gifts through the eyes of the soul and therefore an invaluable spiritual preparation for the moment of Consecration itself.

Offertory prayers which anticipate the Consecration, as do those of the Tridentine Mass, are common to numerous ancient liturgies of both East and West.



means 'so that it may be profitable'

Here is an unequivocal statement of the identity between the Mass and the Sacrifice of Calvary, and that the purpose of the Mass is the same as that of the Cross. For it is the same Victim, the same Priest, Jesus Christ, Who is the chief celebrant of the Mass, and the merits of His Passion and Death are applied to our souls for our sanctification and salvation.

1st Offertory Prayer

Suscipe, Sancte Pater, omnipotens aeterne Deus, hanc immaculatam Hostiam quam ego indignus famulus tuus offero tibi, Deo meo vivo et vero, pro innumerabilibus peccatis, et offensionibus et negligentis meis, et pro omnibus circumstantibus, sed et pro omnibus fidelibus Christianis vivis atque defunctis : ut mihi et illis proficiat ad vitam aeternam. Amen.

Receive, O Holy Father, almighty and eternal God, this spotless Host which I, Thy unworthy servant, offer unto Thee, my living and true God, for my countless sins, offences and negligences ; likewise for all here present, and for all faithful Christians, both living or dead, that it may be profitable for me and for them to salvation, unto life everlasting. Amen.

Exercise 1 Read through the Offertory prayer again and answer the following questions :

1. What is offered?

***hanc
immaculatam
hostiam***

2. Who is offering?

***ego indignus
famulus tuus***

3. To whom ?

***omnipotens
aeterne Deus***

4. In atonement for what?

peccatis

offensionibus

negligentiis

5. For whom?

***omnibus
circumstantibus***

***omnibus
fidelibus
Christianis
vivi atque
defunctis***

6. for what purpose?

***ut mihi et illis
proficiat
ad vitam aeternam***

This prayer, which used to be said by the priest every day of his life, contains in a nutshell the whole meaning of the Mass. How could he forget it? The Mass as Sacrifice was constantly preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in catechisms for the instruction of schoolchildren and converts, included in the introduction of Missals as a reminder to Mass-goers. How could we forget it, unless these things no longer happened?

3rd Offertory Prayer

*Offerimus tibi, Domine, calicem salutaris, tuam
deprecantes clementiam : ut in conspectu divinae*

We offer unto Thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation,
beseeching Thy clemency that it may ascend as a

<i>majestatis tuae, pro nostra et totius mundi salute cum odore suavitatis ascendat. Amen.</i>	sweet odour before Thy divine majesty, for our own salvation, and that of the whole world. Amen.
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The offering of the wine is similarly couched in specifically sacrificial language and spoken of *as if* it were already the consecrated species.



'the chalice of salvation' : the Precious Blood shed for the salvation of the whole world (*pro nostra et totius mundi salute*) is already anticipated in thought by the priest as he raises the chalice.



'with the fragrance of sweetness'

The expression *odor suavitatis* is one of venerable antiquity. It was used in early biblical times with reference to Old Testament sacrifices (e.g. Gen. 8:21), and the theme is also taken up by St Paul (Eph. 5:2) with specific reference to the Sacrifice of Christ. What metaphor could be more apt, more expressive of sacrifice than that of the smoke from the immolated victim of a holocaust rising heavenwards ? Presented in this way, the doctrine that Our Lord offered Himself to His Father in heaven as a pleasing Victim for our sins is expressed in the clearest, most poetic terms of which the Church is capable.

5th Offertory Prayer

<i>Veni, Sanctificator, omnipotens aeterne Deus, et benedic hoc sacrificium, tuo sancto nomini preparatum.</i>	Come, O Sanctifier, almighty and eternal God, and bless this sacrifice which is prepared for the glory of Thy holy Name.
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The Holy Ghost, the Author of our sanctification, is entreated to descend on the offerings, just as He did on the womb of the Virgin Mary at the Incarnation, so that Christ may again be made Flesh for the life of our souls.

