

Of all the virgin martyrs of Rome, none was held in such high honour by the primitive church as St. Agnes, who, according to Pope Damasus, declared herself a Christian as soon as the imperial edict against Christians was promulgated. A Roman maiden in her thirteenth year, she was beheaded, in the year 304, for the same reason that she was a Christian. The original Mass for her feast in the Gregorian Sacramentary had a magnificent Preface that is not inserted in modern Missals. She is praised by all the Fathers of the Latin Church; the family of Constantine built a magnificent basilica at her tomb.

INTROIT Psalms 118: 95-96, 1

Me exspectavérunt peccatóres, ut pérderent me: testimónia tua, Dómine, intelléxi: omnis consummationis vidi finem: latum mandátum tuum nimis. Beáti immaculáti in via: qui ámbulant in lege Dómini. Glória Patri et Fílio et Spíritui Sancto, sicut erat in princípío, et nunc, et semper, et in sæcula sæculórum. Amen. Me exspectavérunt peccatóres, ut pérderent me: testimónia tua, Dómine, intelléxi: omnis consummationis vidi finem: latum mandátum tuum nimis.

COLLECT

Omnípotens sémpiterne Deus, qui infírma mundi éligis, ut fórtia quæque confúndas: concéde propítius; ut, qui beátæ Agnétis Vírginis et Mátyris tuæ solémnia cólimus, ejus apud te patrocínia sentiámus. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

LESSON Ecclesiasticus 51: 1-8, 12

Confitébor tibi, Dómine rex, et collaudábo te Deum salvatórem meum. Confitébor nómini tuo: quóniam adjútor et protéctor factus es mihi, et liberásti corpus meum a perditíone, a láqueo linguæ iníquæ, et a lábiis operántium mendácium, et in conspéctu adstántium factus es mihi adjútor. Et liberásti me secúndum multítudinem misericórdiæ nóminis tui a rugiéntibus, præparátis ad escam de mánibus quæréntium ánimam meam, et de portis tribulatiónum, quæ circumdedérunt me: a pressúra flammæ, quæ circumdedit me, et in médio ignis non sum æstuáta: de altitúdine ventris inferi, et a lingua coinquináta, et a verbo mendácii, a rege iníquo, et a lingua injústa: laudábit usque ad mortem ánima mea Dóminum: quóniam éruis sustinéntes te, et líberas eos de mánibus géntium, Dómine Deus noster.

GRADUAL Psalm 44: 3, 5

Diffusa est grátia in lábiis tuis: proptérea benedixit te Deus in ætérnam. Propter veritátem, et mansuetúdinem, et justítiam: et dedúcet te mirabíliter délixtera tua.

(After Septuagesima, the Alleluia is omitted and the Tract is said instead.)

LESSER ALLELUIA Matthew 25: 4, 6

Allelúja, allelúja. Quinque prudéntes vírgines accepérunt óleum in vasis suis cum lampádibus: média autem nocte clamor factus est: Ecce sponsus venit, exíte óbviam Christo Dómino. Allelúja.

TRACT Psalm 44: 8, 5

Veni, sponsa Christi, áccipe corónam, quam tibi Dóminus præparávit in ætérnum: pro cuius amóre ságuinem tuum fudísti. Dilexísti justítiam, et odísti iniquitátem; proptérea unxit te Deus, Deus tuus, óleo lætítiæ præ consórtibus tuis. Spécie tua, et pulchritúdine tua inténde, prospere procéde, et regna.

GOSPEL Matthew 25: 1-13

In illo témpore: Dixit Jesus discíplis suis parábolam hanc: Símile erit regnum cælórum decem vírginibus: quæ accipiéntes lámpades suas, exiérunt óbviam sponso et sponsæ. Quinque autem ex eis erant fátuæ, et quinque prudéntes: sed quinque fátuæ, accéptis lampádibus, non sumpsérunt óleum secum: prudéntes vero accepérunt óleum in vasis suis cum lampádibus. Moram autem faciénte sponso, dormitavérunt omnes et dormiérunt. Média autem nocte clamor factus est: Ecce sponsus venit, exíte óbviam ei. Tunc surrexérunt omnes vírgines illæ, et ornavérunt lámpades suas. Fátuæ autem sapiéntibus dixérunt: Dómine, dáte nobis de óleo vestro: quia lámpades nostræ exstinguúntur. Respondérunt prudéntes, dicéntes: Ne forte non sufficiat nobis, et vobis, ite pótius ad vendétes, et émite vobis. Dum autem irent émere, venit sponsus: et quæ parátæ erant, intravérunt cum eo ad núptias, et clausa est jánuá. Novíssime vero véniunt et réliquæ vírgines, dicéntes: Dómine, Dómine, áperi nobis. At ille respóndens, ait: Amen dico vobis, nescio vos. Vigilate itaque, quia nescitis diem, neque horam.

