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Despite new missal, we are still people of the cup

Nicole Sotelo | Dec. 1, 2011 NCR Today

Before Mass, the priest apologized for the fans in the church on Thanksgiving morning. The roof was leaking, water had damaged the organ and the space needed to be dried. In this parish in southern Illinois, parishioners were stretching their wallets to pay for a new roof and the Boy Scouts were collecting food for those who would go without a meal in this depressed economy.

For the Vatican, though, these circumstances seem of little concern and retranslating the former Latin Mass is a top priority. New prayer books must be ordered, poor economy or not, because a few bishops want to believe that Jesus used a "chalice" rather than a simple cup, as the new translation says. These bishops believe that a better Latin translation will bring people closer to God.

When life is hard, when the rain pours, it is tempting to seek shelter in elevated stories of Lords, castles and chalices. It is tempting to believe that ours is a God of spirit and not also a God who came to earth with only a loaf of bread and a simple cup for his drink.

After Mass, the priest asked the parishioners to stay a few minutes to prepare the pews for the weekend Mass that would use the newly translated prayer books. People brought forward the former missalettes and replaced them with the new ones. It only took a few minutes before the pews were cleared of the former ways of praying. May we never forget in our praying, however, that we are called by God to be a people of humility, a people of charity; we are a people of the cup.

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