



**Step-by-Step Walk Through the Mass  
Do This in Remembrance of Me, Part 41,  
The Prayer over the Offerings  
by FR. LUKE SPANNAGEL**



Our next “stop” in this journey through the Mass is the **Prayer over the Offerings**. Similar to what we saw with the Collect at the beginning of Mass, the Prayer over the Offerings gives us a summary of our offering and points our minds and hearts to the coming Eucharistic Prayer. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* says, “Once the offerings have been placed on the altar and the accompanying rites completed, by means of the invitation to pray with the Priest and by means of The Prayer over the Offerings, the Preparation of the Gifts is concluded and preparation made for the Eucharistic Prayer. At Mass, a single Prayer over the Offerings is said, and it ends with the shorter conclusion, that is: *Through Christ our Lord*. If, however, the Son is mentioned at the end of this prayer, the conclusion is: *Who lives and reigns for ever and ever*. The people, joining in this petition, make the prayer their own by means of the acclamation *Amen*” (*GIRM*, 77).

### **Offering Prayers, Receiving Graces**

What are we praying about at this point in the Mass? Generally speaking, if we look through these prayers, we find the following familiar words: prayers, gifts, offerings, sacrifices, and oblations. We also ask God to sanctify, accept, and transform these gifts. Fleshing out the content of these Prayers over the Offerings, Charles Belmonte writes, “we usually acknowledge our incapacity to offer to God gifts adequate to his goodness and power. We ask God to accept what we offer with sincerity. We ask some grace in connection with the mystery celebrated on that particular day, in return for the material gifts. We notice an ascending or upward-striving rhythm in the progress of the liturgical action. If we contrast this prayer with the Collect, we can perceive an increase in fervor and assurance. We know that our gifts to God will be returned to us multiplied a hundredfold” (*Understanding the Mass*, p. 116).

Hearing mention of sacrifice, we recall one of the great truths about the Mass: it truly is the one sacrifice of Christ. In the Mass, the perfect sacrifice of Christ on the Cross is re-presented to us. In the traditional understanding of a sacrifice, we need a priest, a victim/offering, and an altar. For Christ’s perfect sacrifice, Jesus is both the priest and victim/offering; that is, he offers himself in sacrifice on the altar of the cross. The Mass is our access to that sacrifice and its many fruits. How amazing: the sacrifice of Jesus is right there before us. No wonder the Mass is such a powerful prayer!

### **Uniting Our Offerings with Christ’s Sacrifice**

Of course, we are not just spectators at the Mass; we don’t just sit back and watch what Jesus does. We have been invited to take part and to unite with Christ in offering our own sacrifices. As we have been reflecting on this part of the Mass, we are able to join our prayers and offerings to the perfect offering of Jesus. As Charles Belmonte says, “St. Paul exhorted the first Christians to offer every action to God. ‘Whatever you eat, whatever you drink, whatever you do at all, do it for the glory of God’ (1 Cor. 10:31), and never say or do anything except ‘in the name of the Lord Jesus’ (Col 3:17). The Second Vatican Council [in the Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 34] encourages ordinary Christians to make their daily offering united to the [E]ucharistic sacrifice: For all their works, prayers and apostolic endeavors, their ordinary married and family life, if patiently borne—all these become ‘spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ’ (1 Pet. 2:5). Together with the offering of the Lord’s body, they are most fittingly offered in the celebration of the Eucharist” (*Understanding the Mass*, p. 116–117). Belmonte goes on to suggest that we make offerings to God each day as an anticipation of joining in this Prayer over the Offerings. If you are up for it, I invite you to consider his challenge. Resolve to make offerings each day this coming week, and then bring those offerings to be spiritually joined to the sacrifice of the Mass on Sunday. Hopefully, you will experience deeper union with Jesus, especially the next time you are at the Mass!