

Catechism on the Liturgy I,19

Again, it would be a mistake to insist on using the liturgy as the *only* text for learning, a mistake which would ignore the good development of the catechism and before that the scholastic approach of late medieval times. But it is clear nonetheless that the texts contained in the *Liber Usualis* can and do serve in what Leon Gauthier describes as, “an exposition of Catholic doctrine.”

I would not dispute the point that a faithful Catholic could participate in the liturgy, armed with nothing but a crucifix, or a chaplet, or maybe nothing in his hands at all. But to participate in a deeper sense, going beyond even education, he will need a daily missal for his *vadecum*. The best missal of all is likely the *Liber Usualis*, because it has everything the daily missal has, plus the music that should go with it.

5. At this point, the believer is polished, formed, informed, educated and instituted in the Sacred, by his ever deepening participation in the Mass. But he can go deeper still, by the sixth mode of teaching, which Senior called Instruction. *Instruere* means putting an army at the ready for battle.

“In the ancient times and in all the middle ages, music was a part of the studies. Why? And why this pre-eminence given to music rather than to any of the other arts? Music is the most violent of all the arts, and the one which most powerfully affects the senses. Music is very useful in forming sensitivity...The slightest beat of the drum, even if you are thinking about something else, will produce a physical effect far more powerful than any painting.” James Taylor, Poetic Knowledge

The experience of the procession into Mass, with an organ thundering, or with

the silent power of Chant, disposes us to “fight the good fight” in the Mass, by rejecting anger towards our neighbor, as well as the common distractions of the world. Thus music has the capability to put us at the ready for battle.

But even before the procession starts, the simple act of the priest putting on the amice in the sanctuary *instructs* us in a marvelous union of Sacred Scripture, vestment and gesture.

The meaning of this rite is explained by the Church herself in the prayer which is to be recited by the celebrant when he puts on the amice: “Place, O Lord, on my head the helmet of salvation, that I may overcome the assaults of Satan.” The question arises, what is to be understood by this helmet of salvation (galea salutis), with which the priest at the altar should be armed against the attacks of Satan. The expression is taken from Holy Scripture, which also contains its meaning. When the Apostle St. Paul exhorts Christians to put on the armor of God, to resist the attacks of Satan, he urges them “to take unto them the helmet of salvation” (galeam salutis assumite – Eph. 6.17).

In another place he says Christians should “be sober, having on the breast-plate of faith and charity, and for a helmet the hope of salvation” (induti loricae fidei et caritatis et galeam spei salutis – I Thess. 5.8). The protecting helmet and, consequently, the amice also which covers the head in a similar manner, are accordingly symbolical of Christian hope; for “hope” in the goods of grace and glory acquired and promised to us by Christ is a powerful weapon of protection against “our adversary the devil who, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour” (I Pet. 5.8). Truly, the supernatu-

ral virtue of hope is our protection and shield in combat against all the enemies of salvation! "They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as the eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." (Is. 40.31)

"The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life: of whom shall I be afraid? My enemies that trouble me, have themselves been weakened, and have fallen. If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear. If a battle should rise up against me, in this will I be confident!" (Ps. 26.1-3) Unshaken in faith and all confident in God, animated with every hope of his salvation, he will "walk upon the asp and the basilisk, and trample under foot the lion and the dragon" (Ps.90.13) (Therefore, a lively hope, is that firm

confidence in God is that armor of protection which the priest prays for in putting on the amice, that he may victoriously overcome all the attacks and temptations of the Evil One, especially during Mass.) Such a petition is most appropriate before beginning Holy Mass. Although the devil is ever lying in wait for man to destroy or at least to weaken in him the life of faith and hope, yet it is more particularly at the time of the Holy Sacrifice that he seeks to confuse the soul by all manner of suggestions and distractions, in order to rob him of devotion and of the fruits of the Sacrifice. The amice now admonishes the priest to arm and to prepare himself to encounter this danger. Fr. Ghir, The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass