



26 May 2022 • ASCENSION THURSDAY

“He who does God’s work does not do so in vain.” —Motto of Pope Pius IX

MASS IN A BARN: When Father Adrian Fortescue (d. 1923) first arrived at his parish, there was no church; it hadn’t been constructed yet. This young priest had earned a **triple doctorate (!)**, and because of this great accomplishment, the HOLY ROMAN EMPEROR himself awarded Father Fortescue his degrees. His talents had no limit: *Moral Theology, Dogma, Church History, Canon Law, Arabic, Biblical Science, Music, the Eastern rites, the Classics* (esp. Dante & Boethius), *Painting, Poetry, Heraldry, Calligraphy*—he seemingly knew everything one could know. He passed his examination in Semitic languages with great distinction (a rare achievement). It reminds one of the young Josef Hofmann, about whom Moritz Moszkowski exclaimed: “I can teach him nothing; this boy, somehow, already knows everything.” Because there was no parish church, Father Fortescue had to say Mass in a barn. Therefore, the Second Person of the Divine Trinity (**JESUS CHRIST**) became present in a barn—as He had before. For example, during the French Revolution the young John Mary Vianney illegally attended (clandestine) Masses in a barn. Fortescue died young, but on his final day—before leaving to die in a hospital—he was seen to kiss devoutly the altar upon which he had so often celebrated the holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

COLLEGE PROFESSORS: One calls to mind the abject poverty willingly *embraced* by the holy martyrs of North America such as Father Gabriel Lalemant, Father Pierre Chaumonot, Father François Bressani, and Father Isaac Jogues. These men were the most intelligent men of their generation. They had been college professors in France (at that time, the most civilized country in Europe). Yet, they chose a life filled with mosquitos, thirst, hunger, and every imaginable hardship. The best food they ever had was ground corn mush. Sometimes **the only food they had** was the carrion of dogs, foxes, and other animals—which they had to dig up. And yet, Jesus Christ also became present on their rude altars.

WHICH NONE CAN QUESTION: I write today to thank you for your generosity. I cannot explain why Father Fortescue had to say Mass in a barn. Nor can I explain the (worldly) “logic” behind sending the 17th century’s smartest men to die in the New World. Nor can I explain the various Church scandals that “land” each day. All I can do is affirm the Holy Providence of God, *which none can understand yet none may question*. He is the Creator; we are the creatures. May He be praised for allowing us—in spite of our sinfulness—to serve Him through sacred music. **Thank you so much for supporting our humble efforts.**

Sincerely, in our Lord Jesus Christ,

Jeffrey M. Ostrowski, *President*
CORPUS CHRISTI WATERSHED
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