

## THE OFFERTORY RITE IN THE ORDINES ROMANI

THE Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of Vatican II, when it speaks on the general principles of liturgical renewal, says amongst other things, that, 'the rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity; they should be short, clear and unencumbered by any useless repetitions; they should be within the people's power of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation' (n. 34). Later on, in subsequent articles, the same Constitution speaks on more particular principles as it treats on more specific liturgical celebrations. Thus in chapter II, when it speaks on the Mystery of the Eucharist, it says that 'the rite of the Mass is to be revised in such a way that the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as also the connection between them, may be more clearly manifested, and that devout and active participation by the people may be more easily achieved' (n. 50). In the same article it then stresses the need of simplifying the rites with due consideration to the preservation of their substance; the discarding of those elements which are superfluous and of little advantage, and the reintroduction and restoring of those elements which have suffered injury through accidents of history.

Consequently, it is my intention in this paper to examine and seek the historical and theological evolution and make an evaluation of the principal elements of the offertory structure in the Ordines Romani, and then to try and evaluate the contemporary renewed offertory rite in the light of the same rite in the Ordines Romani. Thus we hope to come to a better understanding of the offertory in the new Ordo Missae.

### THE OFFERTORY RITE IN THE ORDINES ROMANI

To begin with, by taking a glance at the table of the principal elements of the offertory structure, given above, we notice that the offertory starts immediately after the OREMUS. Here we find the following elements:

- the chanting of the offertory hymn
- the collection of the gifts
- the washing of hands
- the placing of the offertories on the altar

- incensation
- the *Orate Fratres*
- the *Secreta*.

Before treating each element separately, I would like to add that I have drawn this structure from a selection of the Roman Ordines because the other Ordines make only a passing reference to the offertory rite (ita c.g., Or. L, cap. XX, nn. 35-36), or else, as in most cases, they do not contain anything pertinent to the theme.

#### THE OFFERTORY HYMN

Generally we find a reference to this singing after the offertory rite is over (OR. nn. I, IV, V, VI); at other times just at the start of the rite (OR. V, X, XVII) or even in the middle (OR. n. V). All this leads to the conclusion that the singing accompanied the offertory actions, and it perdured throughout until the principal celebrant thought it fit to start the preface. Consequently, the singing here marks the duration of the rite. Besides, it was rather long since the offertory rite itself took quite some time. Righetti holds that it is of North African origin and exactly started during the episcopacy of S. Augustine (391-430) in Carthage, from where it reached Rome during the 5th century. It gradually evolved and reached its peak before the 8th century. Then it began to decline until already, in the 11th century we find it reduced to the antiphon. Earlier it was responsorial in nature, and was left exclusively to the schola to sing it alternately, that is, a group or soloist sang the verses, whilst the second group sang the antiphon (e.g., OR. I). Righetti adds that the exclusion of the verses in the offertory chant and its reduction to the antiphon might indicate that the offertories of the faithful had ceased by then or else, that it was enforced to save time and leave the people moments when they could prepare themselves in silent prayer for the sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the wording of the chants, here, was always strictly connected with the presentation of the gifts and expressed the jubilation of the heart with which the faithful offered these same gifts since, as they quoted, 'God loves the cheerful giver'.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. M. RIGHETTI, *Storia Liturgica*, (Ancora-Milano) 1956, v. III, pp. 279-280.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. J. JUNGSMANN S.J., *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, (New Revised & Abridged Ed. — Burns & Oates) London — 1959, p. 329.

