



## *Praying the Mass Anew*

*The New Translation of The Roman Missal  
and Our Actual Participation at Mass*

### **15. The Prayer of the Faithful and the Offering of the Gifts.**

**T**he Liturgy of the Word concludes with the Prayer of the Faithful (also called the “General Intercessions”) wherein the people express their prayers both as a response to God’s word that they have just heard and meditated upon, and as an imploring of God for the good of community united in faith and the needs of the world. Usually, the petitions reflect the prayers and needs known to a particular people. Accordingly, there are no direct changes that will affect this part of the Mass. Indirectly, however, the prayers offered at this time will likely become more like unto the style of the *Roman Missal* itself, making use of elevated language, seeking to approach God the Father with a greater humility of heart. Those who write petitions are encouraged to compose prayers in consistency with the style used in the Missal.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins after the intercessions with the Preparation of the Gifts. The ritual includes a few of the faithful bringing forth the gifts of bread and wine that will become the Body and Blood of Christ. Once more, nothing of the ritual itself will change at this time; only the words of prayer will be new. During the Preparation of the Gifts, the priest takes the bread, and then the wine, and offers prayers of blessing to God. Both prayers acknowledge God as the Creator through whom we are given what we ourselves

are made able to offer. Hence, the prayers convey gratitude to God for both his creative work and his generosity to us. In addition, the reality of sacrifice that is present in the prayers reflects back on God’s providing for us. Here are the texts:

*The priest prays over the bread as follows:*

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.

*The people respond: **Blessed be God for ever.***

*The priest prays over the wine as follows:*

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.

*The people respond: **Blessed be God for ever***

The underlined portions of the texts express the revisions in the translation. Once more, the new texts possess a greater sense of humble dependence on God than the previous version – as “we have received” what we now offer. In other words, there is humble acknowledgement that even our opportunity to make an offer, and the

offering itself that we give, have their source in God.

The most noteworthy change in the Preparation of the Gifts comes in the priest's words inviting prayer that the sacrifice be accepted:

*(After the priest has washed his hands,) he turns toward the people and says:*

Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

*The people rise and say:*

**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.**

Once more, the changes are underlined. Whereas the previous version makes reference to "our sacrifice," we see here the reference to "my sacrifice and yours," as though there are two separate sacrifices. In truth, while the true sacrifice is that of Jesus Christ, offering himself to the Father for the forgiveness of sins, what is distinguished here is *the way of participating in the sacrifice* by the

lay faithful and the ordained. As with the response "And with your spirit," that expresses the grace of Holy Orders more clearly, the nature of the sacrifice offered here by the ordained is in the place of Christ. Through ordination, the priest offers the sacrifice as Christ himself. The laity also offer the sacrifice, *but as an offering of themselves in union with Christ*. The offering of the laity is thus as members of His Body, with Christ himself as the Head of the Body.

That the sacrifice is offered for the "good of all his *holy Church*" is simply a more literal translating of the original Latin version. To call the Church "holy" is both in keeping with the Creed (that the Church is holy is one of the "four marks" of the Church), and an expressing of the nature and dignity of the Church.

The Preparation of the Gifts concludes when the priest offers the "Prayer over the gifts," which, as in the Collect (Opening Prayer), is specific to each occasion. It concludes with the people's "Amen," thus concluding this time of humble asking of acceptance of the sacrifice that is to be offered.

### ***Questions of the Week:***

➤ ***Sometimes the priest does not say "Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation..." Is that correct?***

The priest always prays these prayers, even if the people can not hear him. In the ritual of Mass, the Preparation of the Gifts is a time that is meant to include singing. When such takes place, the priest is to say the two blessing prayers in a low voice. When there is no music, he is permitted to pray them aloud, with the people giving their proper response.

➤ ***Why does the collection take place at this time?***

As the Preparation of the Gifts is the moment in which we present the offering for sacrifice, it is fitting that the offerings of the people in honor and thanksgiving to God and for the good of the Church and her works would also be made at this time. In this manner, whatever is offered in the way of donations can be understood in connection with the offering of self that all are invited to make during the Mass.