

Entrance Procession

Now that we have looked at the mysteries of the Mass, as well as some of the history of the Mass and the symbolism of the church building itself, we can actually turn to the parts of the Mass proper, known as the Order of Mass. So, for example, if you have a missal and you open it up to the center of that missal, you'll find a section called the Order of Mass. In Latin, the *Ordo Missae*, and this is going to give the order of the main parts of the Mass that are common and consistent to every Mass that you might go to, or every form of the Mass that you may celebrate.

So the first part of the Order of Mass is known as the Introductory Rites, and this is going to be a few things at the beginning of the Mass that take place before we turn to the Liturgy of the Word proper. And the first major part of the Introductory Rites that's described in the missal is known as the entrance, sometimes called the Entrance Procession, and this is how it's described in the official missal of the Church:

When the people are gathered, the Priest approaches the altar with the ministers while the Entrance Chant (Latin *introit*) is sung. When he has arrived at the altar, after making a profound bow with the ministers, the Priest venerates the altar with a kiss and, if appropriate, incenses the cross and the altar. Then, with the ministers, he goes to the chair. (Roman Missal, *Order of Mass* no. 1)¹

Now, if you've ever been to Mass, which I'm assuming you have, you'll notice that there's a lot going on with the Entrance Procession. And I think it's easy for us just to kind of think of this as the preliminary opening of the Mass. We don't necessarily think about where the Entrance Procession comes from in Scripture or where it comes from in tradition or what is happening symbolically and mystically here. But we actually really do need to do that, because this is a very, very important part of the Mass. It is, in a sense, literally the doorway that opens up the mystery of the liturgy.

¹ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal, Third Edition*. USCCB, 2011.

So I want to highlight a few things about it that need to demand our attention. First, just the idea of a procession to the altar. You know, why do we have a procession? Second, who participates in the procession? So we see the priest, the deacon and other ministers, think here of acolytes, altar servers that would participate in that procession. Why are they there? What do they symbolize? You can also think about the things that are being carried in procession. So if incense is being used, you'd have a thurifer. If it's not being used, you're still going to have candles. You have the book of the Gospels, for example, being carried, all in procession up to the altar. So what's the symbolism behind that? Where does that come from? Another element that's important, you'll notice it says "while the Entrance Chant is sung." What is that? What is the Entrance Chant? The Latin for that is *Introit*. So what is the *Introit* and where does that come from and what is being sung at this particular part of the Mass? And then finally, notice the procession includes two important acts of veneration. The priest making a profound bow to the altar. Notice, not a genuflection, but a profound bow. And then also the priest kissing the altar. So why do we do that? Why does the priest bow to the altar and then kiss the altar. What's the meaning of these signs and symbols in these actions that all form part of the Entrance Procession.

Before I try to answer that question, one more thing just on the Entrance Chant. Let me make one quick point about that. For many Catholics in the United States today, our experience of the Entrance Procession is usually that it would be accompanied by a hymn, which would be some liturgical song that may or may not be appropriate for that particular day. But the Entrance Chant proper is actually part of the Mass. The *Introit* is going to be a quotation of Scripture, usually from the Psalms, that will actually identify the central theme or the theological meaning of a particular Mass, whether it's because it's in a particular season like Advent or Lent, or just a Sunday of Ordinary Time. And you can actually see how important these Entrance Chants are and how ancient they are to identifying the Mass by the custom of referring to particular Sundays with a name. So you have probably heard, for example, of the fact that in Advent, the Third Sunday of Advent, is called *Gaudete* Sunday, which means Rejoice Sunday. Or you may have noticed that the Fourth Sunday of Lent is called *Laetare* Sunday. One of the reasons these Sundays will stand out is because on those Sundays instead of wearing the ordinary

purple for the liturgical season of Lent or Advent, the priest will wear rose vestments, so the color will change, right? Or maybe you've also heard of a *Requiem* Mass, which would be a Mass for a funeral, a Mass for the dead. Well, all of those names: *Laetare* Sunday, *Gaudete* Sunday or *Requiem* Mass, those actually come from the Entrance Chants that are in the actual missal for the beginning of Mass, right? So that the Entrance Chant isn't just a hymn that's sung or picked from any number of songs, it's actually part of the Mass, and it's a quotation of Scripture. So for example, this is the Entrance Chant, the Entrance Antiphon is what it's called, for the Third Sunday of Advent:

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.

