

Historical and doctrinal remarks on the Roman Offertory

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In any study of liturgical reality, one must clearly distinguish, without separating them, the euchological aspect and the ritual aspect, the word and the gesture that accompanies it. The history of rites teaches us much in this regard. Sometimes, simple yet meaningful gestures preceded the formulas that subsequently sought to explain the intention of the rite. Such is the case with the Offertory.

The aim of the first part of my presentation will therefore be to offer some historical points of reference, within the framework of the major divisions of liturgical history. What did the ancient gesture of offering consist of? When did we begin to ‘give it a voice’? What, then, is the historical and geographical origin of each of the Offertory prayers in the Tridentine Missal, the subject of the various studies at this conference? However, because we believe that all liturgical research, to be complete, must lie at the intersection of history and theology, we shall seek to ascertain, in our chronological inquiry, what was the profound meaning of a gesture that was initially silent. To this end, we shall examine patristic literature, followed by the earliest Roman ritual and euchological texts. It will then remain for us to grasp the historical and doctrinal link connecting the medieval formulas to the ancient texts. The limitations imposed by any oral presentation compel us to defer a more strictly ceremonial study to a later date.

However, the Offertory known as that of St Pius V, which resulted from historical development on the one hand and the choice of the Roman Church on the other, has undoubtedly been the least studied of all the parts of *the Ordo Missae*, and consequently the most misunderstood, indeed the most criticised. For this reason, drawing on the considerations set out above, we shall attempt in a second part to outline its more strictly theological profile, if only to help all those who are attached to this rite, who unite with it and celebrate it, to understand it better.

1. Notes on the historical development of the Rite of the Offertory.

1.1 *From the post-apostolic period to the 7th century*

Justin’s *First Apology*, addressed to Antoninus Pius around 152, is the oldest document containing details of the Eucharistic celebration. The work provides two descriptions of the Eucharistic liturgy, both of which offer us a sketch of the rite

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of the Offertory. In the first of these descriptions, linked to the administration of baptism which it follows, we read: *‘Deinde antistiti fratrum adfertur panis et poculum aquae et vini aqua mixti²’*. In addition to the bread and wine, a cup of water is brought here which, according to a later indication provided by the *Apostolic Tradition*³, will be presented to the neophyte before communion from the chalice as a sign of the inner purification of the soul. The second description is that of the Sunday assembly: *“Ubi precari desiimus, panis adfertur et vinum et aqua⁴”*. Here, the water merely tempers the wine.

In both cases, we are dealing with a very simple ritual consisting of the placing on the altar of bread and wine, the elements of the sacrifice, without any formula being recited. The gesture described by Justin corresponds substantially to the accounts given in the New Testament texts, where we see Jesus, at the Last Supper, taking bread and wine that had been placed on the table⁵.

However, *adferre*—that is, to place and carry the elements for the Sacrifice onto the altar—is this, in this context, a gesture identical to that of *offerre*, namely to offer to God created elements upon which He will pour out His almighty power?

We may find part of the answer in an earlier text, Clement of Rome’s *Letter to the Corinthians*, written towards the end of the 1st century. There, Clement discusses the order to be observed in the presentation of what he refers to as *oblaciones*. Without, however, specifying the nature of these, the Pope reminds us that these offerings must be made at the time and place prescribed by the Lord⁶.

Since the Eucharistic rite instituted by Christ is essentially a sacrifice, as our faith proclaims, should it not, like every sacrifice – the sacrifices of the Old

² JUSTIN, *Apologies*, ed. WARTELLE, coll. *Études augustiniennes*, Paris, 1987, n. 65.

³ *The Apostolic Tradition*, ed. BOTTE, *Sources chrétiennes* 11 bis, Paris, 1968, n. 23. A trace of this usage is found in the Pre-Sacramentary of Verona, ed. MOLMBERG - EIZENHÖFER - SIFFRIN, *Sacramentarium Veronense*, in *Rer. eccl. documenta*, Ser. Maior., Fontes I, Rome, 1956, n. 205.

⁴ JUSTIN, *Op. cit.*, n. 67.

⁵ See *Mt* 26:26–27; *Mk* 14:22–23; *Lk* 22:19–20; *1 Cor* 11:23–25.

⁶ CLEMENT OF ROME, *Epist. ad Corinthios*, in *Sources chrétiennes* 165, Paris, 1971, n. 40: “[The Master] has ordained that the offerings (*oblaciones*) and the sacred rites (*officia sacra*) should be performed not haphazardly and without order, but at fixed times and moments. Where and by whom he wishes them to be performed, he himself has determined by his sovereign decision, so that all things may take place in holiness according to his good pleasure and be pleasing to his will. Thus, those who present their offerings at the appointed times are approved and blessed, for by following the Master’s precepts they do not err. For the high priest has been entrusted with duties peculiar to him, the priests have been assigned their own specific roles, and the Levites are charged with particular services. The layperson is bound by the precepts proper to the laity.”

“When Saint Clement,” comments Bishop M. RIGHETTI, “speaks of the oblations to be made at the time and place prescribed by Jesus, it is very likely that he is referring above all to the two elements of the Eucharist, bread and wine. Even if one cannot see in this an allusion—which would be the first—to the collective liturgical rite of the Offertory, one must admit that these oblations were subject to specific disciplinary rules: proof that by the end of the 1st century, liturgical organisation in Rome had already reached a stage of considerable development.” (*Storia liturgica*, Milan, 1966, III, p. 105).

Testament, but also the sacrifices of paganism – presuppose an offering upon which the *sacrum facere* would be performed? This offering was indicated by Christ Himself who, at the Last Supper, pronounced the words of consecration over the bread and wine that had been set out there. By divine institution, bread and wine are therefore the characteristic elements of the Eucharistic liturgy, to the exclusion of all others, and they appear from the very beginning as the *oblaciones* par excellence of the Church. It is, moreover, under the term *prosfora* that, around 215, the *Apostolic Tradition*⁷ designates them, thus using the same term with which it will later, in the *Canon*, designate the already consecrated oblates⁸.

Originally, the offerings placed on the altar were thus the subject of a liturgical separation, dedicated to the Lord for the Eucharistic prayer which was immediately to be pronounced over them. The ritual is austere, for, as J. A. Jungmann observed, ‘...in contrast to the sacrificial rites of the Gentiles and the Jews, the nascent Church emphasises the spiritual nature of Christian worship. Its gaze glides over the earthly substance of bread and wine and fixes itself on the gift that is above all spiritual and even heavenly, which proceeds from its Eucharist...’⁹

However, towards the end of the 2nd century, the rise of Hellenistic Gnosticism—which, professing contempt for the material world, consequently denied the reality of the Incarnation—provided the Church with an opportunity to defend the goodness of material creation. In doing so, a polemicist such as Irenaeus of Lyon would emphasise the value of the material element of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, without, of course, losing sight of the primacy of the spiritual element: “We must,” he says, “present an offering to God and show our gratitude to the Creator in all things, offering to him, with pure dispositions and faith without hypocrisy, with firm hope and ardent charity, the first fruits of his own creatures¹⁰”. The spiritual sacrifice therefore has an earthly starting point in the offering of a material reality:

“The Eucharist,” says Irenaeus, “consists of two things, one earthly, the other heavenly¹¹”. And again: “We offer it to him, in fact, not as to one who is in need, but to give thanks to him through his gifts and to sanctify creation. For just as God has no need of what comes from us, so we have a need to offer something to God¹²”.

⁷ *The Apostolic Tradition*, *loc. cit.*, n. 4.

⁸ *The Apostolic Tradition*, *loc. cit.*, n. 4: “*Et petimus ut mittas spiritum tuum sanctum in oblationem sanctae ecclesiae*” (n. 4). See also the prayer of episcopal consecration: “*offere dona sanctae ecclesiae tuae*” (n. 3).

⁹ J.A. JUNGSMANN, *Missarum solemnia*, Paris, 1952 ed., Vol. II, p. 272.

¹⁰ IRENAEUS of Lyon, *Adv. Haereses*, in *Sources chrétiennes* 440, Paris, 1999, Vol. II, IV, 18, 4.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, IV, 17, 5.

¹² *Ibid.*, IV, 18, 6.

