

## BRIEF COMMENTS ON A CONSECRATION PRAYER

(The prayer by J. K. S. Reid was one of Two Eucharistic Prayers published in the last issue)

(1) Dr Reid describes the Prayer as “Consecration Prayer”, which is unfortunate, and may well be erroneous. We should do well to pay particular attention to the caveat of Bishop Frere. “To use for the central part of the Liturgy the familiar term ‘Consecration Prayer’ would be misleading, for the word ‘prayer’ is commonly taken to mean merely petition: and the word ‘consecration’ diverts modern attention from the central action which is the offering of the sacrifice to some other point, in fact to the very point about which the meaning and method of consecration ranges, The Recital of the Institution. That term, therefore, ‘begs the question’; and it may easily be deceptive. The term Anaphora is used therefore by preference. The term is a reminder that the formula is bound up with the sacrifice done by the offerers; while consecration is the gracious outcome of the divine acceptance of it — an act of God and not of men.”<sup>1</sup> Frere’s conclusion is “that the Consecration lies *in the whole observance of what we were told to do*”.<sup>2</sup> I submit that we should place the words “The Consecration” immediately before the Great Entrance, or the Offertory as it became known in the West. The whole act, The taking, The thanking, The breaking, The giving, The partaking, is the consecration. The Consecration is the *Liturgy of the Sacrament*. It is interesting to note that there is no *explicit* reference to “consecration” in the Modern Roman Order.

(2) The epiclesis is split, and so we have an epiclesis-consecration and epiclesis-communion prayer. Among recent liturgies, this is found only in the Roman Mass, where the two strands of the epiclesis may be (rightly?) regarded as buttresses for the Institution Narrative, which is patient of an understandable but unacceptable interpretation of its significance. The epiclesis is all of one piece in the Anglican Series 2 and 3, in the 1966 Liturgy of the Scottish Episcopal Church, in the Liturgy of the Church of South India, and in The Divine Service 1979. The magisterial study of the epiclesis, “Eucharist and Holy Spirit”, by the Roman theological professor, John H. McKenna, C.M.,<sup>3</sup> ends with the words, “It would seem that

placing the entire epiclesis *after* the institution, while it is not the only solution, is the preferable one”.

(3) Nowhere, except in Reid, does the fraction take place now within the Eucharistic Prayer. In the Mass it takes place in the Communion rite, and the Manual Acts should properly be performed in face of the faithful, that is, outwith the Canon, in their traditional position, as found in all the ancient liturgies, after the Lord's Prayer.

#### NOTES

1. W. H. Frere, *The Anaphora*, p. 54.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
3. Alcuin Club Collections No. 57 (1975).

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