If you look at the Latin for that Entrance Chant, that Entrance Antiphon, The first word is *Gaudete*, Rejoice. It's a quote from the Latin translation of St. Paul's letter to the Philipians, Philipians 4:4-5. So that word *Gaudete* is the Latin word for the beginning of the Entrance Chant. It would be the first word you would hear if you would go into Mass and that song were actually chanted in Latin. The reason we call the Fourth Sunday of Lent *Laetare* Sunday is because of the Entrance Antiphon. The Entrance Chant for that Sunday is:

Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her...

From Isaiah 66, and the the the Latin of that is "*Laetare Jerusalem*". So Rejoice, Jerusalem. And then finally, at a funeral Mass, if you go to the funeral Mass and you actually sing the Entrance Chant, the chant is:

Eternal Rest grant to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

And the first word there is *Requiem*:

Requiem æternam dona eis Domine

So, rest give to them, right? So a Requiem Mass is a Mass, a rest Mass. It's for the eternal rest of the person involved. So when the missal talks about the Entrance Chant being sung, traditionally, in the missal itself, in the book to this day, these

entrance antiphons are quotations from Scripture, usually the Psalms, but not always. They can be from other parts of the Bible, and in some cases even non-biblical texts that queue you into the mystery, the theme, the theological meaning of that particular Mass. So if you've ever wondered, why do we call it *Laetare* Sunday and *Gaudete* Sunday, that's where it comes from. It comes from the text of the Entrance Antiphon.

Okay, so that's what's going on in the Entrance Procession. So where's that from in Scripture? And where's that from in Tradition? So let's go back to the Bible for a minute and look at some biblical roots of the Entrance Procession. The first point I would want to make is that, just with regard to the idea of a procession, we actually see this in the Old Testament for the first time in descriptions of the Tabernacle of Moses or the Temple of Solomon. In other words, whenever you would enter into a holy place, into a sanctuary for worship, there would be a kind of formal procession into that sacred space, into that sacred temple, into that place of sacrificial worship. So for example, if you go back to the Old Testament in the book of Exodus 33... We've already seen how the church building is in some ways inspired by the the map or the blueprint of worship given in the Tabernacle of Moses. In Exodus 33, we see a little hint of a kind of procession into the Tabernacle in the description of Moses. So it says this in Exodus 33:7-10:

Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp; and he called it the tent of meeting. And every one who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. *Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose up, and every man stood at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he had gone into the tent.* When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the door of the tent, and the LORD would speak with Moses. *And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the door of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship* (Hebrew, *chawa*, “bow down”)...²

² Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible citations/quotations herein are from *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*. New York: National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, 1994.

So notice, we see here kind of an interesting analogy with what we do. When the priest comes in, who's going to lead us in worship, and he enters into the sanctuary within the church building, we as the people of God rise up, right? And we kind of orient ourselves toward the place where God dwells, which is in the sanctuary, in the Tabernacle, in the Blessed Sacrament, and who will be coming into our presence as the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is being offered. So it's a very powerful window into that communal, as well as priestly nature, of the procession that's described with the Tabernacle of Moses in the book of Exodus. Now, remember that the Tabernacle is a kind of blueprint for the Temple. So eventually when the Israelites are going to get to the land of Israel, they're not going to have a portable sanctuary, they are going to have a permanent sanctuary, and it's called the Temple of Solomon. So if you read through the Book of Psalms, you'll notice that a number of the Psalms are actually dedicated to the active proceeding into the Temple, and not just by the priest or ministers, but also by the people who had gathered as a crowd to enter in in worship, to offer sacrifice and praise and thanksgiving to God.