The liturgical consequence is immediate: the simple gesture found in Justin is to be developed, and become a personal gesture of offering performed by the faithful taking part in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Whilst this gesture remains foreign to the *Apostolic Tradition*, very ancient testimonies attest to it. Thus, when Tertullian addresses a believer wishing to remarry, he asks ironically: ‘Will you then present yourself before the Lord with as many wives as you recall in your prayer? And will you offer (*offeres*) for both of them?’¹³ ” At the beginning of the 3rd century, as attested by the *Acta Petri* (200–225), and then, towards the middle of the century, by Saint Cyprian of Carthage, the offering of the elements of the Sacrifice by the people had become the norm: ‘You come to the Lord’s rite,’ Cyprian reproaches a wealthy woman, ‘without the bread of the sacrifice (*sine sacrificio*), and you dare to receive a share of the sacrifice offered by the poor’¹⁴. Here the direct link between the offering, called *sacrificium*, and communion is emphasised.

In 303, the Synod of Elvira established, for the first time – at least to our knowledge – the legal norms governing the offering. No one who is not in communion with the Church may offer or receive the Eucharist (can. 28). The act of bringing the offering to the altar whilst stating the name of the offerer, and the fact that it is accepted, constitute the outward sign of the faithful’s membership of the Church. The same Synod (can. 29), and subsequently the Council of Nicaea in 325, established who might not be admitted to it. In Rome, the formulas of the oldest sacramentaries reveal on more than one occasion the offering on behalf of the people: ‘*Has oblationes famulorum famularumque tuarum benignus assume, ut quod singuli obtulerunt...*’ (5th Sunday after Pentecost); ‘*Has populi tui oblationes benignus assume...*’ (6th Sunday after Pentecost).

Once the offerings had been received, the deacons were charged with placing on the altar the quantities of bread and wine necessary for the communion of those present, a service to which the *Apostolic Tradition* had already appointed them¹⁵ (14): ‘...*tua, Domine, muneribus altaria cumulamus*’, the Secret of the Mass of the Precursor would later say, suggesting the abundance of the offerings. As Jean Daniélou observed, on examining the earliest Eucharistic catecheses, the ministry of the deacons is drawn into parallel with that performed by the angels in the heavenly liturgy: “Through the deacons,” says Theodore of Mopsuestia, “who minister to what is taking place, we form in our minds a picture of the invisible powers at work who officiate at this ineffable liturgy; it is they who bring and arrange upon the awe-inspiring altar this sacrifice or the symbols of this sacrifice¹⁶ ”. The same

¹³ TERTULLIAN, *De exhort. cast.*, in *Sources chrétiennes* 319, Paris, 1965, ch. 11.

¹⁴ CYPRIAN of CARTHAGE, *De opere et eleemosyna*, in *Sources chrétiennes* 440, Paris, 1999, XV.

¹⁵ *The Apostolic Tradition*, loc. cit., n. 3.

¹⁶ TH. of MOPSUESTE, XV, 24, quoted by J. DANIELOU in *Bible et Liturgie*, Paris, 1951, p. 179.

Theodore of Mopsuestia provides us with the clearly *sacrificial* conception held in the East of the act of Offering at the dawn of the 5th century, and hence the rationale behind the ritual surrounding it: “Through these symbols,” he says, “we must now see Christ being led away, going to his Passion, and laid out on the altar to be sacrificed.” And again: “You must consider that it is the image of the invisible powers at work that the deacons hold, now that they bring the portion from outside for the oblation...And when they have brought it, it is upon the holy altar that the angels place the oblation for the perfect fulfilment of the Passion¹⁷”.

In the West, even before the testimony of the Eucharistic texts, we note an allusion by Ambrose to the Rite of the Offertory in the treatise *On the Sacraments*: ‘You have come to the altar, you have seen the *sacred symbols* placed upon the altar, and you have marvelled at this creature itself, which is, however, but a common and familiar creature¹⁸’. This suggests that there is more to it than the presentation of a gift of bread and wine, but that bread and wine, both “common and familiar creatures”, point to something else; they are indeed *sacred symbols*. The act of offering is conceived as a participation in Christ’s sacrificial offering, through the medium of bread and wine, ‘common and familiar’ substances that have become *sacred symbols* (Ambrose) in view of *perfect fulfilment* (Theodore of Mopsuestia).

The rite of the offering very quickly had to be organised into a collective procession, with the exception, however, of the liturgies of the East and Gaul, where the procession of the oblates was reserved for the clergy alone, the faithful having previously deposited their offerings in some *sacrarium*. The procession seems to have initially taken place in silence, but by the dawn of the 5th century, it was already accompanied by a special chant: *the Offertory*, initially a simple antiphonal psalmody which, from the following century, would see the development of the responsorial form of the *Gradual* and *the Alleluia*.

1.2 The Offertory in the Ordo Romanus I and the Roman Sacramentaries.

1.2.1 The *Ordo Romanus* I

Towards the end of the 7th century, *the Ordo Romanus* I¹⁹, the earliest liturgical description of the Roman Mass that we possess, presents us with the same ancient structure of the Offertory, now having reached the height of its development (nos. 63–87).

Once the Gospel chant has ended, the pontiff, after greeting the assembly with *Dominus vobiscum*, chants: *Oremus* (n. 63). A deacon stands at the altar, spreads the corporal there and

places

¹⁷ THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA, XV, 25 and 27. ‘It is worth noting,’ says J. DANIELÉLOU (*op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*, p. 180), ‘how the two themes of the commemoration of the Passion and the heavenly liturgy merge into one another in a shared symbolism’.

¹⁸ AMBROSE, *De Sacramentis*, IV, 8, ed. BOTTE, in *Sources chrétiennes* 25bis, Paris, 1961, IV, 8.

¹⁹ M. ANDRIEU, *Les Ordines Romani du haut Moyen Âge*, Leuven, 1971, Vol. II, pp. 89–95, nos. 63–87.

the chalice. The pope then descends to *the senatorium* to receive the offerings of bread from the high nobility: *suscipit oblationes* (n. 69). He hands these offerings to a regional subdeacon. The archdeacon, who has followed the pontiff to *the senatorium*, receives the wine cruets there and pours the wine into a chalice. Meanwhile, a bishop (*the ebdomadarius*) and a deacon receive the offerings of bread and wine from the congregation. If necessary, other priests assist in receiving the offerings. Meanwhile, the pope has descended to the confessional, where he receives the offerings from a few dignitaries, then moves towards the noble matrons, before returning to his cathedra (n. 76). The archdeacon then places the oblations on the altar; there he receives from the hands of a subdeacon *oblationarius* the pontiff's personal offering of wine, which he pours into the chalice (nos. 77–79). A subdeacon *sequens* descends to the *schola* to receive from the archiparaphonist the offering of water, which the archdeacon, at the altar, will pour into the chalice *faciens crucem* (n. 80). Then the pontiff rises, goes to the altar, which he greets, and there receives the offering from the hebdomadary priest and the deacons (n. 82). There, the subdeacon *oblationarius*, who had already presented the pontiff's offering of wine, presents to the archdeacon the pontiff's offerings of bread: the archdeacon hands them to the pontiff, who himself places them on the altar (nos. 83–84). The archdeacon places the chalice *juxta oblatam pontificis* (n. 84). The pontiff signals to the *schola* to cease the singing that has accompanied the rites of the offering²⁰.

The Offertory, as A. Chavasse noted, consists of two coordinated and complementary movements: PRESENTATION (*offerre*, once; *oblationes*, 3 times; *oblatas*, 5 times) and RECEPTION (*susceptio*, n. 77; *suscipere*, 7 times). Each movement is carried out by the Assembly as such, according to the basic structure: the Bringers, named at the moment they act (men and women, Pontiff, bishops, priests, deacons, etc.); the Receivers, the ministers who receive the offerings (from the Pontiff to the acolytes). These two groups, co-actors, each retain their own structure. On the one hand: men and women, with their hierarchies...; on the other: the ministers, cooperating according to their position... In itself, the rite of Ordo I is an immense collective 'gesture', which mirrors the very structure of the celebrating assembly and through which it expresses itself, in its journey towards the Eucharistic Act²¹.

