

The Traditional Background of The New Offertory Rites

This Sunday the homily in most parishes will focus on the meaning and form of the changes in the offertory ceremonies in the Mass liturgy slated to take effect on March 22.

Father Robert F. McNamara, professor at St. Bernard's Seminary, offers the following article on "The Offertory in the New Missal."

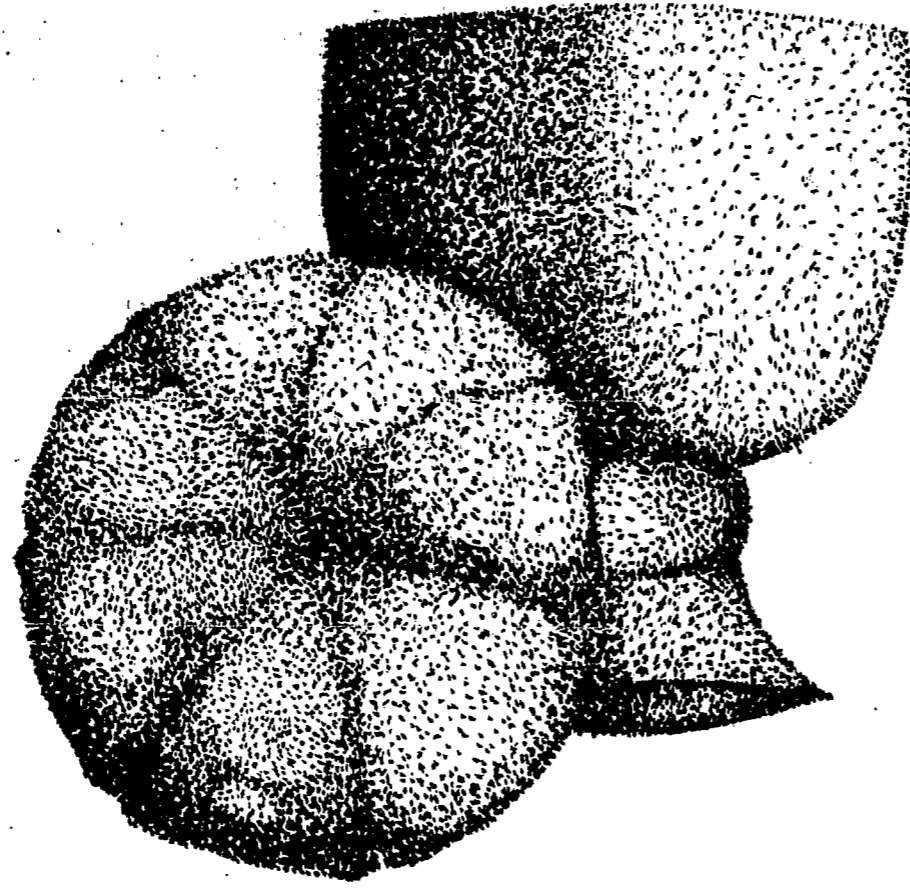
By Fr. Robert F. McNamara

As every Catholic knows, the Offertory marks the beginning of the second part of the Mass—the part called the Liturgy of the Eucharist, to distinguish it from the Liturgy of the Word which has just been concluded.

The term "Offertory" is used, of course, because in this preliminary rite the bread, wine and water to be utilized in the consecration are formally set upon the altar and dedicated to God for eucharistic use.

In the earliest days of the Church, this presentation of the gifts was perfectly simple. They were merely set upon the altar and acknowledged by the celebrant, after which he began the solemn eucharistic prayer.

Like most liturgical rites, however, the Offertory became more involved with the passage of time. It came to include a formal procession of presentation, accompanied by song; prayers by the priest over these gifts; an incensation; the ceremonial washing of the celebrant's hands; and so forth.



Sketch by John Dash

Many of the elaborations developed in France and Germany rather than in Rome, although the popes subsequently incorporated them into the Roman rite. However, it was not until

Pope St. Pius V authorized the Roman Missal in 1570 that they received the final stamp of approval.

