



Boston Catholic Journal

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What Happens



at the Solemn Profession of a Nun?

First: The Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass begins.

(The following sequence occurs after the Celebrant's homily. Mother Abbess comes forward. Our Sister, who is to profess her vows, publicly witnesses to her free choice to do so.)

Examination

Mother:

"Sister Maria Seraphina of Our Heavenly Father"

Sister:

"Lord, you have called me by my name.
Behold, I come to do your holy will."

Mother:

"Dear daughter, what do you desire?"

Sister:

"One thing I have asked of the Lord, this I seek, to dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life."

Mother:

"Have you pondered well and really understood what you wish to commit yourself to do?"

Sister:

"I have, with the grace of God."

Mother:

"Have you the courage to trust in God completely, that he will provide for all your needs, especially that he will give you the grace to live out faithfully what you desire to promise to him?"

Sister:

"I have, with the grace of God."

Mother:

"You have put your hand to the plough
and from this day forward there can be no looking back.
Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests but the Son of Man, your Spouse, had
nowhere to lay His head.
Are you prepared to follow Him completely until the end?"

Sister:

"I am, with the grace of God."

Mother:

"What you hold now, may you hold forever.
What you promise now, may you never abandon, but with swift pace, light step and unswerving
feet go forward, securely, joyfully, swiftly and prudently on the path of happiness, so that you
may offer your vows to the Most High in that perfection to which the Spirit of the Lord has
called you."

(All stand.)

Celebrant:

"May God who has begun this good work in you bring it to fulfillment before the day of Christ
Jesus."

Dear friends in Christ,
let us now pray to the Father of all good gifts, uniting ourselves with the prayer of all the Saints
that His handmaid who seeks to serve Him with the whole desire of her heart may be
strengthened in His service and that He may bestow on her those gifts for which she longs."

(Our Sister now prostrates before the altar. Because this gift of love reaches beyond time and
space, we ask our family in Heaven to join their prayers to ours as we sing the responses to the
Litany of the Saints.)

Cantors: Lord have mercy. **R. LORD HAVE MERCY.**
Christ, have mercy. **R. CHRIST HAVE MERCY.**
Lord, have mercy. **R. LORD HAVE MERCY.**

God our Father in Heaven. **R. HAVE MERCY ON US.**
God the Son, Redeemer of the world. **R.**
God the Holy Spirit. **R.**
Holy Trinity, one God. **R.**

All you Seraphim and Cherubim. **R. PRAY FOR US.**
All you Angels of the Lord. **R.**
Mary Immaculate, Mother of God. **R.**
Our Holy Father St Francis **R.**
Our Holy Mother St Clare **R.**
Our Holy Mother St Colette **R.**

All you first companions of Blessed Francis **R. SPEAK TO GOD FOR US.**

St Berard and Companions **R. TEACH US TO WITNESS TO CHRIST.**
St Daniel and Companions **R.**
St Nicholas Tavelic and Companions **R.**
St Nicholas Pick and Companions **R.**
St John Jones and Companions **R.**
St Peter Baptist and Companions **R.**
St Fidelis **R.**
St Maximillian **R.**
Bd Josephine Leroux **R.**
Bd Maria Isabel of Madrid and Companions **R.**
Bd Asuncion of Madrid **R.**
Bd Vincenta, Joaquina, Felicidad and Josefa of Valencia **R.**
Bd Milagros of Valencia **R.**
Bd Isabel of Castellon **R.**
Bd Maria of Ostravere **R.**
All you Brothers and Sisters who laid down your life for Christ **R.**

St Anthony of Padua **R. TEACH US TO FOLLOW THE LORD.**
St Bonaventure **R.**
St Bernadino **R.**
St John of Capistrano **R.**
St Benedict of San Fratello **R.**
St Paschal Baylon **R.**
St Laurence of Brindisi **R.**
St Conrad of Parzam **R.**
St Leopold Mandic **R.**
St Pio of Pietrelcina **R.**
Bd Agnellus of Pisa **R.**
Bd John Duns Scotus **R.**
All you shepherds who feed Christ's flock **R.**

St Agnes of Assisi **R. *TEACH US TO LOVE THE LORD JESUS.***

St Agnes of Prague **R.**

St Catherine of Bologna **R.**

St Cunigunda **R.**

St Eustochia Esmeralda **R.**

St Jeanne de Valois **R.**

St Veronica Guiliani **R.**

St Alphonsa of the Immaculate Conception **R.**

Bd Helena Enselmini **R.**

Bd Phillipa **R.**

Bd Salome **R.**

Bd Yolanda **R.**

Bd Mattia **R.**

Bd Felicia **R.**

Bd Seraphina **R.**

Bd Paula **R.**

Bd Antonia of Florence **R.**

Bd Louise of Savoy **R.**

Bd Baptista Varano **R.**

Ven. Ortolana and Beatrix **R.**

Ven. Mary Francis of the Five wounds **R.**

St Elizabeth of Hungary **R. *PRAY FOR US.***

St Ferdinand of Castile **R.**

St Rose of Viterbo **R.**

St Louis **R.**

St Margaret of Cortona **R.**

St Roch **R.**

St Vincent Palotti **R.**

St Jean Marie Vianney **R.**

St Eleazer and Delphina **R.**

Bd Pope John the Good **R.**

All you Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order of our Father Francis **R.**

All you who heard the word of God and did it **R.**

Lord be merciful. **R. *LORD SAVE YOUR PEOPLE.***

From all evil **R.**

From all sin **R.**

From everlasting death **R.**

By your coming as man **R.**

By your death and rising to new life **R.**

By your gift of the Holy Spirit **R.**

Christ hear us, Christ hear us.