However, it seems to me that we must also emphasise another dimension of this gesture, namely the act of placing the offerings on the altar. We have observed that the pontiff, once he has reached the altar, places his own offering of bread there himself. This gesture is highly significant. Indeed, given the abundance of material offerings provided by a large congregation, he does not

²⁰ No. 85: 'And the pontiff, bowing slightly towards the altar, looks at the choir and nods for them to be silent'.

²¹ A. CHAVASSE, *The Liturgy of the City of Rome from the 5th to the 8th Century*, in *Studia Anselmiana*, no. 12, Rome, 1993, p. 37.

there could only have been a surplus of offerings. Among these offerings, only a certain quantity was to be set aside for the Sacrifice, and it was precisely the act of placing it on the altar that distinguished it from a simple offering intended for the needs of the clergy or the poor. The act of placing it on the altar constituted it as an offering of a particular kind, a *sacrificial* offering, as it referred to the Offering par excellence into which it would be transformed. It is this same principle that we find in the Byzantine practice of taking from the offering bread, or *prosphora*, only the upper part intended for consecration.

This is easily understood: once the distinction has been established between the simple presentation of offerings not culminating in the Sacrifice, and that linked to the Sacrifice and placed on the altar, there is nothing to prevent the Offertory from being or becoming an occasion for the offering of gifts other than bread and wine. Thus, from the 9th century onwards, as unleavened bread began to replace domestic bread, the practice of offering other gifts—oil, wax, silver, etc., offerings that were entirely legitimate and accepted, provided that their practice did not risk diminishing, in the minds of the faithful, the *sacrificial* nature of the principal Offering.

In *the *Ordo Romanus I**, once the act of offering is complete, the ministers take their places behind the pontiff (n. 86), the subdeacons facing him (n. 87), and the opening dialogue of the Preface begins without *the *oratio super oblata** having been recited. Indeed, whilst contemporary Roman sacramentaries contain the text of *the oratio super oblata*, and whilst this is mentioned in the brief *Ordo missae of the Hadrianum*²², it does not appear, according to the very wording of our *Ordo*, that this prayer was recited as part of the station liturgy of the Roman Pontiff. Again according to Chavasse, who in this respect diverges from the remarks of Battifol and Jungmann,

such a full and complete ritual display requires no ‘words’. The singing of the *Schola* suffices for its festive character. For the rite thus performed at the station presided over by the Roman Pontiff, a concluding prayer (*super oblata*) is not actually present and is not required. It is the great *Prex*, announced by *the* initial *Oremus* and opening with the *Preface*, which *presents* to God the oblation of the Assembly²³.

It is here, following the examination of *the Ordo Romanus I*, that it seems to me worthwhile to take a look at the Offertory of the Gallican Mass as contained in *the Expositio brevis antiquae liturgiae gallicanae* by Pseudo-Germanus, a document slightly earlier than our

²² Ed. J. DESHUSSES, *Le Sacramentaire Grégorien*, in *Spicilegium Friburgense* 16, Fribourg, 1971, pp. 54–56.

²³ A. CHAVASSE, *Op. cit.*, p. 37.

Roman text. In a recent study on *the Gallican Expositio*, Mr Philippe Bernard²⁴ has highlighted what he considers to be the true nature of the offertory chant, *the sonus gallicanus*, but also *the Roman offertorium*. To this end, drawing on documentation that appears convincing, he draws upon the ancient concept of *the imperial adventus*, a solemn and triumphant entrance imitated and transposed into the Liturgy. In both cases, Gallican and Roman, the texts almost never allude to the rite of the Offertory they accompany: might this not be, asks Ph. Bernard, because the Gallican *sonus* and *the Roman offertorium*, unlike the Mozarabic *sacrificium* and *the Milanese offerendum*, are conceived as the chant of a victorious *adventus*, the introit of the second part of the Mass²⁵ ?

In this context, the third entrance of the Gallican pre-Mass, namely the entrance of the oblates, with the veneration paid to them, appears as a glorious entrance of the Lord.

The Gallican pre-Mass, says Mr Bernard, with its three processions, is not a mere entrance of the clergy, but rather that of Christ, represented by the bishop (who is *a priest* in the likeness of Christ), then by the Book (which contains the Word, the *Logos*), then by the oblates (who, not yet consecrated, *represent* or *symbolise* the Body and Blood of Christ)²⁶ .

Thus, albeit in a more sober manner, and with that collective dimension which we have highlighted with A. Chavasse, the Roman Offertory of the early Middle Ages might well also be considered an *adventus*, and consequently all the attention and meticulous care reserved for the oblates could and should be understood in terms of what Mr Bernard calls the *representation* or *symbolisation* of the Holy Species. This seems important to me, for we might see here the outline of all the developments in the prayers and rites of the Offertory from ^{the 8th} to ^{the 13th} century, and hence the developments in the theological conception of this rite.

²⁴ Ph. BERNARD, 'The "Liturgy of Victory"', in *Ecclesia Orans*, XIII, 1996/3.

²⁵ 'This would explain why the text of the Roman offertories is almost always psalmic: *the offertory* is a psalm (reduced to a few verses), just like the introit, because, like the latter, it is a song *of adventus*. As such, it naturally has no reason to allude to the rite of the offering: the assimilation with *the adventus* is so strong and so profound that it overrides the natural function one might expect of this chant, proof that this conflation is undoubtedly primitive: the Roman Offertory chant was undoubtedly always a chant *of adventus*, and it is indeed likely that this assimilation led to its creation. This alone seems to me capable of explaining the curious absence of any link in Rome between the Offertory chant and the Offertory rite: this absence is absurd only if one ignores the link between *adventus* and *offertorium*.' (Ph. BERNARD, *Op. cit.*, pp. 387–388).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 398.

1.2.2 *The orationes super oblata of the Roman Sacramentaries.*

Let us leave the realm of hypotheses aside, however, and turn instead to the evidence of the Eucharistic formulas in the non-hybrid Roman Sacramentaries.

The oratio super oblata is in fact already present in the pre-Veronese Sacramentary. In the Old Gelasian, we find it under the name of ‘*secret*’, no doubt because it was already recited in a low voice, as attested by Amalarius of Metz in the 9th century. Why had it ceased to be recited aloud, in the same way as the Collect and Postcommunion prayers? Should we see in this an influence of the station liturgy, where, as A. Chavasse has noted, it was not recited?

Be that as it may, the concise and elegant forms provided by the Roman sources of the Sacramentaries inform us about the conception of the offering at the time of what is considered the ‘pure Roman liturgy’. J.A. Jungmann, concluding his analysis of these formulas, noted that “the complete absence of the idea of sacrifice [there] has always remained, from the earliest times, a rare exception²⁷”. M. Righetti, for his part, observed that “the doctrine of Christian sacrifice, in its theological and mystical aspects, unfolds there in phrases of exquisite craftsmanship and of incomparable depth and acuity²⁸”.

The oratio super oblata, the collective prayer of all the offerers, generally takes the form of an oblation formula. The terms *accepta, accipe, hostia, haec hostia, oblatio, oblationes, oblata, sacrificium, sacrificia, suscipe, munera, respice, offerimus*, etc., are very frequently found therein. Its primary purpose is to offer to God the material and secular gifts which, having been placed on the altar, have become sacred, so that they may be made suitable for the Eucharistic consecration. Let us note for this purpose two formulas, both taken from *the Veronensis*: ‘*Munera, quaesumus, oblata sanctifica*²⁹’; ‘*Respice, quaesumus, Domine, propitius ad munera quae sacramus, ut tibi grata sint...*³⁰’

Often the prayer goes further: it asks, more or less explicitly, for the consecration of the gifts offered and, in this perspective, as if the oblates had already been consecrated, it implores the sacramental graces linked, *ex opere operato*, to the offering of the Sacrifice. For example: “*Muneribus nostris, quaesumus Domine, precibusque susceptis, et coelestibus nos munda mysteriis et clementer exaudi*³¹”. Furthermore, *the oratio super oblata* adapts the idea of oblation to the specific object, circumstance or intention of the

⁽²⁷⁾ J.A. JUNGSMANN, *Op. cit.*, p. 375.

⁽²⁸⁾ M. RIGHETTI, *Op. cit.*, p. 339.

