

**HANDBOOK OF
CEREMONIES FOR PRIESTS
AND SEMINARIANS**

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Handbook of ceremonies for priests and seminarians by Johann Baptist Mueller & W. H. W. Fanning

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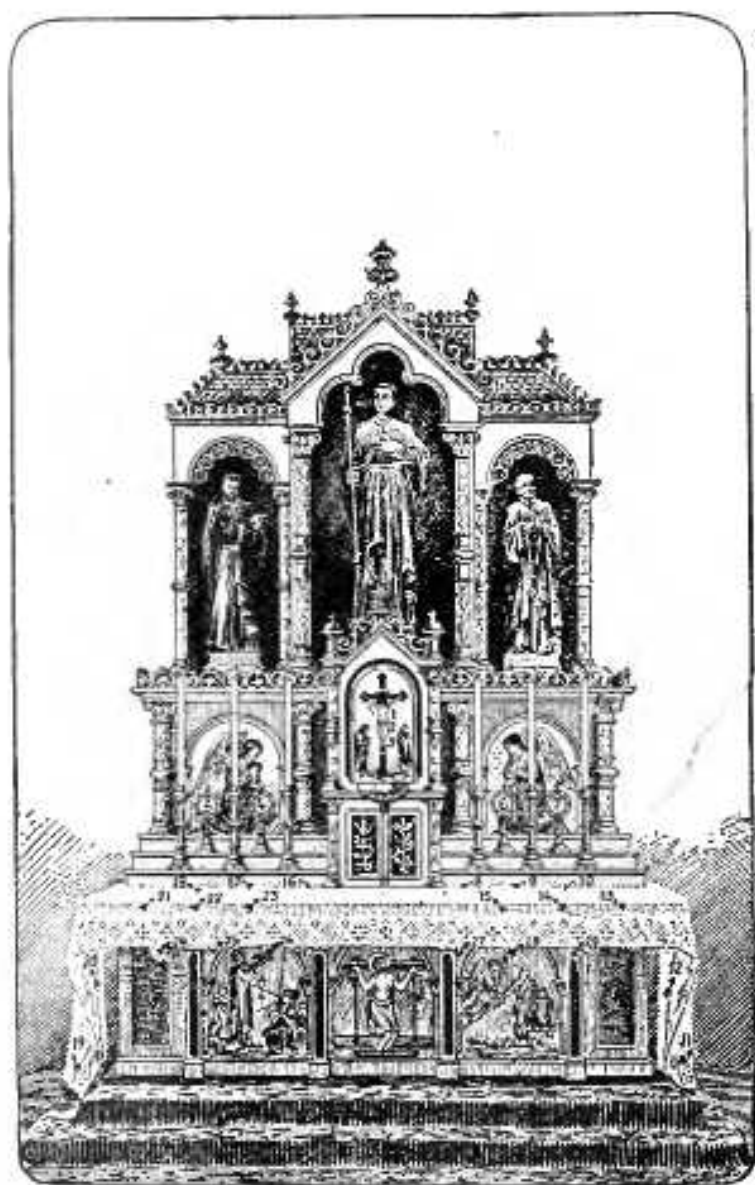
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JOHANN BAPTIST MUELLER & W. H. W. FANNING

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FRONTISPIECE—MODEL

Cf. p. 83 et seq.

HANDBOOK OF CEREMONIES

FOR PRIESTS AND SEMINARIANS

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD.

The reverence and decorum that should mark the service of Almighty God are inculcated over and over again in Holy Writ and in the decrees of the Church. The beauty of the House where the Lord dwelleth should be dear to God's chosen minister, and not the smallest part of that beauty is the solemn awe inspired in the faithful by the devout and exact manner in which the priest performs the sacred Ritual.

Aspirants to the priesthood should lay to heart the undoubted truth, that their own faith and devotion will be fostered and increased by a careful observance of what the Church commands in regard to Holy Mass and the administration of the Sacraments. A slovenly performance of the Ritual indicates a distracted mind and a tepid heart. A minister of God, who would bestow less care upon all that concerns the Adorable Sacrifice or on the opening to the faithful of those channels of grace, the Sacraments, than he would upon some worldly function, surely does not practically realize his sacred character.

Entering as he does into the Holy of Holies before the very face of God, breaking with con-

secrated hands the Body of the Lord in fulfilment of Christ's dying command, he should realize the solemn dignity with which he is invested and show it forth in his actions. Man, as a being who manifests his interior thoughts and emotions by the exterior senses, must display by his reverential attitude, by the decorum of his every action, that he is fully cognizant of the exalted mysteries in which he participates.

The observer can judge only by the exterior. If then a priest ministering to God in His sanctuary be hasty and careless in the functions of his office, the faithful will be pained and disedified. Instead of having their faith and love strengthened and increased, they will first be scandalized and then perhaps led to doubt of the truth of those mysteries which the priest seems to treat so lightly.

Young levites in preparing for ministry at the altar should remember this and be warned in time. To make light of Rubrics because they seem of small moment, is to indicate a want of appreciation of the sacred things they surround and guard. It is trite to say that if we were in the presence of an exalted personage to whom honor is due and whom we desired to honor, we should be most precise in all that regards the prescribed etiquette. A failure even in small things would be looked on as gross disrespect. How then can anyone claim that the Rubrics so carefully prepared and so solicitously commanded by the Church are of little moment? The majesty of Almighty God's service surely demands as much preciseness as does a worldly function.

Sacerdotes . . . sancti erunt Deo suo et non pollutent nomen ejus. Careful preparation is required of the priest who ascends into the Mountain of God that he may offer sacrifice with pure hands. *Mundamini qui fertis vasa Domini.* The preparation should be interior and exterior. Interior as regards purity of heart; exterior as regards decorum of action. This decorum of action is obtained by a careful and loving observance of the sacred Ritual. It is to promote this latter object in our own country that an English rendering has been made of Müller's Handbook of Ceremonies.

THE EDITOR.

ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY,

Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, 1907.