So, for example, I'll just give you two famous examples from the Book of Psalms. If you turn to the middle of the Book of Psalms, Psalms 42 and 43 are both liturgical texts that describe processions, not just into the Temple, but up to the altar, which is kind of the ultimate destination of any liturgical procession. So Psalm 42:4 says this:

These things I remember, as I pour out my soul:
*how I went with the throng, and led them in procession to the house of God,
with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving,
a multitude keeping festival.*

And then again, Psalm 43 says:

Vindicate me (Latin *Judica me*), O God, and defend my cause... Oh, send out
your light and your truth; let them lead me,
let them bring me to your holy hill...

That's the Temple Mount.

and to your dwelling!

That's the Temple.

*Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy;
and I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God. (Psalm 43:1, 3-4)*

So notice in both those texts, that we see described as both the king and the ministers as well as the people going up together, so to speak, to the house of God, to the mountain of Jerusalem, to the altar of sacrifice, in order to offer sacrifices of Thanksgiving. So in Hebrew the word for Thanksgiving is *Todah*. In Greek it's going to be *Eucharistia*. So the idea that the Eucharist, that the Mass, would involve a procession up to the altar, involving both the ministers and in some cases the people as well, is just a very deeply rooted scriptural idea that goes back not just to the Book of Exodus, but also to the book, especially to the Book of Psalms. In fact, if you read through the Book of Psalms and you go down to Psalms 120 through 134—that's in the Hebrew enumeration—there's actually a whole series of Psalms that are called Songs of Ascents. Each one of them will have a title, a Song of Ascents, a song of going up. And scholars have speculated about what these titles mean, but one common hypothesis is that these songs were actually sung by pilgrims as they went up in procession to the Temple, because you have to go up to Jerusalem. It's on a mountain, and on Jerusalem you have to go up into the Temple, and then even within the Temple you have to go up to the Altar of Sacrifice, and then up to the Holy of Holies. Every time you move closer and closer to holiness, you don't just go more inward; you also go more upward. There's an ascending character to entry into these sacred spaces.

So the Psalms of Ascents, Psalms 120-134, are hypothesized by some to actually reflect these kinds of processions up into the Temple, into the altar. Which is interesting, because in Latin, the term for a song of ascent is *Canticum Graduum*, right? It's like when I graduate from high school; I'm going to go up out of high school and into the next stage of life. So the *Canticum Graduum* is actually where the Church gets its name for its traditional collection of Psalms that would be sung

as part of the Mass, known as the *Roman Gradual*. You might not have heard of the Gradual, but it's a traditional book that's a collection of Psalms that can still be used and sung from today in the Roman Missal, because what are we doing? We're singing, like the Jews who sang Psalms as they went up to the altar, so we sing the Entrance Chant, we sing the antiphon, we sing the words of Scripture as we ascend into the house of God and into the sanctuary, where the sacrifice of the Mass will be offered, on the true altar, the altar of the Eucharist. Alright, so fascinating, there is a lot of interesting stuff going on, and we're not even at the beginning of Mass yet. I mean, we are at the beginning, but we haven't said a word yet in terms of the Order of Mass with the Sign of the Cross. We're just chanting the Psalm here as a kind of preparation and entry to the mystery.

Okay, one other thing I want to say scripturally here about... I'm going to do a whole other video just on the altar and a whole other video just on incense, so I don't want to go into that in any detail right now, but I do want to highlight the fact that, you'll notice that in the Missal it says part of the ascent to the altar can sometimes involve incense, and people often have questions about that, so I would just highlight for you to take a look at Revelation 8:1-3, because in Revelation 8:1-3, John has a vision of heavenly worship, and in that heavenly worship, he not only sees an altar, he also sees incense being offered at the altar. So sometimes people wonder, why does the priest, when he goes around the altar in the Entrance Procession, sometimes he will, at a Solemn Mass for example, he will incense the altar. Well, the scriptural roots of that are in Revelation, where it says this:

