THE CANON OF THE MASS IN ENGLISH

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FOREWORD

In a very short space of time we have witnessed a progressive introduction of the use of the vernacular into the Mass. Now that the Canon has been permitted in the vernacular we might say that the last stage has been reached: English may now be used for all parts of the Mass which are said in a loud voice for the people to hear. Assuredly, the fact that we no longer have to change from one language to another is of no small benefit. Moreover, the great Eucharistic Prayer will be all the more meaningful and will serve to achieve a still fuller participation of the people in the Mass.

For an indefinite period of time, we must however use a temporary translation of the Canon. This calls for some explanation.

Following the usual course of procedure, liturgical translations of the Canon were made in each of the language groups, submitted to the proper territorial authority for approval and then sent to the Holy See for confirmation. In a general way the Holy See has indicated that certain alterations may have to be made in the vernacular text of the Canon and therefore decided to defer confirmation of these vernacular translations until a definite decision has been made. In view however of urgent pastoral needs each territorial body of bishops has been authorized to permit the use of a temporary translation. However the pastoral advantages to be derived from the use of the vernacular in the Canon will indeed more than compensate for the inconveniences of a temporary solution.

In order to achieve the maximum benefit expected from the use of the Canon in the vernacular it is most important that it be proclaimed in the best manner possible and that some catechesis be given to the people. This bulletin, (n. 18), is published in order to be of assistance in meeting these needs.
APPROBATION OF PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION
OF THE CANON OF THE MASS

— The use of the vernacular language is authorized for the proclamation of the Canon of the Mass, at all Masses celebrated with people present.

— Until otherwise provided, the provisional translation approved by the Canadian Episcopate is to be used to the exclusion of all others.

— These norms become effective on Sunday the 1st day of October 1967.

+ G. Emmett Carter
  Bishop of London
  Chairman of the Episcopal Commission on Liturgy.


The English text of the Canon, approved for interim use by the Canadian Episcopacy, here follows. It is also contained in a Missal insert published by Liturgy Publication Service of the CCC, Ottawa.

The French translation of the Canon approved by the Canadian Episcopate may also be obtained from Liturgy Publication Service of the CCC, Ottawa.
This new translation of the Roman Canon was made by the International Committee on English in the Liturgy, which was established three years ago by the episcopal conferences of ten English-language countries. The formal approbation of the translation for actual liturgical use in the celebration of the Eucharist comes from the episcopal conference of the particular country, in accord with the Constitution on the Liturgy.

Although in practice the canon will be read by the celebrant from an insert to the sacramentary or missal or from a card or booklet, until he is sufficiently familiar with the text to recite it from memory, the best introduction to this translation is by way of the spoken word. The principal aim of the translators was to provide a version which the priest will be able to speak aloud easily and effectively and which the members of the congregation will be able to listen to and comprehend. Thus the best introduction to the translation is to listen to it.

Much may be said about the translation and the principles on which it is based, but first of all, something should be said about the nature of the canon - as we ordinarily call the eucharistic prayer of the Roman liturgy.

The eucharistic prayer begins with the greeting and invitation of the priest at the beginning of the preface; it is a complete misunderstanding of the prayer to think of it as beginning only after the Sanctus. In spite of the varied elements within it, the canon is a single prayer which is completed only with the doxology and Amen — and indeed it is closely related to the Lord’s Prayer which follows and which introduces the communion rite.

The eucharistic prayer or canon is a prayer of blessing — and that not only in the sense of a consecratory prayer but in the fuller and deeper meaning, indeed the original meaning, of a prayer proclaiming the praise of God and thanksgiving. It is not always easy to express this in our language, but the sense is that through this prayer we bless God, that is, we proclaim the wonderful deeds of God, the mystery of creation and redemption, and in so doing we give thanks to God and are filled with God’s blessing.

Central to the eucharistic prayer are the recital of the narrative of the Lord’s supper and the memorial of the paschal mystery: the Lord’s passion,
resurrection, and ascension. In varying degrees not only the Roman canon but also the many other eucharistic prayers used in Christian liturgies attempt to put into words the meaning of the eucharistic mystery: the sacrifice, the memorial, and the banquet.

The Roman canon has many defects, some of which will become more and more obvious by its regular recital in the vernacular. Its weakness is in its complex arrangement as well as in the disproportionate space given to prayers of intercession and prayers of offering, with relatively little of praise and thanks after the Sanctus itself. Its strength is in the fact that it has worn so well, with practically no change since the seventh century, and in its special characteristic: the praise of the mysteries of salvation through the variety of prefaces.

Many people have suggested that, rather than a mere translation of the Roman canon, there should be a radical simplification and revision of its text. Another course of action has been chosen: to retain the Roman canon substantially intact and, at the same time to develop in the future other eucharistic prayers to be used as alternatives to it. The Roman liturgy is rather unique in having only a single eucharistic prayer, a limitation only partially overcome by the variety of the prefaces. It is now possible to look forward to a number of distinct eucharistic prayers, embodying the characteristics which have developed in Christian usage, which may express with varying emphasis the many facets of the eucharistic celebration.

The present text of the Roman canon is a faithful and substantially integral translation. With regard to the integrity of the translation, there are several observations to be made.

First, it is hoped that the Holy See will eventually give permission for the omission of the saints' names not found in holy Scripture. This is not a principle necessarily desirable in all eucharistic prayers; it may be hoped that future eucharistic prayers will provide for the mention of one or other modern or local saint's name. Nevertheless, the non-biblical names added in the Roman canon present many difficulties, pastoral and historical; they are very difficult to recite aloud in the vernacular, some of the saints are obscure, and certainly most of the saints listed enjoy no veneration among the people.

The second desired omission from the Roman canon is of four brief conclusions to separate prayers. Although these conclusions ("Through Christ our Lord. Amen.") had the effect of emphasizing repeatedly the mediatorship of Christ the Lord, they have the greater disadvantage of interrupting the flow of the eucharistic prayer and of contributing to its complexity. The unity and integrity of the entire prayer should be enhanced by the omission of these repeated conclusions. We must however await authorization from Rome before omitting the names of the non-biblical Saints, and the four above mentioned brief conclusions.

Third, a late and confusing addition to the Roman canon has been dropped, namely, the phrase "for whom we offer," in the intercession for those present. Since this addition is susceptible of misunderstanding — as if members of the faithful were present who could not or would not offer for themselves — it seemed best to suppress it.
Apart from this one minor omission, the new translation is a faithful rendition of the Latin text. As indicated already, the aim of the translation was to produce a version that could be used effectively in the public liturgical assembly for the celebration of the Eucharist. This has been done with complete fidelity to the Latin text — in such a way as to reproduce, as far as possible, every meaning and value, particularly biblical and liturgical, in the original.