²⁹ *Sacramentarium Veronense*, ed. MOLHBERG, *loc. cit.*, 368.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 160.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 1124.

Mass celebrated. Thus, in the Old Gelasian, on Easter Monday: ‘*Sacrificia, Domine, paschalibus gaudiis immolamus, quibus Ecclesia tua mirabiliter renascitur et nutritur*’.

The oratio super oblata, found in the *Veronensis* and the Gelasian texts – “works which were not, as such, organised as books for the official and personal use of the Apostolic Lord³²” – is therefore intended to express what takes place at the Offertory and what dispositions should accompany the act of offering. According to A. Chavasse, its recitation takes the place of the vast collective gesture of offering, “significant in itself”, of the station liturgy. It is more than a mere concluding prayer for a section of the Mass, the Offertory, whose function would be as it were foreign to the sacrificial Oblation of the great *Prex*. No, like the ancient collective gesture, *the oratio super oblata* leads to the Act of the Canon, whose main ideas it already evokes. It links the oblation of the faithful—often framed within the mystery of a liturgical season or feast—to the Sacrifice that is about to be accomplished.

To introduce the great Mystery of the Eucharistic Anaphora: such is the liturgical function of *the oratio super oblata*, and such is consequently the function of the entire complex of prayers and rites of the Offertory, as we shall see them develop from the 8th century onwards and throughout the Middle Ages³³. For, as J.A. Jungmann observed, *the oratio super oblata*, or *secret prayer*, ‘effectively represents, in its own way, an anticipation of the idea of sacrifice. It is therefore from this that we must begin in order to give the texts of the Middle Ages their rightful place³⁴’.

⁽³²⁾ A. CHAVASSE, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

³³ This was well understood by BOSSUET who, responding to the difficulties raised by the Protestants, affirmed: “To understand what the Church does in offering bread and wine to God, we must consider the prayers that precede the consecration, not only in the Canon of the Mass, but also in the prayers known as ‘secret’, or ‘*super oblata*’, because they are said over the oblations after they have been placed on the altar ” (*Explanation of Certain Difficulties Concerning the Prayers of the Mass*, IV).

³⁴ J.A. JUNGSMANN, *op. cit.*, pp. 380–381.

1.3 The Offertory Prayers from ^{the} 8th to the 16th Century

1.3.1 The Roman-Frankish and Roman-Germanic periods (8th–11th centuries)

We have seen that *the Ordo romanus* I prescribed no silent prayers³⁵. It was during the migration of the Roman liturgy to the Frankish lands, leading to its hybridisation through contact with the rituals and more expansive piety of the Franks and Germans, that the Offertory underwent new developments.

In the collection of *the Ordines Romani*, it is *Ordo XVII* (Roman or Romano-Frankish), composed towards the end of the 8th century, which provides us with the first indication of a development of *Ordo I*: ‘*Tunc vero sacerdos, dextra levaque, aliis sacerdotibus postulat pro se orare*³⁶’, the origin of what would become *the Orate fratres*. In *Ordo XV*, one of the five documents of *the Capitulare*, drawn up in Gaul around 775–780, we read: “*Pontifex...taking his own two (offerings) into his hands, raising them with his eyes and hands towards heaven, prays to God silently and, having finished his prayer, places them upon the altar*”, a development of the gesture and an indication of a silent prayer.

The Ordo V, a 9th-century Roman-Frankish liturgical book, prescribes the incensation of the oblates, the oldest and most widespread form of incensation. This incensation emphasises the sacred nature of the oblates and their separation from the secular world as material for the Sacrifice. Following the incensation, the pontiff turns towards the people and says simply: *Orate*. This is a sort of echo of *the* introductory *oremus* to the rite, just before the pontiff secretly pronounces the prayer over the oblates. *Ordo X*, composed in the first half of the 10th century, describes a *lavabo* at the throne (already mentioned in the *Sangallensis* 614 collection, a Gallicanised recension of OR I) after the pontiff has received the oblates from the faithful. Returning to the altar, the bishop places his oblation there and then blesses what the text calls the *hostias*, saying: *Veni sanctificator omnipotens, aeterne Deus*, etc. He then incenses the altar, turns towards the people and says: *Orate pro me*.

³⁵ ‘However,’ writes Dom P. TIROT, ‘a gesture by the Pontiff may have been the starting point: after the deposition of the oblations,

‘the pontiff, bowing slightly towards the altar, looks towards the choir and nods for them to be silent’. As the altar at the Lateran faces the congregation, this bowing of the Pontiff serves no other purpose than to signal to the cantors to bring the Offertory Psalm to a close. However, as the Rev. Fr. B. Luyckx observes, “it is not unlikely that it was the remark ‘*paululum se inclinans*’ that inspired the later custom of bowing before the altar after the rite of the offering” (in *Essai sur les sources de l’Ordo Missae prémontré*, Postel, n.d., p. 32). This is a hypothesis. In any case, this is the meaning given to this gesture by Amalarius, who considered himself a faithful observer of Roman customs, which he went to study on site: “While the cantors are still singing, the priest goes to the altar and prays: he does what he has instructed the others to do. He prays for the remission of his own sins so that he may be worthy to approach the altar” (*De Eccl. off.*, ed. J.M. HANSSSENS, Rome, 1948, Vol. I, p. 318). (D. P. TIROT, O.S.B., *History of the Offertory Prayers in the Roman Liturgy from the 7th to the 16th Century*, in *Ephem. Lit. Subsidia* 34, Rome, 1985, p. 13.

³⁶ “This rubric,” wrote Bishop M. RIGHETTI, “explains why the priest turns towards the people, forming a perfect circle with the movement of his body. The Pontiff had to do this in order to address everyone, bishops and clergy, situated to the right and left of the altar.” (*Storia liturgica, loc. cit.*, p. 367).

However, it is each step of the original gesture whose meaning is now to be explained. Indeed, “several holy bishops,” wrote Father Lebrun, “deemed it appropriate to distinguish between the oblation of bread and wine, the oblation of ourselves, and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, and to set out the reasons for our oblation in prayers that might rouse the priests’ attention and give them cause to perform this great act in a holy manner³⁷ ”. All these private prayers are to be recited in a low voice.

It is important above all, and contrary to a fairly common opinion among liturgists, to draw a distinction between the Offertory prayers proper and the numerous formulas of apology through which the celebrating minister ceaselessly confessed his unworthiness throughout *the Ordo Missae*.

It would [indeed] be mistaken, writes Dom Paul Tirot, to think that the appearance of the Gallican-origin apologies preceded that of the Offertory prayers proper. The latter appear at the same time as the former, in the 8th century, in the Frankish Gelasian Missals, and are undoubtedly inspired by certain prayers used in the last surviving examples of the Gallican liturgy³⁸.

Undoubtedly, if only because of their literary origin, many of the Offertory prayers draw their source from the formulas of the apologies; yet when, in the 12th century, these were to disappear from *the Ordo Missae*, the private Offertory prayers would endure, as they offer concepts more closely linked to the theology of the Sacrifice than to the unworthiness of the one celebrating it.

The hybrid Sacramentaries and medieval Missals of Western Europe offer a vast number of these private prayers. Faced with such an abundance of eucharistical formulas, Dom Paul Tirot was able to indicate the method to be followed in their study: to specify the geographical origin, the evolution, and the interpenetration of the various types of Offertory. We can only refer the reader to Dom Tirot’s study, a work of rare erudition which, we believe, provides an exhaustive overview of the subject. We shall confine ourselves here to highlighting those aspects relevant to the formation of the Offertory of *the Ordo Missae* of St Pius V.

1.3.2 *The origins of the Offertory of the Ordo Missae of St Pius V*

Whilst north of the Alps and in Italy itself the prayers and rites of the Offertory had developed, it seems that the papal chapel long adhered to the barely modified structure of *the Ordo Romanus I*. Around 1140, *the Ordo Ecclesiae Lateranensis* by Prior Bernard

³⁷ P. LEBRUN, *Explication des prières et des cérémonies de la Messe*, Tours, ed. 1976, p. 237.

³⁸ P. TIROT, *Op. cit.*, p. 20.