## COLLECTION OF THE GIFTS

Here I have purposely stressed this action as a 'collection' instead of a 'presentation' or an 'offering', in order to mark the part played by the pontiff in descending from his throne and going down among the congregation to make himself the collection from among the people. In fact, we find that the Ordines which are of strong Roman tenor express this idea of collection (OR. I, IV, V, VI) as G.J. Booth rightly points out in his study on the *Ordo Romanus Primus*.<sup>3</sup> Those that bear a Gallican influence, speak more of a presentation, or rather of a procession unto the altar where they handed the gifts to the pontiff (OR. XVII). Jungmann believes that the idea of the offertory procession in Gaul is coming from the Byzantine solemn offertory entrance which was also adapted by Rome but only on great feasts.<sup>4</sup> The offertory oblations were directly connected with communion and originally the Church insisted that would-be communicants were to bring their offertories, and besides, she refused the gifts of penitents or of Christians at enmity amongst themselves.<sup>5</sup> Jungmann also insists that undoubtedly not all the bread and wine collected were used for the sacrifice, but those which were not to be consecrated were probably placed on side altars, or behind the main altar, and then later distributed to the poor by deacons.<sup>6</sup> However, we find the insistence that even those who were not to receive communion are not to appear before the Almighty empty handed at least on principal feast days, since as St. Cesarius of Arles would insist, they could bring other things such as oil and candles that would serve for worship. And by the eighth century, money was accepted as a substitute, as this was deemed necessary for the sustenance of the increasing number of the clergy. Yet even here, such offertories kept their sacred character as

<sup>3</sup> G. J. BOOTH, *The Offertory Rite in the Ordo Romanus Primus*, (Cath. Univ. of America Press-Washington) 1948.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 324.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 323-324, and Righetti, *op. cit.*, in his reference to the Synod of Elvira in Spain in the year 303, p. 270. Besides, both OR. X, n. 44, and OR. L, c. XX, nn. 35-36, indicate directly and indirectly that the priest carries on the altar the oblations that were necessary for communion only.

<sup>6</sup> *op. cit.* pp. 318-9. Besides, in the excavations in the Lateran, Rome, altars have been found which were intended for the reception of gifts. E. Josi, R. Krauthmer, S. Corbett, *Note Lateranensi*, in *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* 33 (1957), 79-98.

they still expressed the closer participation of the community in the sacrifice because of their own oblation.<sup>7</sup> A very interesting note is found in Ordo L, c. XX, nn. 86-87, which says that parents are to leave their children outside the church 'in custodia' so as to return and offer oblations both in their name and in their children's name. Moreover, certain theologians consider such an action as the first exercise of the priesthood of the faithful.<sup>8</sup> But undoubtedly, the change from natural goods to money that was brought about because of more practical economic considerations, as it has already been hinted at earlier, caused with the passing of time a decrease in the sacrificial notion of the oblations of the congregation.<sup>9</sup>

#### WASHING OF HANDS

The first remark that we are rightly bound to make is that certain Ordines (nn. IV, XV, XVII) speak of two washings of hands, one preceding the collection of the gifts and the other following it. Andrieu, while commenting on the first washing says that it is of Gallican origin. For the meaning behind it we have to enquire from others such as Righetti, who only sees in it a symbolic meaning, namely, the interior purification necessary before approaching the sacrificial act. It still survives in a way in a Pontifical Mass and curiously enough Righetti himself adds that the custom is very ancient, dating as far back as Tertullian (Apolog, 39, P.L., 1. 540), though here it rather bore a practical reason, since the Agape at this time used to precede the Eucharistic Celebration and consequently, the washing of one's hands was thought quite evidently and necessarily after a meal.<sup>10</sup> The second washing of hands, after the collection of the gifts, shows more clearly the propriety and convenience of the act, as the pontiff would deem it necessary to clean his hands after collecting the gifts. However, with the decline of this collection, we find that the practice became also rare especially during the 11th-13th century. And where it survived it gained once more the symbolic meaning of spiritual cleansing. In actual fact it never lost this

<sup>7</sup> Righetti, *op. cit.* p. 273.

<sup>8</sup> A. CLARK, *The Origin and Development of the Offertory Rite and its Function in the Sacrifice of the Mass*, (Typis Polyglottis Vat. — 1950) p. 311, excerpt from his *Dissertation ad Lauream in Pontif. Univ. Gregoriana*.