A superficial study of the translation may suggest that the new translation freely omits significant words found in the Latin text. In fact, this is done on principle. It soon became evident to the translators that certain words — especially the multiplication of adjectives — were found in the Latin text not for their meaning but for stylistic reasons, in order to satisfy the demands of Latin prose rhythm, or because of a particular cultural mentality associated with the Latin language of the time of composition. Since contemporary English has nothing corresponding to these characteristics of Latin style, it was a conviction of the translators that attempts to find an English word corresponding to each Latin word would result in mistranslation, as well as awkwardness and artificiality.

In the preparation of this translation, all available English translations were examined. It was found that even the best of these, although literary and eloquent in some measure, were too greatly concerned with transferring the Latin words rather than the Latin sense into English. Moreover, and more seriously, it was found that these translations, however much they attempted a contemporary style, were suited rather for individual and private reading than for public proclamation in the concrete circumstances of the Eucharist.

The great concern of the translators that the resulting text should be contemporary should not be misunderstood. The language of the translation is not ordinary or colloquial or conversational. Its eloquence derives from its directness and simplicity; there is no reason why dignity and indeed solemnity of style should be incompatible with clarity and intelligibility.

At the same time, in some instances it is virtually impossible to interpret the concepts of the Latin canon without resorting to terms of biblical or even technical theological reference, unless lengthy circumlocutions or explanatory phrases are introduced. The eucharistic prayer, however, is not a catechetical lesson, but a living announcement of faith. What is expressed summarily in the eucharistic prayer should be the subject of catechesis of the people.

Several examples of this need for catechesis may be mentioned: the profound meaning of blessing, already indicated; the objective nature of the memorial of the Lord’s passion and glorification; the biblical concept of God’s glory filling all creation; the mediatorship of Jesus; the meaning of the blood of the new covenant; the theological implications of the doxology of the canon.

The words of this and other presidential prayers should be spoken clearly, distinctly, and intelligibly — so that all who are present may hear each word and appreciate its meaning. Obviously, it is necessary that in larger churches and gatherings the very best means of mechanical amplification should be employed.
The notion of proclaiming God's word in the readings from Scripture and in the homily has become familiar through the insistence of the Second Vatican Council upon a new appreciation of preaching and proclamation. The Council also noted the intimate relationship between the liturgy of the Word and the eucharistic liturgy: the proclamation of God's word in the reading and preaching is itself an act of worship, since it is the acknowledgement of God's goodness and greatness; the eucharistic act, worship, and liturgy, is likewise an announcement of God's deeds and the praise of his goodness and greatness.

This means that the manner of speaking or saying the words of the eucharistic prayer should be not unlike that employed in the homily. The eucharistic prayer is a set formula, but it too is an announcement of the mystery: we proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes. This obviously demands reverence and dignity, but it also suggests the avoidance of any artificial or dramatic solemnity. The text is simple, and it should be said with meaning and with the greatest attention; it should be spoken deliberately and carefully, never routinely or hurriedly.

Many of these observations are so evident that they do not bear repetition. Recent experience with the use of the vernacular in the presidential prayers of Mass — and in the biblical readings as well — indicates that these are not always said with care and deliberation as sincerity of worship demands. Since the eucharistic prayer is used regularly, an even greater effort is required of the celebrating priest, who must try to speak the words with a fresh realization of their meaning. Inevitably, some will speak the eucharistic prayer in a formalized and ritualistic way, but this will gravely detract from the genuine and authentic expression of the Eucharist.

A special note should be added concerning concelebration. The individual concelebrants who take a particular part of the canon should of course say that part carefully and intelligibly. The original directive given for the concelebrants in the case of the Latin canon should also be noted: “The concelebrants say aloud only those prayers which they have to say either alone or with the principal celebrant. They should recite these as far as possible from memory. They are not to say them so loudly that their voice predominates over the voice of the principal celebrant.”

This directive is even more significant now for the English canon. In those parts of the text which are said by the principal or presiding celebrant in unison with the concelebrants, only the single voice of the presiding celebrant should be heard and it should be clear and distinct; the concelebrants should take the greatest pains not to let their voices predominate or obscure the clear speaking of the text by the principal or presiding celebrant. In every case the words of the eucharistic prayer should be clearly intelligible to all who are present.

The printed text of the new translation of the Roman canon is arranged in sense-lines, so that — in addition to the usual punctuation — there may be an indication of the pauses necessary for intelligible reading. Needless to say, the text of the prayer should not be recited too slowly or too ponderously, so that the attention of the congregation wanders, but the greater danger to
be avoided is that of a hurried recitation with little concern for meaning or understanding. The introduction of our own language into the eucharistic prayer represents another step of pastoral value in the liturgical reform. It can have greater value if priests proclaim these words with simplicity and strength and with deep conviction of their sense in each gathering of the Christian assembly to celebrate the Eucharist.

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THE ROMAN CANON
IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

1 We come to you, Father, in this spirit of thanksgiving, through Jesus Christ your Son. Through him we ask you to accept and bless these gifts we offer you in sacrifice.

We offer them for your holy catholic Church. Watch over it and guide it; grant it peace and unity throughout the world. We offer them for N. our Pope, for N. our bishop, and for all who hold and teach the catholic faith that comes to us from the apostles.

Remember, Lord, your people, especially those for whom we now pray: N. and N. Remember all of us gathered here before you. You know how firmly we believe in you and dedicate ourselves to you. We offer you this sacrifice of praise for ourselves and all who are dear to us.

We pray to you, our living and true God, for our well-being and redemption.

In union with the whole Church we honor the memory of the saints. We honor Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus Christ our Lord. We honor Joseph, her husband, the apostles Peter and Paul, Andrew, James and John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Jude, Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonus,
John and Paul; Cosmas and Damian,
the martyrs and all the saints.
May their merits and prayers
35 gain us your constant help and protection.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Father, accept this offering
from your whole family.
Grant us your peace in this life,
save us from final damnation,
and count us among those you have chosen.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bless and approve our offering;
make it truly spiritual and acceptable.
Let it become for us
the body and blood of Jesus Christ,
your only Son, our Lord.

The day before he suffered
he took bread,
and looking up to heaven,
to you, his almighty Father,
his gave you thanks and praise.
He broke the bread,
gave it to his disciples and said:
55 Take this and eat it, all of you;
this is my body.

When supper was ended,
he took the cup.
Again he gave you thanks and praise,
gave the cup to his disciples and said:
Take this and drink from it, all of you;
this is the cup of my blood,
the blood of the new and everlasting covenant —
the mystery of faith.