Among the changes, it mentions only the blessing of the water by the celebrant, the incensing, and a brief reference to *the *Orate fratres**³⁹. At the end of the 12th century, in the **De sacro altari mysterio** by the future Innocent III, after the oblations have been offered and incensed, the priest bows, prays in silence – without any specific formula being indicated – and then addresses the people, saying: **orate pro me fratres**. However, still in the 12th century, at St Peter's – where the Pope did not yet reside – *the Ordo Missae*⁴⁰ offers a much more developed rite, originating from the Germanic region. As the work of Father van Dijk allows us to observe⁴¹, it was *the Ordo Missae* drawn up by Innocent III at the beginning of the 13th century that incorporated the Eucharistic formulas of the Offertory, which, via the Missal of the Roman Curia of the 13th century, were incorporated into *the Ordo Missae* of St Pius V, with a few variations⁴².

From the study of sources conducted by Dom Tirot, it appears that the Offertory of the Missal of St. Pius V results from the fusion of two Germanic *Ordines*, one Rhenish, the other Mainz.

Chronologically, the numerous forms of the Rhenish type⁴³ include *the Offerimus* (early 9th century), followed by the *Suscipe sancte Pater*⁴⁴ (early 11th century). It is worth noting the two expressions *calicem salutaris* and *immaculatam hostiam* which, just as with the Protestant reformers, caused so much difficulty for most 20th-century liturgists, and today seem to be the decisive argument of the opponents of *the Ordo Missae* of Saint Pius V. In the Rhenish type, each of the two prayers is followed by a formula of blessing which, according to Dom Tirot, 'corrects the prolepsis'⁴⁵. We shall see later what the prolepsis in question consists of, and whether it was therefore necessary to correct it.

The Mayence type⁴⁶ includes the prayers *In spiritu humilitatis*, *Veni sanctificator* and *Suscipe sancta Trinitas*. All three forms are of Frankish and even Gallican origin. *The In spiritu humilitatis*, which appeared in Amiens in the 9th century, had initially formed the conclusion of the Norman-Anglo-Saxon liturgies and of numerous monastic liturgies. The *Veni*

³⁹ Ed. L. FISCHER, *Ordo officiorum Ecclesiae Lateranensis*, in *Historische Forschungen und Quellen*, nos. 2–3, Munich, 1916.

⁴⁰ Ed. A EBNER, *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte und Kunst-Geschichte des Missale Romanum im Mittelalter. Iter Italicum*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1896, XVI.

⁴¹ S.P. van DIJK, *The Ordinal of the Papal Court from Innocent III to Boniface VIII, and related Documents*, in *Specilegium Friburgense* 22, Fribourg, 1975.

⁴² See P. TIROT, *Op. cit.*, pp. 117–119.

⁴³ 'At the beginning of the 9th century, according to K. Gamber, the famous Abbey of St Gall, the scene of intense liturgical creativity, seems to have created a new type of offertory prayer which spread to the wealthy abbeys of the Rhineland before spreading to Italy, and through the Missal of the Roman Curia, to the whole Church'. (P. TIROT, *ibid.*, p. 67).

⁴⁴ '... The Rhenish Ordo would only find its completion through the introduction of the formula "*Suscipe sancte Pater*", which, however, does not appear to be of Rhenish origin. The earliest known example is a Sacramentary from the Abbey of Seon in Bavaria. It is dated to 1009'. (P. TIROT, *Ibid.*, p. 70).

⁴⁵ P. TIROT, *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁴⁶ 'We call it this because its oldest known example is found in *the Ordo Missae* of an 11th-century Mainz Pontifical.' (P. TIROT, *Ibid.*, p. 78).

sanctificator, a formula of blessing for the oblates with an epiclesis, was already found in the Gallo-Celtic Missal of Stowe (9th century), and we have already noted it in *the Ordo Romanus X*, which in fact describes an episcopal Mass in Mainz in the 10th century⁴⁷. The *Suscipe sancta Trinitas*, found in an appendix to a Frankish Gelasian Sacramentary from the 9th–10th centuries⁴⁸, was undoubtedly originally intended ‘as a substitute for the old Gallican practice of mentioning the names [of the offerers] at this point⁴⁹’.

Apart from the rites of incensation and the *lavabo*, linked to the more ceremonial aspect of the Offertory, the only remaining items to be added to the list of formulas are those of the “blessing of the water” and the *Orate fratres*.

The pouring of water into the chalice, which in *the Ordo Romanus I* was performed in the shape of a cross by the deacon, was succeeded by the celebrant making the sign of the cross over the water. This gesture is now linked to the prayer *Deus, qui humanae substantiae*. In itself, this formula is of Roman origin: attributed to Saint Leo the Great, it is already found in the *Veronensis* as a prayer for the feast of Christmas. But it was not until the 11th century, first in *the Ordo* of Minden (*Missal Illyrica*), the Pontifical of Salzburg-Sées and that of Saint-Laurent de Liège, that it began to be applied to the rite of the infusion of water, now with the interjection *per hujus aquae et vini mysterium*. Its use spread throughout Italy from the following century.

As for *the Orate fratres*, we have already noted its first draft in the 8th century in *the Ordo XVII*, a Roman-Frankish ordinary. It is found in the Sacramentary of Amiens in the 9th century, and at the Abbey of Saint Thierry in the 9th and 10th centuries. Both the Rhenish and Mainz versions contain it, but it was not until the 11th century that it appeared almost universally in the Sacramentaries. It took on a great many forms, and seems initially to have been addressed solely to the clergy. In Rome, at the end of the 12th century, according to the testimony of Innocent III’s **De sacro altaris mysterio**, the celebrant still said only **Orate pro me, fratres**. There was no response, as remained the custom among the Carthusians and Dominicans, as well as in the Roman Mass of the Presanctified on Good Friday. *The current ‘Suscipiat’*, one of the many responses from the 11th century, appeared in Innocent III’s *Ordo Missae*⁵⁰.

⁴⁷ See M. ANDRIEU, *Les Ordines romani...*, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 358–360.

⁴⁸ St Gall Manuscript 348, ed. MOLHBERG, *Das fränkische Sacramentarium Gelasianum in alamanischer Ueberlieferung*, in *Liturgiegeschichte. Quellen*, I-II, p. 247, XCIX. ‘Thus we find it already at an early stage, recited alone and with that profound inclination, at this point, before *the Orate fratres*, first of all in Italy; it forms an integral part of the Roman Ordinary of the Offertory as it was taking shape. It was only later that it appeared in this place in a few countries, even outside Italy’ (J.A. JUNGSMANN, *Missarum solemnina, loc. cit.*, II, pp. 324–325).

⁴⁹ N. M. DENIS-BOULET, in A. G. MARTIMORT, *L’Église en prière*, Tournai, 1965, p. 387.

⁵⁰ In light of these historical observations, it is worth noting a few details regarding the *Orate fratres* rite in the Tridentine Missal. Before 1962, the priest pronounced the words ‘*Orate fratres*’ not aloud but *voce paululum elevata*; both before and after 1962, the celebrant’s elaboration of the formula was not spoken aloud, and the congregation’s response was audible only at a read Mass.

2. Theological remarks on the prayers of the Tridentine Offertory

In the course of our brief historical investigation, we have already been able to identify some clues that shed light on the profound—that is to say, doctrinal—nature of the developments from the primitive Roman gesture of the Offertory up to the formation of *the Ordo Missae* known as that of St Pius V.

Along with J.A. Jungmann and Bishop M. Righetti, we believe that the starting point for medieval Eucharistic formulas is to be found in the theology of the Sacrifice of the ancient *orationes super oblata*. On the other hand, whilst the Offertory that resulted from this—that is, the one adopted by the Roman Church in the 13th century—is the product of a fusion of the Rhenish and Mainzian types, this does not mean that two complete types were simply placed end to end in a new Ordinary. On the contrary, the fusion is the result of a selection, the curial ordinary having retained, as Dom Tirot further emphasises, ‘the prayers of greatest doctrinal value... in the Frankish, Germanic and Celtic traditions⁵¹’. Indeed, we must not forget that the Roman Curia received this ordinary in the 13th century, at a time when the theologians of the School were devoting all their thought to the field of sacramental theology, and especially Eucharistic theology.

