

The Eucharistic sacrifice, in all its rich variety of forms and traditions, has always retained this basic shape: the **taking of the elements** of bread and wine in the Preparation of the Gifts, the act of thanksgiving in the Eucharistic Prayer, the breaking of the bread, the giving and sharing of the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion.

INSTITUTIO GENERALIS MISSALIS ROMANI DOCUMENTATION

42. The gestures and posture of the priest, the deacon, and the ministers, as well as those of the people, ought to contribute to making the entire celebration resplendent with beauty and noble simplicity, so that the true and full meaning of the different parts of the celebration is evident and that the participation of all is fostered. Therefore, attention should be paid to what is determined by this General Instruction and the traditional practice of the Roman Rite... A common posture, to be observed by all participants, is a sign of the unity of the members of the Christian community gathered for the Sacred Liturgy: it both expresses and fosters the intention and spiritual attitude of the participants.

43. The faithful should stand **...from the invitation, *Orate, fratres* (Pray, brethren), before the prayer** over the offerings until the end of Mass, except at the places indicated below.

...In the dioceses of the United States of America, they should kneel beginning after the singing or recitation of the Sanctus until after the Amen of the Eucharistic Prayer, except when prevented on occasion by reasons of health, lack of space, the large number of people present, or some other good reason. ...

73. At the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist the gifts, which will become Christ's Body and Blood, are brought to the altar. First, the altar, the Lord's table, which is the center of the whole Liturgy of the Eucharist, is prepared by placing on it the corporal, purificator, Missal, and chalice (unless the chalice is prepared at the credence table). The offerings are then brought forward. It is praiseworthy for the bread and wine to be presented by the faithful. They are then accepted at an appropriate place by the priest or the deacon and carried to the altar. Even though the faithful no longer bring from their own possessions the bread and wine intended for the liturgy as in the past, nevertheless the rite of carrying up the offerings still retains its force and its spiritual significance. It is well also that money or other gifts for the poor or for the Church, brought by the faithful or collected in the church, should be received. These are to be put in a suitable place but away from the Eucharistic table.

74. The procession bringing the gifts is accompanied by the Offertory chant (cf. above, no. 37b), which continues at least until the gifts have been placed on the altar. ... Singing may always accompany the rite at the offertory, even when there is no procession with the gifts.

75. The bread and wine are placed on the altar by the priest to the accompaniment of the prescribed formulas. The priest may incense the gifts placed upon the altar and then incense the cross and the altar itself,... Next, the priest, because of his sacred ministry, and the people, by reason of their baptismal dignity, may be incensed by the deacon or another minister.

76. The priest then washes his hands at the side of the altar, a rite that is an expression of his desire for interior purification.

77. Once the offerings have been placed on the altar and the accompanying rites completed, the invitation to pray with the priest and the prayer over the offerings conclude the preparation of the gifts and prepare for the Eucharistic Prayer. In the Mass, only one Prayer over the Offerings is said, and it ends with the shorter conclusion: *Per Christum Dominum nostrum*. ...

139. When the Prayer of the Faithful is completed, all sit, and the Offertory chant begins (cf. above, no. 74). An acolyte or other lay minister arranges the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, the pall, and the Missal upon the altar.

140. It is appropriate for the faithful's participation to be expressed by an offering, whether of the bread and wine for the celebration of the Eucharist or of other gifts for the relief of the needs of the Church and of the poor. The offerings of the faithful are received by the priest, assisted by the acolyte or other minister. The bread and wine for the Eucharist are carried to the celebrant, who places them upon the altar, while other gifts are put in another appropriate place (cf. above, no. 73).

141. At the altar the priest accepts the paten with the bread. With both hands he holds it slightly raised above the altar and says quietly, *Benedictus es, Domine* (Blessed are you, Lord). Then he places the paten with the bread on the corporal.

142. After this, as the minister presents the cruets, the priest stands at the side of the altar and pours wine and a little water into the chalice, saying quietly, *Per huius aquae* (By the mystery of this water). He returns to the middle of the altar, takes the chalice with both hands, raises it a little, and says quietly, *Benedictus es, Domine* (Blessed are you, Lord). Then he places the chalice on the corporal and covers it with a pall, as appropriate. If, however, there is no Offertory chant and the organ is not played, in the presentation of the bread and wine the priest may say the formulas of blessing aloud, to which the people make the acclamation, *Benedictus Deus in saecula* (Blessed be God for ever).

143. After placing the chalice upon the altar, the priest bows profoundly and says quietly, *In spiritu humilitatis* (Lord God, we ask you to receive us).

144. If incense is used, the priest then puts some in the thurible, blesses it without saying anything, and incenses the offerings, the cross, and the altar. A minister, while standing at the side of the altar, incenses the priest and then the people.

145. After the prayer *In spiritu humilitatis* (Lord God, we ask you to receive us) or after the incensation, the priest washes his hands standing at the side of the altar and, as the minister pours the water, says quietly, *Lava me, Domine* (Lord, wash away my iniquity).

146. Upon returning to the middle of the altar, the priest, facing the people and extending and then joining his hands, invites the people to pray, saying, *Orate, fratres* (Pray, brethren). The people rise and make their response: *Suscipiat Dominus* (May the Lord accept). Then the priest, with hands extended, says the prayer over the offerings. At the end the people make the acclamation, Amen.