This blood is to be shed for you and for all men
so that sins may be forgiven.
Whenever you do this,
you will do it in memory of me.

So now, Lord, we celebrate the memory of Christ, your Son.

We, your people and your ministers,
recall his passion,
his resurrection from the dead,
and his ascension into glory.

And from the many gifts you have given us
we offer to you, God of glory and majesty,
this holy and perfect sacrifice:
the bread of life
and the cup of eternal salvation.

Look with favor on these offerings.

80 Accept them as you did the gifts of your just servant, Abel,
the sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith,
and the offering of your priest Melchisedech.

Almighty God,
we pray that your angel may take this sacrifice
85 to your altar in heaven.
Then, as we receive from this altar
the sacred body and blood of your Son,
let us be filled with every grace and blessing.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Remember, Lord, those who have died, N. and N.
They have gone before us marked with the sign of faith,
and are now at rest.
May these, and all who sleep in Christ,
find in your presence
95 light, happiness, and peace.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

For ourselves, too, we ask a place
with your apostles and martyrs,
with John the Baptist, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas,
100 Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter,
Felicity, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy,
Agnes, Cecelia, Anastasia,
and all the saints.
Though we are sinners,
105 we trust in your mercy and love.
Do not consider what we truly deserve,
but grant us your forgiveness,
through Christ our Lord.

Through him you give us all these things.
110 You fill them with life and goodness,
you bless them and make them holy.

Through him,
in him,
with him,
115 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor is yours,
almighty Father,
for ever and ever.
Amen.
1. **Christmas**

In union with the whole Church we celebrate the day (night) when Mary, ever a virgin, gave this world its savior.

We honor the memory of the saints...

2. **Epiphany**

In union with the whole Church we celebrate the day when your only Son, sharing your endless glory,

showed himself in human flesh.

We honor the memory of the saints...

3. **Holy Thursday**

In union with the whole Church we celebrate the day when Jesus Christ, our Lord, was betrayed for us.

We honor the memory of the saints.

We honor Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus.

We honor Joseph, her husband, ...

Father, accept this offering from your whole family

in memory of the day when Jesus Christ, our Lord, gave the mysteries of his body and blood for his disciples to celebrate.

Grant us your peace in this life...

The day before he suffered to save us and all men, that is today, he took bread and, ...

4. **Easter**

In union with the whole Church we celebrate the day (night) when Jesus Christ, our Lord, rose in the flesh.

We honor the memory of the saints.

We honor Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus.

We honor Joseph, her husband, ...

Father, accept this offering from your whole family and from those born in the new life of water and the Holy Spirit, whose sins are now forgiven.

Grant us your peace in this life...
5. Ascension

In union with the whole Church we celebrate the day when your only Son, our Lord, took his place with you and raised our fragile flesh to glory. We honor the memory of the saints. We honor Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus. We honor Joseph, her husband, . . .

6. Pentecost

In union with the whole Church we celebrate the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit appeared to the apostles in countless tongues. We honor the memory of the saints . . .

(Hanc igitur as for Easter)

7. Episcopal consecration

Father, accept this offering from your whole family and from me, chosen for the order of bishop. Protect the gifts you have given me, and let them yield a harvest worthy of you. Grant us your peace in this life . . .

8. Episcopal consecration — Easter and Pentecost

Father, accept this offering from your whole family and from those born in the new life of water and the Holy Spirit, whose sins are now forgiven. And accept this offering from me, chosen for the order of bishop. Protect the gifts you have given me, and let them yield a harvest worthy of you. Grant us your peace in this life . . .

TRANSLATORS’ NOTES TO THE TEXT

Existing English translations of the Roman canon generally provide “transverbalizations” of the Latin in order to give the missal user an understanding of the words used by the celebrant. Despite their many merits, most of these translations have not resulted in a clear transmission of the principal ideas of the canon. The following principles have therefore been adopted in preparing the translation:

1. The English canon should express faithfully the essential meaning of the Latin text including its scriptural references and overtones.
2. The language should be suitable for being prayed aloud and easy for the congregation to understand when its members hear it read, even in a large church.

3. The text should wear well with daily use.

Under the direction of its Episcopal Committee, the International Committee began the work of preparing an English translation of the present Roman canon early in 1967. A study of the existing versions was made and a compilation of the best recommended translations was prepared and submitted to twenty of its international consultants. On the basis of these replies a brief was prepared on the objectives — linguistic, liturgical, biblical, pastoral, and theological — to be sought in the translation.

This brief, along with the replies of the consultants, was used to prepare a working draft which was submitted on April 8 to a larger group of consultants. At the same time the constituent hierarchies were polled, either through their representatives on the International Committee or, in several cases, the entire episcopal conference, to determine the pastoral needs and desires of the bishops. Hundreds of pages of reports were received and collated. At the May meeting of the Advisory Committee, an editorial board was formed to study the returns and prepare a second draft. This draft was then discussed by the entire committee, assisted by theological and biblical specialists who had studied the criticisms of the draft, and a final version was prepared. The notes which accompany the present text therefore reflect not only the reasoning which led to the final decisions, but also much of the reasoning contained in the earlier reports.

Lines 1-4: Te igitur.

Because of the importance of unifying this prayer with the sanctus and especially with the preface, a prayer of praise and thanksgiving, the expression "in this spirit of thanksgiving" is used to convey the weight of igitur and to sum up the theme of the preface (cf. Botte-Mohrmann, L'Ordinaire de la Messe, Paris-Louvain, 1953, p. 75).

Supplices rogamus ac petitimus. In many instances Latin words such as supplices and pairs of words such as rogamus ac petimus are employed for reasons of Latin rhythm and style or rhetoric; they do not represent thought content which need be or should be explicitly translated in another language. Other examples are placatus (line 37), digneris (lines 7, 44, 79 etc.), cognita-nota (lines 16-17), donis ac datis (line 74). In this case, the force of the Latin rhetoric is carried by the expression "we come to you . . . . we ask you," since the word "come" is here intended to embrace the sense of suppliance and petition and to set the mood for what follows.

Clementissime. The English spoken style does not have anything corresponding to the Latin multiplication of adjectives; in fact the effect in English is to weaken rather than to strengthen the sense. In this particular instance to translate clementissime directly would violate English usage, which rarely attaches an adjective to a vocative; the meaning of
clementissime is carried into the English by the tone of the first two lines. Other adjectives which have been similarly treated in this translation are aeterno . . . vivo et vero (line 20), hostiam puram, hostiam sanctam, hostiam immaculatam (line 76), etc.