2.1 Some criticisms

Nevertheless, these Offertory prayers, along with the whole complex of rites that accompany them, have been the subject of criticism, firstly from Protestants, and secondly from several authors of the 20th-century Liturgical Movement.

All the Reformers, wrote the Lutheran pastor D. Reed, rejected the Roman Offertory and its idea of an offering for sins made by the priest, rather than an offering of thanksgiving made by the people (*sic*). Luther, with his conviction that the sacrament is a gift from God to man, and not an offering from man to God, called the Roman Offertory an ‘abomination’ where one ‘hears and feels the oblation everywhere’⁵².

One finds an echo of the Reformers’ criticisms even in the proceedings of the Council of Trent. Indeed, the commission tasked with drawing up a list of abuses occurring in the celebration of Mass included in the *libellus* to be submitted to the Legates ‘the fact that at the Offertory the unconsecrated bread is called the holy and immaculate host offered for the living

⁵¹ Dom TIROT, *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁵² L. REED, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, Philadelphia, 1959, p. 312.

and for the dead; that the wine, before it is consecrated, is called the saving chalice⁵³ ”. However, upon examination, the Legates had a *compendium* drawn up, to be submitted for discussion by the Council Fathers, in which the section relating to the Offertory was not included, and thus could not be subject to any discussion. Several centuries later, however, it is the same kind of criticism that abounds in the writings of the authors of the Liturgical Movement. Following in the footsteps of J.A. Jungmann, they often regard the Offertory of *the Ordo Missae* of St Pius V as merely a sort of ‘duplicate’ of the prayers of the Canon, and highlight the clumsy expression ‘little canon’ by which some began to refer to it towards the end of the Middle Ages⁵⁴ . R. Cabié summarised the criticisms of this liturgical school as follows:

What is most striking about these prayers is their anticipatory nature: whilst the elements are not yet on the altar, there is talk of a ‘spotless offering’ and a ‘chalice of salvation’; one considers in advance what the consecration will bring about. It is therefore not surprising to find duplicates of the anaphora and, above all, the expression of the offering⁵⁵ .

Whilst the nature of these objections requires a primarily theological response, we would nevertheless like to preface this with two remarks relating to liturgical practice.

Firstly, the problem that, according to liturgists, the Offertory of *the Ordo* Tridentinus would raise is by no means limited to the Roman liturgy alone. We observe, in fact, that the Offertory, with its sacrificial content and ‘anticipatory’ character, is a heritage common to both Eastern and Western liturgies. To a greater or lesser extent, all of them employ prayers and rites of offering that refer directly to the Oblation of the Holy Victim. There is no doubt that a comparative study of the types of Offertory found in these various liturgies – a study that has yet to be undertaken – would be of great use in gaining a better understanding of the theology of the Offertory. For if the Offertory of *the Ordo Missae* of St Pius V, with all its complex rites, is merely a more or less useful, and more or less pompous, counterpart to the consecration, what, for example, was the theological value of that sort of *adventus* which constituted the Offertory procession in *the Expositio* of Pseudo-Germanus? And in the face of the Byzantine Great Entrance rite, should we appreciate the sceptical, even hostile, attitude of some of the Latin Fathers of the Council of Florence?

On the other hand, it should be noted that anticipation is not only present at the Offertory, but is found in many other parts of the Roman Missal of St. Pius V, and even, as we might say with Dom Tiro, in Paul VI’s *Novus Ordo* – in

⁵³ *Conc. Trid. Acta*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1919, Vol. 8, p. 917.

⁵⁴ J.A. JUNGSMANN, *Op. cit.*, II, p. 378.

⁵⁵ R. CABIE, *The Eucharist*, in *The Church in Prayer*, Paris, 1983, p. 180.

insofar as the latter incorporates the preceding euchological formulas. Among these formulas, in addition to the *orationes super oblata*, which are thought not to have been altered and therefore remain common to both missals, we may cite the *Te igitur* of the Roman Canon, which has become the *Prex I*, where mention is already made of *the sacrificia illibata* prior to the Act of Consecration.

2.2 The Offertory in the Sacrifice

Does the Offertory duplicate the Consecration? How does it differ from it?

We do not presume to undertake an exhaustive analysis of the theology of the Offertory. With the aid of a few considerations—which, moreover, presuppose the doctrinal indications identified in historical research—we seek to understand the theological conceptions of a given *Ordo*, in this case that of St Pius V. Because this *Ordo*, as we know, is the medieval development of a pre-existing rite, we believe it essential to draw upon certain elements of scholastic sacramental theology, and especially Thomistic theology, in order to account for it.

We shall also draw upon the commentaries of a few more recent authors. In the face of the criticisms we have outlined, a reflection on the Offertory—which lies at the intersection of history and theology—has been undertaken by only a few; among these, we may highlight C. Callewaert and Dom B. Capelle⁵⁶. From a strictly theological perspective, we cannot overlook, within the specific context of this conference, a study which, though born of a polemical context, nevertheless offers a significant contribution to doctrinal reflection on the Offertory, the work of the Dominican theologian M.L. Guérard des Lauriers⁵⁷.

In his *Commentary on the Sentences*, St Thomas Aquinas conceives of the Offertory as ‘*oblatio materiae consecrandae*⁵⁸’. The *Summa Theologica* offers an important clarification: here, *the oblatio* is understood as an integral part of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, alongside the *consecratio* and the *perceptio*⁵⁹. *The oblatio* consists of two elements: the praise of the people in the *Offertory* chant, through which the joy of those who offer is signified; and the priest’s prayer “*who prays that the oblation of the people may be accepted by God*”. Even though the act of offering is no longer collective, Aquinas thus reminds us that it is indeed the whole Church that continues, through the hands and the

⁵⁶ Dom B. CAPELLE O.S.B., ‘*Our sacrifices and the Sacrifice of Christ*’, in **La Messe et sa catéchèse**, ed. *Lex orandi* 7, Paris, 1947, pp. 155–179.

⁵⁷ M.L. GUERARD des LAURIERS O.P., *The Offertory of the Mass and the New Ordo Missae*, in *Itinéraires*, No. 158, 1971, pp. 29–69. The citation of an article by Father Guérard des Lauriers, who was a professor at the Saulchoir and at the Pontifical Lateran University, obviously does not imply the author’s personal endorsement of the ecclesiological theses put forward by the Dominican theologian after the writing of this article (1971).

⁵⁸ *Sent.*, IV, dist. 8.

⁵⁹ *Summa Theologiae*, IIIa, q. 83, a. 4. “*Thus, with the people prepared and instructed, the celebration of the mystery begins. This is indeed offered as a sacrifice, consecrated and received as a sacrament: first, the oblation is performed; second, the consecration of the offered matter; third, the reception of the same.*”

prayer of the priest, to offer the matter of the Sacrifice. Now, for St Thomas, the offering of the matter to be consecrated is already sacrificial – *offertur ut sacrificium*.

To better understand the sacrificial character of this Offering, we must here briefly recall the Thomist doctrine of the sacrificial act. According to St Thomas, sacrifice is a natural act of the virtue of religion⁶⁰, the most perfect of all the external acts of this virtue. In sacrifice, the religious person offers to God, the first principle of all his goods, the sensible realities at his disposal in order to bear witness to Him, through a freely expressive act, to the invisible and interior offering of his whole being⁶¹. The external rite signifies the interior sacrifice; ‘Man himself,’ comments Father A. Barrois, ‘consecrated to God by his whole being and by the very fact of his creation, is the first and principal victim of every sacrifice, to such an extent that the external act has only symbolic value, the victim offered in his stead having no other function than to represent man in the inner gift he makes of himself to God⁶²’.

The sacrificial offering is therefore determined by the strictly and exclusively laetific end to which it is directed. This is why a clear distinction must be made between the offering of the material intended for sacrifice and the simple offering, or presentation, of a free and indeterminate nature, of a gift for the use of the cult or its ministers⁶³. For the offering linked to the Sacrifice is that of a material which acquires a special status, a material upon which, concomitant with the act of offering, a *sacrum facere* is performed—a sacred rite which sets it apart for the exclusive use of God⁶⁴.

It is easy to see that whilst consecration specifies the sacrifice, the offering, which is its generic element, obviously contributes to the consecration of the matter. It is therefore necessary to distinguish, within the very act of consecration, the part played by human activity and the crucial part played by divine activity: man offers, but consecration consists essentially and formally in God’s appropriation of that which has been offered to Him.

