



IS IT AN OFFERING OR IS IT AN OBLATION?

Many of us may have occasionally noticed a change in the priest's Eucharistic Prayers, which has been brought into use the word "*oblation*". For example, in Eucharistic Prayer III, we hear:

*"Therefore, O Lord, as we celebrate the memorial of the saving Passion of your Son, his wondrous Resurrection and Ascension into heaven, and as we look forward to his second coming, we offer you in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice. ... Look, we pray, upon the **oblation** of your Church and, recognizing the sacrificial Victim by whose death you willed to reconcile us to yourself, grant that we, who are nourished by the Body and Blood of your Son and filled with his Holy Spirit, may become one body, one spirit in Christ. ..."*

In the revised 2010 General Instruction to the Roman Missal (GIRM), the U.S. Bishops remind us:

"The oblation, by which, in this very memorial, the Church, in particular that gathered here and now, offers the unblemished sacrificial Victim in the Holy Spirit to the Father. The Church's intention, indeed, is that the faithful not only offer this unblemished sacrificial Victim, but also learn to offer their very selves, and so day by day to be brought, through the mediation of Christ, into unity with God and with each other, so that God may at least be all in all" (2010 GIRM, 79ff).

As noted in the GIRM, here in the liturgy the action is different from any other kind of offering we may make. For example, we can offer advice, our chair to another, and our donation/envelope in the collection basket, but these sorts of offering don't even begin to approach what happens during the Eucharistic Prayer.

An *oblation*, on the other hand, is most closely associated with the offering of a sacrifice. What is offered in the oblation—and what distinguishes it from other offerings—is, first, Jesus, and secondly, me.

The heart of sacrifice, and that which makes it truly pleasing to God, is the heart of the giver. The term *oblation* expresses more clearly the Church's intention in the Eucharistic Prayer: it is Jesus and me—all of me, not just part of me—that is given to God at this point. While it is an offering, it more truly is an *oblation*. (SR: *Pastoral Liturgy*, Jan-Feb 2012, pp 10-11)