

## THE LITURGY OF THE CONSECRATION OF VIRGINS ACCORDING TO THE ROMAN PONTIFICAL

*(In Benedictine communities the hymn, Jesu, corona Virginum, is sung during the procession into the chapel. Having entered the church, the virgins genuflect and then kneel in their places. The Bishop proceeds to the sanctuary, and having removed the cope, is vested for the Pontifical Mass, which he commences at once. The Mass is that of the day, with the following oration for virgins under one conclusion with the Collect:*

Grant, we beseech You, O Lord, to Your handmaids here present, whom You have graciously adorned with the honor of virginity, the complete fulfillment of the work undertaken; and that they may offer You a perfect oblation, may they deserve to carry out to the end what they have begun. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who with You lives and reigns in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

### I

#### Invitation and Presentation of the Virgins

*After the Alleluia verse (or before the last verse of the Tract or Sequence), the Bishop, with mitre, is seated on the faldstool before the middle of the altar. The archpriest, facing the virgins, sings:*

Wise virgins, prepare your lamps. Behold, the Bridegroom comes. Go forth to meet Him!

*After the virgins have lighted their candles, the arch-priest addresses the Bishop:*

Most Reverend Father, holy Mother the Catholic Church desires that you deign to bless and consecrate the virgins here present, and to espouse them to our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Most High God.

*The Bishop:*

Do you know that they are worthy of this?

*Answer:*

Insofar as human frailty is able to know, I believe and testify they are worthy.

*The Bishop:*

With the help of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ we choose to bless and to consecrate these virgins here present and to espouse them to our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Most High God.

*The Bishop then in a chanting tone calls the virgins:*

Come!

*They answer:*

And now we follow.

*They rise and come to the entrance of the choir where they kneel.*

*Again chanting the Bishop calls them:*

Come!

*The virgins rise and sing:*

And now we follow with all our heart.

*Then the Bishop calls:*

Come, daughters, hear me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

*The virgins answer:*

And now we follow with all our heart; we draw near to

You with reverence and seek to see Your face. O Lord, do not put us to shame, but deal with us according to Your kindness and according to the greatness of Your mercy.

*The virgins sing:*

Receive me, O Lord, according to Your word; let no injustice gain power over me.

## II

### The Self-surrender of the Virgins in Legal Form (Profession)

*The Bishop:*

Do you desire to persevere in the state of holy virginity?

*They answer:*

We desire it.

*He asks each one individually:*

Do you promise to preserve virginity forever?

*She answers:*

I promise it.

*The Bishop says:*

Thanks be to God!

## III

### The Consecration

*The Bishop:*

Do you desire to be blessed, consecrated and espoused to our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Most High God?

*They all answer:*

We desire it.

a) Litany of the Saints and Hymn to the Holy Spirit



*To the Litany is added:*

That You would graciously bless Your handmaids here present. We beseech You, hear us. That You would graciously bless and sanctify Your handmaids here present. We beseech You, hear us.

*After the Litany the Hymn is sung:*

Come, Creator Spirit!

**b) Blessing of the Garments and Insignia**

*The Bishop first blesses the garments:*

∇. The Lord be with you.

⌘. And with your spirit.

Let us pray. O God, who are filled with greatest fidelity in the promise of eternal goods and will certainly also fulfill Your pledges, You have promised Your faithful the garb of salvation and robes of eternal joy; we humbly implore Your kindness that You may graciously bless these garments, which signify humility of heart and contempt of the world and by which Your handmaids shall be visibly reminded of their holy state, that under Your protection they may preserve the garb of holy chastity which they assume by Your inspiration. May they, whom You clothe in the habit of so venerable a state in this mortal life, one day also be clothed with blessed immortality. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who with You lives and reigns in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

Let us pray. O Lord God, You bestow good gifts and bountifully pour out all blessings; we urgently beseech You to bless and sanctify these garments, which Your handmaids wish to put on, so that in them their holy state may be manifest and they may be recognized among other women as consecrated to You. Through Christ our Lord. Amen. Let us pray. Hear,

