



Invest time each week to expand your vocabulary and deepen your faith.

07 January 2024

## WORD OF THE WEEK

### Preparation of the Gifts

\pre-pə-'rā-shən | 'gifts\

The set of ceremonial actions at Mass preceding the Eucharistic Prayer and Holy Communion. Includes dressing of the altar; bringing forward the bread and wine; and the community's personal sacrifices taken up in the collection. Formerly called the Offertory. The community offers a song of praise for all these gifts as the priest washes his hands in a purification rite.

*Pronunciation:* <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-preparation-gifts>

### CONTEXT

The **Preparation of the Gifts** allows time for the preparation of our hearts. Like the Magi bearing gifts and doing homage to Majesty, we bring our gifts and our praise to the Table.  
—Father Paul Boudreau

God has first blessed us with the gift of creation. Humans take those gifts given, wheat and grapes, and, using our creativity, make bread and wine. Then, we bring those gifts we have received and labored over to present them at the Altar/Table that they might be transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. Finally, we receive them back in Communion. The procession of the **Gifts** says, in essence, "Behold the gifts God has given us!"  
—Father Roc O'Connor, S.J.

### WHY IT MATTERS

We take great care preparing other festive tables for our most cherished gatherings. Could we do less for the table where the Real Presence of Christ will be made tangible for us?

From the General Instructions of the Roman Missal: The altar or Lord's table, which is the center of the whole Liturgy of the Eucharist, is made ready. . . . The offerings are then brought forward. It is a praiseworthy practice for the bread and wine to be presented by the faithful (73).

### RELATED WORDS

Corporal | purificator | Missal | Chalice

## QUESTION OF THE WEEK

### Is Epiphany about giving or getting gifts?

"We three kings of Orient are/ bearing gifts we traverse afar." Nowhere in the gospels does it claim there are three kings. They are magi, hereditary priests of the ancient Medes and Persians. At least the carol gets one thing right: this wise group does bear gifts. Gold symbolizes wealth and power. Frankincense, used in prayer, represents the divine Presence. Myrrh prepares bodies for burial. It's an ominous sign that would make a startling gift. . . . But they were appropriate honors for the King of the Universe, the Divine Son, and the crucified Lord.

We also bear Jesus gifts at every Eucharist: bread, wine, and our financial sacrifice. "Made by human hands," these gifts are transformed and returned to us as the Body and Blood of Christ, and then redistributed for those in need.

More gifts come to us by way of this shared Table. Grace pours out on the assembly. Grace forgives sin, and rescues us from every evil. This is one gift you don't want to put at the bottom of a closet.

—Alice Camille, from *Questions Catholics Ask* <https://tinyurl.com/QCA-presentation-gifts>

## REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD (JANUARY 7)

### Remember our migrant roots

America was once renowned as the land where people could come to breathe freely. Scripture reminds us of the considerable gifts that migrant people bring with them. Whether king or commoner, each person offers what they have to make the community more dynamic.

READINGS: saiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6; Matthew 2:1-12 (20 <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/010724.cfm>). "Raise your eyes and look about; they all gather and come to you."

### FAITH IN ACTION

Let's welcome the newcomer and remember that the infant Jesus was once a migrant, too.