

The new translation of The Roman Missal: Preparation of the Gifts

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When we begin using the new translation of the Roman Missal on the First Sunday of Advent, the prayers the priest says during mass also changed. This is the new translation for the Preparation of the Gifts: The prayers have been re-translated to more closely reflect the meaning of the original Latin text:

The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins with the preparation of the gifts. When the bread and wine are placed upon the altar and raised by the Priest as an offering to God, we often hear two prayers spoken aloud over each element (they can also be spoken quietly by the Priest).



The current versions of these two prayers are very familiar, so it is easy to see that the differences are relatively minor. The first is spoken when the Priest lifts the paten (the sacred vessel that holds the unleavened bread), and second is said at the lifting of the chalice.

The prayers accompanying the offering of the bread and wine are very important, because they express the sacramental reality of the Sacred Liturgy. Through our human work amidst creation, we offer back to God what is already His (the new translation highlights that we first “received” these gifts from Him), and He brings it to its heavenly fulfillment. In an overarching sense, this applies to our entire Christian lives on earth. Just as the bread and wine become Christ’s Body and Blood, we look forward to our resurrection in glorified bodies (as we profess in the Creed), and also to the perfection of all creation in the heavenly Jerusalem.

The people’s response to both prayers remains, “Blessed be God for ever” (a phrase that is actually a traditional introduction for Jewish prayers).

The entire preceding exchange during the preparation of the gifts bears similarity to prayers found in an episode from the Book of Daniel, when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are cast into a fiery furnace for refusing to worship an idol created by King Nebuchadnezzar. Abednego (also known as Azariah) utters a prayer from within the furnace that begins, “Blessed are you, and praiseworthy, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and glorious forever is your name” (Dan 3:26). And as the three men are kept safe by an Angel while in the furnace, they sing a litany of praise, wherein they repeatedly bless the Lord and extol His name “above all forever.”

After offering the bread and wine, the Priest then quietly recites, “With humble spirit and contrite heart...” More than a simple rearranging of the current translation, the new text is a much clearer allusion to a portion of the same prayer spoken by Abednego in the furnace: “But with contrite heart and humble spirit let us be received; as though it were holocausts of rams and bullocks, or thousands of fat lambs, so let our sacrifice be in your presence today as we follow you unreservedly; for those who trust in you cannot be put to shame” (Dan 3:39-40). This also recalls Psalm 51 (50), which affirms that the Lord desires a humble heart over burnt sacrifices.

PART OF MASS	PRESENT TEXT	NEW TEXT
Prayers at the Preparation of the Gifts	Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.	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.

	<p>Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become our spiritual drink.</p> <p>Lord God, we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the sacrifice we offer you with humble and contrite hearts.</p> <p>Lord, wash away my iniquity; cleanse me from my sin.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>With humble spirit and contrite heart may we be accepted by you, O Lord, and may our sacrifice in your sight this day be pleasing to you, Lord God.</p> <p>Wash me, O Lord, from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.</p>
<p><i>Orate, fratres</i></p>	<p>Pray, brethren, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.</p>	<p>Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.</p>