O Almighty God, our petitions and shower these garments, with which Your handmaids ask to be clothed, with the dew of abundant blessings, as You poured on the hem of Aaron's robes the blessing of the ointment which flowed down from his head onto his beard; and as You have blessed the garments of all religious consecrated to You, with whom You are most pleased, so deign to bless and sanctify these, and grant, O most kind Father, that the garments for these Your handmaids may be a protection unto salvation, a badge of their holy state, a beginning of sanctity, a firm defence against all assaults of the enemy, so that, persevering in continence, they may be rewarded a hundredfold. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*The Bishop blesses the veils:*

Let us pray. Earnestly we beseech You, O Lord, that Your kind blessing descend upon these veils for the heads of Your handmaids; may these veils be blessed, consecrated, spotless and holy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen. Let us pray. O God, Head and Savior of all the faithful, sanctify with Your right hand these veils, which Your handmaids desire to place upon their heads for love of You and of Your Mother, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, and under Your protection may they always preserve blamelessly in body and in soul what these veils mystically signify, so that, when they shall come to the eternal reward of the saints, they may be found ready with the prudent virgins and, under Your guidance, deserve to enter into the nuptials of eternal happiness. Who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

*The Bishop blesses the rings:*

Let us pray. Creator and Preserver of the human race, Bestower of spiritual grace and Dispenser of human blessings, send forth Your blessing upon these rings, that those who will wear them may be fortified with heavenly strength, preserve



unbroken faith and sincere fidelity, keep their virginal state as brides of Christ and persevere in perpetual chastity. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*The Bishop blesses the crowns:*

Let us Pray. Bless, O Lord, these crowns and grant, through the invocation of Your Name, that all who will wear them may merit, after serving You faithfully, to receive the crown in heaven, which these crowns symbolize. Who in perfect Trinity live and reign, God forever and ever. Amen.

*The virgins sing:*

The kingdom of the world and all worldly ornaments have I despised for love of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom I have seen, whom I have loved, in whom I have believed, whom in love I have chosen. My heart utters a good word; therefore I will relate my works to the King.

Whom I have seen, whom I have loved, in whom I have believed, whom in love I have chosen.

c) Consecration of the Virgins by the Consecratory prayers

*The Bishop:*

Let us pray. Look down, O Lord, with favor upon Your handmaids, that by Your guidance they may preserve the state of holy virginity, which they assumed by Your inspiration. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who with You lives and reigns in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God. . .

*The Bishop Sings:*

∇. Forever and ever.

℞. Amen.

∇. The Lord be with you.

℞. And with your spirit.

∇. Lift up your hearts.

℞. We have lifted them up to the Lord.

V. Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

R. It is meet and just.

It is truly meet and just, right and salutary that always and everywhere we give thanks to You, O Holy Lord, Almighty Father, Eternal God, who are a gracious guest in chaste bodies and a lover of pure souls. By Your Word, by Whom all things are made, You so restore human nature, profaned in our first parents by the wiles of the devil, that You not only recall it to original innocence, but also lead it to a foretaste of eternal blessings prepared in the new era. You raise to a likeness with the angels human beings who are still in the flesh. Look down, O Lord, upon Your handmaids here present, who place the vocation of their continency and their surrender to You into Your hands, from whom they received the will to offer themselves. How else could souls still in the body overcome the inclinations of nature, the urge of sensuality, force of habit and the impulses of youth, if You, O God, had not graciously enkindled in their wills love for virginity, if You had not lovingly nourished the desire for it in their hearts, if You had not endowed them with fortitude.

You have poured out Your grace upon people in all generations and have adopted them, numerous as the stars, as heirs of the New Covenant. But among the gifts which You have bestowed upon Your own—on those who were begotten not by blood nor by the will of the flesh, but by Your Holy Spirit—you have mercifully given certain souls an altogether special gift. While no prohibition lessens the dignity of marriage and while the nuptial blessing resting on matrimony is safeguarded, nevertheless, there will be nobler souls who, spurning the carnal union entered into by man and wife, strive after the mystery it signifies. Without imitating what takes place in matrimony they devote their entire love to the



mystery signified by marriage. Perpetual virginity has recognized its Author and, emulating the purity of the angels, has dedicated itself to the bridal chamber of Him who is the Bridegroom of perpetual virginity and perpetual virginity's Son.

