

PREPARING FOR THE NEW TRANSLATION

THE PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS (PART I)



We now begin to treat the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the differences in translation between our current books and the New Translation of the *Third Typical Edition of the Roman Missal*.

liturgy for the presentation of the gifts that very few of the faithful have ever heard. These each have a Gregorian Chant setting and are in Latin, and the attempts to reproduce these chants in the vernacular was long delayed and then both poorly received and poorly promoted by the publishers of Catholic liturgical music. For some reason following the introduction of the *Novus Ordo* of the Mass in 1969/70 there was a preference among musicians and liturgists to opt for recently composed music and even “popular” music, which detracted from the mystery about to be celebrated. Perhaps it was an attempt to be closer to *the people*, so that they could relate better to what they were singing. In any event, this instruction does not preclude the use of hymns at the presentation of the gifts. It simply points to a preference for the proper chant. The chant or hymn that is sung should last until the gifts have been offered by the priest.

Current Translation	New Translation
<p><i>After the liturgy of the word, the offertory song is begun. Meanwhile the ministers place the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, and the missal on the altar.</i></p> <p>Sufficient hosts (and wine) for the communion of the faithful are to be prepared. It is most important that the faithful should receive the body of the Lord in hosts consecrated at the same Mass and should share the cup when it is permitted. Communion is thus a clearer sign of sharing in the sacrifice which is actually taking place.</p> <p><i>It is desirable that the participation of the faithful be expressed by members of the congregation bringing up the bread and wine for the celebration of the eucharist or other gifts for the needs of the Church and the poor.</i></p>	<p><i>When all this has been done, the Offertory Chant begins. Meanwhile, the ministers place the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, the pall, and the Missal on the altar.</i></p> <p><i>It is desirable that the faithful express their participation by making an offering, bringing forward bread and wine for the celebration of the Eucharist and perhaps other gifts to relieve the needs of the Church and of the poor.</i></p>

The altar, which is the center of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, is prepared at this time. The corporal—the white linen cloth upon which the chalice and paten are set—is to be placed on the altar at this time. The name *corporal* is derived from the Latin word *corpus* because upon the corporal the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ becomes present. Notice also that the use of linen brings to mind the linen in which the body of Jesus was wrapped and placed in the tomb. (We might also mention the Church’s traditional preference for stone altars as connecting the literal bodily Resurrection of Christ with the celebration of the Eucharist.) In the Extraordinary Form of the Mass the host is taken off the paten and placed on the corporal itself, which calls to mind the body given in sacrifice on the cross and wrapped in a linen shroud becomes the source of eternal life and our spiritual food.

The second paragraph from the rubrics of the Current Translation is entirely missing in our New Translation although the practice is indicated elsewhere in *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)*. The Second Vatican Council’s *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 55 teaches as much when it says, “That more perfect form of participation in the Mass whereby the faithful, after the priest’s communion, receive the Lord’s body from the same sacrifice, is strongly commended.”

COMMENTARY:

The New Translation intentionally chose the word **Chant** instead of **song**. There are proper chants in the Church’s

The *GIRM* indicates that it is “praiseworthy” for the faithful to present the wheat bread and grape wine to the priest and deacon, who accept them “at an appropriate place” and car-

ry them to the altar. These are the same gifts that Christ Himself took into his hands and offered. They are both composed of many smaller parts (grains of wheat and grapes) now forming a common whole, and they symbolize our communion and self-offering. The Church only offers what Christ Himself offered in obedience to His command: *Do this in remembrance of me*. She does not have the authority to alter the “matter” of the offering, e.g. rice bread or soft drinks, under the faulty notion that these are more culturally relevant in certain places.

Current Translation	New Translation
<p><i>The priest, standing at the altar, takes the paten with the bread and, holding it slightly raised above the altar, says inaudibly:</i></p> <p>Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.</p> <p><i>Then he places the paten with the bread on the corporal.</i></p> <p><i>If no offertory song is sung, the priest may say the preceding words in an audible voice; then the people may respond:</i></p> <p>Blessed be God for ever.</p>	<p><i>The Priest, standing at the altar, takes the paten with the bread and holds it slightly raised above the altar with both hands, saying in a low voice:</i></p> <p>Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the bread we offer you: fruit of the earth and work of human hands, it will become for us the bread of life.</p> <p><i>Then he places the paten with the bread on the corporal. If, however, the Offertory Chant is not sung, the Priest may speak these words aloud; at the end, the people may acclaim:</i></p> <p>Blessed be God for ever.</p>

COMMENTARY:

The distinction between **inaudibly** and **in a low voice** is a cosmetic one. The response of the faithful will not be

changing. If the Offertory Chant is sung, the Priest should not raise his voice to drown out the music. The words of blessing by the priest are slightly altered in the New Translation in this part to correspond to the longer sentence structure in Latin.

Current Translation	New Translation
<p><i>The deacon (or the priest) pours wine and a little water into the chalice, saying inaudibly:</i></p> <p>By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity.</p>	<p><i>The Deacon, or the Priest, pours wine and a little water into the chalice, saying quietly:</i></p> <p>By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity.</p>

COMMENTARY:

This short prayer, which is always to be said by the deacon preparing the chalice or a priest doing the same in the absence of a deacon, is to be said quietly. The prayer refers to mankind’s participation in the divinity through the Incarnation of the Son of God, a mystery celebrated with much emphasis on the feasts of the Annunciation and at Christmas. The mingling of water and wine also points to the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary when the soldier pierced His side and out flowed blood and water (Jn. 19:34).

According to St. Cyprian of Carthage, writing in the third century, in the Eucharistic sacrifice the faithful are joined to Christ just as inseparably as the water that is dropped in the wine (*Epistle* 63:13). Our sacrifices become one with His one perfect sacrifice. This reminds us, as we shall see below, of the sacrifice that we are called to make as well and the reason the Church continues to teach that baptized Catholics have a grave obligation to assist at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. It is here in the Eucharist that the offering of Christ our head made once in time, and we his mystical body spread throughout space and time, are made one. The uniting of our sacrifices and of our daily lives to that perfect sacrifice of Christ in worship of the Father is the heart of *active participation*.