Offertory Prayer to the Holy Trinity

<i>Suscipe, Sancta Trinitas, hanc oblationem, quam tibi offerimus ob memoriam passionis, resurrectionis, et ascensionis Jesu Christi Domini nostri...</i>	Receive, O Holy Trinity, this oblation offered up by us to Thee, in memory of the passion, resurrection, and ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ...
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This prayer is a specific statement of the doctrine that the Sacrifice of Jesus which takes place in the Mass is offered to the Holy Trinity.

Preparation of the soul

Because ritual washing, as a symbol of purification, was an important preliminary to the sacrifices of the Old Testament, the Church included in the Offertory the following verses from Psalm XXV which illustrate the intention of preparation for sacrifice. In the Tridentine Mass the emphasis is on the preparation of the priest's soul which must be pure in the sense of withdrawn from earthly attachments and dedicated entirely to God before daring to make the offering of His Son on the Altar of Sacrifice :

Lavabo inter innocentes manus meas : et circumdabo altare tuum, Domine : ut audiam vocem laudis : et enarrem universa mirabilia tua. Domine, dilexi decorem domus tuae et locum habitationis gloriae tuae. Ne perdas cum impiis, Deus, animam meam, et cum viris sanguinum vitam meam : in quorum manibus iniquitates sunt : dextera eorum repleta est muneribus. Ego autem in innocentia mea ingressus sum : redime me, et miserere mei. Pes meus stetit in directo : in ecclesiis benedicam te, Domine. Gloria Patri, et Filio et Spiritui Sancto...

I will wash my hands among the innocent : and will compass Thy altar, O Lord : that I may hear the voice of Thy praise : and show forth all Thy marvellous works. I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth. Take not away my soul, O God, with the wicked, nor my life with men of blood : in whose hands are iniquities : their right hand is filled with gifts. But I have walked in my innocence : redeem me, and have mercy on me. My foot hath stood on the straight path : in the churches I will bless Thee, O Lord. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost...

The Offertory at High Mass

At Solemn High Mass the concept of the Holy Sacrifice is celebrated explicitly with the addition of prayers which take up the theme of the Offertory and extend it. When the priest blesses the incense, he accompanies his action with this prayer :

Per intercessionem beati Michaelis archangeli, stantis a dextris altaris incensi, et omnium electorum suorum, incensum istud dignetur Dominus benedicere, et in odorem suavitatis accipere.

May the Lord, by the intercession of blessed Michael the Archangel, standing at the right hand of the altar of incense, and of all His elect, vouchsafe to bless this incense, and receive it as an odour of sweetness.

He also incenses the bread and wine, saying :

Incensum istud a te benedictum ascendat ad te, Domine, et descendat super nos misericordia tua.

May this incense which Thou hast blessed, O Lord, ascend to Thee, and may Thy mercy descend upon us

Then he incenses the altar, saying these verses of Psalm CXL :

Dirigatur, Domine, oratio mea, sicut incensum, in conspectu tuo : elevatio manuum mearum sacrificium vespertinum. Pone, Domine, custodiam ori meo, et ostium circumstantiae labiis meis : ut non declinet cor meum in verba malitiae, ad excusandas excusationes in peccatis.

May my prayer be directed, O Lord, as incense in Thy sight : the elevation of my hands, an evening sacrifice. Place, O Lord, a guard to my mouth, and a door to my lips, that my heart may not decline into words of malice, to seek excuses in my sins.

All these prayers are permeated through and through with words which are metaphors of sacrifice about to be offered. The sweet fragrance of incense (*odorem suavitatis*), the elevation of hands (*elevatio manuum*) and the guard (*custodia*) or door (*ostium*) to shut out the senses and keep the priest unspotted from the world, all indicate that what is about to take place is the Great Sacrifice, a solemn and sacred event of infinite value.

