

Mass Parts 24/52: *Congregation Prayers over the Offertory*



Now all of the quiet preparation of the gifts has ended. Now we become more dialogical, between each other and with God. It starts with an invocation to pray that causes us to stand up, leaving behind our receptive posture of sitting to the active posture of standing. We are getting ready for the Eucharist to become present. The gifts are ready on the altar. Our hearts and intentions are ready as well. So the priest invites all to begin this great prayer by saying:

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

During the preparation, we placed many things on the altar: our intentions for others, for our own lives, the people we have promised to pray for, the hurts and needs of those attending, the thanksgiving for all the blessings in our lives. May all of this be acceptable to God. But here in particular, we are praying at this moment for the bread and wine, as seen in the people's reply; which affirms this invitation and answers the prayer. The priest has invited the people to address God, so the people answer:

*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.*

All that we pray for, in addition to the bread and wine, is placed at the hands of the priest to lead the people in prayer and consecration. Summing up all of the people's praise, the priest then prays the Prayer over the Offerings. This prayer changes for each Mass, and normally follows a direct address to God to accept the gifts and the intentions of the people. The prayer that was just used this weekend, the Fifth Sunday of Lent was:

*Hear us, almighty God,
and, having instilled in your servants
the teachings of the Christian faith,
graciously purify them
by the working of this sacrifice.
Through Christ our Lord.*

With this setup all now complete, we are ready to begin the Eucharist Prayer itself.

-Fr. Kopp

Next Week: Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Preface Dialogue