

Bringing Up the Gifts

by Paul Turner



At the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the bread, wine, and offerings for the church and the poor are brought to the altar. Sometimes the bread and wine are placed on the credence table before Mass. In this case, a minister brings them to the altar at the preparation of the gifts. More commonly the bread and wine are placed near the door of the church before Mass. They may be brought up in procession to the altar.

The procession should include just these primary symbols. Other elements, such as the water, bowl, towel, and chalice should be in place before Mass. The procession of the gifts is not a setting of the credence table. It begins the preparation of the offerings for Mass.

Similarly, symbolic tokens that will be retrieved and put back into use after the liturgy should not be brought up in procession. Textbooks, sports paraphernalia, and hobbies, for example, might be arranged to catch the eye upon entering the church for a school Mass, but they are not the gifts of the Eucharist.

Gifts are brought up in procession by “the faithful,” who hand them to the priest or deacon (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal* 73). After handing them over, some people make the sign of the cross, genuflect, bow, or do none of the above. The GIRM gives no instructions about what to do. The *Ceremonial of Bishops* says, “A deep bow is made to the altar by all who enter the sanctuary (chancel), leave it, or pass before the altar” (72). It would be most appropriate if those who bring up the gifts made a profound bow to the altar just before returning to their places. ML

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Paul Turner, pastor of St. Munchin Parish in Cameron, MO, holds a doctorate in sacramental theology from Sant' Anselmo University in Rome.