

Altar Vocabulary



Altar - the table around which we gather to celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus, and to be nourished by his Body and Blood

Altar cloth - a beautiful white linen cloth which covers the altar. At St. Paul our altar cloth is the color of the liturgical season.

Crucifix - the cross with the figure of the Suffering Christ to remind us of his Passion, Death, and Resurrection.



Paten - the plate, made of precious metal, which holds the Body of Christ during Mass.



Chalice - the cup, made of precious metal, which holds the Precious Blood



Candles - made of beeswax and placed at the altar to remind us of the light of the Risen Christ who is present.



Other Items

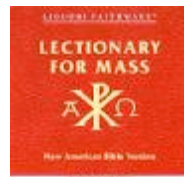
Extinguisher – the snuffer; used to put out the candles



Ambo – the tall book stand which holds the lectionary during Mass; this is where the Word of God is proclaimed; used to be called the lectern.



Lectionary – the book with collection of readings from the Bible to be read at Mass



Tabernacle – a small cabinet beautifully made and placed near the altar; it holds the consecrated bread, which is the Body of Christ



Ciborium (plural ciboria) – a golden cup with a cover. It contains the consecrated bread that has already become Jesus.



Sanctuary lamp – the candle, usually in a red glass container, kept burning day and night near the tabernacle. It tells us the Jesus is present in the consecrated bread.



Sacramentary – the book which the priest uses containing the gestures and prayers for the celebration of Mass. It is brought to the altar after the Liturgy of the Word.



Corporal – a square white cloth placed on the altar under the paten and chalice



Purificator – a white, rectangular cloth used to dry the chalice after each person receives the Precious Blood. It is also used to dry the fingers and lips of the celebrant after communion. It is used to cleanse the vessels after Communion.



Cruets – the vessels which hold the wine and water for Mass



Hand towel – small, white towel which the priest uses to dry his hands after the lavabo (hand washing) during Mass

Articles for Adoration

Monstrance – from the Latin word “monstrare” meaning “to show”. A vessel made of precious metals used to display the Sacred Host for Adoration.



Thurible – censer in which the incense burns for liturgical celebration



Thurifer – the person who carries the thurible



Canopy – a cloth covering lifted up on 4 poles carried in procession over the Blessed Sacrament



Priest Vestments

Chasuble – outer vestment in liturgical colors worn at Mass and liturgical celebrations



Humeral Veil - a long oblong vestment worn around the shoulders and over the hands of the priest holding the monstrance or other sacred vessel



Cope – a long, cloak-like vestment used during Adoration or in procession

