

New and Corrected Translation of the Mass – Part 17

The Preface

✠ The Lord be with you.

Ruth 2.4

✠ **And with your spirit.**

Gal 6.18; 2 Tim 4.22

The Preface to the Eucharistic Prayer begins with a dialogue. The priest and people again pray that the Lord may be with one another. In particular, that the priest may act *precisely* as a priest for the Church, in this sacrifice.

✠ Lift up your hearts.

Job 11.13; Col 3.15

✠ **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Lam 3.41

The priest says literally, ‘Hearts aloft!’ The heart represents the core of a person – mind, body and spirit. It is a call to offer all our being to God. It is a call to repentance, self-offering and a laying-aside of all earthly cares.

✠ Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Col 3.17

✠ **It is right and just.**

Pss 54.6; 92.1; 147.1; Col 1.3

‘Let us give thanks’ is literally in Greek, ‘Let us Eucharist’ – although Eucharist is not a verb in English. The priest invites us to give thanks in the sense of entering into the Mass, to share in Christ’s Eucharist.

Why is it right to do so? Because Jesus asked us to do His ‘memorial’. Jesus’ memorial is not a re-enactment of the Last Supper. No, it is actually a re-enactment of what happened on Calvary – except what happened there is truly present to us now, two thousand years later, at every Holy Mass. The Mass is not a new sacrifice. The same sacrifice which Christ accomplished in a bloody manner on Calvary is made present in an unbloody manner on every altar in every Catholic church, and this one, unrepeatable sacrifice of Christ at Calvary is made present to us.

Why is it just to do so? ‘Just’ is used as a synonym for ‘righteous’. John the Baptist, a self-acknowledged unworthy sinner, is told by Jesus to baptize Him ‘to fulfil all righteousness’ (cf. Mt 3.15). Likewise, an unworthy priest is given to offer the sacrifice of Christ, and an unworthy people consume the sacred Body and Blood of Christ. It is just because all this fulfils a New Law, the Law of Christ, the sacrifice of which is offered precisely for us sinners – to make us righteous and just.

The priest continues the Preface repeating the people’s words: ‘It is truly right and just...’ meaning that he is continuing their prayer; the old translation simply brushed aside the people’s response. He also mentions the choirs of angels, whom we join in praising and adoring God. So the Eucharistic Prayer begins, acknowledging that priest and people and angels are joined together in praising and adoring God.