Line 5: Haec dona, haec munera, haec sancta sacrificia illibata.
This is a clear example of the multiplication of expressions which do not add without adding substantially to the meaning. While it would have been sufficient to translate the entire phrase by “these gifts” or “these offerings,” this translation attempts to round out the expression according to correct English style and to refer to the sacrificial element explicitly.

Line 6: In primis.
The meaning of an expression like in primis, which is not in itself substantive, can be adequately conveyed by the emphasis in a distinct sentence placed at the beginning of the petitions. This same emphasis is employed to reflect the words in primis in the prayer Communicantes, line 24.

Line 9: Una cum famulo tuo Papa nostro.
The Latin text of the Roman canon may mean either that we offer the gifts in union with the Pope and the bishops, or that we offer the gifts for the Pope and the bishops. In such instances a choice has to be made by the translators, and the choice made is, in itself, certainly sound.

Line 11: Cultoribus.
Research has made it clear that cultoribus refers not to teachers in general, but to the bishops. The present translation, however, deliberately avoids this question and does not introduce any element which is not explicit in the Latin of this line.

Line 13: Famularum famularumque.
Because of the restricted meaning of the word “servant” in contemporary English, it was necessary to seek an equivalent expression used for the members of the church. The expression “your people” is biblical and also avoids the need to make explicit the reference to men and women. Cf. notes on servitutis (line 38), and servi (line 70).

Line 14: N. et N.
The tradition of the Roman canon allowing for the insertion of names of the living at this point (and in line 90) is preserved together with the customary pause. In spoken English, the expression “especially those for whom we now pray” is necessary to particularize the reference to “your people” and to indicate aloud what would be evident through punctuation in the written text.

Lines 14-15: Vel qui tibi.
The expression pro quibus tibi offerimus, vel is a late addition to the original Latin text, to which the name of Alcuin has been attached. Since if translated word for word the expression would be confusing pastorally,
it is generally agreed that the phrase should be omitted. (The reference to those for whom, on special occasions, the Eucharistic offering is made is adequately reflected in the proper *hanc igitur* for Holy Thursday, Easter, etc.) The present translation, however, attempts to include the addition of Alcuin by the change from the third person (of the opening reference to the participants) to the first person. This makes the prayer *Memento, Domine* consistent in itself and properly leaves the question of the added phrase open.

If any objection should be raised to the inclusion of the addition of Alcuin merely by means of the change from the third person to the first person, it is desirable that the words *pro quibus tibi offerimus, vel* should be dropped from consideration in future English translations of the Roman canon. For this reason the question should be settled by formal request to the Holy See for the omission, as has been done by the French-speaking episcopal conferences.

**Line 21: Pro redemptione animarum suarum, pro spe salutis.**

*Pro redemptione animarum suarum* is adequately represented by the words “our redemption”: to translate *animae* as “souls” would be incorrect, since the Latin word does not reflect a disjunction between body and soul such as might be improperly represented by the English word “souls.” The words *salutis et incolumtatis suae* are conveyed in English by “well-being,” which is sufficiently broad to cover health of body, safety, and welfare. The English word “salvation” is not the equivalent of the Latin *salus* as used here, or the French *salut*.

**Line 22: Communicantes.**

The word *communicantes* has been translated to refer to the fullness of the Church, including the communion of saints. The expression “in communion with” was avoided because it might be popularly misunderstood as referring to Eucharistic communion in the limited sense.

**Line 24: In primis . . . Iesu Christe.**

Because of the desire for an effective and emphatic English expression, this phrase has been simplified. The *in primis* (cf. similar usage in line 6) is emphasized by the use of a separate sentence at the head of the list of saints. It was agreed that the most forceful and clear title of Our Lady would be the simplest, namely, the virgin mother; a direct English style seems to demand that the proper name of Jesus should follow the prepositional phrase immediately. At the same time it is important that this appositional phrase should not be enlarged out of proportion to the entire enumeration of the saints’ names.

**Line 25: Sponsus.**

A question had been raised whether *sponsus* should be translated “spouse,” but it is clear that this word is used at present only in a familiar and very colloquial way, or in an artificial and obsolescent style referring to Saint Joseph. The word “husband” which is the correct translation of *sponsus*, is employed in all current biblical translations.
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Line 29: Thaddaei.

Thaddeus is ordinarily known as Jude in English.

Lines 30-32: Lini, Cleti, etc.

It is proposed that, with the consent of the Holy See, the names of the saints not mentioned in scripture should be omitted from this section and also from the section Nobis quoque peccatoribus. In addition to the difficulty in pronouncing a very lengthy list, including complicated names, there is the serious pastoral difficulty that the saints are not easily recognized by the people and that certain of the saints listed are obscure and uncertain historically. Rather than choose from among the saints' names, or limit the list to Peter and Paul, for example, the simplest distinction can be made on the basis of mention in the bible. If the non-biblical names are omitted, the text should read: "the apostles Peter and Paul . . . Simon and Jude, the martyrs and all the saints," so that the traditional reference to martyrs who are not apostles would be clearly preserved in the Roman canon.

Line 36: Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

It is generally agreed that the unity of the entire Eucharistic prayer — from the beginning of the preface to the Amen of the doxology — would be strengthened by the omission of the intermediate conclusions and the accompanying Amen, the latter being a late addition to the Roman canon. From a pastoral viewpoint, these interruptions to the flow of the single Eucharistic prayer would be aggravated by the tendency of the people to answer Amen at these points, a difficulty which did not arise when the canon was said silently. Their omission, with the consent of the Holy See, is also proposed in the prayers Hanc igitur (line 36), Supplices (line 89), and Memento etiam (line 96). This omission will serve the same purpose in the canon as the unification of the collects and other prayers according to the instruction of May 4, 1967.

Line 37: Domine.

The use of Pater, Domine, Deus in the vocative appears to be almost interchangeable in the Roman canon as Latin style rather than distinct meaning. The translation chooses the word which is required for clarity of address and for effectiveness. Thus "Father" is used at the beginning of this section, and, because of its proximity, an explicit translation of the word Deus is not repeated at the beginning of the next section. Other instances are found in the prayers Unde et Memores (line 69), Qui pridie (line 51), and Per Ipsum (line 117).

Line 38: Servitutis.

The words servitutis nostrae refer to the ministers at the altar, not to the abstract concept of service. (Cf. Botte-Mohrmann, pp. 77-79.) Since, in this instance, the ministers of the altar are properly included in the fullness of the expression "your whole family," the translation makes explicit mention of the ministry only in the prayer Unde et Memores (line 70).
Line 41: *Electorum tuorum.*

Although the technical term “elect” might have been used, its meaning would not have been apparent to the listening congregation. The alternative, to speak of “the chosen,” was rejected in favor of an expression suited to English style which leaves the way open to a catechesis on election by God.