And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer;

We will sometimes call a thurible. Those are two ways to talk about the same thing.

and he was given much incense to mingle with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the throne; and the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel before God.
(Revelation 8:2-4)

So, notice here what's happening, just as everyone rises, as Moses goes into the Tabernacle, and just as the people proceed into the Temple, those scriptural roots kind of reveal to us that the mystery of what's happening in the procession is that we are entering into the sanctuary, the sacred place, the dwelling of God to offer sacrifice; the use of incense also reminds us that we're not just, in a sense, fulfilling the earthly temple and the earthly Tabernacle, we are also entering into heavenly worship, right? Because the altar of God that John sees in the heavenly sanctuary is, in a sense, replicated sacramentally and symbolically through what we do on earth. So there are all these biblical allusions just in the very notion of a procession and of an altar and of incense all coming together to tell us you're in the Tabernacle, you're not in the world anymore. You're entering into the sacred sanctuary. You're in the Temple; you've left the ordinary realm behind, and now you're entering into the sacred. And not only have you left those things behind, but you're also in heaven, right? You're not on earth anymore, so to speak. You're entering into a heavenly realm, into heavenly worship. And it's fitting in that case that we would sing heavenly songs, we would sing the inspired words of scripture given to us, for example, in the Entrance Chant and in the Entrance Antiphons.

Alright, so that's some of the scriptural roots of the Entrance Procession. What about its traditional roots? Where does the Entrance Procession and the Entrance Chant, the antiphon, and some of these gestures of reverence, like the bowing and the kissing of the altar, where do those come from in Tradition? Well, I have to tell you, this part of the Mass is fascinating because it is very ancient. The roots of this in ancient Roman Christian worship are strikingly old. So let's just begin with a couple of examples. For example, with regard to the Entrance Antiphon, the idea of chanting the Psalms, singing these chants at the beginning of the Mass, St. Isidore of Seville, who was writing in the 6th century, had a little book that he wrote called *The Ecclesiastical Offices*. It's on the Mass. It's a description of the Western liturgy, Latin liturgy at his time. And he actually tells us that the antiphons were first introduced by Greek Christians and then they made their way over to the West through the figure of St. Ambrose, who was the Bishop of Milan and who converted St. Augustine. So this is what St. Isidore says:

The Greeks first composed antiphons, with two choirs alternately singing together like two seraphim...

Pause there. That is what the word antiphon means. In Greek, *antíphōna*, is a response. It is where there is a kind of responsorial singing, where you have two different choirs. One sings one part and the other responds, and they go back and forth between one other. It is very repetitive but also communal in character. So St. Isidore continues:

*Among the Latins, however, the same most blessed Ambrose was the first to have instituted antiphons, imitating the example of the Greeks. From that time their usage has increased in all the western regions.*³

So according to Saint Isidore, it was St. Ambrose who adopted that Greek custom of antiphons and introduced that kind of singing into the liturgy. If we go a little further down the road with the book I've mentioned before, the *Liber Pontificalis*, the *Book of the Pontiffs*, it actually contains an ancient tradition that it was Pope Celestine I, who in the 5th century actually brought these Entrance Antiphons into the Mass itself of the Church at Rome, so not just Western liturgies, but the Roman Church in particular. And it says:

*Celestine, born in Campania, [...] decreed that the 150 psalms of David be antiphonally sung before the sacrifice, something not done formerly...*⁴

Notice the use of the language of antiphons there and notice that, in particular, the antiphons involve chanting the Psalms. And that they're done at the beginning of the liturgy, before the Liturgy of the Eucharist. That's what it means by before the sacrifice, so before you get to the sacrificial component of the Mass, the antiphons are going to be chanted at the beginning of the Mass. So if you look at ancient, like medieval writers, like William Durand or Walafrid Strabo and others, they're going to identify this tradition as saying it was Pope Celestine who introduced, in particular, the Entrance Antiphons. And it's true, if you look at the actual Entrance Antiphons in the missal, some of them are extremely ancient and they're very

³ Isidore of Seville, *On the Ecclesiastical Offices*, 1.7. In Isidore of Seville, *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis* (trans. Thomas L. Knoebel; New York, N.Y./Mahwah, N.J.: Newman Press, 2008), 32.

