

Liturgy We Live *by Dr. Gil Haas*

Oblationers bring the bread and wine to the altar where they are offered to God. Oblation means “to offer”, and it is defined as “an offering of ourselves, our lives and labors...” (BCP, p 857). In a broad sense, oblation refers to money, bread/wine, self, soul, and body offered at the Eucharist. However, the oblations of bread and wine are different from other offerings since the bread and wine are identified with Christ’s self-oblation for our salvation. The Prayer of Oblation within the Eucharistic prayer states, “And we present..., from your creation, this bread and this wine” (BCP, p 369). The Prayer of Oblation follows the Words of Institution (anamnesis - “After supper...our Lord Jesus Christ took bread/wine”) and before the invocation of the Holy Spirit (epiclesis - “...send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts”). Oblations should not be confused with ablutions - a liturgical cleansing of the Eucharistic vessels. St. Paul’s performs this ceremony in the sacristy where the residual bread and wine are either consumed by lay ministers or poured on the earth. The vessels are then flushed with holy water. The cleansing of the celebrant’s fingers before communion is another form of ablution.

If you have a liturgical question or an inquiry about anything that transpires during or around our worship service, please forward the question you would like researched to: gghaas@aol.com, or drop the question in the offering basin. Please note whether we can credit you as the source of the question.