Prayer to the Holy Trinity after the Postcommunion

Placeat tibi, Sancta Trinitas, obsequium servitutis meae : et praesta ut sacrificium quod oculis tuae majestatis indignus obtuli, tibi sit acceptabile, mihi que, et omnibus, pro quibus illud obtuli, sit, te miserante, propitiabile.

May the lowly homage of my service be pleasing to Thee, O most holy Trinity : and do Thou grant that the sacrifice which I, unworthy, have offered up in the sight of Thy majesty may be acceptable to Thee, and, through Thy mercy, may avail to atone to Thee for myself and for all those for whom I have offered it.

This prayer which serves to reinforce the truth that the Mass is a solemn Sacrifice offered to the Holy Trinity has suffered the same fate as that of the Offertory prayers : it has been discarded from the current form of Mass of the Roman rite. But the Holy Trinity continues to receive honour from it whenever the old rite of Mass is celebrated. We need only to look at the language of the text to be convinced that it was composed as a result of centuries of inspired Catholic thinking, and brings out the following doctrinal points :

obsequium

the homage due to God from man

**servitutis
meae**

'of my service'. These words are spoken by the priest who has just offered up the sacrifice (*sacrificium quod...obtuli* - 'the sacrifice which...I have offered'). He prays that in spite of his own unworthiness (*indignus*) it may be :

acceptabile

to the
God,

'acceptable'
Divine Majesty, and, with the mercy of

propitiabile

a propitiatory sacrifice availing to his salvation and that of the faithful.

A HEAVENLY LITURGY

In the traditional Latin Mass the celebration is focused entirely on God in all His glory, His majesty and His absolute transcendence, as described in a prayer in the Divine Liturgy of St James :

Let all mortal flesh be silent, and stand with fear and trembling and meditate nothing earthly within itself for the King of kings and the Lord of lords, Christ our God, comes forward to be sacrificed, and to be given for food to the faithful ; and the bands of angels go before Him with every power and dominion, the many-eyed cherubim, and the six-winged seraphim, covering their faces and crying aloud the hymn, Alleluia,

Alleluia, Alleluia

This was the faith which inspired the Church to celebrate Holy Mass as a solemn Sacrifice carried out with the greatest possible reverence, dignity and decorum and to impose the most stringent and meticulous regulations on the priest who offers the Son of God to His heavenly Father.

A Mystical Mount Calvary

The Mass gives us the only means with which to glorify God as He is glorified in heaven, for it is by the Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, offered by the priest at every Mass, that Almighty God receives infinite honour and glory in a way that no earthly or human sacrifice could replace. It is precisely because of this supremely sacred action that any emphasis on earthly or human activities during its celebration is inappropriate in that they distract attention from the essentially transcendent and supernatural nature of the Mass and gives the erroneous impression that it is a celebration of merely human dimensions.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE SUPERNATURAL

But where do words come in? Only, as Cardinal Newman pointed out above, to act as " instruments of what is far higher, of consecration, of sacrifice " which excite the devotion of the faithful and move them to accept the Mystery of Faith. Let us now look at some of the ways in which the text of the Tridentine Mass reflects the supernatural nature of the Mass.

Note especially the following points which reinforce this concept by highlighting the remarkable bond between celestial spirits and human beings and the doctrine of the Communion of Saints .

