



NATIONAL  
**Eucharistic  
Revival**

**Step-by-Step Walk Through the Mass  
Do This in Remembrance of Me, Part 34,  
Collection & Procession  
By FR. LUKE SPANNAGEL**



It's time to pass the basket for the **Offertory**. For many people, the word offertory might make us think simply of the money offerings we place in the collection basket. While that certainly is part of the typical Sunday offertory, this is also an important spiritual moment for uniting ourselves to the offering on the altar.

### **The Collection in the Early Church**

The practical details of this part of the Mass have looked different at various points in history. In earlier times, the gifts would typically be things that people brought from their homes. People would bring all sorts of food, along with bread and wine, and gifts for the poor (money or otherwise). These gifts would all be brought up and then sorted. The bread and wine were used for the Mass, some food and money were given to the priest to provide for him, and the remainder of the food and money were divided up and given to the poor. So, one can see that even in the earliest times, this part of the Mass was about offering and giving. In our modern day, to simplify the offertory, the ushers collect money. This money still symbolizes our gift: what we give to God for the Mass (bread, wine, candles, etc., are purchased for the Mass), what we give to provide for the needs of the priest and the upkeep of the church, and what we give to provide for the needs of the poor and those less fortunate. As the ushers prepare to collect the offerings, we can take a look at our lives, all that we have, all that the Lord has provided for us. We can show our gratitude and thank the Lord by offering a portion of what we have back to him for the good of the Church and others.

Along with the collection, the bread and wine (and water in some places) are brought forward, just as in the days of the early Church. Around the year 150 A.D., St. Justin Martyr describes this part of the Mass by saying simply: "bread, water, and wine are brought" (Understanding the Mass, p. 109). The gifts are brought forward by members of the faithful. Whether it is the ushers, family members who requested the Mass intention, or other parishioners, whoever brings the gifts forward represents the whole congregation, bringing forth our offerings to God.

### **An Offering of Spiritual Gifts**

As we think about our practical or material gifts during this part of the Mass, we should not overlook the opportunity to also offer spiritual gifts. Mother Teresa of Calcutta was known for asking priests to leave room on the paten for her intentions. One priest also recalled her saying that she would place her heart on the paten so that it would be near Jesus in the Mass. If we think about this part of the Mass, offering the gifts we have in thanksgiving to God and in union with Jesus, it is true that one of the best offerings we can make is ourselves! Along these lines, Charles Belmonte teaches, "Together with Christ, we offer everything that we are and all that we possess, all that we have done or try to do. We offer our memory, intelligence, and will; our family, profession, hobbies, success, sufferings, failures, and worries; and our aspirations, [joys and hopes], and spiritual communions. Likewise, we offer our small and big mortifications: all those acts of love we performed yesterday and as many as we plan to perform today" (Understanding the Mass, p. 110).

If you haven't thought about the offertory in this way before, I encourage you to think about including your personal spiritual offering along with whatever you drop in the basket. It certainly is a great way to join to the prayers the priest offers at the altar spiritually and a great way to deepen our unity with the perfect offering of Jesus!