Now, this is where another element comes into play: sin. For, whilst man is bound by justice, and in a natural way, to the offering of sacrifices, nevertheless, because of original sin, his sacrifice is in itself worthless in God’s eyes, and this remains so as long as humanity remains in a state of depravity. ‘The path of homage is closed to him, and, even if it remained open, the gift would be worthless: God accepts the tribute of honour only from those who conform

⁶⁰ *Summa Theologica*, II-II, q. 85, a. 1.

⁶¹ *S.T.*, II IIae, q. 85, a. 2.

⁶² A. BARROIS O.P., ‘The Sacrifice of Christ on Calvary’, in *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques*, 1925, XIV, p. 150.

⁶³ *S.T.*, II IIae, q. 85, a. 3, ad 3um. See also q. 86, a. 1.

⁶⁴ “Sacrifices are properly so called when something is done in respect of things offered to God” (*S.T.*, II IIae, q. 85, a. 3, ad 3um).

fully to his purposes, and he demands spotless victims⁶⁵ ". If, in the Old Testament, we see God commanding that sacrifices be offered to him, it was not because such sacrifices were capable of restoring the harmony broken by sin. In themselves, such sacrifices possessed no absolute value, and if they were granted any efficacy, it was only because of the Sacrifice of Christ which they foreshadowed and to which they referred.

To restore harmony and redeem humanity, Jesus had to be the victim of His own sacrifice. 'And if, as Father Barrois further states, the sacrifice consists for man in honouring God with the gifts he has received, Jesus as the victim is assuredly the most precious thing humanity could offer, since He embodies in Himself all the perfections of men, singularly ennobled by their subsistence in the person of the Word⁶⁶'. The Sacrifice of Christ, who is the immaculate Host, therefore possesses an absolute and transcendent value; this is why all sacrifices that have been or will ever be offered must, on pain of nullity, refer to the redemptive Sacrifice through which the possibility of offering a sacrifice that is acceptable is restored to man. "Just as man's merit and satisfaction are based respectively on the merit and satisfaction of Jesus, so too does man's sacrifice, to be valid, presuppose that of Christ and represents only human collaboration in God's work, that is, the union of the creature with the uncreated Host⁶⁷ ".

This explains, wrote Father M.L. Guérard des Lauriers, why the Sacrifice of Christ – which is obviously acceptable – must also be the sacrifice of man. If there were two sacrifices, foreign to or juxtaposed with one another, if the Sacrifice of Christ were not the sacrifice of man, and at the same time the *same sacrifice*, Redemption would be missed; it would not allow man to recover what is most fundamental to his own purpose, namely to offer to the Creator, as a rational creature, a sacrifice that truly proceeds from the creature and is accepted⁶⁸ .

2.3 Theological Profile of the Offertory of the Ordo Missae of St Pius V

'This oblation,' wrote Saint Irenaeus, 'the Church alone offers, pure, to the Creator, offering to Him with thanksgiving that which comes from His creation. The Jews no longer offer it: their hands are full of blood, for they have not received the Word through whom one offers to God⁶⁹ '.

⁶⁵ A. BARROIS, *Op. cit.*, pp. 150–151.

⁶⁶ A. BARROIS, *Ibid.*, p. 151.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

⁽⁶⁸⁾ M.L GUERARD des LAURIERS, *Op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁶⁹ IRENAEUS, *Adversus hereses, loc. cit.*, Vol. II, 18, 4.

It is therefore only through and with Christ that one can offer to God. Thus, at the Offertory, when the redeemed man, a living stone of the Church of Christ, offers the bread and wine through the hands of the priest, he relates his offering, through the gestures and prayers proper to each rite in which the Eucharistic Sacrifice is celebrated, to the only Oblation recognised by law, the Sacrifice of Christ. Thus, in *the Ordo Missae* of St Pius V, the priest may say:

'Suscipe sancte Pater...hanc immaculatam hostiam' and *'Offerimus tibi, Domine, calicem salutaris'*. For, as Father Lebrun comments, "what the priest holds on the paten is merely bread, but it is bread that is offered only because it is to become the true bread of Jesus Christ Our Lord, the only victim without blemish or defect. Truly, this bread on the paten could be called a spotless host, that is to say, pure, clean, and carefully chosen; but the priest calls it a spotless host in a more real and elevated sense. The Church, which prescribes this expression, assumes that we are taught that we must offer to God a pure and spotless host, which is pleasing in his sight; that there is none but Jesus Christ who can please him; and that we must be so intent on offering this divine victim that, as we begin to offer the bread, we already speak as though we were offering this *spotless host*, which is the only one whose offering can wash us clean of our sins ⁷⁰".

Likewise, the rite of the drop of water mixed with the wine is to signify, as the Council of Trent⁷¹ teaches, following Saint Cyprian⁷² (among other Fathers of the early centuries), the mystical union of the faithful with their Lord, and thus the total assimilation of man's sacrifice to the Redemptive Sacrifice⁷³. Another allegorical interpretation, which gave rise to numerous forms in medieval ordinaries and was also accepted by the Council of Trent⁷⁴, further reinforces the sacrificial character of the Offertory, which sees in this mixing an allusion to the shedding of blood and water from the Saviour's side.

The prayer **In spiritu humilitatis** links the offering of the faithful with the offering of Christ.

⁷⁰ P. LEBRUN, *Explanation of the Prayers and Ceremonies of the Mass*, Tours, ed. 1976, pp. 240–241. See also BOSSUET, *Explication de quelques difficultés...*, IV: '...the Church does indeed offer bread and wine, but not in an absolute sense or in and of themselves; for in the New Covenant, inanimate things are no longer offered to God, nor anything other than Jesus Christ: this is why bread and wine are offered so that they may become his body and blood'.

⁷¹ Council of Trent, Session XXII, 7: "Since the people are described as water in the Apocalypse of St John, the union of the faithful of that people with Christ the Head is represented."

⁷² "Christians ought to be so absorbed in Christ that they can no longer be separated from Him, just as water cannot be separated from wine once it has become part of it." CYPRIAN of CARTHAGE, in *Epist.* 63, *Ad Coecilium*, 12; P.L. 4, 371.

⁷³ On the expression *hujus et aquae mysterium*, Father LEBRUN writes (*Op. cit.*, p. 249): "The word 'mystery' means secret or secret sign. Since the earliest centuries, the Church has been accustomed to regard the mixing of wine and water in the chalice as the secret representation of the union of the faithful with Jesus Christ... She asks that this mystery of the mixing of wine and water be followed by the union which it represents."

⁷⁴ Council of Trent, *Ibid.*: "*Quia e latere ejus aqua simul cum sanguine exierit..., sacramentum hac mixtione recolitur*".

This sacrifice, says Father Guérard des Lauriers, which is *ours* because it proceeds from us, is designated as *the* sacrifice; for, *objectively*, there are not two sacrifices. *Objectively*, that is to say *ontologically*, our sacrifice must be ‘converted’ into the Sacrifice of Christ. This is precisely what the Roman Offertory suggests with rigorous precision in its concise splendour: the *sacrificium nostrum* of the ‘In spiritu humilitatis’ becomes, in the ‘Veni Sanctificator’, *hoc sacrificium*, this sacrifice, the *one and only* sacrifice⁷⁵. There is a response and fulfilment from one prayer to the next, by virtue of a dual movement, *ascending* and *descending*. The *descending* movement is marked with particular emphasis by the epiclesis of the prayer ‘*Veni Sanctificator*’⁷⁶.

For, as Father Lebrun says, “the blessing or sanctification of the gifts we offer to God to be changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ is attributed to the Holy Spirit, just as is the fulfilment of the mystery of the Incarnation and the outpouring of supernatural gifts upon the Church⁷⁷”.