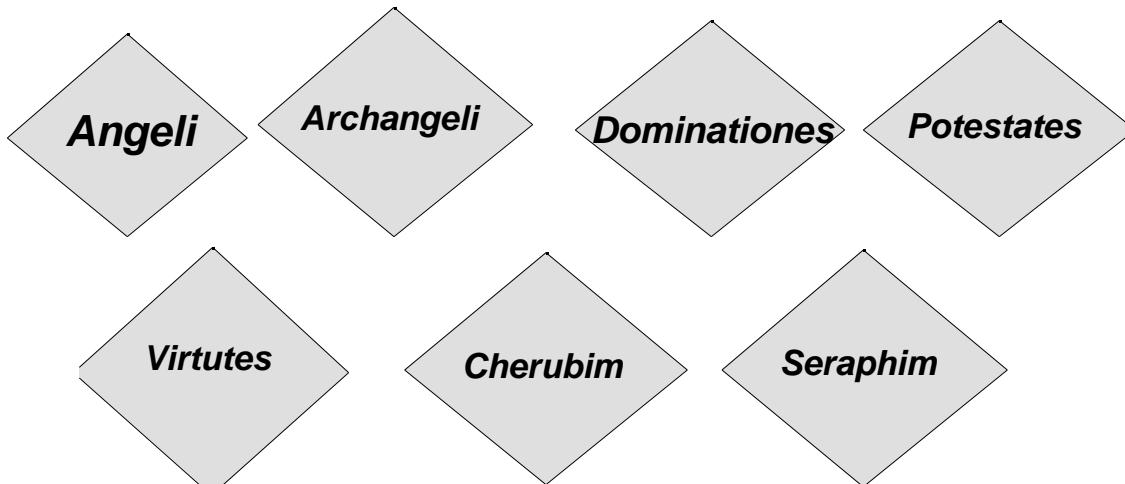
- the frequency with which the Angels, especially Michael the Archangel, are included in the liturgy
- the number of times Our Lady and the Saints, especially John the Baptist, Peter and Paul are mentioned *by name*, given honour and asked to intercede for us
- the profound influence which this celestial dimension is bound to exert on the priest who offers the Tridentine Mass and on the faithful who assist at it with attention and devotion.

The Archangel Michael, defender of the Church Militant, is invoked by name three times :

- in the *Confiteor*
- at the blessing of incense during High Mass
- in the Leonine prayers at the end of Low Mass

ANGELS were, in the tradition of the Church, objects of affection for the faithful. Devout Catholics prayed to them, responded to their presence and inspirations and had a special regard for their own Guardian Angel. The faithful were exhorted to the pious practice of asking their Guardian Angel to aid them during Mass to adore Christ present upon the altar, and to offer Him to God. It was to be expected that they would feel at home in a liturgy where Angels featured prominently. They wanted them to be close to them and their wishes were satisfied in the liturgy of the traditional Latin Mass.

The Church teaches that the Angels are present during Holy Mass, countless numbers of them all kneeling in adoration, reverently worshipping their Lord and God, singing in honour of the Victim Who is immolated, and that they offer the Mass together with our prayers to Almighty God. The following choirs of Angels, set out below according to their different ranks, are mentioned at every Mass :



At the **Asperges** (*Ad aspersionem aquae*) before Mass begins, the presence of Angels is acknowledged :

<i>Exaudi nos, Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, aeterne Deus, et mittere digneris sanctum angelum tuum de caelis, qui custodiat, foveat, protegat, visitet atque defendat omnes habitantes in hoc habitaculo. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen</i>	Hear us, O holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God, and vouchsafe to send Thy holy Angel from heaven, to guard, cherish, protect, visit, and defend all that are assembled in this house. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.
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The **Common Preface**, which is said on all days and festivals to which no Proper Preface is assigned, assures us of the presence of Angels at the Mass :

<i>Per Christum Dominum nostrum, per quem majestatem tuam laudant Angeli, adorant Dominationes, tremunt Potestates : caeli caelorumque Virtutes ac beata Seraphim sociis exultatione concelebrant.</i>	Through Christ our Lord through Whom the Angels praise Thy majesty, the Dominations adore, the Powers tremble, the heavens, the heavenly Virtues and blessed Seraphim all unite in exultation to sing Thy glory
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After the Consecration we pray that an Angel would receive the Sacrificial Victim together with our self-offering and present them before the throne of God.