⁴ *Liber Pontificalis* 45.1. In Johnson, *Worship in the Early Church*, 4:58.

beautiful and they're very rich in their theology, and they go way back in time, some of them being sung for over 1000 years as part of the Roman liturgy. So that's with regard to the music of the Entrance Procession.

What about those symbolic acts, though, of like having incense and bowing to the altar and kissing the altar. Where do those come from in the tradition? Well, here I would point you to another important book, and this is from the 7th century. I mentioned it in other videos. It's called the *First Roman Ordo* or the *First Order of Mass*. It's the same word I was using to describe the missal today. The Order of Mass is the *Ordo Missae*. This is the *Ordo Romanum Primus*, the *First Roman Ordo*. It's the most ancient description we possess of a papal Mass in Rome. And one of the cool things about the Mass today is that we have this Entrance Procession as an ordinary part of the Sunday liturgy, and this Entrance Procession is really modeled on the Entrance Procession going all the way back to the 7th century in Rome at a papal Mass. So I'm going to read this description of the Entrance Procession to this ancient papal Mass, and I just want you to try to imagine that if you were in Rome and it's the 7th century, you know, this is how the Mass would begin. This is what you would see. And you can see some of the parallels with our own experience today and with the missal we described. So here's what it says:

When they have lit [the incense], immediately the attendant subdeacon, holding *the golden thurible*, places the incense outside the doors, so that he may go before the pope... *Then... the candlesticks are divided*, four to the right and three to the left, and *the pope crosses to the top part of the schola and bows his head to the altar, standing up and praying and making the sign of the cross on his forehead...* [T]he fourth of the choir... places the prayer rug in front of the altar; and approaching, *the pope prays on it* until the repetition of the verse.

Notice there, the verse it is talking about is the Entrance Antiphon. They're chanting one of the verses from the Psalms and he's praying while they chant the Entrance Chant.

Now the deacons get up when he says: “As it was,” so that they kiss the sides of the altar, first two by two in turn returning to the pope. *And getting up, the pope kisses the evangelary [book of the Gospels] and the altar* and approaches his seat and stands turned toward the East.⁵

All right, wow. There's so many things I could talk about in this description. It's really, really fascinating. For our purpose here, I just want to highlight a few things. Notice, already in the 7th century, we have a procession to the altar, right? Mass doesn't begin, there's a formal procession up the aisle to the altar. Number two, we have incense being used in a censer (thurible) in front of the Pope. We have candlesticks being used as part of the procession, brought in line there. We have a choir, the Schola, and they're chanting the antiphon. They're chanting the verses of the Psalms to begin the Mass. When the Pope gets in front of the altar, he bows to the altar and then he's also going to kiss the altar. The very two signs of veneration that we do today. Notice he also just doesn't kiss the altar, he kisses the Book of the Gospels. We'll come back to that. We'll look at that act of veneration of kissing the Book of the Gospels as well. And then he's going to return to his seat and he's going to stand and face east to begin the rest of the Mass, to begin the prayers. So, what we see here, and this is really interesting, is that all of the signs and symbols that we've looked at in Scripture, whether it's the symbol of the altar or the procession, they're all kind of coming together here in this ancient description of the papal Mass. So that when the missal here today describes the priest coming in with the deacon and the ministers, with candlesticks and incense, and bowing to the altar and kissing the altar, what we're engaging in is ancient Roman tradition. This is an ancient Roman expression of the preliminary introductory rites of worship in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. So this is a very ancient part of the Mass, and it's beautiful that it has been preserved and even restored in the contemporary Roman Missal.

