

## Lesson 21: Offertory

Can we give something back to God? Yes, once we arrive to the Offertory, it's our turn to give something to God.

After the Universal Prayer, the Mass enters into a new and profound phase: the ritual of offering and sacrifice. Pay attention because a lot is going on.

"The ministers place the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, the pall, and the Missal on the altar." If this were a meal, the table is now set. But this is not a meal: it is a sacrifice, and the sacrifice is ready to begin.

Members of the faithful can offer their sacrifice. Typically on Sundays a collection is taken up. That monetary sacrifice is real, but also symbolic of what we hope is a deeper reality: the readiness to sacrifice ("*sacrum facere* — literally, 'to set aside'") our hearts, minds, souls and bodies for the love of God.

Frequently members of the faithful come forward bringing gifts of wine, water, and unleavened bread which will be consecrated for the Eucharist. In some countries, such as the highlands of Mexico the faithful also bring gifts for the celebrants for his own use: milk, cheese, and eggs, for example. It is all very moving.

The priest offers the bread, offers the wine, to God, so that it might be sanctified, and the people respond with, "Blessed be God forever."

And what can we, who are poor, offer to God?

All the work that we will do that day. That offering allows us to put our heart into our work, especially into the ordinary housework that makes life pleasant for those we live with. Offering our daily work allows us to extend the Mass through the day.

In this way we discover that nothing is trivial, nothing is wasted: all can be offered and connected to God who awaits us in the hum-drum activities of daily life.