Some experts have criticized cer-

tain of the phrases of these prayers. In their opinion, it is confusing to call the gifts of wine and water "sacrifices" at this point; for they become sacrificial only when they are consecrated into Christ's body and blood and offered up in the Canon of the Mass.

But the majority of experts are agreed that sacrificial terminology is used in the Offertory prayers only by way of anticipating their consecration later in the Canon.

How does the revised Offertory differ from the one that we have been using since 1570? Not drastically, even though the ceremony has been shortened and its prayers abbreviated. Its spirit is more of "preparation of gifts" than just offering them.

At the beginning of the Offertory, the servers will now bring up the chalice and missal to an altar which thus far has been bare.

Meanwhile, an offertory procession is being readied.

Most parishes are already accustomed to this procession for bringing up the breads, wine and water. The new format recommends that others come bearing gifts for the poor, and also the plate collection taken up at that Mass. These extra gifts are not, of course, set on the altar, but at

some other place in the sanctuary. Although their presentation is still optional, it is certainly appropriate.

The celebrant has a brief new prayer to recite as he dedicates the bread to God, and another new prayer as he dedicates the wine. (The prayer which he says while mixing water with the wine has also been changed.)

Now normally a psalm or hymn will have been sung while the gifts are being brought up in procession. But if there has not been a song, the priest may recite the two prayers of dedication aloud. In this case, the faithful are asked to acclaim each of these prayers with the exclamation, "Blessed be God forever!"

The celebrant next bows low and says quietly: "Lord God, we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the sacrifice we offer you with humble and contrite hearts." This is a beautiful prayer, summing up, as it does, the whole symbolism of the Offertory: we give our gifts, and along with them, ourselves.

If he chooses, the priest may now incense gifts and altar. Then he himself, and, after him, the congregation, will be incensed by one of his assistants. After he has been incensed, he washes his hands.

The long extract from Psalm 25

which he formerly recited at the washing is now reduced to a very brief petition: "Lord, wash away my iniquity; cleanse me from my sin."

The familiar exhortation, "Pray, brethren . . ." follows directly on the washing of the hands. The new text of the exhortation differs a little from the old. So too, does the response of the congregation: "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 the Church."

When the celebrant then offers the usual, "Prayer over the Gifts," and the congregation replies, "Amen," the Offertory is over, the Canon is ready to begin.

The revised rite of the Offertory should cause the man in the pew no great difficulty. The responses will be printed in the leaflet missals, so the congregation, under the coaching of alert lay commentators, should become accustomed to the changes in a couple of weeks.

Priests will no doubt find the revision harder to get used to. Since the prayers have been shortened, where they have not been wholly eliminated, and since certain ritual gestures are now no longer required, the celebrant will have to work out a wholly new rhythm of action at this point.

THE HOLY FATHER

Disobedience Draws Fire

Vatican City — (NC) — In his first general audience (Feb. 25) after a week's retreat, Pope Paul VI complained about the "disobedience" one sees today.

This disobedience, he said, is "the rejection of authority of any kind." And, he added, "the higher the authority the more it is contested."

Reflecting on the Lenten period, the Pope asked: Does the enjoyment of personal liberty abolish the ancient discipline of penance, abstinence and asceticism?

Today, he continued, there is an "eroticism" in which men seek "hundreds of forms of exhibitionist sensuality," although this is "described as naturalness, youth, art, beauty and liberation."

The Pope declared: "We, the sons of our times, by following this order, or disorder, of our thoughts are not going along the right way."

But then he enlarged on his reflections and said: "We must not close this brief survey of the moral orientation of our times without not-

ing certain positive tendencies which, whether wittingly or unwittingly, go to confirm the ancient ascetic wisdom of the Church."

Again he asked a question: "Is there not hidden behind some of the forms and some of the profound reasons for the present opposition, a rejection of conventional hedonism, of bourgeois mediocrity and cowardly conformism and an aspiration to a simpler and more severe, more personal style of commitment?"

And he stated: "There are positive phenomena even in the decadent habits of our century . . ."

"Our times need strong Christians. The Church, which is today so moderate in its practical and ascetic demands, needs courageous sons, educated in the school of the Gospel. Therefore, its appeal for the mortification of the flesh is ever more real."

