



Sacred Heart

Catholic Church

Imlay City, Michigan Tel: (810) 724-1135

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(810) 724-0870

DRE Office
(810) 724-1145

[email Fr. Paul Ward](#)



Homily Fr. Paul Ward

Saturday, Oct. 15, and Sunday, Oct. 16, 2011
29th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle A
Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Imlay City

New Translations, n.9 The Offertory to the Preface

We continue our review of the new translations of the Mass today, exploring the offertory up to the preface. These new translations are steeped in Scripture and beauty, and will provide, to those who desire it, a rich spiritual harvest. ual harvest. ual harvest. ual harvest.

With the offertory, or preparation of the gifts as the new Mass calls it, the Liturgy of the Word ends, and the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins. “At the Last Supper, Christ instituted the Paschal Sacrifice and banquet, by which the Sacrifice of the Cross is continuously made present in the Church whenever the priest, representing Christ the Lord, carries out what the Lord himself did and handed over to his disciples to be done in his memory.”^[1]

In the offertory, the bread and wine, which will become the body, blood, soul and divinity of the Lord, are brought to the altar and prepared with the chalice and all the other instruments of the holy sacrifice – the Missal, the corporal, the paten, and so forth. Then the priest offers the prayer over the offerings. Next, he begins the Preface, which is in fact considered part of the Eucharistic prayer.

One detail here: the priest mixes water into the wine. The Church mandates that the priest do this, with the most ancient tradition, “both because Christ the Lord is believed to have done so, and because water came from his side together with blood^[2] and this sacred sign is recalled by this mixing. Further, when in the Revelation of the blessed John, the peoples are

said to be waters,^[3] the union of Christ the head with his faithful people is signified.”^[4]

In all of these matters of translation pertaining to the Offertory, all of the prayers have been translated in the same, superior way as we have been seeing over the last few weeks. Yet most of the prayers are said by the priest, sometimes said in a manner inaudible to the congregation. If I were to engage in a detailed discussion about each of these prayers, we would be here too long today. I think it is best, therefore, if I provide explanations about three aspects: The *Pray brethren*, the Preface’s introductory dialogue, and the *Holy, holy, holy* (or the *Sanctus*).

The *Pray brethren* reads differently. [Read it from the homily aid.] The response, which the people make to these words, does not change. The important part of the priest’s words here is the fact that “our sacrifice” changes to “my sacrifice and yours.” This apparently small difference has huge significance, and has been, again, one point of great interest for me. First there is an expression of unity, with the term “brethren,” for we all pray to God as “our” Father, and we are one in Christ’s mystical body. But then there is an expression of distinction, “my sacrifice and yours.” Mine, yours. Why this distinction? Because every Catholic partakes spiritually “in a variety of ways and in different degrees in the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice, while the priest in their name and for their benefit alone completes the sacrificial action itself.”^[5] Do you remember how we spoke of that expression, “The Lord be with you,” and its response, “And with your spirit,” pointing out that the Spirit of the Lord was, by Holy Orders, present and acting in the priest in a unique way at Mass? So too we see here, the priest and the people are performing different roles in the Mass, which is the sacrifice of the whole Church, head and body. The priest offers it in the person of Christ, which the laity do not, and this is only because of the sacrament of Holy Orders which he has received through no merit of his own. The laity partake in this sacrifice with heart and soul, with one heart and one soul, in the piety of grace. So if the whole Church, laity and clergy, offer all together both Christ and themselves, each does so in a very different way. Hence, “my sacrifice and yours,” while it is a more correct translation, is also more correct theologically than “our sacrifice.”

The next point to consider is a bit more interactive today: the responses of the preface. Here we will have to look at our sheets and rehearse them. [*Recite together, better do it twice.*] You have noticed that from “It is right to give him thanks and praise” we move to “It is right and just.” The new translation is in fact what the original Latin says. There is no mention of thanks or praise – these will come in the Eucharistic prayer, and even this: the priest *just said*, “let us give thanks to the Lord our God.”