<sup>9</sup> Jungmann, *op. cit.* p. 323-4.

<sup>10</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 284f.

meaning, which continued to remain as an undertone even when it was simply practical to follow it. For its real origin lies in Old Testament ablution rites, that perpetuated in Christianity under various forms and customs. Thus, in the Ethiopic Rite the priest sprinkles the congregation after he had watered his hands and before he dries them, whilst at the same time he warns those who approach the Lord's table unworthily. The fount that is found in the atrium of Christian Basilicas expresses the same idea. We can say the same thing as regards the introduction of the Holy Water founts at the entrance of churches, and the inclusion of the Asperges rite at the start of the mass at Sunday High Masses during the Carolingian era. Perhaps we may also say the same with regards to the custom of the priest in washing his hands in the sacristy before commencing mass. Consequently, the washing of hands is not necessarily connected with the offertory, and it is rather found there since it is nearer to the Consecration, and, though it is still reminiscent of its practical nature, yet its purpose is very well expressed by the Lavabo psalm that was introduced in the eleventh century, to serve as a precaution for priests especially before handling the Sacred Host and Chalice during the Canon.<sup>11</sup>

#### PLACING OF OFFERTORIES ON THE ALTAR

The preparation of the altar which is then followed by the placing of those gifts on the altar that are to be used in the sacrifice was carried in Rome in a very simple and sobre way. We notice in the Ordinals that the acolytes, subdeacons and deacons first prepared the altar with the necessary candles, cloths and some of the gifts. Then the pontiff descended from his throne and made for the altar. Having saluted it, he then places upon it his offerings. Here we notice that the head of the choir brings the cruet with water and hands it to the deacon (OR. IX, n. 23), who prepares the chalice. Meanwhile, the pontiff prays over the oblata. It is only Ordo X that provides us with the formula 'Veni Sanctificator...' at the blessing of the host (n. 46). The others refer us to his actions, namely, 'elevans oculos' (OR. XV, n. 33-34, XVII, n. 42), whilst he elevates the host and prays in secret, and 'inclinans se paululum...' (OR. I, n. 85, VI, n. 51), which is also a reference to his silent prayers. These actions are also accompanied by the blessing, by means

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., cf. also Jungmann, op. cit., p. 350f.

of a cross, of the oblata. The fixed prayer formulae of these actions came later, around the eleventh century, and most probably they are of Gallican origin, since such silence was not very tolerated for long in Frankish liturgy.<sup>12</sup> The 'Veni Sanctificator' formula derives from the Irish Stowe Missal (11th cent.), and it is an invocation to the Holy Spirit to bless the oblata. And though it seems to be of an epikletic nature, yet we cannot admit it fully since we are not here in the Canon. Besides, the prayers here are of a private and simple nature and have not the force of those found in the Canon.<sup>13</sup> It is important to add that the carrying of the water was left to the head of the choir so as to include the singers in the sacrifice by letting them share in bringing the offertory gifts.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the mixing of the water with wine symbolizes the intimate union of the faithful with him to whom they had bound themselves in Faith. This union could not be severed just as water could not be separated from wine once they had been mixed. Jungmann affirms this doctrine by quoting S. Cyprian: 'when someone offers only wine, then the blood of Christ begins to exist without us; but when it is only water, then the people begin to exist without Christ' (Ep. 63, ad Caecilium). He adds that this theory which symbolizes Christ's union with his Church and which is very well expressed in the prayer, 'Deus, qui humanae substantiae mirabiliter condidisti . . .,' that accompanied the mixing of water with wine, was repeated and extended in the Middle Ages and prevailed over a later theory that referred to the blood and water flowing from Christ's side on Calvary. It even prevailed against another theory coming from the East that referred to the water and wine as representing Christ's human and divine nature, whence it grew customary to put in the chalice equal portions, and consequently our few drops of water was a stumbling block to unity with some Ecclesial denominations.<sup>15</sup>

As regards the blessing of the oblata (bread, wine and water), it is to be noted that this is a sign of dedicating the gifts to such a holy purpose, whilst at the same time invoking God to render the offerers holy. And here we also notice that the oblata is referred to as 'sacrificium'.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Jungmann, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 346.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, p. 329.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, p. 333f.

