

Solemn High Mass: What *Is* the Subdeacon Holding?

When participating in a Solemn High Mass, have you ever wondered what the subdeacon is holding from the Offertory to the *Pater Noster*?

Fr. Van Vliet explains:

At the offertory, the subdeacon goes to the credence table and puts on the humeral veil. Using the humeral veil, he veils the chalice and paten and takes them to the altar. At the altar, he helps prepare the chalice while the deacon gives the paten with the host to the priest, who then offers it up. Once this is done, the host is slid onto the corporal and the paten is eventually given back to the subdeacon to hold veiled in the humeral veil. The subdeacon stands at his position until the *Pater Noster*, when he brings the paten back to the priest.

This is a rite that is reminiscent of an ancient rite whereby a particle of a Host previously consecrated by the bishop would be mingled with those consecrated at the Mass in order to show the unity of the Sacrifice. The remnant of this is visible at the Solemn Mass, and is also present at the Low Mass, since the priest slips the paten halfway under the corporal and covers the rest with the purificator.

*The following pictures are from the Solemn High Mass of Thanksgiving
Rev. Charles Vreeland, FSSP, celebrant
June 12, 2013, Annunciation Church, Houston, TX*

