

The Liturgy of the Eucharist: Preparation of the Gifts (3)

The time between the end of the Liturgy of the Word (when the Prayers of the Faithful are done) and the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer, when the priest says “*The Lord be with you...*” seems like a merely “in between” time, when the main thing that happens is taking up the Collection. But there are actually several significant prayers and actions that happen here. The first is the way in which the Collection is taken up here in the Parish, with the baskets passed from person to person in the pews. In some parishes the ushers use long handled baskets to gather the offerings. With this method the ushers maintain direct control over the basket and its contents, while our method allows all the people to have a more direct and active involvement in gathering the Collection. Recall that one of the main goals of liturgy is the full, conscious, and active participation of all.

A new step was recently added to the Collection process here in the Parish, as in all parishes of the Diocese. It used to be that once the collection baskets had been returned to the ushers they would transfer everything into one basket to be taken to the altar. Now the entire Collection is placed and sealed in a tamper proof bag before being brought forward. It remains in the bag until opened in the parish office area by the week’s money counters as an additional safeguard called for by the Diocese. The gifts of bread and wine and the Collection are then brought forward in procession to be presented to the priest or deacon.

Our present practice in the Parish is to have the ushers bring the gifts forward, though the General Instruction of the Missal says here “*It is desirable that the participation of the faithful be expressed by members of the congregation bringing up the bread and wine and other gifts.*” I understand that years ago other parishioners, families and individuals, brought the gifts forward, and I would like to have us begin this practice again. I will work with the rest of the Parish Staff to arrange and organize this.

My next article will address, among a couple other things, the confusing matter of *when to stand*.

Please let us know what else about our faith tradition you'd like to find out more about. Contact Fr. Dan Krettek at dkrettek@saintmaryhc.org.