Line 44: *Rationabilem.*

The scientific study of this word indicates that it is intended to refer to interior worship and offering, as opposed to external rite (cf. Botte-Mohrmann, pp. 117-122). The word “spiritual” as used in the translation should not be taken to mean spirit as opposed to matter; the expression “truly spiritual” reflects both the sincerity and the inwardness meant by the Greek word *logikos* which *rationabilis* translates into Latin. The series of adjectives may be properly taken, as in other instances, to be a stylistic embellishment, apart from any intention of precise differentiation of meaning. Nevertheless, since each of these words has been the subject of considerable study, the translation attempts to express them.

Line 47: *Dilectissimi.*

To the English speaker the mere statement that Jesus is “your Son” is the most effective expression, but “only” has been inserted to reflect the meaning of *dilectissimi*, in accord with the Hebrew manner of thinking represented in turn by the Greek word *agapetos* (LXX) and the Latin *dilectissimi* (cf. Gen.22:12, Is.42:1).

Line 49: *Sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas.*

Because the meaning of “taking bread” is clear in itself and from the action of the priest, the force of the narrative would be weakened by explicit reference to the hands of Jesus, a reference which is implicit in the translation. The whole narrative is expressed as concisely as possible in accordance with biblical scholarship to avoid detracting from the person and action of Christ. The same reasoning applies to the parallel phrase *in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas* in the next passage.

Line 52: *Tibi gratias agens, benedixit.*

The Latin words *gratias agens* and *benedixit* represent the Greek *eucharistesas* and *eulogesas* and in turn the underlying Hebrew *berekah*. The only way to express this single Hebrew concept adequately and simply in English appears to be the twofold expression “gave you thanks and praise”; in the mind of our Lord and those who heard him it was the Jewish concept of blessing which was intended rather than any notion of making things blessed or sacred. The blessing of God embraced the praise of God’s works and thanksgiving. The liturgical tradition also includes a secondary notion of hallowing which is in some measure represented by our English word “blessing,” in other parts of this translation, e.g. *Te igitur* (line 4) and *Quam oblationem* (line 43). Nevertheless, the Latin word *benedixit* retains etymologically a clear reference to the underlying Greek and Hebrew meanings which the English “blessing”
cannot do. It thus appeared misleading to employ the English word "bless," which in this context is almost entirely associated with hallowing an object and even associated with the ritual gesture — a sign of the cross, recently suppressed in this part of the canon. If a catechesis concerning the deeper meaning of the Eucharist is to be undertaken, it is important that this should not be confused by an inappropriate use of the word "blessing" in this part of the translation. The same reasoning applies to item tibi gratias agens, benedixit in the Simili modo.

Line 56: *Enim.*

In current English, the use of "for" at the beginning of a clause is disappearing in favor of "because" or "since." It is impossible to introduce one of these words into the present text, and of course no word corresponding to *enim* occurs in any of the biblical accounts. The simple phrase "this is my body" after the semicolon is the most effective means of expressing the Latin text.

Line 58: *Praeclarum.*

Although the word *praeclarum* may be treated as purely honorific, the biblical allusion is to Psalm 22:5. The meaning can thus be expressed as "brimming cup" or, in an attempt to show the deeper sense, as the "banquet" or the "festive" or "joyful cup." It seemed impossible to employ any of these expressions in present day English style so that this addition, not found in biblical accounts of the institution, would be intelligible to the hearers.

Line 59: *Simili modo.*

The word "again" bears the meaning of the Latin words *item* and *simili modo;* the parallel between the two accounts also makes the sense of these words evident.

Line 63: *Novi et aeterni testamenti.*

One possibility in translating the words referring to the wine was to follow directly one of the biblical texts, e.g., the clearer expression in I Cor. 11.25 "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (Jerusalem Bible), adding the non-biblical reference to the "eternal" covenant from the Latin. But the liturgical tradition of the Roman canon can be legitimately preserved as the present translation does, and catechesis can include the four biblical accounts.

The repetition of the word "blood" is necessary for clarity and to avoid the immediate succession of a second prepositional phrase beginning with "of." The translation properly avoids the question whether the Latin mention of the covenant refers directly to the cup or to the blood.

Line 64: *Mysterium fidel.*

It is evident that these words are an interpolation, possibly a diaconal monition, but it is not clear whether the mystery referred to is the immediately preceding mention of the covenant, or the blood, or the totality of the Eucharistic memorial. The translation carefully avoids prejudicing the question by simply interposing these words after a dash;
it then becomes necessary for clarity to take up the interrupted text with the repetition of the word "blood."

Line 65: *Pro multis.*

Neither Hebrew nor Aramaic possess a word for "all." The word *rabbim* or "multitude" thus served also in the inclusive sense for "the whole," even though the corresponding Greek and the Latin appear to have an exclusive sense, i.e., "the many" rather than "the all." Cf. J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (New York, 1966), pp. 179-182, 229.

Line 68: *Facietis in mei memoriam.*

On the one hand it seems important in the translation to express the objective character of the memorial, i.e., the Jewish concept of reliving the event in the celebration, which is different from mere remembering. On the other hand, every effort should be made not to read into the tradition of the Roman canon a stronger insistence upon the objective memorial than this tradition supports.

Line 69: *Unde et memores.*

Most of the ancient texts of the Roman canon include the word *sumus* (*memores sumus*), thus confirming the view that the memorial should receive emphasis at least coordinate to that of *offerimus.* Although the word "memorial" better expresses the objective nature of the recalling or remembering, the word has unsatisfactory connotations; instead emphasis is retained by the complete expression "celebrate the memory" placed in an independent sentence and then resumed by the word "recall." In addition, the immediate mention of "Christ your Son" in the first line makes it possible, by employing the relative pronoun later, to simplify and stress the elements of the memorial — passion, resurrection, and ascension.

Line 70: *Servi tui.*

This reference is to the clergy. To translate it as "servants" would obscure its meaning in English.

*Domini nostri.* Because of the proximity of the two uses of the word *Domine* in different senses, the English text must avoid the repetition or lead to a mistaken emphasis on *nostri.*

Line 71: *Tam beatae.*

Although many adjectives such as this are added because of the honorific and elevated rhetoric, which should not be reproduced in a modern language such as English, the use of *beata* may reflect a desire to restore the appreciation of the passion as "victorious" and "triumphant." Such words as these would carry an undue weight in English, and in this context the word "blessed" would be weak and almost meaningless. The solution, including the choice of the word "celebrate," takes into account that the unity of the resurrection-glorification of the Lord with the mention of his passion, can today serve the same purpose as *tam beatae* does in the Latin. This will be achieved if there is a sound catechesis on the Eucharist in which "the victory and triumph of his death are again made present"
(Council of Trent, Sess.13, quoted in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy).

