

# Baculus Pastoralis

Blessed Ildefonso Cardinal Schuster  
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WHIT-SUNDAY  
*Station at St. Peter*

On this day Christ, risen from the grave and seated at the right hand of the Father, communicates his own divine life to the members of His mystical body through the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. So the Church, which until this moment has been confined within the narrow walls of the upper room, like an infant in its cradle, having attained its full development, now first appears before the world, glowing with holiness and truth. The Holy Spirit, which flows to-day through her pure limbs, fills her with the life of Christ, associating her with his teaching and with his work of redemption, whence St. Paul has well said that the apostolic labours of those who preach the Gospel have their share in this very work; indeed, the Saviour told the same Apostle on the road to Damascus that it was He Himself who was being persecuted and who suffered in the members of His Church.

Peter is the leader around whom gathers the little flock of Sion on this first Christian Pentecost, and he inaugurates to-day his pontifical primacy when he announces for the first time the Gospel message to the representatives of the various nations, without distinction of race or nationality, of country or State. It is Peter, too, who in the name of the whole Church protests against the false and vulgar accusation of drunkenness brought against the Apostles, and, lastly, it is he who consequent on that first sermon converts and baptizes the first three thousand neophytes, who thus are added to the household of Christ.

For this reason the station, unlike that of Easter Sunday, is held to-day at the Vatican Basilica where the Pope used formerly to celebrate the first Vespers, the night vigil and the Mass. According to the Roman rite for the greater solemnities of the year, the night Office of the vigil on this occasion was duplicated; it was carried out first in the crypt where the tomb of the Apostle was venerated, and afterwards at the high altar. At this latter celebration, which was the more solemn of the two, the Canons sang the first lesson, the Cardinals the second, and the Pope himself the third. After the Mass the Pontiff was crowned with the *regnum*, and returned in procession to the Lateran.

The Introit, which is taken from the Book of Wisdom, should be heard, in order to be fully appreciated, together with the majestic and joyful melody which the ancient Gregorian music has allotted to it. It is well known that all the present texts of the Missal and of the Breviary have beautiful melodies attached to them. As no one, for instance, would desire to judge of an opera simply by reading the *libretto* of the author, but would also wish to hear the music and see the full effect of the *mis-en-scène*, so, in order thoroughly to appreciate the sense of beauty and inspiration, the powerful influence produced by the sacred liturgy on Christian people, it is necessary to see it performed in the full splendor of its architectural setting, of the clergy in their vestments, of the music, the singing, and the ritual, and not to judge of it merely from a curtailed and simplified presentment.