

REFLECTION

The Vesting Prayers

by Guillermo de Carndonagh

It is late on a warm Fall Sunday morning and the middle aged man sits slipping into a drowse amidst the hum of whispers that so dishearten him. Earlier, as he had entered, the person in the front left seat was talking loudly to her neighbor about a new car, while some one else was equally loudly discussing the impending ball game. The drowsiness is winning and...

The two young boys were moving swiftly up the narrow side walk in the cool morning fog. Shorter by almost a foot, and three years the junior, the younger boy had to break into an occasional jog as they went up the hill. With no adults about to forbid them, they took a short cut over the old black iron fence and made their way between the rose stone buildings. Through a narrow doorway with a pointed top into a room fragrant with the smells of wax and incense, warm pressed fabric and polished wood. The old man in the room looked up with a soft smile and quietly directed them to the shoe rack and cloths press. Soon scuffed brogans were exchanged for clean black shoes, cassocks donned, hands checked for cleanliness and hair patted down. The younger boy was given a lighted taper and sent to light the candles in the sanctuary.

There were a dozen or more people in the quite nave preparing themselves to assist at Mass. Some telling their beads others making the stations, a few kneeling at a rail in front of a favorite shrine. Returning to the sanctuary just as the priest entered, he and his companion began to assist with the vesting. These vesting prays always had a strong impact on the young boy and ...

The young man was kneeling in the sanctuary his palms slippery with oil and bound with a linen band. Soon the newly "baked" priest stood at the top step of the cathedral porch giving his blessing to the many faithful who had stood in the light drizzle as he and his companions were ordained and ...

A nudge at the elbow rouses the middle aged man who stands and performs the concluding rites. In the sacristy a few parishioners stop by to say a word as the man packs his personal belongings. The chalice with its embossments softly rounded from use and the name of his father and two brother knights engraved on the base goes into its black leather bag. Locking the church doors for the last time and placing his things in the car's trunk he starts down the highway.

In time the highway will take him to a hilltop place, a place where in the mists of morning young boys hand priests their vestments as they pray the vesting prayers; a place of peaceful Masses where young boys day dream of someday being priests as they assist with the vesting; a place where the Holy Ghost calls young men to become priests forever in the Rite of Melchizedek.