

IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH: THE MASS



Offertory

This is article 8 of 21 of the Mass series

What's going on?

At the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar. These gifts are not props; they are our own offerings for the Mass. The few people that process up with the offertory gifts act as representatives for the whole community. As gifts are being accepted at the altar, we must believe that the priest is accepting those gifts from each of us!

What is the meaning of all this?

Christ makes himself present in the Eucharist, and the Church community brings the very things that are needed for Christ to be present. The beauty of Communion is that Christ offers himself to us within the gifts we offer to him.

Sometimes there's incense, what's that for?

When the bread and wine are placed on the altar, the Priest may incense the gifts placed on the altar and then incense the cross and the altar itself. These actions signify the Church's offering and prayer rising like incense in the sight of God. Then the Priest and the people may be incensed by the Deacon or by another minister as a visual expression of our very lives becoming a part of the offertory.

What we Bring...

What we bring to Mass is crucial. Ultimately the Eucharist is not about ritual prayers, but it is about what we are offering. The prayers said at Mass would be empty and pointless without the gifts we offer. Along with the gifts of bread and wine, we are challenged to offer our lives. At Mass, we may give Christ the gifts of our sadness, joys, worries, hopes, and everything else. We come to Mass because Christ desires to make himself present, not just in bread and wine, but within the offering of our entire lives.