

## Liturgy Lesson Twenty: Prayer Over the Gifts

After the priest washes his hands he invites us to pray. He says, “Pray that our sacrifice will be acceptable to God the almighty Father.” In other words, it is the sacrifice of the community and so we all need to pray that “the Lord accept the sacrifice at” the hands of our representative, our priest, and that it is for “our good and the good of all His Church.”

The next prayer, which changes every week and which is called the Prayer Over the Gifts, has an odd history. It was always said out loud until about the eighth century when in France it became a silent prayer. No one knows why. At that time the French church carried great influence, and so this silence was adopted by Rome. Older Catholics will remember that the prayer was actually called the “Secret.” The Second Vatican Council brought it out of secrecy and restored it as a spoken prayer.

It is an important prayer, and we should listen carefully to it. Remember, nothing happens at the altar without God's action. In this prayer we are almost begging God to act on our behalf. It is also a transitional prayer, for when it ends we begin the “Preface Dialogue” which introduces the great Eucharistic Prayer, the heart of the Liturgy of the Eucharist.