(cf. *Veni Sanctificator*-prayer). We are later to find this same word in the *ORATE FRATRES* and very often in the *SECRETA*. And since certain prayers are of an epikletic nature, as they are addressed to the Holy Spirit (ita, *Veni Sanctificator*), many scholars were led to consider the offertory rite as a 'petit canon'. However, the idea that it was a sort of an anticipation of the sacrifice proper soon gave way to a more sober and reasonable interpretation – the presenting of the sacrificial gifts on the altar of sacrifice, even because the prayer-formularies that included such terminology as 'immaculatam hostiam', and 'calicem salutaris', were of a later origin. Besides, here, very often the oblata are referred to as 'sacrificium' (S. Cyprian, *De opere et eleemos.*, XV). Consequently, whenever we meet the term 'sacrificium' in the offertory context, we are to consider it as synonymous to 'oblaciones'.<sup>16</sup>

#### THE INCENSATION

The first instance that we meet with the incensation of the oblata, is in *Ordo V* and *Ordo X*. It is to be remembered that the latter has the former as its principal source. *Ordo V* belongs to the end of the ninth century and it is a re-edition of the previous ordinals with the addition of Gallican elements. As a matter of fact, the incensation at the offertory is a fruit of Carolingian liturgical development that in turn introduced it from the more solemn liturgical celebration of the offertory in the Byzantine rite. Its main inspiration is Scriptural, since for example, in the New Testament, we find incensation closely connected with sacrifice (cf. Lk. 1:11, 18ff., Apoc. 8:3-4, Eph. 5:2). Besides, the words that accompany it and which were introduced in the eleventh century, are drawn from these same and other Scriptural passages. But they were introduced in Rome itself rather with reluctance in the following century. The author of the *Micrologue* says in this regard, '*Romanus Ordo praecipit ut incensum semper praecedat evangelium... non autem concedit ut oblatio in altari thurificetur... quamvis modo a pluribus, imo pene ab omnibus, usurpetur*' (c. 9). But by this time it was almost practised everywhere, even in Rome where later, Pope Innocent III (+1216), adopted it officially, though, it must be admitted, only 'facultative', as *Ordo*

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Righetti, *op. cit.*, pp. 289, 291ff. Vide also, F. CABROL & H. LECLERCQ, *Diction. d'Archeol. Chret. et de Liturgie, Offertoire*, v. XII, 2 (NOIRMOUTIER-ORVIETO) 1936, p. 1946ff.

XIV would say, 'prout videbitur faciendum' (n. 53). As to the meaning behind this incensation, we notice that this is clearly expressed in its actions and accompanying prayers. For the burning of the incense in charcoal is a sign of our debasement before the majesty of God, which makes our prayers worthy in a way to ascend graciously to him. In turn, after psalm 140, his mercy may come down to us. The incensation however, cannot be separated from our gifts at the altar, even because here they are incensed and blessed at the same time, whilst the prayer 'Veni Sanctificator' is said to enforce, as it were, their dedication and envelope them in a holy atmosphere of prayer. The same can be said for the incensation of the celebrant, ministers choir, and congregation that generally immediately follows.<sup>17</sup>

