

Understanding the Mass Placing the Offerings on the Altar

*Each week, we are explaining a different part of the Mass - the items that are used, the parts of the church, and the roles of the people who help us celebrate Mass. This week, our topic is **Placing the Offerings on the Altar**.*

Once the priest has accepted the gifts of bread and wine from the gift bearers, he takes them to the altar (with the help of the altar servers, if they are present). In this part of the Mass, the priest is **Placing the Offerings on the Altar** before God, on behalf of all of us who are present at Mass. He then prays two special prayers of thanksgiving.

The priest holds the bread slightly above the altar and blesses God. He then holds the chalice in the same way, blesses God, and places the chalice on the altar, praying:



Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the bread we offer you: fruit of the earth and work of human hands, it will become for us the bread of life.

and

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the wine we offer you: fruit of the vine and work of human hands, it will become our spiritual drink.

These prayers are based on Jewish table-prayers, which are prayed to express gratitude to God before and after eating. They are an expression of praise of God and thanks to Him for the gift of creation and for the effort of those who made the bread and wine.

The bread the priest holds is itself, even before its transformation into the Body and Blood of Christ, the natural gift of God as the “fruit of the earth,” and the wine that will become the blood of Christ is the natural “fruit of the vine” given by the “God of all creation.”

Often the priest will pray these prayers silently, though sometimes he will pray them aloud. If he does, we the congregation respond with the acclamation, **Blessed be God for ever**.

Did you hear these prayers at Mass today? _____