

*Welcoming the*

English Translation of the

**Roman Missal**  
THIRD EDITION

## Part 7: Presentation of the Gifts

Perhaps the most overlooked ritual in the Roman liturgy is the Presentation of the Gifts. We often see it only as a moment to get the bread and wine from the back of the church to the altar or a time to collect money. So much more is occurring during this moment:

a moment where we join Christ in the offering of sacrifice. The new English translation of the Roman Missal slightly retranslates the “Orate Fratres,” the dialogical prayer which occurs after the gifts of bread and wine have been placed on the altar and offered up to God. In our current 1973 translation of the Missal, the celebrant says, “Pray, brothers and sisters, that *our* sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.” In the new 2010 English translation of the Missal, the celebrant will say, “Pray, brothers and sisters that *my sacrifice and yours* may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.” The translation change from “our sacrifice” to “my sacrifice and yours” sounds minor, however the theological meaning is significant. St. Augustine wrote greatly about this moment in the liturgy. He said that if you look carefully, you can see mixed in with the bread the joys and accomplishments of the whole community. And if you look closely, you can see mixed in with the wine the sorrows and sacrifices of the whole community. The sacrifices which the community makes to be present at the Lord’s table: the single mother who has two jobs, three kids and still manages to drag them to Mass; the man struggling with addiction who is on his second “one days at a time” and still manages to come to celebrate Eucharist; the woman who has a terminal disease and is in tremendous pain and still manages to gather around the Lord’s Table. All of these sacrifices are brought to the celebrant, along with the gifts of bread and wine, and placed on the altar, just as Jesus placed his body on the altar of the cross, and together these sacrifices and gifts are offered up to God. In our current translation when the celebrant says, “our sacrifice,” it sounds like he is speaking of a single sacrifice, perhaps the Sacrifice of the Cross. In the new translation the celebrant, who is in *persona Christi*, in the person of Jesus Christ says, “my sacrifice and yours,” acknowledging that the sacrifices of the whole community are united with Jesus’ sacrifice of the cross and together with the gifts of bread and wine are offered up to God. And what does God do in return? God sends down the Spirit to change those gifts of bread and wine into food for the journey, so those who make these sacrifices receive the spiritual nourishment and sustenance they need to return the next Sunday. Presentation of the Gifts is more than just getting bread and wine to the altar or collecting money. It is during this ritual where we each bring our own joys and sacrifices to be offered up to God together with the Sacrifice of the Cross, and open our hearts to receive the nourishment of God’s body and blood for our own journey until we return to the Lord’s Table.

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