To those, then, O Lord, who implore Your help and who desire to grow strong by the blessing of Your consecration, grant the protection of Your strength and guidance, lest the ancient enemy, who assails nobler aspirations with subtler wiles, obscure the glory of perfect continence, steal into their unguarded souls and rob the virginal state of that purity which must adorn even those who are married.

May there dwell in them, O Lord, by the gift of Your Spirit, a prudent modesty, a wise kindness, a grave gentleness, a chaste freedom. May they glow with love but delight in nothing apart from You. May they live in a praiseworthy manner, but may they not desire to be praised. May they glorify You alone by their holiness of body and purity of soul. In love may they fear You, in love serve You. May You be their honor, their joy, their will, their comfort in affliction, their counsel in doubt, their defence in injury, patience in tribulation, abundance in poverty, food in fasting, medicine in sickness. May they possess all things in You, whom they love above all. Through You may they keep what they solemnly assumed as their vocation.

Aiming to please You, the Searcher of hearts, not according to the body but according to the spirit, may they be numbered among the wise virgins, so that waiting with the burning lamps of virtue and the oil of preparedness, they may not be confounded by the unexpected arrival of the heavenly Bridegroom; joining the choir of virgins going before them, may they hasten joyously with lighted lamp in hand to meet Him. May they not be shut out with the foolish but with the wise virgins freely enter through the royal gate. Tried in



enduring chastity, may they be permitted eternally to follow Your Lamb. Thus by Your bestowal of the gift of virginity they will be adorned with fruits a hundredfold.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who with You lives and reigns as King in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

d) The Symbolic Nuptials of Christ and of the Newly-consecrated Virgins

*The Bishop chants the responsory, which the choir continues:*

Come, My elect, I will set up My throne in you.  
For the King desires your beauty.  
Hearken, daughter, and see and incline your ear.  
For the King desires your beauty.

*Then the brides rise, humbly kneel before the Bishop and sing:*

I am the handmaid of Christ; therefore, I conduct myself as becomes a handmaid.

*Once more the Bishop asks:*

Do you desire to persevere in holy virginity, which you have vowed?

*They answer:*

We desire it.

*Thereupon he covers the brides with the veil and says:*  
Receive the holy veil, which shows that you have despised the world and have subjected yourself in truth and humility and with all the strength of your heart as a bride to Jesus Christ. May He preserve you from all evil and lead you to eternal life. Amen.

*The veiled virgins sing:*

He has placed a seal upon my forehead, so that I may admit no other lover besides Him.

*The Bishop:*

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

Let us pray. By Your devoted care, O Lord, defend Your handmaids, that under Your protection they may preserve spotless the state of holy virginity, which they assumed by Your inspiration. Who live and reign with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

*Once more the Bishop calls the brides:*

Come, beloved, to be espoused; the winter is past, the turtle dove calls, the blooming vineyards give forth their fragrance.

*The brides ascend the altar steps. The Bishop places the ring on their right hand and says:*

I espouse you to Jesus Christ, the Son of the Most High Father, that He may keep you unharmed. Therefore, receive the ring of fidelity, the seal of the Holy Spirit, that you may be called the spouse of God and, after you have served Him faithfully, you may be crowned eternally. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*The virgins sing:*

I am espoused to Him whom the angels serve, whose beauty sun and moon admire.

*Lifting up their right hands, the virgins sing:*

My Lord Jesus Christ has espoused me with this ring and has adorned me with a crown.