<i>Supplices te rogamus, omnipotens Deus : jube haec perferri per manus sancti Angeli tui in sublime altare tuum in conspectu divinae majestatis tuae : ut quotquot ex hac altaris participatione sacrosanctum Filii tui corpus et sanguinem sumpserimus, omni benedictione coelesti et gratia repleamur.</i>	We most humbly beseech Thee, Almighty God, command these things to be carried by the hands of Thy holy Angel unto Thy altar on high, in the sight of Thy divine majesty : that as many of us as by this participation of the altar shall take the most sacred Body and Blood of Thy Son, may be filled with all heavenly blessing and grace
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It is more efficacious to join our prayers with the holy Angels, for it was always considered that the supplications of those pure spirits who behold God face to face are more potent than the prayers which lowly mortals send up to heaven and that consequently they will more certainly obtain a favourable hearing.

OUR LADY AND THE SAINTS are frequently invoked during the old rite of Mass. No opportunity is lost during the Mass to give them honour by a special mention of their name. They are the faithful servants of God who have fought the good fight on earth and have received the crown of glory. It is the Church's wish that their names should be honoured in the presence of their Lord when His Passion and Death are represented in the Mass. And so we find a roll of honour, always headed by Our Lady, the greatest of all the Saints by her merits and prerogatives, at frequent intervals in the traditional Latin Mass.

As the prayers of the faithful are strengthened by the intercession of Our Lady, and all the Saints, we appeal to their intercession so that by their merits and prayers we may more readily receive from God what we are not likely to obtain because of our own unworthiness.

The **Confiteor**, recited separately by the priest and the people, brings out vividly the mystery of the spiritual union that exists between the Saints in heaven and the faithful on earth. Here the holy Mother of God, Michael the Archangel, John the Baptist and Saints Peter and Paul are lovingly approached to intercede on our behalf, and are given the honour of a special place in the Mass where their names are mentioned twice in the same prayer.

Confiteor Deo omnipotenti, beatæ Mariæ semper Virgini, beato Michaeli Archangelo, beato Joanni Baptistæ, Sanctis Apostolis Petro et Paulo, omnibus Sanctis et tibi, pater, quia peccavi nimis cogitatione verbo et opere : mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa. Ideo precor beatam Mariam semper Virginem, beatum Michaellem Archangelum, beatum Joannem Baptistam, Sanctos Apostolos Petrum et Paulum, omnes Sanctos et te, pater, orare pro me ad Dominum Deum nostrum

I confess to Almighty God, to Blessed Mary ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, to all the Saints and to you, father, that I have sinned exceedingly through thought, word and deed : through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore I beseech Blessed Mary ever Virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, all the Saints and you, father, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

At the end of the Offertory Our Lady and the same Saints are again honoured and asked to intercede for us together with all the Saints :

in honorem beatæ Mariæ semper Virginis, et beati Joannis Baptistæ, et sanctorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli, et istorum et omnium sanctorum : ut illis proficiat ad honorem, nobis autem ad salutem : et illi pro nobis intercedere dignentur in caelis, quorum memoriam agimus in terris.

in honour of the blessed Mary ever Virgin, of blessed John the Baptist, the holy apostles Peter and Paul of these and of all the saints : that it may be available to their honour and our salvation : and may they vouchsafe to intercede for us in heaven whose memory we celebrate on earth.

The **Communicantes** invokes by name the Apostles and Martyrs of the early Church, together with Our Lady, reminding us that they were real people who once lived and suffered for the Faith, that in their heavenly glory they know and understand our needs, and are all part of the same family of the Church.

Communicantes, et memoriam venerantes in primis gloriosæ semper Virginis Mariæ, Genetricis Dei et Domini nostri Jesu Christi : sed et beatorum apostolorum ac martyrum tuorum, Petri et Pauli, Andreae, Jacobi, Joannis, Thomæ, Jacobi,

Communicating with and honouring in the first place the memory of the ever-glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of our Lord and God Jesus Christ : as also of the blessed apostles and martyrs, Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James, Philip,