#### THE ORATE FRATRES

This offertory element, the Orate Fratres, may be considered as the most ancient of the offertory apologies, and since we find it in the Ordinals that bear strong Gallican elements (i.e., nn. V, X, XVII), we may say that this too is of Frankish origin. However, not all scholars agree on this point, as M. Andrieu, in his comments on Ordo XVII, when he speaks precisely on the 'Orate pro me' (n. 45), quotes Edmund Bishop (*Liturgia Historica*, p. 7), and follows him in considering it as of Roman and not Gallican origin.<sup>18</sup> Jungmann thinks otherwise. Besides, he adds that it is an instance which shows that the presiding priest feels very strongly that he is exalted above the people. The early Medieval Church was fully conscious of this, more still in the sacrificial prayer where he is considered as the people's mediator and stands alone between them and God. Consequently, he would turn to those around him to pray for him, here at the offertory, before he begins the Canon. This instance originally led to private spontaneous prayers. It was only later that the whole community was included and that a fixed prayer was set.<sup>19</sup>

#### THE SECRETA

There is no need to enter into detail as regards this prayer since it has been treated quite exhaustively in many scholarly works. However,

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Jungmann, *op. cit.*, p. 347ff., and Righetti, *op. cit.*, p. 282ff.

<sup>18</sup> M. ANDRIEU, *Les Ordines Romani du Haut Moyen Age*, v. III, p. 169.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Jungmann, *op. cit.*, p. 353f.



we shall be limiting ourselves to giving its evolution, or rather its impoverishment in the Ordinals, and its theological meaning. To start with, in the Leonine and Gregorian Sacramentaries it is known as the 'Oratio super Oblata', precisely because it was the official prayer said over the offertories that included not only the celebrant's prayers, but also those of the congregation whom he was officially representing. The name SECRETA was adopted by the Gelasian Sacramentary, since by then it was no longer said in a loud voice, and it had become very much a private prayer of the celebrant. The Ordo Romanus Primus does not mention it, though it may be referring to it indirectly when it speaks of the Pontiff's silent prayers at the altar immediately before the preface (n. 85), for undoubtedly, by then the texts for such prayers were not lacking. However, other subsequent Ordinals refer to it specifically, and add that it ought to be said in Secret (OR. nn. V, n. 58; VII, n. 2; XV, n. 35; XVII, n. 46). We see here that in its way of presentation it has become very much of an apology even though its formulae still belonged to the 'orationes' – the prayers of the people. One of the principal reasons for its decline undoubtedly is the offertory chant that continued throughout the offertory until the celebrant was about to start the preface, as it has been already hinted at earlier. For once there was singing the priest could not pray aloud, and there was no reason for the people to listen also to him. Consequently its decline came with the Gallican influence on Roman liturgy. And this continued even when the offertory chant was on the decline for the simple reason that by then it had become part and parcel of the Apologies which were private and secret in nature even when there were fixed formularies, and even because in this way they could give rise to spontaneous private prayers from the people's part. When we come then to the Secret's theological concept, we find that we build this theology in the Roman Ordinals, not from its liturgical practice but from its content, a content that, liturgically speaking, knew better and happier days. For it is a general prayer of petition made by the presiding priest in a loud voice so as to be expressive of the collective voice of the community at worship; and built in the same way as the other collective prayers in the Mass, that is, the Collect and the Postcommunion. But it is still characteristic of the offertory rite since the terms used belong to the offertory. Thus we find: 'accipe', 'hostia', 'sacrificium', 'oblatio', 'munera', and the like. In it we find a mystical exchange of gifts: our gifts that are bound to mount up to God, so that

in turn God's blessings may come down to us. The AMEN at the end that is asked from the congregation, is not only their affirmation in its message but also a sign that it is their own prayer. And it is authentically liturgical since it is directed to God the Father through the merits of the Son and the help of the Holy Spirit. It may also include a particular intercession to a Saint when it is his feast-day.

The Secret brings the offertory rite to a close, which is an indication of its communal and collective nature, in that, it denotes the people's share in the preceding actions.<sup>20</sup>

#### THE NEW ORDO MISSAE

In the introduction to this paper we have already expressed the mind of the Second Vatican Council as regards liturgical reform, and even as regards the reform of the Mass. These same principles are repeated once more by Pope Paul VI in his Apostolic Constitution by which he promulgated the New Ordo Missae on April 3rd., 1969.<sup>21</sup> Later on, in the same Constitution, we come to the various renewed parts of the Mass amongst which we find the Offertory rite. Consequently, we shall be considering the latter in the light of the analysis of the various elements that have been examined earlier in the Roman Ordinals.

