

New and Corrected Translation of the Mass – Part 16

The Offertory

The second part of Mass, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, begins with the Offertory, during which bread and wine are brought to the altar and prepared and offered to God. The collection is also made at this time, as an offering for the local church. Nothing else should be brought forward at this point; otherwise, as they are gifts to God, they may need to be burned – whole and entire, or kept by the church. The priest may say the offertory prayers silently (for example, if the offertory chant is still being sung), or he may say them aloud. If aloud, then both times for the offering of bread and the wine, we say:

Blessed be God forever. *1 Chr 16.36; Ps 41.13; Dan 2.20; Rom 9.5*

In saying so, we acknowledge that we bless God because He has blessed us first, in giving us these gifts which we then offer to Him. Here we forget ourselves, and acknowledge an eternal truth: that God is blessed forever. After the priest has washed his fingers (a symbolic washing reminding the priest how he must repent and confess his sins before even daring to approach and touch the sacred mysteries) he turns to us and invites us to pray with him: ‘Pray, brethren...’ Standing up, we respond:

**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.** *1 Cor 11.24-25; 1 Pet 2.5
1 Chr 16.29; Joel 2.26
Mt 26.27; Mk 14.24; Lk 22
Eph 4.12; 5.25-30*

The priest says ‘my sacrifice and yours’, because he offers bread and wine, and the sacrifice of Christ Himself on the cross; we share in this same offering and join to it *our very selves*. The wine poured in the chalice represents the divinity of Christ, and the single drop of water represents our frail humanity, which we seek to offer, to be lost in Christ and transformed by His divinity. Later, of course, the wine ceases to be wine and becomes the actual, true, substantial Blood of Christ, just as the bread ceases to be bread but becomes Christ’s Body, actually, truly and substantially present.

Notice that the sacrifice of the Mass is offered for the praise and glory of God first (one of the four ends of Mass), and then for our good, we who are present to share in the offering and fruits of the Mass, and also for those who are not present – indeed, for all the holy Church. The ‘holy Church’ includes those suffering in purgatory, since the Mass is offered for their good as well.