Liturgical Vocabulary List

And you shall make its plates and dishes for incense, and its flagons and bowls with which to pour libations; of pure gold you shall make them.... And you shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The base and the shaft of the lampstand shall be made of hammered work; its cups, its capitals, and its flowers shall be of one piece with it.... Their capitals and their branches shall be of one piece with it, the whole of it one piece of hammered work of pure gold.... Its snuffers and their trays shall be of pure gold.... And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.... They shall receive gold, blue and purple and scarlet stuff, and fine twined linen. And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet stuff, and of fine twined linen, skillfully worked.
~ Exodus 25:29, 31, 36, 38; Ex 28:2, 5-6

Alb: A WHITE LINEN GARMENT, reaching from the neck to the feet, worn by the principal clergy at liturgical functions. The alb is a symbol of the purity of soul that should be present at the celebration of the Mass. It is also a baptismal garment, referring to the Baptism of the one wearing it.

DAVID CHARLES PHOTOGRAPHY

A deacon prepares the chalice for the priest

Altar: The table on which the central sacrifice of the Eucharist is offered during the Mass. The altar is the heart of the church building because it is around the altar that the People of God gather to receive the Bread of life, the Eucharist.

Chalice: A sacred vessel that holds the wine to be consecrated during the Eucharistic prayer. A chalice is blessed by a bishop or priest, setting it apart for liturgical use.

Chasuble: The sleeveless outer vestment worn over the alb by priests and bishops during the celebration of the Mass. Symbolizing the all-encompassing love of God, the chasuble covers the entire body.

Ciborium: A sacred vessel that is used to hold the Eucharistic hosts which are distributed to the faithful during Communion.

Confessional: An enclosed place where the penitent confesses sins and the priest administers the sacrament of Penance. During the sacrament, the penitent may either kneel behind a screen or sit with the priest face-to-face.

Corporal: A small, white linen cloth, upon which the Eucharistic species rests during the Mass. All sacred vessels that hold the Blessed Sacrament must be placed on the corporal, to ensure that no fragments of the Eucharist are lost.

Credence Table: A small, moveable table, located

The Association for Catechumenal Ministry (ACM) grants the original purchaser (parish, local parochial institution, or individual) permission to reproduce this handout.

DAVID CHARLES PHOTOGRAPHY

A sanctuary lamp, usually with red glass, is kept burning at all times to mark the location of the tabernacle in Catholic churches

off to the side of the altar, which holds the necessary items for liturgical functions, particularly the Mass, such as the chalice, basin, and finger cloth and towel.

Crucifix: A cross with an image of Christ's body on it. Symbolic of the Passion and death of Christ, it is used in public and private devotions.

Genuflection: The act of bending the right knee to the ground and rising up again, as a sign of reverence or an act of adoration. We genuflect when entering or leaving a church that has the Blessed Sacrament present, and when passing the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the Tabernacle. We genuflect on both knees when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed in a monstrance (see below).

Holy Oils: Blessed by the local bishop at the Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday, holy oils (holy chrism, the oil of catechumens, and the oil of the sick) are used at the anointing during the celebration of the sacraments as well as in the consecration of persons and things. From the earliest times, oil has signified healing and being set apart for special work and important responsibilities.

Holy Water: The blessed water, normally found just inside the entrance of the church, which is used to make the sign of the cross. Holy water is a powerful reminder of the sacrament of Baptism and is frequently used in blessings as a sign of the Lord's loving care.

Humeral Veil: A scarf-like vestment, usually ornately decorated, which covers the hands of the minister when he is touching or carrying sacred objects such as the monstrance during Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The humeral veil is worn in reverence, so that the ends of the veil, and not the hands of the minister, touch the sacred object.

Icon: An image of our Lord, the Virgin Mary, or a saint that is painted on a flat surface and exists to aid the faithful in devotion. Icons are particularly prominent in the Eastern rites of the Church, where they take the place of the statues that are more common in the Latin Rite.

Incense: Granulated or powdered aromatic resin that is burned during liturgical services (such as processions and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, funeral masses, and dedications of churches) and releases a fragrant odor. The rising of incense during the liturgy symbolizes the rising of our prayers to God (see Ps 141:2, Rv 8:3-5).

Lectern/Ambo: A fixed, elevated platform from which the Scriptures are proclaimed at Mass or the Liturgy of the Hours. The homily and general intercessions are also frequently offered at the lectern.

Lectionary: The liturgical book containing the Scripture readings that are proclaimed during the Liturgy of the Word at Mass.

Liturgy: The public worship carried out by the People of God, the Church. Liturgy is the general term that includes all forms of liturgical prayer: the Mass, the sacraments, the Liturgy of the Hours, and Liturgies of the Word.

Mass: The holy sacrifice of the Eucharist, which is the central act of worship in the Church.

Missal: The large book, used by the liturgical minister, that contains the prayers, directives, and rubrics for the celebration of the Mass.

A monstrance

Monstrance: The sacred vessel designed to expose the Eucharist to the faithful during adoration and Benediction in a church or while the Blessed Sacrament is being carried in procession. Oftentimes, the glass enclosure is surrounded by rays that emanate in all directions, symboliz-

A ciborium

ing the infinite outpouring of graces that flow from the Blessed Sacrament upon those who worship and adore it.

Pall: A square of stiff linen that covers the chalice during the Mass to prevent dust and other particles from falling into it.

Paschal Candle: A large, ornamented candle which is first lit during the Easter Vigil Mass. The Paschal candle is one of the primary symbols of the risen Christ and remains lit throughout the fifty days of the Easter season. After Pentecost, it is used during Baptism and funeral liturgies as a reminder of the centrality of the Paschal Mystery in the Christian life.

Paten: A thin, round, flat metal vessel used to hold the large Eucharistic host during the Mass.

Processional Cross: A portable crucifix, mounted on a staff, which is carried in front of liturgical processions.

Purificator: A small, white, linen cloth, usually marked with a cross in the center, which is used to wipe the rim of the chalice following the reception of the Precious Blood and to clean the sacred vessels after Holy Communion.

Pyx: A small sacred vessel that is used to privately carry the Blessed Sacrament to the sick and homebound.

Sanctuary: The area at the front or center of the church where the altar, lectern, and chairs for those serving in the liturgy are located.

Server/Acolyte: A person who assists the priest at Mass and other liturgical functions.

Stole: A liturgical vestment worn at all sacramental celebrations and at various prayer services. The stole consists of a long, narrow strip of cloth several inches wide that is worn around the neck by priests and bishops and from the left shoulder like a sash by deacons. The color of the stole corresponds to particular prescribed color of the liturgical season or feast day.

Tabernacle: The shrine located in churches, chapels, and oratories that serves as a place for the exclusive reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. The tabernacle is always to be solid, immovable, and located in a prominent place.

Thurible/Censer: The metal vessel wherein incense is added to burning coals which produce rising, sweet-smelling smoke.

(CCC 1145-1162, 1182-1185)

A thurible or censer