**Line 75: Praeclarae maiestati.**

The replacement of *praecelarae maiestati tuae* by the simple pronoun “you” would seem to be more satisfactory and direct, but does not take into account an underlying meaning of the word *maiestas*, as a translation of the Old Testament *kabod* (e.g., Deut. 5:24, Num. 14:22, Is. 6:1 & 3), namely God’s presence in creation. It is impossible to express this concept completely without circumlocution, and a direct reference to the “presence” of God would be totally misunderstood in the context. “God of glory and majesty” is an expression somewhat alien to the direct simplicity of the present translation, but is intended to permit a better understanding of the biblical concept of God’s glory filling all creation, and the offering made to God in realization of this presence in the world.

**Line 76: Hostiam puram, hostiam sanctam, hostiam immaculatam.**

This triplet is an example of Latin style of the time of the canon’s composition which cannot be correctly reproduced to the letter in English. The emphasis in the repeated adjectives is conveyed in English by the two words “holy” and “perfect,” although one would suffice to express the meaning.

**Lines 77-78: Panem sanctum vitae aeternae, et Calicem salutis perpetuae.**

The two Latin words *aeternae* and *perpetuae* are adequately reproduced in translation by “eternal”; this style permits the clear retention of the biblical allusion to the bread of life (cf. Jn. 6:35, 6:48), and the direct parallel of the bread and the cup is stressed.

**Line 81: Patriarchae.**

The translation “father in faith” attempts to convey the real meaning of Abraham as patriarch in relation to the people of the new covenant, which would be insufficiently conveyed by the simple “our patriarch.”

**Line 82: Summus sacerdos.**

The Latin *summus sacerdos* is apparently a faulty reflection of the biblical “priest of the most high God” (cf. Gen. 14:18), but the direct translation of *summus* as “great” priest does not convey this meaning in English and the common translation “high priest” is misleading. *Sanctum sacrificium, immaculatam hostiam*. These words, attributed by the Liber Pontificalis to Leo the Great, are a later gloss and it is not immediately apparent whether they refer to the offering of Melchisedech or to the Eucharistic gifts. To avoid prejudging this question, the reference in the immediately preceding section to the “holy and perfect sacrifice” (line 76) seems sufficient, without an unwieldy duplication of the expression here.

**Line 85: In conspectu divinae maiestatis tuae.**

The elaboration of this phrase is not directly repeated in this section, where the English reflects the meaning sufficiently, since the deep allusion of the expression has been sufficiently developed a few lines before in the prayer *Unde et memores.*
Line 86: *Ex hac altaris.*

An attempt was made not to decide the question whether the heavenly altar and earthly altar are one altar or distinct altars.

Line 88: *Caelesti.*

The meaning of this word is adequately conveyed by the words “in heaven” three lines earlier, where the source of the “blessing” in indicated.

Line 97: *Nobis quoque peccatoribus.*

The complexity of this prayer has been relieved by combining the initial reference to sinners with the concluding section. Thus it is possible to separate the petition for a place with the saints from the references to “trust in God’s mercy” and “forgiveness for sin.” This is the reason for moving the expression “though we are sinners,” without change of meaning or text.

*Famulis tuis.* In view of the opinions referring *famuli* either to the ministers or to the congregation present, a correct translation avoids determining the question and leaves the prayer open to either interpretation (cf. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite* (New York, 1955), I, 248-250). A verbal translation of *famuli* would not permit this since it might be confused with *servi* in the prayer *Unde et memores* (line 70).

Line 100: *Ignatio, Alexandro, etc.*

The reasons given for the omission of saints’ names, not mentioned in the scriptures are equally applicable here, where some of the names are uncertain or unknown.

Line 110: *Creas.*

Since the sequence of the several verbs does not give a sure indication of a deliberate development from one concept to another, the climactic reference to God’s “giving to us” has been placed first in an independent sentence. The other verbs are represented by either verbs or nouns, the concept of God’s continuous creation (*creas*) in the expression “fill them with life.” No attempt has been made to settle the controverted question whether *haec omnia* refers to the non-Eucharistic elements such as the oils blessed on occasion or to the Eucharistic elements themselves. This question should be left to any future evolution of the Roman canon.

Lines 113-114: *Cum ipso-in ipso.*

The inversion of the phrases “in him” and “with him” is purely stylistic, because the expression “in the unity of the Holy Spirit” follows immediately (below).

Line 115: *In unitate Spiritus Sancti.*

Two interpretations of this phrase are possible. One, that the unity of the Holy Spirit is to be joined to the references to the Son and to the Father so that the phrase expresses the relationship of the persons; the other, that the reference is to the Holy Spirit unifying the church and the whole of creation in giving glory and honor to the Father. The translation deliberately leaves this open so that the phrase “in the unity of
the Holy Spirit” may refer back to the mention of Christ the Son or refer forward to the fullness of glory and honor.

Line 116: *Est tibi.*

The numerous attempts to translate this expression so that glory and honor are “given to the Father,” “come to the Father,” “belong to the Father,” are inadequate, since they suggest too directly the act of a man in praising God, a concept which the Latin text does not contain. Although the issue could be avoided by the simple omission of a word, corresponding to *est*, the resulting expression in English (“all glory to you”) would be interpreted as if the Latin word *sit* were understood rather than the declarative *est*.

Line 117: *Deo.*

The placement of the words “almighty Father” in the final position is deliberate, so that the climactic character of the doxology will be evident and forceful.

**Catechesis on the Canon of the Mass**

Immediately following the promulgation of the Constitution on the Liturgy in December 1964 no one even dreamed that almost three years later permission would have been given to proclaim the Canon of the Mass in the vernacular. The Constitution on the Liturgy itself seemed to exclude this possibility (nn. 36 and 54). But once effectively started the liturgical reform developed under its own power. The use of the vernacular spread from the dialogue to the Preface and the Sanctus to the Preface itself and, as of October the 1st, it has extended from the Preface to the entire Canon of the Mass.

The use of the vernacular languages for the proclamation of the Canon of the Mass constitutes a new and important stage in the progressive liturgical reform. Undoubtedly, from a pastoral point of view, the after effects will be many and of prime importance. Henceforth the Eucharistic liturgy will not take second place to the liturgy of the Word to which more attention was given in the first stages of the renewal.

Even though the use of the vernacular will be of great benefit, a true understanding of the Canon of the Mass will be achieved only through an appropriate and suitable catechesis on its principal parts. The following thoughts and suggestions will be of assistance.

