

somewhere in the center aisle.⁸ The offerings of bread and wine presented by members of the congregation consist of a **ciborium** of unconsecrated hosts and a **cruet**, or a decanter, **of wine**. The cruet of water is brought to the altar by a server at the time of the 'offertory', and the other needed vessels and linens are brought at a later time during the celebration.

The procession of the gifts begins when the celebrating priest leaves the altar with the servers and walks to the front of the sanctuary to receive the offerings. At this point, predetermined members of the congregation, usually two of them, reverently come out of their pew and take the gifts in procession from the 'table of the gifts' to the front of the sanctuary where they present the gifts to the celebrating priest. The servers assist the priest in bringing the gifts to the altar. Meanwhile, members of the congregation collect our money offerings for the needs of the Church, and especially the poor, and place them at a suitable place away from the altar.⁹

If a deacon is present, he is usually the one who prepares the altar, receives the gifts from the faithful, and prepares the gifts for the offertory. However, since **only an ordained priest** can celebrate the sacrament of the Eucharist, the priest, and not the deacon, is the one who offers the gifts and the sacrifice of the Mass to God.

At the time of the 'procession of the gifts,' if the **offerings** of bread and wine are **presented by the servers**, they first bring the ciborium (*ciboria*) containing the hosts to be consecrated for the communion of the faithful from the credence table to the altar. As the priest proceeds with the 'offertory',¹⁰ the servers then bring him the offering of **wine** and the water contained in the cruets.

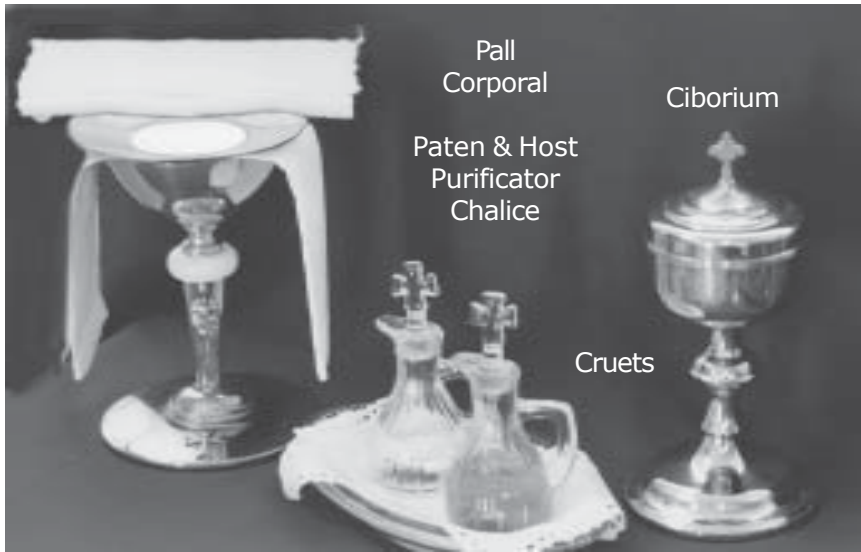
Let us take a closer look at the sacred vessels and linens.¹¹ The **pall** is a stiff square piece of cardboard or acrylic, covered with linen, used to cover the chalice during Mass. It is used to prevent dust or flying insects from falling into the wine of the Eucharist. The **corporal** is a small white linen, well pressed and folded, that the priest reverently unfolds on the altar and uses to prepare and to offer the sacrifice of the Mass. When brought to the altar, the corporal covers the **large host** contained in a small plate called the **paten**. The paten is used to consecrate the large host, and the **ciborium** is used to consecrate the small hosts. A larger paten may be used to contain both the large and

8. See Part Two, Preparing Ourselves and the Temple, e) Preparing the Sanctuary.

9. Money offerings away from the altar: cf. GIRM [49] 73. The collection of money offerings is to be interrupted during the consecration.

10. Offertory: see page 91.

11. Sacred vessels & linens: see picture on the next page; also see Part Three, After the Mass, the Sacristy and the Purification of the Sacred Linens.



the small hosts. At the time of the consecration the hosts become the Body of Christ. The **chalice** is used to contain and consecrate the wine mixed with water, which, at the time of the consecration, becomes the Blood of Christ. The **purificator** is another small white linen, which is used by the priest to wipe the chalice during the sacrifice, during communion, and after communion, in order to collect any remnants of the Blood of Christ. Since all of these sacred vessels and linens come in direct contact with the Body and Blood of Christ, they need to be handled with great reverence.

At the time of communion, ciboria of consecrated Hosts that are **reserved in the tabernacle**¹² may be brought to the altar for communion of the faithful. "...[T]hey also participate in the same sacrifice to whom a priest distributes the Blessed Sacrament that has been reserved; however, the Church has not... ever forbidden, ... a celebrant to satisfy the piety and just request of those who, when present at Mass, want to become partakers of the same sacrifice, because **they likewise offer it** after their own manner... ."13 "[It is a] more perfect form of participation in the Mass whereby the faithful, after the priest's communion, **receive** the Lord's Body **from the same sacrifice**... ."13a

In many churches, the tabernacle is located outside of the sanctuary on a secondary altar.¹⁴ The **sanctuary lamp**, located near the tabernacle, is kept lit as an indication to all of the real presence of God

12. See Part Three, Liturgy of the Eucharist, Communion Rite, The Eucharistic Reserve. Ciboria, Tabernacle, and Sanctuary Lamp: see Part Five, Catholic Glossary.

13. *Mediator Dei*, no. 118 (bold face added).

13a. CCC 1388, quoting SC 55 (bold face added).

14. See Part Five, Floor Plan of a Church in the Shape of a Latin Cross.