

Study Guide

Sacred Vessels

A chalice is a sacred vessel used at Mass to hold the water and the wine which will be consecrated and become the Blood of Christ.

A paten is a sacred vessel, like a flat dish, on which the large host is placed for Mass.

A ciborium is a sacred vessel which holds the small hosts of unleavened bread which will be consecrated at Mass.

A monstrance is a device for showing the Blessed Sacrament during special times of worship and prayer services.

A pyx is a sacred vessel used to bring the Blessed Sacrament to the sick and homebound.

Linens

A corporal is a white, square, linen cloth placed on the altar which will catch a fragments of the Holy Eucharist. It is like a table cloth.

A purificator is a white, linen cloth which the priest uses to clean the chalice and the ciborium after communion.

A pall is a hard, square covered with linen which is placed over the chalice and is used of protect the Precious Blood from any foreign elements, such as insects.

A chalice viel is a cloth which covers the chalice and paten before the Eucharist prayers begins. After communion, the priest recovers the chalice and paten with the viel.

Vestments

An amice, originally used by the Roman soldiers underneath their helmets, is placed around the neck of the priest. It reminds the priest that he wears the helmet of salvation.

An alb is a white garment signifying our purity and rebirth from baptism. Any baptized Christian may wear an alb.

A stole is a long vestment, like a scarf, which symbolizes the priest's authority.

A cincture is like a belt; we are reminded by St. Paul that we should gird our loins and fight for our faith.

A chasuble is the large outer garment which symbolizes hope. This garment also is made of different colors depending upon the season of the year or the feast day celebrated.

Church architecture

An altar is a church furnishing, usually made out of stone, on which the Holy Mass is offered. The priest kisses the altar at the beginning of Mass and at the end of Mass because the altar symbolizes Christ, the one, true sacrifice.

Stations of the cross depict the way Christ followed from Pontius Pilate's house to finally the tomb. Stations originated in Church around the Middle Ages because people could not afford to visit Jerusalem and then because the Moslems invaded and sealed Jerusalem off from others.

Stained glass windows were used to teach. Since most people in the Middle Ages could not read or write, stained glass windows were used to tell stories of the saints or the Bible.

Statues are used as visual reminders of Jesus or the saints. Just like a history book uses pictures, we sometimes use statues.

Church colors

White or gold symbolizes happiness and joy. It is used during Easter and Christmas season. It is used for feast days of saints other than martyrs. It may also be used for funerals as a sign of the resurrection.

Red symbolizes blood or the fire of God's love. Red is used on feast days of martyrs, Palm Sunday, Good Friday. It is used also on feasts of the Holy Spirit like Pentecost, symbolizing the fire of God's love.

Green symbolizes hope. It is used during Ordinary Time.

Purple symbolizes penance. It is used during Advent and Lent. It may also be used for funerals, symbolizing mourning.

Rose symbolizes joy even though we are in a season of penance. It is used only on Gaudete and Laetare Sunday.

Black symbolizes death. It is used only at funerals.