COMMENTARY

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ALL IN THE FAMILY

Hurry Up and Worry

By Sarah Child

"I saw that glazed look on your face," my husband said apropos of nothing a couple of Sundays back on our way home from the 11:15 Mass.

"I'll bet you a dollar you can't tell me two sentences from today's sermon," he challenged.

I stuck out my hand for the dollar and quoted: "How often do we worry needlessly about illness and job problems and other daily nuisances. Having confidence in God is the highest form of worship."

He handed over my dollar and waited for an explanation. I told him that he should know that that was one sermon that hit home.

Worry is, as they say now-a-days, my hangup. My doctor referred to it the other day during my annual checkup as anxiety neurosis. In charitable moments my friends call it "sensitivity." I call it a pain-in-the-neck.

I worry about the usual things: the health and safety of my husband and children and of our respective families. I worry, too, about instilling the proper moral and social values

in our children and maintaining a home where love and respect for God and for each other has top priority.

All legitimate worries, right?

Outside of the home, I have a few things on my mind, too. For a starter, there's national and world poverty, the Vietnam War, student violence, discrimination against minorities, housing, the birth control issue, water and air pollution, waste of other national resources, airline and automobile safety, the high incidence of deaths from cancer and heart disease, neglect of children without parents, neglect of elder citizens, mental health problems, drug abuse and misuse of nuclear power.

Who will quibble with me on these urgent questions? From there I set to work on less sticky problems such as will we really be able to come up with the college tuition for our children when the time comes. In this category, too, are such other monetary considerations as balancing our weekly budget, the yearly budget and the long-range 10-year budget. (The national budget I leave to more qualified worriers.)

On to the personal side of the picture: my hair, my weight and my clothes. All negatives that need immediate dealing with.

Now I hark back to the family: Is my husband getting the attention and consideration he deserves? Are the kids running us or is their high spiritedness a natural if wearing phenomenon? Do our parents really feel neglected because I'm such a poor letter writer?

I get on to the ridiculous: Shouldn't the garage floor be painted just as the former owners did every year for 12 years? Then: overdue library books, remembering the name of my favorite zinnia so I can plant it again, do we watch too much TV?

Move on to the sublime: What shall I do with those thousands of dollars I'm sure to win in the very next state lottery drawing?

And finally the ultimate problem: Worry over worrying so much.

How about a repeat on that sermon, Father?



RACL VIEWPOINTS

Some Roadblocks to Peace

By George L. Jost

RACL Viewpoints is written periodically for the Courier-Journal and is a means by which this paper gives the lay association a chance to have its views published. Its opinions, however, do not necessarily reflect the views of the Courier-Journal.

Almost everyone you meet wants peace, just as practically everyone wants racial justice and integration. It is only when some specific attempt is made to bring about these desired ends that the obstacles begin to appear.

Peace is the work of justice. It is not enough just to pray for peace. If that is all we are going to do we might as well skip the prayer and pray for something we are willing to work for, like a better job. If all the prayers for peace in the last 50 years were laid end to end they'd probably circle the globe a few times. Now we know that God will hear and answer honest prayer but the reason he doesn't grant us peace is because we are not willing to do our share to deserve it.

We want to have our cake of peace and eat our cake of hatred. Jesus Christ said we must love our enemies. Even the pagans love their friends. This means we must love even the Viet Cong, the North Vietnamese, the Russians, the Chinese.

This doesn't mean we have to be wild about their ideas or their methods, but must regard them as our human brothers and be ready to be reconciled to them. How many of us, at the height of World War II, when our newspapers were picturing the Germans as Huns and the Japs as monkeys in the jungle, would have thought that these two peoples would be our allies today?

We ought to be willing to put at least as much effort in the quest for peace as we do in fighting our wars. Yet often I read where some idealistic young man has asked a veteran clergyman for advice on a matter of conscience in the area of war and peace, and the answer comes right off the cuff with no evidence of any effort to come to grips with the roots of the poor fellow's dilemma.