*The Bishop:*

May the Creator of heaven and earth, God the Almighty Father, bless you; He has graciously chosen you to be companions of the Blessed Mary, the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. Before God and His angels may you preserve upright and spotless the virginity you have professed. May you keep



your promise, love chastity and suffer patiently, so that you will deserve to receive the crown of virginity. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Again the Bishop calls the virgins to the altar:*

Come, bride of Christ, receive the crown which the Lord prepared for you from eternity.

*Kneeling the brides receive the crown. The Bishop says:*

Receive the crown of virginal excellence. As you are crowned by our hands on earth, may you deserve to be crowned by Christ with glory and honor in heaven. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

*The brides sing:*

The Lord has clothed me with a garment of gold and He has adorned me with priceless jewels.

*Now the Bishop prays:*

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

Let us pray. Grant, we beseech You, Almighty God, that Your handmaids here present who, in the hope of an eternal reward, desire to be consecrated to You, may persevere in their holy state with full fidelity. Bestow on them, O Lord, humility, chastity, obedience, charity and an abundance of all good works, so that they may deserve eternal glory. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us pray. We beg You, O Holy Lord, Almighty Father, Eternal God, in behalf of these Your handmaids, who have vowed to serve You with a pure mind and heart, that You may graciously join them to the one hundred and forty-four thousand who remained virgins, who did not defile themselves with women, and in whose mouth was found no guile. Thus let Your handmaids here present remain spotless to the end through our immaculate Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



*The virgins sing:*

Behold, what I have longed for I see; what I hoped for I possess; I am united with Him in heaven, whom on earth I have loved with utmost devotion.

## e) Concluding Prayers of Blessing

*The Bishop:*

O God, Moulder of bodies and Infuser of souls, You despise no age, reject no sex and hold no station unworthy of Your grace, but are equally Creator and Redeemer of all. Cover Your handmaids here present whom You, Good Shepherd, have graciously chosen from Your flock with the strength of Your protection, that they may preserve the crown of perpetual virginity and chastity of soul. As their Teacher, prepare them with wisdom for every work of virtue and glory, so that they, overcoming the lusts of the flesh and fleeing illicit wedlock, may merit indissoluble union with Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Give them, we beseech You, O Lord, powerful weapons, not of the flesh but of the spirit, so that, their senses and members strengthened by You, sin cannot reign in their souls and bodies. Since they desire to live in Your grace, let not the advocate of the wicked and the enemy of the good claim anything for himself in these virgins consecrated to Your Name. May the rain of Your heavenly grace extinguish every harmful flame and enkindle the light of perpetual chastity. Let their modest countenance be closed to all scandals and let no carelessness provide an occasion for sin. May a chaste virginity dwell in them; may they be both adorned and armed with deep faith, unflinching hope, sincere charity, so that prepared for chastity they may overcome all the wiles of the devil, and, despising that which passes, they may seek that which is eternal. May they prefer fasting to feasting, holy reading and prayers to eating and drinking. Nourished by prayer, filled with instruction, enlightened by vigils, may they

accomplish the work of virginal chastity. Having been strengthened interiorly and exteriorly with the weapons of these virtues, may these Your handmaids blamelessly complete a life of virginity. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit bless you with every spiritual blessing; may you always remain incorrupt, inviolate and undefiled under the garb of Holy Mary, the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. May the Spirit of sevenfold grace rest upon you, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and fortitude, the Spirit of knowledge and piety, and may you be filled with the Spirit of the fear of the Lord. May He strengthen the frail, fortify the weak, elevate you in love, rule over your minds, direct your ways, instill holy thoughts, approve your actions, perfect your works, build up charity in you, enlighten you in wisdom, confirm you in chastity, instruct you in knowledge, strengthen you in faith, increase virtue in you, raise you up in holiness, prepare you for patience, make you docile for obedience, protect the sober and pure; may He visit you in sickness, bring you relief in sorrow, safeguard you in temptation, make you frugal in prosperity, gentle in anger, pure amid iniquity; may He infuse grace in you, forgive your offences, bestow discipline on you, so that, filled with these and similar virtues and adorned with good works, you may always strive to do what is worthy of reward.