**The Structure of the Canon**

At first sight the Canon of the Mass of the Roman rite would appear to be composed of elements more or less unrelated. It is true that its structure is clearly more complex than the structure of the Eucharistic prayers of the first centuries (the present Roman Canon dates back to the 5th century). It is equally true that since the Roman Canon contains many conclusions, *Per Christum Dominum nostrum*, the impression is given that its text is made up of a number of parts which have been pieced together.

The general structure of the Roman Canon has been strongly influenced by the structure of the Jewish blessing. Traditionally, the Jewish blessing was
made up of three parts: 1. the blessing properly so called: an exclamation of admiration and joy in a rather stereotyped form; 2. the anamnesis or the memorial: recalling the wonderful deeds accomplished by God in favour of His people and the recalling of which gives rise to admiration and joy; 3. the return to the initial blessing or the doxology: conclusion by way of inclusion. Frequently a fourth element — a prayer of petition — took place after the memorial and before the doxology.

All of these elements are found in the Roman Canon of the Mass and contribute to its structure (initial blessing — beginning of the Preface; memorial — the body of the Preface plus the narrative of the Last Supper plus the Unde et memores; petition — Supplices te rogamus; doxology — Per ipsum). For reasons of order, either literary or theological, certain points have been clarified and developed and other elements have been added. Taking into account the structural elements of the Jewish blessing which are still perceptible, the particular literary form, and the theological content, the Roman Canon of the Mass has the following structure:

**STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preface</th>
<th>Complimentary Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Sanctus</em></td>
<td><em>Memento of Living</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Te igitur</em></td>
<td><em>Communicantes</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Hanc igitur</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recalling**

- *Quam oblationem*
- Last Eucharistic
- Supper narrative

**Memorial**

- Recalling of the Passion,
- Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus (*Unde et memores*)
- Offering (end of *Unde et memores* and *Supra quae*)

**Prayer for the fruits of the Communion** (*Supplices te rogamus*)

**Doxology** (*Per ipsum*)

**COMPLIMENTARY ELEMENTS**

- Memento of Living
- *Nobis quoque*
- *Per quem haec omnia*
It is to be noted that the Preface and the Sanctus, even though separated from the Canon properly so called in the recent editions of the Roman Missal, form part of its structure. Actually speaking, the Preface and Sanctus, constitute an essential element which influences the whole religious bearing of the Canon: in the Eucharistic liturgy the Preface, the Sanctus, and the doxology are the special parts in which praise and thanksgiving are expressed.

The *Te igitur* literally forms the link between Preface and the Canon properly so called. In contrast to the eastern anaphoras the prayer following the Sanctus in the Roman Canon expresses petition rather than thanksgiving and praise. The official English translation attempts to establish something more than a mere literary link between the Preface and the Canon: “We come to You, Father, in this spirit of thanksgiving . . .”

Some of the missals of the faithful were accustomed to designate only the *Unde et memorares* as the anamnesis or memorial. No doubt the word “*memores*" suggested this presentation. However a study of the history of the Eucharist reveals that the word *anamnesis* has a wider range and, in the Roman Canon, includes in the memorial the narrative of the Last Supper, the *Unde et memorares* and the two supplications which follow.

Preceding the account of the Last Supper in the Roman Canon there is a supplication which corresponds in a certain sense to the epiklesis of the eastern liturgies (epiklesis: prayer to the Holy Spirit to transform the sacrificial gifts). Undoubtedly it is from a consideration of the words of institution from the viewpoint of their consecratory value that this supplication has been included.

As in most of the liturgies of the fourth and fifth centuries, the sacrificial dimension of the Eucharist has been brought out, in the Roman Canon, within the memorial: “We, your people and your ministers, recall His passion . . . and from the many gifts you have given to us we offer to you, God and of glory and majesty, this holy and perfect sacrifice.” The *Supra quae*, which follows, develops this theme of offering by asking God to receive the sacrifice which is offered to Him: “Look with favour on these offerings. Accept them as you did the gifts. . . .” The *Supra quae* is then, rather naturally, connected with the second part of the *Unde et memorares*.

At first glance, we might be tempted to consider the *Supplices te rogamus* as a simple supplication, one of many which are found in the Roman Canon. But here also, historical research reveals that this prayer has a special place of its own. The *Supplices te rogamus* not only refers immediately to the fruits of Eucharistic Communion: “Then, as we receive from this altar the sacred Body and Blood of your Son, let us be filled with every grace and blessing”, but moreover it comes at the end of the memorial as did also the prayer of petition in the Jewish blessing. Therefore, of all the petitions contained in the Roman Canon this one harmonizes best with the Eucharist properly so called.

What the Preface is to the commencement of the Canon, the doxology is to its termination. It forms the recapitulation by bringing the mind and heart back to sentiments of praise and thanksgiving that were expressed at the beginning. It is then essential to the dynamic structure of the whole Eucharist.
SOME IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

The Eucharistic liturgy of the Mass is at one and the same time praise and sacrifice; it is a sacrifice of praise as is mentioned in the Memento of the living in the Roman Canon: "We offer you this sacrifice of praise". It is the sacrifice of praise of Christ, in which there is recalled the Last Supper as well as the death and resurrection; it is the sacrifice of praise of the Church, the Body of Christ, united with its Shepherd and Leader.

PRAISE

It is not by chance that the re-presentation of the Last Supper in the Church is called the Eucharist. This word immediately recalls the literary form which the words of Jesus addressed to his Father assumed at that time. On that night, overcome with joy at the thought that God's plan was very soon to be fully and marvellously accomplished in the mystery of his death and resurrection, Jesus blessed his Father and gave him thanks. Obeying the command of Jesus to celebrate the memorial of his death and resurrection, the Church uses substantially the same words: by Jesus and in him it offers thanksgiving to the Father. In the Roman Canon of the Mass it is at the Preface-Sanctus and at the doxology that there is principally expressed the sentiments of thanksgiving of the Church.

By means of the Eucharistic liturgy the Church and every Christian is enabled to take part in the Eucharist (thanksgiving) uttered by Jesus at the Last Supper. We must even go further and say that the Eucharist of the Church is first and foremost the Eucharist of Jesus mysteriously perpetuated through time and space. That is why, within the Eucharistic liturgy itself, the Church recalls to memory the Eucharist of the Last Supper: In the Canon of the Mass the narrative of the Last Supper is made part of the memorial.

