

PREPARING FOR THE NEW TRANSLATION

THE PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS (PART II)



Current Translation	New Translation
<p><i>Then the priest takes the chalice, 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 wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become our spiritual drink.</p> <p><i>Then he places the chalice 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 then takes the chalice 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 wine we offer you: fruit of the vine and work of human hands it will become our spiritual drink.</p> <p><i>Then he places the chalice on the corporal.</i></p> <p><i>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 instruction for the priest to use both hands when saying the prayer and offering the wine reflects a slight change in the rubrics in Latin in the latest edition of the Roman Missal. Using both hands steadies the chalice and reduces the possibility of spilling, which should be kept in mind by all who receive the Precious Blood from the chalice. As for the prayer itself, the changes parallel those discussed last week in the offering of the bread. The prayer is basically the same although now its structure mirrors that of the Latin text and the connection between our total dependence on God, even for the mere gifts that we offer, is clearer. The response of the faithful, when no offertory chant is sung and the priest chooses to say these prayers audibly, remains the same.

Current Translation	New Translation
<p><i>The priest bows and says inaudibly:</i></p> <p>Lord God, we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the sacrifice we offer you with humble and contrite hearts.</p> <p><i>He may now incense the offerings and the altar. Afterwards the deacon or a minister incenses the priest and the people.</i></p> <p><i>Next the priest stands at the side of the altar and washes his hands, saying inaudibly:</i></p> <p>Lord, wash away my iniquity; cleanse me from my sin.</p>	<p><i>After this, the Priest, bowing profoundly, says quietly:</i></p> <p>With humble spirit and contrite heart may we be accepted by you, O Lord, and may our sacrifice in your sight this day be pleasing to you, Lord God.</p> <p><i>If appropriate, he also incenses the offerings, the cross, and the altar. A Deacon or other minister then incenses the Priest and the people.</i></p> <p><i>Then the Priest, standing at the side of the altar, washes his hands, saying quietly:</i></p> <p>Wash me, O Lord, from my iniquity and cleanse</p>

COMMENTARY:

Following the offering of the wine, the priest says an additional prayer *quietly*. The first thing that catches the reader's attention is the insertion of the word **profound** to describe the bow to be made. Traditionally, the liturgy specified three types of bows: slight (head bow), medium (head and shoulders), and profound (a bow from the waist) with the degree of the bow corresponding to the degree of reverence. The rubrics for the Mass now specify two types: bows (simple or head bows) and profound bows. With respect to the English text of the prayer, you will notice a significant difference in the New Translation from before even if you are unaccustomed to hear these words spoken audibly. The underlying prayer in Latin has not changed one word; it is here and elsewhere—particularly in those prayers said solely by the priest—where the deficits of the Current Translation

are most obvious. The priest prays that BOTH **we** and **the sacrifice offered** might be acceptable in God’s presence **today**. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ was offered once and for all on Calvary (Heb. 9:25-28) to take away our sins, but we—the mystical body of Christ—enter into this perfect sacrifice at each celebration of the Mass in time.

Psalm 140 (141) describes prayer as the cloud of incense rising in the sight of God. In some sense, the sweet smell of incense that is wholly consumed in its offering on the charcoal reminds us that our sacrifice should not be stained by any sin so that it too might be pleasing in God’s sight. The incense reminds us that our offerings, the Priest, and the entire faithful are being surrounded in prayer in this offering.

The wording of the priest’s prayer at the washing of his hands simply restructures the two short sentences into one longer one, again to better reflect the Latin text. This expresses the sentiment that priest must be pure to offer the sacrifice and his hands unstained to touch the body of Our Lord in the Eucharistic species.

COMMENTARY:

One very important change in the New Translation is the literal translation of the Latin in the priest’s prayer at this point. He is now to say “**my sacrifice and yours**” and no longer “**our sacrifice**.” The priest, by his ordination into the ministerial priesthood of Jesus Christ, is given the power to offer Christ’s one eternal sacrifice. He offers it for the sanctification of the People of God, who in their turn unite their own sacrifice to his; indeed they are to offer their own selves. Each of us has a unique offering to make: the trials we are facing, the suffering that we are undergoing or sharing with others, the people that we know who stand in need of God’s grace, etc. When we of our own free will skip Mass on Sundays, we fail to assist in the sanctification of the world, and we necessarily put something of lesser importance before God, which is the definition of sin. This is why the Church continues to teach that assisting at Mass on Sunday is a grave obligation.

You will note the introduction of the word “**holy**” before that of “Church” to the response of the faithful. Why this important word was intentionally omitted is a mystery. It is true that each of us here on earth are sinners standing in need of God’s grace, but the Church has never understood her holiness as deriving from her earthly members but rather from her head and bridegroom, Christ himself. The return of the word **holy** is a reminder that the Church is more than a human institution; she is more than the hierarchy, the faithful gathered, more than we can see with our eyes. In fact her origin, extension, and destiny are not circumscribed by the limits of this world. The Church’s true homeland is where her perfect members, the Saints in heaven, are, i.e. with Christ.

Finally, the Preparation of the Gifts ends with the Prayer over the “**Offerings**,” which is a more faithful translation than that of “**gifts**”. The Prayer over the Offerings varies from week to week and feast to feast. These translations are also certain to change, and here the beauty and theological depth of the prayers will be more noticeable than with many of the parts of the Ordinary of the Mass that we have considered so far. That being said, they are not part of the Ordinary of the Mass (those parts that do NOT change from week to week) and thus take us too far afield for this column.

Current Translation	New Translation
<i>Standing at the center of the altar, facing the people, he extends and then joins his hands, saying:</i>	<i>Standing at the middle of the altar, facing the people, extending and then joining his hands, he says:</i>
Pray, brethren (“friends”, “dearly beloved”, or “my brothers and sisters”), that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God the almighty Father.	Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.
<i>The people respond:</i>	<i>The people rise and reply:</i>
May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his Church.	May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.
<i>With hands extended, the priest sings or says the prayer over the gifts, at the end of which the people respond:</i>	<i>Then the Priest, with hands extended, says the Prayer over the Offerings, at the end of which the people acclaim:</i>
Amen.	Amen.

