

The Preparation of the Gifts (part 1 of 3)

THE COLLECTION

In the early Church people would bring the bread and wine from their homes and present it to the priest during the Mass. Now the bread and wine are brought, but we still have the opportunity to “give” of ourselves at Mass.

One of the most concrete ways that we offer some part of ourselves in the Mass is by giving in the offertory collection. In most churches a basket is passed around, and we are presented with an opportunity to give of our hard-earned money. For better or for worse, money has come to symbolize in our culture what really matters to us.

Giving in the collection is a symbolic but very real way of dying to ourselves. It proclaims that our faith is ultimately in God, not in our material wealth. Of course, it also pays the very real bills that the church accrues every time the lights, heat, or air conditioning are turned on. Most of us would be shocked to know how much it actually costs to pay such bills.

In the same way that our Lord handed Himself over to sinful men and was sacrificed on the cross for our salvation, we now give of ourselves too. It is not to recreate His sacrifice, but rather to participate in His sacrifice. We will offer ourselves through Christ to the Father in the Eucharistic Prayer.

PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR

During the collection, the altar is prepared. The altar is the center of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, much in the same way that the ambo was the center of the Liturgy of the Word. Now the altar is readied. A corporal, purificator, Sacramentary, paten, and chalice are all placed on the altar.

WHAT ARE THEY?



CORPORAL A square linen cloth that the chalice and paten rest upon on the top of the altar.

PURIFICATOR A linen cloth used to clean the chalice.

SACRAMENTARY A book containing the various prayers said at Mass.

PATEN A sacred plate used to hold the bread that will be consecrated at Mass.

CHALICE A sacred cup used to hold the water and wine that will be consecrated at Mass.

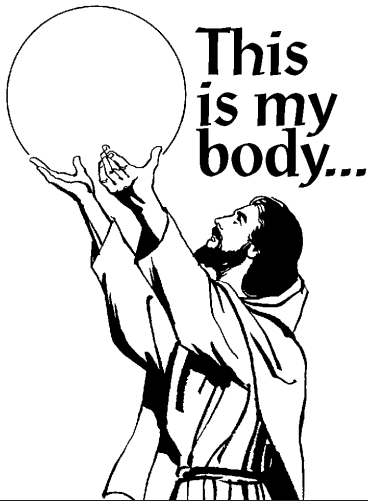
PROCESSION OF THE GIFTS HYMN

A hymn is sung while the altar is being prepared and the gifts are being assembled. It continues as they are brought from the congregation to the priest in a procession. Again, the hymn brings together all of us into one and is a way of unifying the action of those who represent us with ourselves.

PROCESSION OF THE GIFTS

A very important part of the preparation of the gifts to be offered at this Mass is the procession of the gifts. Remember that at the very beginning of the Mass, there was a procession in which the Book of the Gospels was held aloft as the various ministers entered the church building. Now there is another procession, this one involving representatives from the congregation.

The gifts represent us, and the people who bring them to the front emphasize the fact that “we” the congregation are asking the priest to take these gifts and to offer them to God in our name. It is important, because it sets the tone for us to understand that while the priest will say many of the prayers during this part of the Mass, he is saying them for all of us who are offering this Mass to God with him.



THE MASS

I. INTRODUCTORY RITES

- Entrance
- Veneration of the Altar
- Greeting
- Penitential Rite
- “Lord, Have Mercy”
- “Glory to God in the Highest”
- Opening Prayer

II. THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

- Scripture Readings
- Homily
- Profession of Faith
- Prayers of the Faithful

III. THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS<

- Eucharistic Prayer
 - 1. Preface
 - 2. Acclamation Sanctus
 - 3. Epiclesis
 - 4. Consecration
 - 5. The Mystery of Faith
 - 6. Anamnesis
 - 7. Offering
 - 8. Intercessions
 - 9. Final Doxology & Amen
- Communion Rite
 - 1. Lord’s Prayer
 - 2. Rite of Peace
 - 3. Breaking of Bread
 - 4. Communion
 - 5. Prayer After Communion

IV. CONCLUDING RITES

- Announcements
- Blessing
- Dismissal
- Veneration of the Altar
- Personal Thanksgiving