

### **The Offertory – Part 3 – More quiet priest prayers, and... Are you attentive to YOUR sacrifice?!**

After the gifts of bread and wine are brought up the aisle and to the altar, the priest says some prayers to God quietly, which include not only the prayer when mixing the water and wine that we mentioned last week but also quiet prayers thanking God for these materials gifts and what is about to occur during the Mass in the miracle of Jesus becoming present to us (“*Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation...R: Blessed be God forever*”). The quiet prayers are beautiful to reflect on because it helps us appreciate, in a small part the spiritual life of the priest during Mass in addition to the main part of, the truth of what is about to occur in the bread and wine being transformed into the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. For example, the priest right before the offertory is just about to end, turns towards the altar servers and as they pour water over his hands, he prays quietly, “*Wash me, O Lord, from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sins.*” The priest is meant to both understand the glory and profoundness of what is about to happen through his words and actions, but also, he is meant to humble himself before God and recognize his own brokenness, unworthiness, and dependence on God for the entirety of what is about to occur.

One last part of the offertory (and the preparation of the altar) that we really should reflect on is based on at least two of the prayers that the priest says towards the end of this part of the Mass. First of all, the priest prays silently right before washing his hands, the following prayer, “*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.*” These words by the Catholic priest during Mass imply that he together with all the people present are offering some sort of sacrifice to God the Father throughout the Mass. In addition, look at the words of the prayer that is said when everyone stands at the end of the offertory, “*Pray brothers and sisters, that **my sacrifice and yours**, may be acceptable to God our Almighty Father.*” And everyone responds with the words, “*May the Lord **accept the sacrifice** at your hands, for the praise and glory of His Name, for our good and the good all His holy Church.*” To summarize, we need to remember what we said two-weeks ago when we began the offertory reflection, which is that we not just preparing to receive Jesus in Holy communion, but we are also offering our entire week and our entire selves to God the Father through our union with Jesus during each Mass. In a real way, Jesus’ one sacrifice on the Cross that happened 2,000 years ago, that one sacrifice for us becomes present during each Mass, and we can unite ourselves to Jesus anew and offer all of ourselves along with everything that we’ve done during the past week, *for our spiritual good and the good of all His holy Church.* May we thank God for giving us this possibility to unite ourselves to Jesus every weekend during the Mass, and to offer all that we’ve done and all that we are to God the Father for the transformation of our souls and the spiritual good of the entire world!