



# INSTITUTE OF CHRIST THE KING SOVEREIGN PRIEST *In the Diocese of Plymouth*

7th Sunday after Pentecost

7th July 2024

## The Consecration of an Altar



*An excerpt from The Incredible Catholic Mass by Fr. Martin Von Cochem.*

The consecrating bishop, who together with the congregation has prepared himself by fasting on the preceding day, sets apart overnight the relics to be used in the consecration. On the morning of the day appointed, he betakes himself to the place whither they have been carried and, after vesting pontifically, recites with the clergy present the Seven Penitential Psalms and the Litany of the Saints. He then goes in procession with the clergy to the church.

Kneeling before the high altar, he chants three times the words, Deus, in adiutorium meum intende, etc.—“O God, come to my assistance,” etc. Thereupon he blesses—with the prescribed form of prayer—ashes, salt, water and wine, mixing them together and signing them repeatedly with the cross, and proceeds to consecrate the altar

Dipping his thumb into the preparation which he has just blessed, he makes a cross in the middle and in the four corners of the altar-stone, where five crosses have been carved into the altar, saying: “Let this altar be sanctified + to the glory of God, of the Virgin Mary and of all the Saints, and in the name and commemoration of St. [naming the patron of the church], in the name of the + Father,” etc. These words are repeated five times. Thereupon he goes around the altar seven times, sprinkling it with the special holy water, called Gregorian Water after Saint Gregory the Great, while reciting the Miserere.

He then blesses chalk and sand and mixes them with holy water, thus preparing the mortar for the laying of the altar-stone. Afterwards, going in procession to the place where the relics were deposited on the previous evening, he incenses them and carries them with lighted tapers and smoking censers into the church.

When the procession reaches the high altar, the bishop makes five crosses with chrism in the cavity of the altar called the sepulchre, places the case containing the relics in it, incenses them and closes the repository or sepulchre with a stone that has been blessed

and the mortar prepared for the purpose. Thereupon he incenses the altar itself and hands the censer to a priest, who goes around it, incensing every part. Meanwhile the bishop makes five crosses with oil of catechumens on the table of the altar, one in the center and one in each of the corners; with the same words he employed when blessing the water, he incenses the crosses and goes around the altar incensing it. After the prescribed prayer and psalm have been recited, he again anoints the altar, making five crosses upon it, saying: "Let this altar be blessed, sanctified and consecrated." He then again incenses the crosses and the whole altar. This ceremony is repeated a third time, while psalms are chanted by the clergy.



Finally, the bishop pours oil and chrism over the whole altar rubbing it in with his hand. Returning to the altar, he blesses the frankincense, lays five grains of incense wherever the five crosses were made, forms five small crosses out of wax tapers and lights them. While they are burning, he kneels down, as do all the clergy present, and intones the hymn *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*—"Come, Holy Ghost." This is followed by more prayers and a preface; the clergy chant Psalm 57 in thanksgiving for the graces received; the bishop makes a cross with the

chrism below the table of the altar and recites more and longer prayers. After that, he rubs his hands with bread and salt, and washes them in water. The clergy wipe the altar with linen, cover it with an altar-cloth, decorate it as best they can, while psalms and responsories are sung. In conclusion, the bishop incenses the altar three times and proceeds to celebrate a solemn pontifical High Mass.

All who have been present at the dedication of a church or at the consecration of an altar, cannot find words to express their surprise at the number of different ceremonies, anointings, benedictions and prayers that pertain to the ritual. What is the object of all of these? It is in order to render the church a temple suitable for the Great and Holy Sacrifice offered up therein to the most high God and to hallow and consecrate the altars whereon the spotless Lamb of God is to be slain in a mystical manner.

This is sufficient to convince any Christian of the sanctity of our churches and altars and the great reverence we ought to pay to them. Solomon's temple was but a foreshadow and type of the Christian Church, and yet in what respect it was held, both by Jews and heathen! How much the more should we reverence and respect our churches, hallowed as they are by so solemn a dedication! We read in the Third Book of Kings that Solomon, on the occasion of the dedication of his Temple, offered up no less than two and twenty thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand rams. These animals were all slaughtered by the priests, purified, and laid in pieces on the altar. And

while the king prayed aloud, fire fell from Heaven and consumed the victims. The whole Temple was filled with a cloud, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. And all the people, who beheld the fire and the glory of the Lord, filled with awe, fell upon their faces and adored the Lord. Thereupon King Solomon, standing on a high place in the sight of the assembly of Israel, spread forth his hands toward Heaven and said: "Is it then to be thought that God should indeed dwell upon earth? For if Heaven and the heavens of heavens cannot contain Thee, how much less this house, which I have built!" (3 Kings 8:27).

