

ALTAR SERVER SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION (7/29/25)

GLOSSARY

Items Used by Altar Servers

Alb - a long, white garment worn by Altar Servers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and is the inner vestment worn by the Priest and Deacon. It is a reminder of the baptismal garment worn when the new Christian "puts on Christ." From the Latin word meaning "white."

Aspergilium (sprinkler) – an instrument used for sprinkling holy water; ordinarily made of metal or straw.

Boat - lidded vessel with spoon that holds incense that is scooped into the thurible.

Candle Lighter - Tool with adjustable wick used to light and snuff candle flames.

Chalice - the large cup used to hold the wine that becomes the Precious Blood of Christ. It is made of durable material and comes in various shapes and sizes.

Ciborium - a vessel used to hold the Hosts which will be used for communion; some are cup-like and others are bowl/plate like; they are also used to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. Plural = Ciboria

Cincture - a long white cord used for fastening albs at the waist; it tied on the left side.

Corporal - large white linen cloth, usually with a cross in the center of it, unfolded on the altar to collect any particles or drops of Jesus' Body or Precious Blood. The words of consecration are spoken with the bread and wine sitting on the corporal. From the Latin meaning "body."

Credence Table – the table to the left of the Sanctuary where the chalice, pall, corporals, purificator, tray of ciboria, any pyx, small water pitcher, bowl and towel are placed.

Cruet – a glass container for holding wine and water.

Holy Water - blessed water, a sacramental whose sprinkling or use is a reminder of Baptism and a means of sanctification.

Holy Water Vessel - a glass or brass container of Holy Water, used with an aspergilium for blessing people and objects.

Incense - material used to produce a fragrant odor when burned and used as a symbol of the Church's offering and prayer going up to God. Used on major feast days and for funerals, it symbolizes communication with God. The image of smoke rising to the heavens in combination with the fragrance it emits, invoke a connection with the divine.

Missal – book used by the celebrant at Mass, containing all the prayers for the liturgy of the Mass, including the opening prayer, prayer over the gifts, prayer after communion, solemn blessings, Eucharistic prayers and prefaces for all of the Masses, including special occasions.

Monstrance - large, ornate vessel to hold the Blessed Sacrament for processions, Benediction and Perpetual Adoration.

Pall - A sacred covering. Most commonly, a stiff square cardboard covered with a lining, that is placed over the top of the chalice at Mass.

Paten - a saucer-like disk that holds the bread/host that becomes the Body of Christ.

Purificator - a white cloth used to wipe the chalice after each communicant receives the Precious Blood; used to cleanse the chalice after communion.

Pyx - a container in which a consecrated Sacred Host is kept and can be carried to the sick. Pronounced "Pix".

Thurible/Censer - a metal vessel suspended by chains that is used to burn incense.

GLOSSARY

Helpful Terms with which to be familiar

Altar - the "table" upon which the sacrifice of Christ on the cross is made present under sacramental signs in the Mass. The altar represents two aspects of the mystery of the Eucharist, as the altar of sacrifice where Christ as the sacrificial victim offers himself to God the Father for our sins and as the table of the Lord where Christ gives himself to us as food from heaven

Ambo - looks like a podium and is from where the readings and homily are proclaimed.

Blessed Sacrament - a name given to the Holy Eucharist, especially the consecrated elements reserved in the tabernacle for adoration, or for the sick.

Confiteor – at Mass, the confession of sins. From the Latin "I confess."

Concluding Rite - the brief rite at the conclusion of Mass which consists of the celebrant's final blessing and dismissal.

Eucharist - the central sacrament of the church; instituted by Jesus at the last supper; characterized by the transubstantiation (change) of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ; from the Greek word for thanksgiving.

Eucharistic Prayer - the prayer of praise, thanksgiving and consecration that is said or sung during the Mass. It is the center of the celebration. During this Prayer, the gifts of bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus.

Gloria – an ancient hymn of praise in which the Church glorifies God. It is used on all Sundays, except for those during Advent and Lent, and at solemn celebrations. The text originates from the Christmas narrative in the Gospel of Luke (2:14 - "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.")

Grace - the free and undeserved gift that God gives us to respond to our vocation to become his adopted children. As sanctifying grace, God shares his divine life and friendship with us in a habitual gift, a stable and supernatural disposition that enables the soul to live with God, to act by his love. As actual grace, God gives us the help to conform our lives to his will. Sacramental grace and special graces are gifts of the Holy Spirit to help us live out our Christian vocation

Holy Days of Obligation - feast days on which, in addition to Sundays, Catholics are obliged by Church law to participate in the Mass.

Intercessions - a form of prayer of petition on behalf of others (e.g. the Church, the world, the Pope, clergy, laity and the dead.

Liturgy - in its original meaning, a "public work" or service done in the name of or on behalf of the people. Through the liturgy, Christ our High Priest continues the work of our redemption through the Church's celebration of the Paschal Mystery by which he accomplished our salvation.

Liturgy of the Word - the occasion during Mass when readings from the Scriptures are proclaimed and reflected upon.

Liturgy of the Eucharist - the section of the celebration when the gifts of bread and wine are prepared and the Eucharistic Prayer is proclaimed by the celebrant, and the Blessed Sacrament is distributed to the assembly.