First we delineate the structure of the offertory rite, which is known as the 'preparatio donorum':

- preparation of the altar
- chanting of the offertory hymn
- procession with the gifts
- presentation on the altar
- incensation of the oblata
- washing of the hands
- the Orate Fratres
- the Oratio super Oblata.

The first element, 'the preparation of the altar', is carried on by the ministers that accompany the celebrant. Their task is to bring on the altar, the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, and the missal. These are not left to be carried in procession as gifts since the stress on the

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 355ff., and Righetti, op. cit., p. 296ff.

<sup>21</sup> PAULUS VI, Ordo Missae, *Constitutio Apostolica, Missale Romanum*, 3/IV/69, (Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis-MCMLXIX) p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 25, n. 49.

oblata is that they are gifts. Quite logically then, the corporal, purificator, chalice and missal may not be considered as gifts, as these would belong to the Church.<sup>22</sup> More real gifts are the bread and wine even if these are not in fact brought by the congregation from their homes, for they still: 'vim et significationem servat'. The latter are brought unto the altar in a procession. Whereupon they are received by the celebrant or deacon and placed on the altar. Here we notice a departure from the strictly Roman Tradition, since as we have seen earlier, the Ordinals speak more of a collection of gifts than of a procession, for it was the pontiff himself who went among the congregation to receive the gifts from them. The procession with the gifts is rather of Gallican origin. However, the other idea of a 'collection', is still in a way preserved in the New Ordo, because it speaks of the: 'pecunia et alia dona pro pauperibus vel pro ecclesia a fidelibus allata vel in ecclesia *collecta* accepta habentur'. For here, undoubtedly it comes from the church's ministers who would go around and among the people to collect these second kind of gifts which are not directly connected with the Eucharistic celebration. Whence they are to be carried in the same procession but not to be placed on the altar of sacrifice.<sup>23</sup> This is also a revival of a Middle Age's custom of having side altars for this purpose, as it has also been hinted at earlier.

Whilst the preparation of the altar and the procession is taking place there is to be singing, and when this is possible, then the offertory antiphon is to be dropped. The chant here is similar to that at the introit, that is, it is made up of the antiphon and an accompanying psalm, or else of a hymn that is congruous to the offertory or the particular liturgical season. The singing is to be carried alternately, between the schola itself and/or the people. Undoubtedly, it is intended to last even whilst the priest blesses the offertories until he reaches the *Orate Fratres*, since here he awaits their reply. In the offertory chant then, we see again a return to the Roman Tradition of the first Ordinals, that is, before the Gallican liturgy put an end to it.<sup>24</sup>

The incensation of the oblata, altar, ministers and people may follow. It has remained then facultative and it has thus preserved the Roman Tradition, once incensation was officially accepted by Rome at the

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, n. 50.

offertory in the later Middle Ages. It has also kept its symbolic significance, in that it is to be considered, 'ut oblata Ecclesiae eiusque oratio sicut incensum in conspectum Dei ascendere'.<sup>25</sup>

The 'lavabo' comes next. Here, one would like to note that although 'ritu desiderium internae purificationis exprimitur',<sup>26</sup> yet it would at least have been closer to the Roman Tradition were it to precede the placing of the oblata on the altar. But it seems that it has been kept in the New Ordo for the sake of variety since the same Ordo already insists on purification in the penitential act at the beginning of the Mass. Consequently, one feels that the washing of hands at the offertory could have been eliminated, and it would be no wonder were it to fall into disuse in the near future!