Lord Jesus hear our prayer

R. *LORD JESUS HEAR OUR PRAYER*

(At the end of the litany the Celebrant alone rises and says, with hands joined:)

Celebrant:

"Almighty, eternal, just and merciful God, Give to our Sister the grace to do for your sake what she knows you want and to always want what pleases you, so that, purified and enlightened and set on fire with the love of the Holy Spirit she may follow, until death, in the footsteps of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and by your grace alone may come to you Most High, who live and reign and are glorified in perfect Trinity and undivided unity, God for ever and ever."

Amen.

Our Sister rises and returns to her place. Mother Abbess is now joined by the two witnesses, the Vicarress and the Novice Mistress. First as a Poor Clare she will formally renounce the right to own property thus freeing herself to give her trust completely to God as she professes the the three vows of the Gospel and the fourth vow of enclosure special to our Form of Life

Mother:

"In preparation for the vows which you are about to pronounce, I invite you now to renounce all moral and actual right to own anything under Heaven, in the covenant with Lady Poverty granted to our Holy Mother Clare by Pope Innocent III.

Sister:

Since I desire to belong wholly to the Lord,
I now renounce, once and for all,
the power of owning anything under Heaven,
that I may in every way
cling to the footprints of Him
who became for us the Way, the Truth and the Life,

He whose left hand is under my head
to support the weakness of my flesh,
who feeds the birds of Heaven,
and clothes the lilies of the fields,
will feed and clothe me, and provide all my needs
until that day when His right hand embraces me
and I behold Him in Heaven.

Amen.

Profession

Mother:

"Be faithful unto death, most dear one,
to what you are about to promise
and you will be crowned by Christ with the wreath of eternal life.
Our labour here below is short, the glory is infinite."

(The Sisters kneel and the Celebrant and congregation remain standing)

Sister:

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
I, little Sister Maria Seraphina of Our Heavenly Father,
wish to follow the life and poverty of our most high Lord Jesus Christ,
and to persevere to the end.
And I vow to God, before the Blessed Virgin Mary,
and I promise you, dear Mother,
to observe for the whole time of my life
the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by living in obedience, without property and in chastity,
in the form of life which the blessed Francis gave to our Blessed Mother Clare
and Pope Innocent IV confirmed,
And I vow to observe enclosure,
after the example of our Holy Mother Colette.

Mother:

"I receive these vows on behalf of the Church and the Order.
What you have vowed to God render to Him faithfully
and he shall reward you.
Look up to Heaven, dear one, which beckons us on,
and take up your cross and follow Christ
who walks ahead of us.
For whatever tribulations we may have here
we shall enter through Him into His glory."

(The Vow Card and the Renunciation of Property are then signed by the Sister and her signature is attested to, both on the Vow Card and in the Book of Professions by the Abbess, Vicaress, Novice Mistress and the Celebrant, while the choir sings:)

"Be faithful unto death
and I will give you the crown of life."

Solemn Blessing and Consecration of the Professed

Celebrant:

"**L**ord God,
Creator of the world and Father of mankind,
we honour you with praise and thanksgiving,
for you chose a people from the stock of Abraham
and consecrated them to yourself,
calling them by your Name.
While they wandered in the wilderness
your word gave them comfort
and your right hand protection.
When they were poor and despised
you united them to yourself in a covenant of love.
When they strayed from your friendship
your mercy led them back to the right way.
When they sought you,
your Fatherly care looked after them
until they came to dwell in a land of freedom.

But above all, we thank you, Father,
for revealing the knowledge of truth
through your son Jesus Christ, our brother.

When He took his place at your right hand,
He sent his Holy Spirit to call countless disciples
to follow the evangelical counsels
and consecrate their lives
to the glory of your name and the salvation of humankind.

Today it is right
that your House should echo with a new song of thanksgiving
for this Sister of ours
who has listened to your voice
and made herself over to your holy service.

Lord, send the gift of the Holy Spirit upon your handmaid
who has left all things for your sake.

Father, may her life reveal the face of Christ, your son,
so that all who see her may come to know
that He is always present in your Church.