Okay, now with all that in mind, you might be thinking, Okay, well what am I doing? Like what's happening to me at this part of the Mass when the procession is

⁵ *Ordo Romanum I*, nos 41, . 50-51 (7th century AD). Translation by John F. Romano, in Baldovin, “History of the Latin Text and Rite,” in *A Commentary on the Order of Mass of the Roman Missal*, 118.

happening? What's the mystery behind the history? And I've told you a little bit about the history, told you the Scriptural roots, mystagogically, what's taking place at this moment in the Mass? And I would just highlight two mystagogical or mystical elements of the Entrance Procession. Well, actually three. First, it should be obvious, that if the ancient Israelites in the desert would rise up when Moses went into the Tabernacle to offer worship, or the ancient Israelites in the Temple would chant the Psalms as they went up to the altar to offer sacrifice, then, obviously, on some level, what the Entrance Antiphon and the Entrance Procession tells us is that we are like the new Israel, coming to the new Tabernacle, the new Temple of God, in order to sing the new song of worship in the new and everlasting covenant. So that's a really clear parallel there between liturgy in the old Temple and liturgy in the Church today.

A second thing, though, has to do with the altar itself. There's a symbolism in the altar. Why does the priest bow to the altar? And notice this, it's a profound bow, is the description here. So there are different kinds of bows. You can just nod, a slight bow, but then the profound bow is more of a deep bow, to give a high level of reverence. Why does he bow to the altar? And then why does he kiss it as well? The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* has a great explanation of this in its section on the altar, and this is what it says in paragraph 1383:

The Christian altar is *the symbol of Christ himself*, present in the midst of the assembly of his faithful, both as the victim offered for our reconciliation and as food from heaven who is giving himself to us. “*For what is the altar of Christ if not the image of the Body of Christ?*” asks St. Ambrose. He says elsewhere, “*The altar represents the body [of Christ] and the Body of Christ is on the altar.*” (CCC 1383, quoting St. Ambrose, *On the Sacraments* 5.2.7; 4.2.7)

Here is St. Ambrose again, the 4th century Church Father and Bishop of Milan. So all the way bak in the 4th century, there was a custom of recognizing that the altar isn't just the place of sacrifice., it also is a symbol of Christ himself. Because remember, Christ is the cornerstone. He's the foundation of the new Temple. He's both Priest and victim,. He's both sacrifice and the altar on which that offering is

made. So when the priest bows to the altar, he's honoring Christ. And when he kisses the altar, in a sense, it's offering a kiss to Christ. St. Ambrose actually says this in one of his mystical writings on that, that the kiss reveals that we've been invited to the heavenly banquet the wedding supper of the Lamb. So that the Mass isn't just a sacrifice, it's also a nuptial banquet. There's a dimension to it of Christ the bridegroom and his bride celebrating the marriage supper of the lamb. So that initial kiss of the altar is a very powerful, beautiful moment in the liturgy. Very expressive.

And then the final symbolism that I wanted to highlight here is just of the procession as a whole. I found this in one of the most widely read and popular books in the Middle Ages, after the Bible itself. It's by William Durand. It's called the *Rationale of the Divine Offices*, is basically the English translation. It means the reasons behind the Liturgy, the reasons for the Divine Offices we celebrate in the liturgy, and this is his volume on the Mass and each of the actions that are taking place in the Mass. And in this book, which was published in the 13th century, he's a contemporary of St. Thomas Aquinas, he was a Bishop of Mende, which is basically in modern day France, and Durand was the foremost liturgical scholar of his day. He engages in a lot of allegorical, mystical explanations of the Mass. Some of them are really far fetched and, you know, can be taken with a grain of salt, but others of them, he's really reflecting a deep biblical approach to the Mass and they're really powerful and moving. So I want to read you, in closing, his description of mystically what's happening when we participate in the Entrance Procession. And this is how he describes the Entrance Procession in the liturgy in the 13th century. So this is the Middle Ages, it's a medieval Mass. He says this:

Just as Christ's embassy to this world on our behalf is symbolized in the Mass, at the same time *our processions symbolize our return to our heavenly homeland, and their solemnity resembles on practically every point the journey of the people of God out of Egypt.*