Mass - the principal sacramental celebration of the Church, established by Jesus at the Last Supper, in which the mystery of our salvation through participation in the sacrificial death and glorious resurrection of Christ is renewed and accomplished. The Mass renews the paschal sacrifice of Christ as the sacrifice offered by the Church. Originates from the Latin (*missa*) because of the "mission" or "sending" with which the liturgical celebration concludes.

Paschal Mystery - Christ's work of redemption accomplished principally by his Passion, death, Resurrection, and glorious Ascension. The Paschal Mystery is celebrated and made present in the liturgy of the Church, and its saving effects are communicated through the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, which renews the paschal sacrifice of Christ as the sacrifice offered by the Church.

Penitential Act - a general acknowledgement of sinfulness by the entire assembly, accompanied by requests for God's mercy and forgiveness.

Prayer after Communion - the final prayer by the celebrant in which he petitions that the sacrament be beneficial for all.

Prayer over the Gifts - the prayer by the celebrant asking that the gifts to be offered be made holy and acceptable.

Preparation of the Gifts - the time in the Mass when the bread and wine to be used in the celebration are brought to the celebrant, usually by representatives of the faithful.

Procession - the orderly moving of ministers or assembly. Takes place at beginning and end of the Mass, the gift procession, and the communion procession.

Profession of Faith - the assembly joins to recall and proclaim the fundamental teachings of the Roman Catholic faith. The Profession of Faith is also called the Creed.

Responsorial Psalm - the psalm that is spoken or sung between the first and second readings. The response is repeated after each verse.

Sacrifice - a ritual offering made to God by a priest on behalf of the people, as a sign of adoration, gratitude, supplication, and communion. The perfect sacrifice was Christ's death on the cross; by this sacrifice, Christ accomplished our redemption as high priest of the new and eternal covenant. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is commemorated and mysteriously made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church.

Sacrament: - an efficacious sign of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. The sacraments are seven in number: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance or Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.

Sacrarium - located in the working sacristy, a special sink where linens and vessels are washed.

Sanctuary - the raised area where the altar is located and is set apart for the principle rites of worship. Means "holy place."

Tabernacle - the receptacle in the church in which the consecrated Eucharist is reserved for Communion for the sick and dying. Reservation of the Eucharist in the tabernacle lends itself to private devotional visits and adoration of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament by the faithful.

Transubstantiation - the scholastic term used to designate the unique change of the Eucharistic bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. "Transubstantiation" indicates that through the consecration of the bread and the wine there occurs the change of the entire substance of the bread into the substance of the Body of Christ, and of the entire substance of the wine into the Blood of Christ--even though the appearances or "species" of bread and wine remain.

Veneration of the Altar - the reverencing of the altar with a kiss or bow and the optional use of incense.

Vest - to get dressed in an alb and other liturgical clothing.

Vesting Sacristy - where the priest and deacon vest.

Washing of Hands - an outward expression of the desire for inward purification. The celebrant washes his hands in symbolic cleansing to prepare himself just as the gifts have been prepared as an offering to the Lord.

Working Sacristy - where vessels used for Mass are stored and prepared for Mass by the Sacristan.

Liturgical Colors

The liturgical seasons are there to help us change, grow and become more mature as followers of Jesus Christ. One of the clearest signs of these seasons is the changing liturgical colors. With each change of season, the Church changes the color of vestments as a visible sign of our need to change and grow.

White: The symbol of celebration and triumph, purity and innocence. It is used on all feasts of the joyful and glorious mysteries of Our Lord's life and during Christmas Time and Easter Time; on the celebrations of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the Holy Angels and of Saints who were not martyrs. White is also used on the Solemnities of the Most Holy Trinity (Sunday after Pentecost) and All Saints (11/1); on the Nativity of St. John the Baptist (6/24) and the Feasts of the Conversion of St. Paul (1/25) and of the Chair of St. Peter (2/22). White may be worn at funerals to celebrate the life of the deceased and pray for their triumphal acceptance into heaven.

Red: The symbol of sacrifice because it is the color of blood. It is used on all celebrations of Our Lord's Cross and Passion – Palm Sunday and Good Friday; on the feasts of the birthdays of Apostles and Evangelists; and celebrations of all Martyred Saints. It is also the color of fire and a symbol of the Holy Spirit when it is used on Pentecost and in Masses of the Holy Spirit, in memory of the tongues of fire of the first Pentecost.

Violet: The symbol of penance and waiting. It is used during the penitential season of Lent, during the season of Advent, and on days of fast. It reminds us of preparation. It may also be worn during funerals to show mourning.

Rose: The symbol of subdued joy. It is authorized only on the 3rd Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) and on the Fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday) as an alternative to violet.

Green: The symbol of hope and growth. It is the color of budding and living vegetation. It is used during Ordinary Time, to show that our common state is one of growing in our relationship with God, longing and hoping for eternal life.

Black: The symbol of mourning and death, it may be used at funerals or a day of commemorating the dead or great loss of life (e.g. All Soul's Day).

Gold/Silver: Gold or silver may be worn on more solemn occasions.