

## Catechism on the Liturgy II, 12

### **Solemn High Mass**

A sung Mass with a priest, deacon and subdeacon. A Solemn High Pontifical Mass is similar, only a bishop or an abbot sings the Mass. When a bishop sings the Mass, the Blessed Sacrament is removed from the tabernacle in order to intensify the understanding that the bishop is in the place Christ, and it is Christ who is really doing the work that makes the Mass possible. When a bishop vests for Mass, his vestments are all laid out on the altar for a Pontifical Low Mass, and for a Solemn High Mass the vestments are laid on an altar in the sacristy, to signify that his entire identity comes from Christ.

### **Stational Churches**

We can celebrate something *here* that occurred *there*. Thus the Stational Churches are the papal paralleling of our Lord's own pilgrim journeys around Jerusalem and the surrounding areas. They reproduce in Rome the priestly significance of Christ's own movements in the Holy Land during His life. They indicate the physical sanctification of the land, and by implication the whole of Christendom and the world. This is why it matters that the papal liturgy takes place in Rome, and not some other, even arbitrarily chosen city such as Avignon, France.

### **Stole**

A preeminent sign of the office of the priesthood, it is a long cloth which drapes around the neck of the priest, and used for all the sacraments. Originally a linen cloth, and later a scarf, it has been in its present form for centuries. It symbolizes many things which we will see later, but among them is immortality, that a priest is ordained forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

### **Subdeacon**

The highest of the Minor Orders, his function is to sing the Epistle at a Solemn High Mass. Laymen can also fill this role however, and in that case they are called a "Straw" Subdeacon. They do most of what a Subdeacon does, but do not wear the maniple.

### **Surplice**

A shortened form of the alb, it is a white garment worn over the cassock, used as choir dress for priests and acolytes.

### **Tabernacle**

From the Latin word meaning "tent," in reference to the Old Testament prophecies which said the God would pitch his tent amongst his people." It is a strong, secure but ornate metal box in which is reserved the Blessed Sacrament. Originally it was in the form of a dove, hanging from a crook above the altar, and veiled.

### **Tenebrae**

The celebration of the Office of Matins and Lauds for the last three days of Holy Week. The word is from the Latin meaning "shadows." It is symbolic of the setting of the Sun of Justice, our Lord, and the sadness of those who rejected the Messiah. A special candlestick with fifteen candles is lit, and they are extinguished one-by-one.

### **Throne**

Used for a bishop in liturgical functions, it is the image of Christ seated on His throne in heaven. The bishop is surrounded by many ministers, as in the court of heaven.

### **Thurible**

From the Latin *thus*, meaning incense, it is a metal container in which

burning coals are placed so that when incense is put on the coals it smokes. Also called a censor, the thurible can be of one or three chains.

### **Thurifer**

The minister who carries and is in charge of the thurible, and who incenses the celebrant and faithful is called a thurifer.

### **Tunic**

The preeminent symbol of a subdeacon, it is a liturgical garment worn to symbolize the office of a subdeacon, and is also worn by the bishop at a Solemn High Pontifical Mass. It calls to mind the seamless garment woven by St. Mary Magdalen, for which the soldiers played dice under the cross.

### **Reform of the Calendar**

The editing of prayers, feast days, etc, of the Gregorian Rite. This re-

form was the result of an overemphasis of the necessity of literary and 'factual' proof over the oral and legendary tradition. Thus, the feast of St. Christopher was removed from the calendar (which never meant being forbidden to pray to him). If it is possible to prove from specific records that some event did not happen, or did not happen in the way reported, and the specific records can be corroborated as accurate from other sources, then the independent written record must be respected. But if the record does not speak either way, then there is no reason to alter the calendar, or excise things from it, for mere lack of evidence or because of modern sensibilities concerning the character of the miraculous, or even the metaphorical. In fact, oral traditions often preserve with great faithfulness understandings of events from the past, and should not be distrusted simply because they are, or were for a long time, unwritten.