So pause there for just a second. What he's saying is that there's actually two movements in every Mass. One of the movements is Christ coming down from heaven to us on the earth. That's going to be in the Eucharist, right? But the other movement of the Mass is us going up, so to speak, to heaven. There's a movement

of us from earth to heaven and a procession from this world to the world to come, from our earthly home to our heavenly home. That, in a sense, we are like the Israelites coming out of Egypt and heading toward not the earthly promised land, but the heavenly promised land. So he sees the whole procession as a sign that there's movement in the Mass, movement toward our heavenly promised land. Just like in the Exodus from Egypt. So he lays out a bunch of parallels here. Listen to what he says

...Just as the Tablets of the Testament were received on Mount Sinai by Moses and carried before the people [Exod 34-35], *so too is the Gospel book taken from the altar and carried*. The [Israelites] were preceded by pillars of fire as *we are preceded by the light of the candles*. In front of their squadrons of troops they carried signs; *in front of ours, crosses and banners are carried*. They experienced prodigies; among us, *the miracles never cease*. Their Levites carried the Tabernacle of the Testimony, *our deacons and subdeacons carry cases for consecrated hosts and the books of the Epistles and Gospels*. They carried the Ark of the Covenant; for us, *it is the relic case, or a bier with relics is carried by the presbyters*. For them Aaron the High Priest followed adorned in [his vestments]; *we have the bishop wearing a mitre*. They had Moses with a staff; we have the king with his scepter or *the bishop with his crosier*. They had the noise of trumpets; we have the *clanging of bells*. There, the people were armed; now *the clergy are adorned with sacred vestments, the people with virtue*. There, the people were sprinkled with blood; *now they are sprinkled with holy water with salt*. They had to resist Amalek, who was thirsting for blood; we, the troop of demons who are always lying in wait to ambush us. They had as their conqueror Joshua, *while ours is Jesus Christ, who achieved the victory for us*. *When we process in the direction of a given church, it is as if we are entering into the promised land. When we enter into the church chanting, it is as if we have arrived rejoicing into the fatherland.*⁶ [cf. 1 Pet 2:11: “aliens/ sojourners (Greek *paroikos*) and exiles”]

⁶ William Durand, *Rationale IV: On the Mass and Each Action Pertaining to It* (trans. Timothy M. Thibodeau; Corpus Christianorum in Translation 14; Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2013), 99-100.

So, wow, really powerful there. A beautiful description, kind of mystical description, as the procession into the church as a new Exodus. And you'll notice, there's some similarities and some differences with what we do today. So he's describing a Solemn Mass, kind of a High Mass in the Middle Ages. So one of the things they would carry in procession is they'd have candles like we do. They'd have the Book of the Gospels like we do. They'd have priests and ministers, like the deacons, like we do. But they also had some differences. They would carry, apparently, some relics were part of the procession. They would also carry the Blessed Sacrament as part of the procession, because at this point, tabernacles are not universally present in churches. I'll deal with that in another video on tabernacles. You will also notice that it isn't just priests who are in the processions, it is also lay people, at least one, in this case the king in, I guess, a royal kind of Solemn Mass, would be part of the Entrance Procession into the sanctuary. And then finally, they would also accompany it with chant, with singing, in particular, the singing of the Entrance Chant, the singing of the Psalms. All of this together, for Durand, William Durand, shows us that in the liturgy, we're not just going to Mass. We're not just entering in the church. This isn't just like, come on, let's get the Mass started, and you have to get from one place to the other, so you have a procession. No, there's a kind of spiritual, mystical symbolism to the procession that reminds us that we're not home yet and that part of the liturgy is about bringing us back to God, and our new exodus, our return and entrance into the heavenly homeland, the heavenly promised land of Christ and the angels in the heavenly Jerusalem. So just like the Israelites left Egypt and go to Jerusalem, so too we are leaving the world behind and in the Entrance Procession coming to the altar of sacrifice and the worship of heaven.