OFFERTORY Psalm 44: 15-16

Afferéntur regi vírgines post eam: Próximæ ejus afferéntur tibi in lætítia, et exsultatióne: adducéntur in templum regi Dómino.

SECRET

Hóstias, Dómine, quas tibi offérimus, propítius súscipe: et intercédente beáta Agnéte Vírgine et Márture tua, véncula peccatórum nostrórum absólve. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

COMMUNION Matthew 25: 4, 6

Quinque prudéntes vírgines accepérunt óleum in vasis suis cum lampádibus: média autem nocte clamor factus est: Ecce sponsus venit: exíte óbviam Christo Dómino.

POSTCOMMUNION

Refécti cibo potúque cælésti, Deus noster, te súpplices exorámus: ut, in cuius hæc commemoratióne percépiamus, ejus muniámur et précibus. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: but I have understood Thy testimonies, O Lord: I have seen an end of all perfection; Thy command is exceeding broad. Blessed are the undefiled in the way: who walk in the law of the Lord. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: but I have understood Thy testimonies, O Lord: I have seen an end of all perfection; Thy command is exceeding broad.

O Almighty and everlasting God, who dost choose the weak things of the world to confound the strong: mercifully grant that we who keep the solemn feast of blessed Agnes, Thy Virgin and Martyr, may experience the benefit of her pleading with Thee. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

I will give glory to Thee, O Lord, O King, and I will praise Thee, O God my Savior. I will give glory to Thy name: for Thou hast been a helper and protector to me, and hast preserved my body from destruction, from the snare of an unjust tongue, and from the lips of them that forge lies: and in the sight of them that stood by Thou hast been my helper. And Thou has delivered me, according to the multitude of the mercy of Thy name, from them that did roar prepared to devour; out of the hands of them that sought my life, and from the gates of afflictions which compassed me about: from the oppression of the flame which surrounded me, and in the midst of the fire I was not burnt: from the depth of the belly of hell, and from an unclean tongue, and from lying words, from an unjust king, and from a slanderous tongue. My soul shall praise the Lord even to death: because Thou, O Lord our God, deliverest them that wait for Thee, and savest them out of the hands of the nations.

Grace is poured abroad in thy lips: therefore hath God blessed thee forever. Because of truth, and meekness, and justice: and thy right hand shall conduct thee wonderfully.

(After Septuagesima, the Alleluia is omitted and the Tract is said instead.)

Alleluia, alleluia. The five wise virgins took oil in their vessels with the lamps: and at midnight there was a cry made: Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet Christ our Lord. Alleluia.

Come thou, spouse of Christ, receive the crown which the Lord hath prepared for thee from everlasting: for those who love thou didst shed thy blood. Thou hast loved justice and hated iniquity: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. With thy comeliness and thy beauty set out, proceed prosperously, and reign.

At that time, Jesus spoke to His disciples this parable: The kingdom of Heaven shall be like to ten virgins, who taking their lamps went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride. And five of them were foolish, and five wise; but the five foolish having taken their lamps, did not take oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with the lamps. And the bridegroom tarrying, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made: Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise: Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. The wise answered, saying: Let perhaps there be not enough for us and for you, go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. Now, whilst they went to buy, the bridegroom came: and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. But at last came also the other virgins, saying: Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answering said: Amen I say to you, I know you not. Watch ye therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour.

After her shall virgins be brought to the King: her neighbors shall be brought to Thee with gladness and rejoicing: they shall be brought into the temple of the King, the Lord.

O Lord, graciously receive the oblations which we offer up to Thee; and by the intercession of blessed Agnes, Thy Virgin and Martyr, loose the bonds of our sins. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

The five wise virgins took oil in their vessels with the lamps; but at midnight there was a cry made: Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet Christ our Lord.

We who have been refreshed with heavenly food and drink, humbly entreat Thee, O our God, that we may be defended by the prayers of her in whose memory we have partaken of these mysteries. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.