We pray that in freedom of heart
she may free from care the hearts of others;
in helping the afflicted,
may she bring comfort to Christ
suffering in His sisters and brothers;
may she look upon this world and see it ruled by His wisdom.
May the gift she makes of herself
hasten the coming of His kingdom,
and make her one at last with your Saints in Heaven.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

The Insignia of Profession

(The Bride now receives her ring. Unlike those joined in an earthly marriage, our sister will wear her ring on her right hand. This symbolizes that God's love is always the first love, the love that comes before all other. As St Paul says, marriage is a profound mystery but it is a symbol that refers to Christ's love for the Church. (Ephesians 5:32)

Those of you who were witnesses to Sr Seraphina's simple and temporary vows three years ago will remember that she received a crown of flowers, she now exchanges her flowers for the thorns that her Lord received. The Son of God carried his wounds to his Father's throne in Heaven where they shine more brightly in his risen joy than any earthly diamonds. It is the same for us. The free acceptance of death and suffering will be our glory in eternity.)

The Blessing of the Ring

Celebrant:

Lord of eternal faithfulness
bless this ring +
the symbol of your covenant
with your sister and bride, Maria Seraphina of our Heavenly Father.

As a circle has no beginning or end,
so too, your love is endless and complete.

Fashioned in silver,
it is a sign of the poverty you have chosen for your bride.
May she wear it in trust until the day she is united to you in Heaven.

As she places the ring on our Sister's finger Mother Abbess says:

Mother:

"I espouse you to Jesus Christ
the Son of the most high Father
who will protect you.

Receive the ring of faith,

the seal of the Holy Spirit,
that you may be called the spouse of Christ.
Love Him totally who gave Himself totally for your love."

The Choir sing:

"O holy poverty, O blessed poverty, to those who choose her Heaven is gained where Christ in glory reigns"

The Crown of Thorns

Mother:

Receive, dearest sister,
the crown which your spouse, the only begotten Son of God, offers you,
that you may deserve to share in His passion on earth
and in His glory in Heaven.

As the crown of thorns is placed on the sisters head the choir sing:

If you suffer with Him you shall reign with Him
If you weep with Him you shall rejoice with Him,
if you die with Him on the cross of tribulation
you shall possess a home in Heaven
amid the splendour of the Saints,
and your name shall be called glorious.

(Mother Abbess now leads Sister to the Celebrant and then to the community so that they may exchange the Sign of Peace.)

Choir: "Dona nobis pacem"

The Commendation

(The celebrant stands and addressing the Abbess says:)

Mother:

"Take this spouse of Jesus Christ
under your care and direction,
and consider in what manner you may keep her dedicated
and present her spotless to God,
knowing that you must render an account
before the tribunal of her spouse, the future Judge.

Amen."

The Prayers of the Faithful

(These intercession are read from the lectern:)

Celebrant:

(From the Presidential Chair)

"We pray with trust to our Risen Lord asking that he give us his Holy Spirit

1. We thank God for his gift to us of our family, the Church. Bless our Father Benedict XVI, our Bishops, priests and faithful and all men and women of goodwill.

R. Spirit of the Lord come and pray in us

2. We ask that the love of the Lord may rest on Manuel and Arlene and all our Sister's dear family.

3. Make this Poor Clare Colettine Community a place of grace and call may others to share our joy.

4. May all of us here today and all who are listening to this service receive some special gift of the Lord's goodness.

5. Mary, Queen of the Seraphic Order be with us as we pray. Hail Mary full of Grace the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus. Holy Mary Mother of God pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Celebrant:

"God our Heavenly Father,
come with your Son and Holy Spirit to dwell with us
that your joy may be in us and our joy may be full
in you who live and reign forever,
Amen."

The Preparation of the Gifts

(During the Offertory Song, our newly professed Sister and her Novitiate companions bring the gifts for the Eucharistic sacrifice to the altar.)

I am the bread of life.
He who comes to me shall not hunger.
he who believes in me shall not thirst.
No one can come to me
unless the Father draw him.
Refrain: And I will raise him up,
and I will raise him up,
and I will raise him up on the last day.
The bread that I will give
is my flesh for the light of the world,
and he who eats of this bread,
he shall live for ever,
he shall live for ever.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

(Through the ministry of our priests, we now relive Christ's presence in the Paschal Mystery when he gave us his life, transforming bread and wine into His Body and Blood.)

Rite of Communion

(When the prayer after communion has been said Mother Abbess comes forward and presents Sister Seraphina with a candle.)

Mother:

"Receive this lighted candle,
may you be a lofty candlestick of holiness in the house of the Lord
all the days of your life,
and may we, together, one family in love,
reflect the fire of love that Christ came to enkindle on earth.
Amen."

(The Celebrant blesses the newly professed.)

Celebrant:

May the Father almighty make you firm in faith,
innocent in the midst of evil,
and wise in the pursuit of goodness.
Amen.

May the Lord Jesus, Whom you follow,
enable you to live out the mystery
of His death and resurrection in your own life.
Amen.

May the fire of the Holy Spirit
cleans your hearts from all sin
and set them on fire with His love.
Amen.

(The Celebrant then blesses the community and the congregation.)

May Almighty God, the Father +, and the Son + and the Holy Spirit +
bless all of you who have taken part in this celebration.
Amen."

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