It is therefore by virtue of the conversion of the elements—a work attributed to the Holy Spirit, which will take place at the Consecration—that the unity between *our* sacrifice and *the* Sacrifice of Christ will be realised in action. The Eucharistic conversion, in fact,

concerns not the manner of being, but being itself. The bread becomes, in its very being, the Body of Christ; from which it follows that Christ *is* present in the appearance of the transubstantiated bread, in the manner of a substance, that is to say, in *being*, and by virtue of a Communication which He exercises through His Body. That being the case, Father Guérard des Lauriers goes on to say, we understand that the sacrifice of man, specified by the *oblative* offering of bread and wine, does not and cannot be counted among the Sacrifice of Christ, realised by the simultaneous Presence of the Body and Blood in which the bread and wine,

⁷⁵ M.L. GUERARD des LAURIERS, *Op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁷⁶ See J.A. JUNGSMANN, *Ibid.*, II: ‘This brings us to a final series of texts that developed within the oblation rites of the Middle Ages and of which the *Veni Sanctificator* remains in the Roman Mass: the formulas of blessing. As this blessing is given primarily by imploring divine blessing, by invoking the power of the Holy Spirit, or simply the Holy Spirit, we may also call them epiclesis formulas (p. 342)... Towards the end of the Middle Ages, we find inserted, both in Normandy and in England, but elsewhere too... the hymn *Veni Creator*. The content of *the Veni Sanctificator* does not, it is true, compel us to see it as an invocation of the Holy Spirit and to introduce into the list of offertory prayers and Mass prayers in general a type of invocation that is otherwise foreign to it. But, precisely in view of the fact just alluded to, there is no doubt that the invocation was often understood in this sense in the Middle Ages. In certain cases, the address to the Holy Spirit was formally made explicit in the *Veni Sanctificator* itself’ (pp. 346–347). ⁷⁷ P. LEBRUN, *Op. cit.*, p. 261.

far from being destroyed, are, *as regards their being*, assumed, because metaphysically ‘converts’⁷⁸ .

Up to this point, the two prayers of offering of the bread and wine, the prayer for the mixing of the water, and then *the In spiritu humilitatis*, have primarily highlighted the significance we attach to the offering by emphasising the propitiatory value of our Sacrifice, which is that of Christ. In response to the humble *In spiritu humilitatis*, the prayer of *the Veni sanctificator* affirmed that God finds his glory through this Sacrifice: “*Tuo sancto Nomini praeparatum*”.

After the rite of incensation (where we find, incidentally, the same dual movement of liturgical prayer), followed by that of *the lavabo*, it is the ancient Gallican prayer *Suscipe sancta Trinitas* that serves to relate the first phase—the Offertory—to the overall Action of the Sacrifice, and thus to rise to the ultimate purpose of the Act undertaken. Father Guérard des Lauriers and Dom Tirot agree in their admiration for the theological precision of the form.

The gifts, says Dom Tirot, are offered to the Holy Trinity, the sole object of our worship in the strict sense, in memory of Our Lord Jesus Christ: ‘memoria’ must be taken here in the sense of a memorial which is not a mere remembrance, but a re-enactment of Christ’s sacrifice, His Passion, His Resurrection and His Ascension; finally, they are also offered in honour of the Virgin Mary and the saints, or more precisely, according to the exact meaning of the original expression, ‘in honore’: ‘in the memory or feast we celebrate of them’ (Fr. Lebrun), and this in order to honour them, giving thanks to God who saved and crowned them, and to implore their intercession so as to receive more fully the fruits of the sacrifice⁷⁹ .

The ‘Orate fratres’, with its response, not only draws the attention of the participants but clearly affirms the Church’s intention in offering the Sacrifice. The following are indeed highlighted: on the one hand, the unity between the *sacrifice* of the faithful (*meum ac vestrum sacrificium*) and the *Sacrifice* of Christ, the one and only Sacrifice which the people ask God to accept (*suscipiat Dominus sacrificium*); on the other hand, the twofold purpose of the Mass: its ultimate purpose (*ad laudem et gloriam nominis sui*), and its immediate purpose (*ad utilitatem quoque nostram, totiusque Ecclesiae suae sanctae*).

Conclusion

At the end of this brief study, two questions come to mind.

⁷⁸ L.M. GUERARD des LAURIERS, *Op. cit.*, p. 45. “We thus understand why the ‘hanc immaculatam hostiam’ designated by the gesture of the offering and the ‘hostiam + immaculatam’ following the Consecration are, as they must be, the same ‘hostia immaculata’; and this is why this ‘hostia immaculata’ must be designated as ‘hostia’ before the Consecration brings about what every faithful member of the Roman Catholic Church believes” (p. 63).

⁷⁹ Fr. TIROT, *Op. cit.*, p. 29.

Firstly: can it be said, in the light of history and theology, that the rich collection that is the Offertory of *the Ordo* of St Pius V constitutes a sort of ‘little canon’, with its prayers of offering, its epiclesis (*Veni sanctificator*), and even its anamnesis (*Suscipe sancta Trinitas*)? We agree with Dom Tirot that “this is an artificial distinction, entirely foreign to those who instituted these prayers, and one rightly criticised by J.A. Jungmann⁸⁰”. Since it is the very nature of the sacrifice not to be a simple entity, “but a complex unified by the very unity of its end⁸¹”, the Offertory must be placed, in accordance with the entire history of its development, within the full context of the sacrificial offering: “*offertur ut sacrificium*”, says St Thomas⁸². For, the Offertory, in the words of Dom Capelle, ‘... in no way constitutes an inchoation, a first act of the oblation itself. It is the whole of the oblation, but only in its preparation: “*tuo Nomini praeeparatum*”. The Offertory is therefore not a *partial* act that is nonetheless *absolute*; on the contrary, it is a *total* yet *relative* act, that is to say, the Christian must spiritually realise in it, in anticipation, his full participation in the consecration, his gaze already fixed on the imminent sacramental oblation, in essential relation to it...⁸³”.

On the other hand, is the sacrificial concept of the Offertory—which has been a constant feature throughout the history and celebration of Eastern and Western liturgies—present or sufficiently evident in the Offertory of Paul VI’s *Novus Ordo Missae*? Pending a study of the work of *the Consilium*⁸⁴, if we rely on the few references made by Monsignor A. Bugnini in his work *La riforma liturgica*⁸⁵, it seems that the intention of the reformers who composed the new formulas was clearly influenced by the Liturgical Movement’s criticisms regarding prolepsis. Hence the clearly stated desire of these liturgists to replace the term ‘*Offering*’ with that of ‘*Presentation of the gifts*’⁸⁶. This intention is even more pronounced in the vernacular translation of the phrase ‘*quem (quod) tibi offerimus*’, which becomes, in almost all languages: ‘we present it to you’⁸⁷; furthermore, in the French translation, the text of *the Orate fratres* has become

⁸⁰ P. TIROT, *Op. cit.*, p. 124.

⁸¹ A. BARROIS, *Op. cit.*, p. 149.

⁸² *S.T.*, IIIa, q. 83, a. 4.

⁸³ Dom B. CAPELLE, *Op. cit.* and *loc. cit.*, pp. 171–172.

⁸⁴ *Consilium ad exsequendam Constitutionem de sacra Liturgia*.

⁸⁵ A. BUGNINI, *La riforma liturgica*, Rome, ed. 1997. See pp. 188, 337, 341, 375–376.

⁸⁶ It is worth noting here the personal intervention of PAUL VI, contrary to the proposals of the liturgists, to ensure that the oblation intention of the Offertory was expressed in both forms of *presentation* through the phrase ‘*quem (quod) tibi offerimus*’. (See A. BUGNINI, *Op. cit.*, pp. 375–376).

⁸⁷ Thus, according to Bishop BUGNINI, ‘provision was made for the difficulties’ raised by an oblation and sacrificial view of the Offertory (*Ibid.*, p. 376).

unrecognisable⁸⁸ . However, to better answer this question, which remains relevant today, it would still be necessary to undertake a theological examination of *the* new and revised *orationes super oblata* of the 1969 Missal⁸⁹ . To this we must add the need for a major study of comparative liturgy, as well as an in-depth examination of Luther's critiques and the reformed rituals of the 16th century.

⁸⁸ 'Let us pray, brothers, as we offer the sacrifice of the whole Church'. R.: 'For the glory of God and the salvation of the world'.

⁸⁹ See V. RAFFA, 'Le orazioni sulle offerte del Proprio del Tempo nel nuovo Messale', in *Ephemerides Liturgicae*, 1970, pp. 299–322.