May He be your witness who will also be your judge. Prepare yourself to bear the burning lamp in your hands. You who are to enter into the chamber of the Bridegroom hasten with joy to meet Him. May He find nothing odious in you, nothing unclean, nothing secret and corrupt, nothing shameful. May He find in you pure souls, bright and resplendent bodies, so that when that dreadful day for rewarding the good and punishing the wicked comes, the avenging flame



shall find nothing in you to burn up. May divine love find only what is to be crowned. May you, whom a spiritual life has purified on earth, deserve to be protected, together with those who follow the Lamb and sing the new canticle without ceasing, when the Eternal King ascends the judgment seat. After receiving the reward of your labors, may you remain in the land of the living. And may He Himself bless you from heaven who came graciously to redeem the human race on earth by His agony of the cross, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with the Eternal Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns in perfect unity, God forever and ever. Amen.

#### IV

#### The Anathema

*The Bishop:*

By the authority of Almighty God and His Apostles Peter and Paul, we firmly forbid, under pain of excommunication, anyone to lead these virgins and consecrated nuns away from the divine service to which they pledged themselves under the banner of chastity. Let no one rob them of their property, but rather allow them their property in peace. But if anyone presume to attempt such a thing, let him be cursed in and out of his home, cursed in the city and in the country, cursed waking and sleeping, cursed eating and drinking, cursed walking and sitting; cursed be his flesh and his bones, and from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head may there be nothing sound in him. Let the curse of men fall upon him, as the Lord permitted it to come through Moses in the Old Law upon the sons of iniquity. May his name be erased from the book of the living, and may it no longer be written with that of the just. Let him have his portion and inheritance with Cain, the fratricide, with Dathan and Abiron, with Ananias and Saphira, with Simon Magus and Judas the traitor, and with those



who said to God, "Depart from us, we do not desire to walk in Your paths." Let him perish on the Day of Judgment. May the eternal fire swallow him up along with the devil and his angels, unless he make restitution and do penance. So be it done!

## V

### The Completion of the Consecration of Virgins by the Eucharistic Mystery

*The following prayer is added under one conclusion to the Secret of the Mass:*

By the sacrificial gifts offered here, grant to these Your handmaids perseverance in perpetual virginity, that at the opening of the gate, when the Most High King appears, they may enter the kingdom of heaven with joy. Through our Lord . . .

*After the brides have received Holy Communion, they sing:*

Honey and milk have I taken from His mouth, and His blood adorns my cheeks.

*The following prayer is added under one conclusion to the Postcommunion of the Mass:*

O God, who have established Your dwelling in chaste hearts, look down upon Your handmaids here present that they may obtain by Your consolation what they ask for by continual self-denial. Through our Lord.

## VI

### Authorization of the Virgins for Reciting the Divine Office

*After the Blessing the Bishop prays over the consecrated virgins:*

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

Let us pray. Hear, O Lord, our prayers and send down upon

Your handmaids here present Your blessing, that, enriched by heavenly gifts, they may obtain the favor of Your Majesty and be able to show others an example of a good life. Through . . .

*Now the Bishop holds out to them the Breviary, which they touch with both hands:*

Receive this book, that you may begin the Canonical Hours and read the Office of the Church. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## VII

### Conclusion of the Services

*The Bishop intones the hymn:*

*Te Deum laudamus.*

*At the conclusion of the Te Deum, the choir sings:*

Confirm, O Lord, what You have begun in us.  
From Your holy temple, which is in Jerusalem.

*The Bishop:*

Let us pray. We beseech You, O Lord, may our actions be preceded by Your inspiration and accompanied by Your help, that all our prayers and work may begin in You and through You be happily ended. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*The virgins then return to the portal of the convent, where the Bishop presents them kneeling before him to their spiritual mother, who also kneels:*

See to it, that you preserve these consecrated virgins, so as to present them immaculate to God. You must render an account of them before the judgment seat of their Spouse, the Judge to come.

*Then the Bishop says the Last Gospel. And having put off his vestments he departs in peace.*