

MEMORANDUM

October 17, 2007

TO: Priests and Deacons

FROM: Virginia Meagher
Office for Worship

RE: Preparation of the Gifts During Mass

Recently, the Bishop has received several questions regarding the preparation of the altar and gifts during Mass. For your reference, here are the norms that govern this aspect of the Mass:

General Instruction of the Roman Missal:

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. The norms on the manner of singing are the same as for the Entrance chant (cf. above, no. 48). 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, so as to signify the Church's offering and prayer rising like incense in the sight of God. 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.

Redemptionis Sacramentum

106. However, the pouring of the Blood of Christ after the consecration from one vessel to another is completely to be avoided, lest anything should happen that would be to the detriment of so great a mystery. Never to be used for containing the Blood of the Lord are flagons, bowls, or other vessels that are not fully in accord with the established norms.