

Preparation of the Gifts

The faithful's participation may be worthily 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 the poor.

At the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist the gifts, which will become Christ's Body and Blood, are brought to the altar.

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.

The procession bringing the gifts is accompanied by the Offertory chant which continues at least until the gifts have been placed on the altar.

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, so as to signify the Church's offering and prayer rising like incense in the sight of God.

GIRM 140, 73–756

Some Questions

- How are people helped to make connection between bread and wine that is 'work of our hands and the consecrated Bread and Wine that are the Body of the Lord and the Precious Blood?
- Is the diversity of the assembly regularly represented in those bringing forward the gifts?
- Are the monetary and other offerings of the faithful brought forward with the bread and wine?

Further References

General Instruction of the Roman Missal:
72, 319–321

Celebrating the Mass: 175–181

Redemptionis Sacramentum: 70

Practical Points

- Only genuine gifts should feature in the procession of gifts. Other symbols, for example of our selves or our work, should feature in the Entrance procession
- Rather than buy bread and wine for Mass from a general Church supplier, explore other possibilities:
 - ◇ Find out if any local convents bake bread for Mass. Build up a parish relationship with the community
 - ◇ Will a local vineyard produce wine for the local parishes?
 - ◇ Bread recipes which meet the norms of General Instruction are provided on Liturgy Office website
- A regular collection of needs of local charities highlights link between Mass and the Church's social mission

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Questions for Groups

1. What is good about current practice?
What concerns do you have?

4. Who is most directly involved in these matters, e.g. liturgical ministers?
What formation/information is necessary to engage them in the renewal of current practice?

2. In what ways does the documentation affirm or challenge your current practice?

5. How will the assembly be engaged in the process?
What, in particular, needs addressing at Sunday and/or weekday celebrations?

3. Prioritise the issues you have identified.

6. How will you know whether the formation has worked?