<i>Philippi, Bartholomaei, Matthaei, Simonis et Thaddaei, Lini, Cleti, Clementis, Xysti, Cornelii, Cypriani, Laurentii, Chrysogoni, Joannis et Pauli, Cosmae et Damiani, et omnium sanctorum tuorum: quorum meritis precibusque concedas, ut in omnibus protectionis tuae muniamur auxilio.</i>	Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Thaddeus, Linus, Cletus, Clement, Xystus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, Cosmos and Damian, and of all Thy saints : by whose merits and prayers grant that we may be always defended by the help of Thy protection.
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Once again, special honour is given to the Saints who are mentioned by name :

<i>Nobis quoque peccatoribus famulis tuis, de multitudine miserationum tuarum sperantibus, partem aliquam, et societatem donare digneris, cum tuis sanctis Apostolis et Martyribus : cum Joanne, Stephano, Matthia, Barnaba, Ignatio, Alexandro, Marcellino, Petro, Felicitate, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucia, Agnete, Caecilia, Anastasia, et omnibus Sanctis tuis : intra quorum nos consortium, non aestimator meriti, sed veniae, quaesumus, largitor admitte.</i>	To us sinners also, Thy servants, who put our trust in the multitude of Thy mercies, vouchsafe to grant some part and fellowship with Thy holy Apostles and martyrs : with John, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicity, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecilia, Anastasia, and with all Thy Saints. Into their company do Thou, we beseech Thee, admit us, not weighing our merits, but freely pardoning our offences.
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These 15 Saints (8 male and 7 female) represent the different orders and states in the Church - prophets, deacons, apostles, levites, bishops, popes, priests, exorcists, married people, virgins and widows. Their inclusion in the liturgy is a reminder that the Mass is the sacrifice of the whole Church, and that all the faithful, no matter what calling or state in life they pursue, offer the Holy Sacrifice with the priest.

A CATHOLIC-FRIENDLY LITURGY

The old rite of Mass, which sets before our eyes the renewal of the Holy Sacrifice with such clarity and perfection, and so lavishly displays the doctrine of the Communion of Saints, presupposes and reinforces the Faith which Catholics have always believed. This is so throughout the entire text of the Mass from the *Asperges* and the **Prayers at the Foot of the Altar** to the concluding prayers for the Church in her battle against the devil, followed by the triple invocation to the Sacred Heart

That we are dealing with the Holy Sacrifice and not just a commemorative service of Holy Communion is made abundantly clear even from the opening words of the Mass where the priest declares his intention to approach the 'altar of God' (*altare Dei*) Who has led him 'to the holy mountain' (*in montem sanctum*). This opening prayer is a heavenly expression of his single-minded love for God for Whom he has despised all worldly pleasures so that he may exercise an office denied even to the greatest of angels, for which purpose his hands can never be sufficiently pure nor his soul sufficiently virtuous.

No wonder Popes of past ages regarded the immemorial texts as sacrosanct, and considered it absolutely inconceivable to discard any part of the venerable heritage that has been handed on unchanged through the centuries. No wonder Catholics of all times and cultural backgrounds who knew and loved the Faith could recognise it as the Mass of All Ages, the only form of Mass celebrated for centuries in the Latin rite, and assist at it with fervour in exactly the same way as their spiritual ancestors.

The Latin of the Mass is the language of *Catholic* worship, hallowed by centuries of usage, and because it is withdrawn from worldly intercourse, it takes us beyond the confines of our everyday concerns and is therefore a most suitable medium in which to express the Sacred Mysteries. The very experience of hearing the Latin Mass spoken or sung produces a 'spiritual' effect and predisposes the faithful to feelings of reverence, awe and mystery. That is why Catholics of every degree of education and none have always been able to participate fully in the Latin Mass.

It is because the Holy Sacrifice is a supremely sacred action of infinite value that the traditional Latin Mass has always been invested with the greatest possible reverence, order and dignity and celebrated with solemnity and devout veneration. By presenting the mysteries of our Faith in this way, it gives us a

foretaste of the glory that awaits us in our true home which is in heaven and induces the proper dispositions for us to benefit, while here on earth, from the infinite graces bestowed by Almighty God through devout participation in the Mass.