The Church here invites the faithful to have our minds occupied with holy things, and only holy things, to put away our distractions with passing things and things of the senses, which absorb every moment of our day, and remember the teaching of St. Paul, that “our conversation is in heaven” (Phil 3:20). One might also translate it, “Hearts on high!”

The new, correct translation says, “it is right and just.” It is right, because of the relationship we have with God as his creatures, who have received everything from him. It affirms the dignity both of man and God to do as the priest commands, “Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!” It is *right*, in that God is worthy of this confession of his glory. It is *just*, because we owe God so much gratitude: for making us, for creating us, for giving us so much, for purifying us with suffering, for showing us mercy for our sins. In fact, it isn’t “just enough,” that is, we cannot give God enough gratitude for all he has done for us and given to us.

Then comes the Holy. Let us recite that together. [*Recite.*] This magnificent prayer is taken from Isaiah, where we read, “I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole

earth is full of his glory” (Is 6:3). It is also taken from the acclamations which the crowd raised to the Lord on Palm Sunday, when he entered Jerusalem (Mt 21:9). Therefore, this prayer has overtones of contemplation of God’s glory in heaven, and of the glory of his cross on earth. The only translation point to address here is the fact that we move from “power and might” to “hosts.” Those who did the current translation put the word “power” all over the place, where it never appears in the Latin – irritating, honestly. The word “hosts” here means “armies.” In the angelic cry, the seraphim perhaps meant the angelic armies, in nine beautiful and mighty choirs, in heaven. Israel also had its armies, its hosts, march in battle array. Now the armies are the Church, meaning Christ, Mary, the angels, the Church triumphant in heaven and the Church militant on earth. We fight not with flesh and bone, but with principalities and powers, and it is a great spiritual warfare. I’m very happy to see this small trace of military terminology returned to its proper place in the English translation of the liturgy.

May all these details in the upcoming translations be an opportunity for us all to meditate more deeply on the mysteries of the sacred liturgy. Entering there may our hearts be moved towards contemplation, admiration, divine love, fearlessness in the spiritual battles of our time, union with Christ, love for Mary, and charity towards one another. Amen.■

[1] GIRM, 72; cf. Vatican II *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 47; cf. *Eucharisticum mysterium* 3a.

[2] Cf. Jn 19:34.

[3] cf. Ap. 17:15.

[4] Council of Trent, Session 22, Chapter 7, in Tanner, vol. 2, p. 735.

[5] cf. Nicholas Gehr, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass Dogmatically, Liturgically and Ascetically Explained*, tr. from 6th German ed., Herder (St. Louis: 1902) (reprint, Kessinger Publishing’s Rare Reprints), II., 54, 1, p. 549.

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New Translations of the English Roman Missal (Advent 2011) – Homily Aid for
 Congregation #6

THE OFFERTORY TO THE PREFACE

<p>Oráte, fratres, ut meum ac vestrum sacrificium acceptábile fiat apud Deum Patrem omnipoténtem.</p> <p>V. Dóminus vobíscum. R. Et cum spírítu tuo. V. Sursum Corda. R. Habémus ad Dóminum. V. Grátias agámus Dómino Deo nostro. R. Dignum et justum est.</p> <p>Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dóminus Deus Sábaoth.</p> <p>Pleni sunt coeli et terra glória tua. Hosánna in excélsis. Benedíctus qui venit in nómine Dómini. Hosánna in excélsis.</p>	<p>Pray, brethren, that <u>our sacrifice</u> may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.</p> <p>V. The Lord be with you. R. And also with you. V. Lift up your hearts. R. We lift them up to the Lord. V. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. R. It is <u>right to give him</u> <u>thanks and praise.</u></p> <p>Holy, holy, holy Lord, God <u>of power and</u> <u>might.</u></p> <p>Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.</p>	<p>Pray, brethren, that <u>my sacrifice and yours</u> may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father</p> <p>V. The Lord be with you. R. And <u>with your spirit.</u> V. Lift up your hearts. R. We lift them up to the Lord. V. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. R. It is <u>right and just.</u></p> <p>Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God <u>of Hosts.</u></p> <p>Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest.</p>
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