



# LITURGY LESSON

## Preparation of the Gifts - lesson 7



During the Mass, upon the completion of the General Intercessions, we move into the first part of the Liturgy of the Eucharist called the Preparation of the Gifts.

Several things happen during this transitional period in the liturgy.

The altar is prepared by the servers with a linen cloth  
Bread and wine are brought forth  
God is “blessed” in the prayers  
Wine and water are mixed  
Hands are washed

In the early church, the bread and wine to be used at Mass were brought from home by the faithful and given to the presiding priest. The people actually had baked the bread that would become the Eucharist. Although we no longer bring bread from home, the bread and the wine still belong to the community. The ancient tradition is maintained as parishioners carry the gifts forward and place them upon the altar. In this action each of us places ourselves upon the altar along with the elements of bread and wine.

Before departing the sanctuary our representative “gift bearers,” joined by the presiding minister, step back and offer a reverential bow. This is a powerful visual image of our entire community of faith symbolically standing at the altar presenting the offering. The priest, acting in the role of Christ, will later offer the gifts on behalf of the entire Assembly.

During the Communion Rite, the liturgy comes full circle. The gifts that **we** presented at the altar are now **returned to us** as our heavenly food. The bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. As we “eat this bread and drink this cup” we too are transformed into the Body of Christ, His Church.

The Preparation of the Gifts used to be known as the “*offertory*.” The name was changed to avoid confusion because the actual offering of the sacrifice of Christ to God takes place latter during the Eucharistic prayer.

Parishioners of all ages are invited and recruited to participate in the procession of Gifts. It is our role. All are welcome.

