

What is the zenith of active participation at Mass?

Now that we have concluded our review of the changes affecting the Liturgy of the Word as it relates to the Third Edition of the Roman Missal, I would like to shift our attention to the Liturgy of the Eucharist. As the title for this week's column suggests, there are degrees of active participation at Mass. All of us sing the opening hymn as part of the Introductory Rites. We also acknowledge our need for God the Father's mercy and love as part of the Introductory Rites. In fact, our heartfelt participation throughout the Mass with our whole mind body and soul is what active participation refers to. But the zenith or height of that participation happens at the Sacrifice of the Mass, when the priest or bishop, acting in the person of Christ, offers the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ to God the Father. In the Second Edition of the Roman Missal which we have been using since 1985, the priest would say, "*Pray friends, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.*" But this translation missed a crucial point. It is the priest who offers the Sacrifice of the Mass, but the People of God also offer their own sacrifice in union with the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ. So, mindful of this important nuance, let's look at what we will be saying beginning on November 27.

New Translation: Changes in bold

Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters),
that my sacrifice and yours
may be acceptable to God,
the almighty Father.
People:
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 his **holy** Church.

This translation, which more accurately reflects the Latin, reminds us that both the priest and the laity have an active role in participating in the sacrifice of the Mass. The Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy no. 48, reminds the faithful that they too participate in the sacrifice of the Mass, "*by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him.*" Active participation at Mass does reach a zenith, and we all have a part to play in experiencing this saving event.

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