SACRIFICE

The sacrificial dimension of the Eucharist is quite prominent in the Roman Canon of the Mass. Words to express offering are frequently used: "We ask you to accept and bless these gifts we offer you in sacrifice (Te igitur); "We offer you this sacrifice of praise" (Memento of the living); "accept this offering from your whole family" (Hanc igitur); “bless and approve our offering” (Quam oblationem); “we offer to you, God of glory and majesty, this holy and perfect sacrifice” (Unde et memores); “look with favour on these offerings” (Supra quae). By the Eucharist, the Church offers a sacrifice to God the Father, but this sacrifice is not in the first place her own. Just as the praise and thanksgiving that it addresses to the Father are in the first place the praise and thanksgiving of Jesus, so also the sacrifice that it offers to Him is in the first place the sacrifice of Jesus, the sacrifice which it recalls (Unde et memores) and which it mysteriously makes present under the signs of bread and wine (narrative of Last Supper). From this it is understood that the principal expression of the sacrificial offering of the Church takes place, in the Roman Canon, after the Eucharistic narrative and within the framework of the Unde et memores.

PRAISE AND SACRIFICE

The sacrifice of the Church, which is the sacrifice of Jesus with whom the Church is one, is a sacrifice in praise of the Father. It goes without saying
that this sacrifice has an expiatory and intercessory value, but above all it has a value of praise. It is offered to the Father as a gift of joyful praise. Moreover, when the sacrificial offering of the Church is expressed in words, it takes on the form of a Eucharist, a thanksgiving. And such is indeed, we might say, the general format of the Roman Canon itself.

**THE MEMORIAL**

Most of the eastern Eucharistic liturgies recall to mind the wonderful deeds by which God has manifested himself, intervening in man's history from creation up until the second coming of Christ. The Roman Canon is not exactly the same. At the core of its Eucharistic prayer, it limits the memorial to the Passover of Jesus (the Last Supper, passion — resurrection — ascension). It is in the Preface that the other marvellous works of God and in particular the other mysteries of Jesus are recalled.

In every respect, the memorial of Jesus' Passover occupies a privileged place in the Christian Eucharist. In fact, the Eucharist is above all and essentially the memorial of the paschal mystery. This mystery is the only one which must always be recalled in the Eucharist. It must however not only be recalled in words (narrative of Last Supper and *unde et memores*) but also under signs: the bread and the wine. It can be said that the Passover of Jesus occupies, in the Christian Eucharist, a place identical to the one which it holds in the Gospel: it is its centre and highest point.

**THE GIFT OF GOD**

The Eucharist is not only a movement of man to God it is also and in the first place the gift of God to men. In the Eucharist the gift of God to men manifests itself in many ways.

First of all, the Eucharist is the gift of God to men in the sense that by means of the Eucharist man is enabled to offer to God a sacrifice of praise that is worthy of Him. That is why the Christian Eucharistic Prayer is addressed to the Father through the Son, with Him and in Him. Only insofar as we are united with the Lord Jesus we do have access to the Father. This is indeed a gift of God, a gift that manifests itself and communicates itself to us in a special way in the Eucharist itself.

In another sense, though closely associated with the first, the Eucharist is also a gift of God — the power of God transforms our offering of bread and wine into a spiritual and perfect offering, the Body and Blood of His Son.

Finally, but still closely associated with the first two notions, the Eucharist is the gift of God in the sense that through the symbolic power of the sacrament, God increases our union with Him and enables us to progress towards the fulness of life in Him.

**PASTORAL SUGGESTIONS**

The Instruction on the Mystery of Eucharistic worship promulgated last May by the Consilium on liturgy and the Congregation of Rites will serve as a very appropriate background for a catechesis on the Canon of the Mass
to be given to the faithful. In the light of this Instruction and of the previous observations the following points should be noted.

1. The Eucharistic liturgy of the Mass is the prayer of praise which goes up from the Church to God the Father. This praise is expressed in a special way in the Preface, the Sanctus and the doxology. But the praise of Christians is acceptable to God only if it is joined to the Eucharistic praise of Jesus. That is why the Canon of the Mass recalls what Jesus did and said at the Last Supper.

2. The Eucharist is also the sacrifice which the Church offers to the Father. But it is first of all the sacrifice of Jesus himself. That is why the principal expression of the sacrifice of the Church, in the Canon of the Mass, takes place within the memorial which has made the sacrifice of Christ present under the signs of bread and wine.

3. The bond which unites the Christian Eucharist to the paschal mystery of Jesus is unique. It is much stronger than the bonds which unite the Eucharist to all the other marvellous deeds of God in creation, in the history of men, and in Jesus. In the strongest sense of the word, the Eucharist is the sacrament of the Passover of Jesus. The Passover of Jesus is the single mystery that the Eucharist recalls and makes present under signs.

4. The Eucharist is the gift of God. It is the gift which enables Christians, those who are one with Christ, to have access to the Father and to offer him the perfect sacrifice of joyful praise and thanksgiving, the perfect sacrifice of Jesus. Through it, God enables us to live a life of closer union with him. The Eucharistic Prayer is addressed to God the Father. It is offered through Jesus, in union with him, and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In saying this, we are reminded of the way in which the new catechism tries to explain to children and to adolescents the place of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in their lives.

* * *

The change to the use of the vernacular for the proclamation of the Canon could be accompanied by a catechesis. This catechesis was not possible prior to the first Sunday of October. But there will be without doubt, during the course of the liturgical year many opportunities to instruct the faithful on the relationship of the Word to the Eucharist and this catechesis perhaps can be done to great advantage, in the Homily itself. The Homily, at the Sunday celebration, when it is well done, naturally brings out the value of one or other dimension of the Eucharistic mystery. "When therefore the faithful hear the Word of God, they should realize that the wonders it proclaims culminate in the Paschal Mystery, of which the memorial is sacramentally celebrated in the Mass. In this way the faithful will be nourished by the Word of God which they have received and in a spirit of thanksgiving will be led on to a fruitful participation in the mysteries of salvation. Thus the Church is nourished by the bread of life which she finds at the table both of the Word of God and the Body of Christ." (Instruction n. 10b)

Translated from the French.

L. — A. GIGNAC, O.P.
The day before he suffered he took bread,
and looking up to heaven, to you, his almighty Father, he gave you thanks and praise. He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples and said,
"Take this and eat it, all of you; this is my body." When supper was ended,
he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks and praise, gave the cup to his disciples and said,
"Take this and drink from it, all of you;
this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the
new and ever-lasting covenant— the mystery
of faith. This blood is to be shed for you
and for all men so that sins may be forgiven.
Whenever you do this, you will do it in
memory of me."

DOXOLOGY I

Through him, in him, with him, in the unity
of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is
yours, Almighty Father, for ever and e- ver. A- men.
DOXOLOGY II

Through him, in him, with him, in the unity
of the Holy Spirit all glory and honor
is yours, almighty Father, for ever
and ever. All: Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May Almighty God bless you, the Father,