Or we reach for such shibboleths as "the Bible says there'll always be wars" — it does not say so. Or we invoke good old mother and say "What would you do if your mother were attacked?" Well I thank God my mother has not been attacked and so the question is irrelevant for the moment but war that kills and maims people by the millions and destroys property by the billions is certainly of a different kind and a different quantity.

We are told by some that Jesus

never condemned war outright. No, but if people lived by his principles war would certainly be hard to come by. He blessed the peacemakers, not the warmongers. He asked us to pray for those who persecute and calumniate us, because we would thereby be heaping coals of fire on their heads. By what logic does a personal virtue become a vice if it is practiced by a community instead of by an individual?

We all know that those who have promised that peace could be reached by war have deceived us. Yet we seem to fall for each new promise as if the bearer of the promise had some new and exciting idea that needed to be tried out.

It is relatively easy for us to look back now on the Mexican War or the War with Spain in 1898 as mistakes. Why can't we apply those lessons to today? Perhaps no one can be absolutely certain that our venture in Vietnam is a mistake but it is less than convincing that it is a just war when the only time many get excited over it is when someone burns a draft card.

As for action, I propose only one task to the reader. Be serious about this war, get hold of all the material you can get on it, pro and con. Sift it. Pray over it. And then follow your conscience.

ON THE RIGHT SIDE

Leadership Produces Readership

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

At a recent meeting of pastors with Bishop Joseph L. Hogan at the Wishing Well in Rochester, the value, the needs and the extension of the Courier-Journal were discussed. The Bishop expressed his wish that all the parishes of the diocese would have complete coverage.

Now, "complete coverage" loosely means that 70% of the registered families would receive the Courier-Journal, the costs to be paid by the parish. It was assumed that a capable pastor would find most of his parishioners willing to pay \$6 a year for 52 copies. The parishioners who are registered are usually the cooperative parishioners.

If the CJ didn't cost the parishes anything, most pastors would be content to have complete coverage. However, nearly every parish is feeling financial harassment: from its school, rising maintenance costs, and from chancery taxation. Hence pastoral enthusiasm was not at the bursting point.

The human psyche is the same in Pastors as in other mortals. So, if a man phones the Pastor and says: "Father, I made a killing in the stock

market, and I want to bring you my tithe. It amounts to \$6,300," you can be sure that the pastoral response will be prompt and cordial. "Why, John! Congratulations! You're a fine man. I'll ask Father McNamara, my associate, to run down and pick you up. I'll mix a pitcher of martinis for the three of us to give thanks to God for such a fine parishioner. The Lord love you, John, and all your family! Now don't stir! Father will be right down!"

On the other hand, if the phone rings and a secretarial voice says: "I'm calling from the Chancery for Mr. Ritzenthaler, (Mr. R. is the diocesan comptroller responsible for gathering and scattering diocesan funds.) He'd like to set up an appointment to discuss increasing your levy for diocesan projects," we can reasonably suppose that not quite the same effervescence will bubble in reply. And if a martini is mixed at all, it would not be for Mr. R. and the pastor, but probably only for the pastor, to bolster his soul for the coming dialogue.

One objection which would not be so strong if the CJ were free is: "No one reads the Courier." I think this is not true. And I think that reader-

ship is in proportion to the leadership of the pastor.

Father Francis Donoghue has a flair for expression which makes him quoted with equal admiration by his sacerdotal confreres and his jockey friends at Batavia Downs. At the Elmira pastoral meeting, Corning Father Joseph F. Hogan responded to the canard that "no one reads the Courier."

He said: "Father Frank Donoghue once said: 'If Jesus Christ wrote the Courier, printed it Himself, and peddled it from door to door, there would always be some who wouldn't read it. But that doesn't mean that the Courier isn't read.'"

Readership comes from pastoral leadership. I am convinced from my own experience as Pastor of Clyde-Savannah, where the parishes always had full coverage way back in Father Curtin's pastorate, that not only will The People read the CJ; they will pay for it.

Which costs less? One evanescent evening of bowling, or 52 weeks of the Courier, news, views and instruction? And which does more to make a diocese a family?



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