Who indeed can fail to be amazed at this and feel himself unable rightly to comprehend the dignity of that sacred temple?

And yet that temple was but a type, an image of our churches. In that there was nothing but the Ark of the Covenant, which only contained the two stone Tables of the Law, a basket of showbread and Aaron's rod that had blossomed. The sacrifices of the Jews were only animals that were slaughtered and burnt, besides offerings of bread, wine, cakes, etc.; whereas, our churches are dedicated by the bishops with incomparably greater solemnity; they are anointed with holy oil and chrism; they are blessed by being sprinkled with holy water and incensed with frankincense; they are hallowed repeatedly by the Sign of the Cross and consecrated finally by the oblation of the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Instead of the Ark of the Covenant, we have the tabernacle, where the true Bread of Heaven, the adorable Sacrament of the Altar, the Body and Blood of Christ, is continually

reserved. If it is right to hold Solomon's temple in honor, how much more ought we to reverence our consecrated churches, in which God dwells in person.

Our churches are called the "house of God," and this in very deed they are, since God Himself dwells in them and is always to be found in them. He is surrounded continually by a countless host of Angels, who serve Him, who adore Him, who worship Him, who praise Him, who offer our prayers to Him. This was foreshadowed by the vision of the patriarch Jacob.

Overtaken by night in the open country, he lay down to sleep, and in a dream he saw a ladder standing upon the earth, the top of which reached to Heaven. By this ladder, the Angels of God were ascending and descending, and at the top of it, he beheld God Himself. Jacob awoke from his sleep trembling and said: "How terrible is this place! This is no other but the house of God, and the gate of Heaven." (Gen. 28:17). He took the stone on which his head had rested, poured oil upon it, set it up for an altar, and on his return journey, he offered sacrifice upon it to God. That was a type of the Christian church, with its altar anointed with holy oil and chrism, of which we can say in truth: "How terrible is this place! This is no other but the house of God, and the Gate of Heaven," for here the Angels ascend and descend and carry up our petitions to Heaven. Our churches are the place of which God speaks by the mouth of the prophet Isaias: "I will bring them [the people of the Lord] into My holy mount, and will make them joyful in My house of prayer.

# MASS INTENTIONS

	AT LANHERNE	CANON TANNER
7	BENEFACTORS Kathleen & Martin & Fam	Holy Souls
8	Zach Phelps RIP	Holy Souls
9	Daniel Whitford	Holy Souls
10	Julia Powell	Joyce Yapp RIP
11	Zeth Buscombe William	Reparations for abortions in England
12	William	Raphael Prior RIP
13	Holy Souls	Carol Ann Frost

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Safeguarding Reps:  
Christina Hunt / Sarah Checkley

## At Lanherne Convent

Sunday 8am Conventual Mass  
11am Low Mass  
Monday – Saturday 8am Mass  
Thursday Mass at 8am and 6.15pm  
Confession:  
Thursday: 5.15pm-5.45pm  
Friday & Saturday after Mass

The Sisters of Lanherne are grateful to the Providence of God who supplies their needs through the generous support of the faithful.

## Friends of Lanherne

Sort code: 60-02-20  
Account: 64557391

Rev. Canon Scott Tanner, Prior  
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Safeguarding Rep: Katarzyna Adamiak

## At Holy Angels

Sundays:  
10.20 -10.40am Confessions  
10.45am Sung Mass

Mon. Tues. & Sat. Mass at 8.30am  
Wed. & Fri. Mass at 12 noon  
Thurs. Mass at 7pm

**Holy Angels Torquay**  
Account Name: ICKSP  
Account Details: 40-03-33  
Account Number: 12333902

Mon. Tues. Thurs. & Fri.  
7.30am Lauds & Meditation  
5.30pm Vespers  
6pm Adoration (& Confessions)  
7pm Compline (except Thursday)

**Plymouth:** Sundays at 8.30am First Saturdays: 11.30