178. After the Prayer of the Faithful, while the priest remains at the chair, the deacon prepares the altar, assisted by the acolyte, but it is the deacon's place to take care of the sacred vessels himself. He also assists the priest in receiving the people's gifts. Next, he hands the priest the paten with the bread to be consecrated, pours wine and a little water into the chalice, saying quietly, *Per huius aquae* (By the mystery of this water), and after this presents the chalice to the priest. He may also carry out the preparation of the chalice at the credence table. If incense is used, the deacon assists the priest during the incensation of the gifts, the cross, and the altar; afterwards, the deacon himself or the acolyte incenses the priest and the people.

Below is a summary of the sections from the *INSTITUTIO GENERALIS MISSALIS ROMANI* concerning the Preparation of the Gifts

- The Liturgy of the Eucharist corresponds to the actions of Christ at the Last Supper. **Jesus took the bread and chalice (Preparation of the Gifts)**, he gave thanks (Eucharistic Prayer), and he broke and gave (fraction through Communion.)
- The Offertory chant follows the Prayer of the Faithful. The procession with the gifts is accompanied by the Offertory chant, which should continue at least until the gifts are placed on the altar. There may be singing at this part of the Mass even if there is no procession with the gifts. The instructions for the Offertory chant are same as those for the Entrance chant.
- During the Offertory chant, the appropriate minister sets the altar with the Missal, corporal, purificator, pall, and chalice. The bread and wine and other gifts for the Church and poor are presented by the people, but only the bread and wine are placed upon the altar. Money and other gifts for the poor may also be presented, but they are to be placed “away from the Eucharistic Table.” (73) In addition to money, other real gifts for the poor are appropriate, but not token items that will be retrieved and returned to ordinary use after the celebration.
- These are received by the priest celebrant or deacon at an appropriate place (73, 140, 178).
- The priest celebrant says the prescribed prayer while holding the vessel with Eucharistic bread slightly above the altar (141) and only then places it on the altar. Meanwhile the deacon pours wine and water into the chalice at the side of the altar or at the side table (178) and hands the chalice to the priest celebrant. He then says the appropriate prayer while holding the chalice slightly above the altar (142) and only then places it on the altar.
- The priest celebrant bows to say the next prayer silently. (143). He then prepares the incense, if used, incensing the gifts with three swings of the censer or a simple sign of the cross (75, 144, 277), followed by incensing the cross and altar, and the people (75).
- Afterward, the priest celebrant washes his hands at the side of the altar (76, 145). The prayers of the priest celebrant and deacon during the preparation of the gifts are to be said inaudibly (141- 145). When there is no singing, it is it permitted (but not required) for the priest celebrant to say the "Blessed are you..." prayers aloud (142).
- After the washing of hands, the priest standing at the middle of the altar extends and joins his hands, saying “Pray, brethren...” When the priest concludes, the people stand and respond by saying, “May the Lord accept...” The priest then says the Prayer over the Offerings. (146). ***There is a change in the posture of the people and in the name given the prayer over the gifts. Previously, the people stood after their response to the priest’s invitation to prayer.***
- The Prayer over the Offerings, previously called the Prayer over the Gifts, concludes the preparation of the gifts and prepares for the Eucharistic Prayer, “the center and summit of the entire celebration.” (78)

Some Reminders and Clarifications

PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

- Assisted by the acolyte, the deacon prepares the altar.
- The deacon assists the priest in receiving the gifts.
- When the altar has been prepared, enough hosts and wine for the communion of the faithful are brought forward in the procession. (85)
- The people should stand AFTER the priest’s invitation, *Pray my brothers and sisters...* and BEFORE the response, *may the Lord...* . During the implementation, the priest may gesture for the people to stand after giving the invitation.

BULLETIN INSERT

PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

DEEPENING OUR APPRECIATION OF THE MASS: THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST I. PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

The *INSTITUTIO GENERALIS MISSALIS ROMANI* reminds us that “At the Last Supper Christ instituted the Paschal Sacrifice and banquet by which the Sacrifice of the Cross is continuously made present in the Church whenever the priest, representing Christ the Lord, carries out what the Lord himself did and handed over to his disciples to be done in his memory. For Christ took the bread and the chalice and gave thanks; he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take, eat, and drink: this is my Body; this is the cup of my Blood. Do this in memory of me.” Accordingly, the Church has arranged the entire celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist in parts corresponding to precisely these words and actions of Christ:

1. At the Preparation of the Gifts, the bread and the wine with water are brought to the altar, the same elements that Christ took into his hands....” (72)

This first section of the Liturgy of the Eucharist is a time of preparation. We prepare the altar for the Eucharistic meal, placing on it the corporal, the purificator, the sacramentary and the chalice. Then the gifts of bread and wine to be used in the sacred meal, accompanied by the monetary offerings of the people, are brought forward by members of the assembly. While the altar and the gifts are being prepared, we are invited to prepare ourselves to enter fully into the Eucharistic prayer and communion that will soon follow.

The Prayer Over the Offerings, previously the Prayer Over the Gifts, concludes the Preparation of the gifts and points forward to the Eucharistic Prayer. ***There is a change in the posture of the people.*** The priest invites the people to pray using the formula “Pray, brothers and sister...” When the priest concludes, the **people stand and respond** by saying, “May the Lord accept...” The priest then says the Prayer over the Offerings. (146). ***Previously, the people stood after their response to the priest’s invitation to prayer.***

Then the priest, with hands extended, says the Prayer Over the Offerings. At the end the people make the acclamation, *Amen*.

Some excerpts From: *The Mystery We Celebrate*
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