The next element, the ORATE FRATRES, is an example that the priest has been accepted by the congregation in his presidential role in the sacrifice that is to ensue. It even indicates the major part that the people play in the Mass, since the celebrant may in no way be isolated from them. This is more evident in the subsequent prayer, the Oratio super Oblata. It is heartening to see it achieving once more its original name, and at the same time thus capturing the old spirit of the authentic ancient Roman Tradition, since its wording may be considered now to really mean what they say. It is quite logical then, that the New Ordo here reaches a fair compromise since it prolongs the offertory chant but not to the extent of hindering the people from expressing themselves together with the celebrant who is representing and leading them.<sup>27</sup>

Before we move to our general conclusions, it is relevant to add a few words regarding the prayers that accompany the offertory rite in the New Ordo Missae. To start with, we find first the two prayers that accompany the official presentation of bread and wine respectively, on the altar. These prayers that are said in the plural await at the end the confirmation of the congregation, 'Benedictus Deus in saecula', which occurs if there is no offertory chant. In between, we find the prayer that accompanies the mixing of water with wine, which is a private prayer of the celebrant. Then comes another private prayer just before the 'lavabo', that is, 'In spiritu humilitatis...'. The psalm at the washing of

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, n. 51.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, n. 52.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, n. 53.

hands have been adapted from the one we used to recite earlier, and reduced to two verses. In a way, this is a mode of simplifying this offertory element in order to bring about more clearly the interior purification that it symbolizes. The other two elements, the 'Orate Fratres' and the 'Oratio super Oblata', have remained the same, though their community aspect has been more stressed.<sup>28</sup> What is noteworthy in these offertory prayers is the fact that whilst the part of the people has been placed more into the limelight, however, the apologetic elements have survived in a way which still renders the rite rather pedantic, even because we have to take into consideration that we have other moments in the Mass where we find similar elements, such as, in the rite at the beginning of the Mass, and immediately before communion, although we must admit that at the beginning of the Mass the apologetic elements, like the 'Confiteor', have assumed a public aspect, which was not altogether officially admitted in Roman liturgy before.<sup>29</sup>

But at the same time we have also to add that the new formulae of the prayers at the presentation of the bread and wine respectively on the altar, namely, 'Benedictus es, Domine, Deus...', express more clearly the real nature and meaning behind the offertory rite, that is, the 'preparatio donorum' for the sacrifice. For these help to water down the meaning of the term 'offerre', which has connotations of 'consecrare'. And in fact the official Italian translation of the New Ordo Missae stresses this point even more, as it has translated 'quem tibi offerimus', by 'lo presentiamo a te'.

Having analysed the offertory rite in the Roman Ordinals and in the New Ordo Missae, we can now draw some conclusions in the light of the norms required by Vatican II for the renewal of the Eucharistic Celebration. And to recall them once again, the offertory rite in our case is to be clear, short, and simple so as to lead easily to devout and active participation, without neglecting its substance. In fact the idea behind the offertory as belonging to the Eucharistic sacrifice but still distinct from it, is fairly insisted upon, since the New Ordo emphasises that the offertory is a preparation of the sacrificial gifts. For the words and actions behind the various offertory elements show man's haste with his earthly gifts to meet his Creator. In this light then, the offertory's sub-

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 84-5, nn. 17-26.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 79-80, nn. 1-3; p. 135, n. 101; p. 136, n. 103.

stance is duly preserved and, even more, insisted upon. In this light too, it is within closer reach of the people's power of comprehension, whilst at the same time, it calls for their active participation.

Moreover, the Offertory rite in the New Ordo could have been simpler, had the prayers that are to be said exclusively by the celebrant, been eliminated, because these were introduced in the Roman liturgy in the later Middle Ages from the Gallican liturgy, and even because earlier tradition speaks of actions rather than words. Besides, the 'lavabo' could also be left out, as it seems useless to indulge in symbolic acts of purification that do not very much appeal to contemporary man. But, all in all, the offertory rite in the New Ordo Missae, as viewed in the light of the Ordines Romani, has managed to capture much of its primitive character and spirit, with the result that we have sincerely to admit that it has become for us more meaningful.

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