



**Praying the Mass: Full, Conscious, Active
Participation at the Liturgy**

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THE CHURCH BUILDING

Narthex - A true narthex is either an outside, covered porch-like structure of an inside area separated from the nave (the “body” of the church) but a screen-like structure. Today, the word “narthex” has come to mean “entry,” “foyer,” or even “gathering space.”

Holy Water Font / Baptismal Pool - The Holy Water Font, or Baptismal Pool, is used for

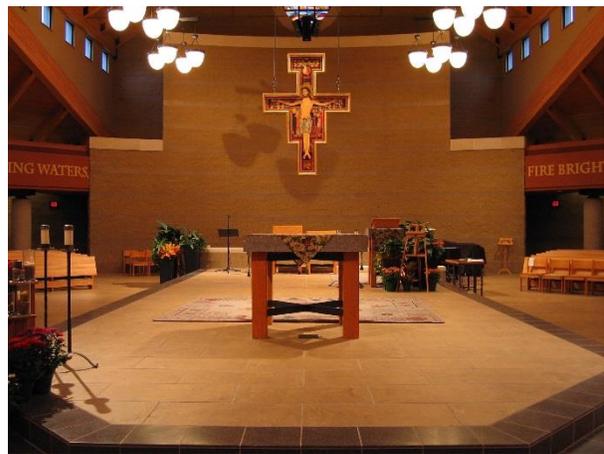
Baptisms. The simplest of fonts is a simple water basin on a pedestal. Some are as elaborate as a pool that allows for full immersion of the one being baptized. Many baptismal fonts are eight-sided as a reminder of the new creation in the Resurrection on the “eighth day” (or, first day) of the week. The eight sides of a font are connected to the practice of circumcision, which traditionally occurs on the eighth day after birth in Judaism. Some are three-sided as a reminder of the Holy Trinity. Fonts are often placed at or near the entrance to a church’s nave to remind us of our baptism as we enter the church to worship, since the Rite of Baptism serves as our initiation in the Catholic Church.

Nave - Referring to the “barque of Peter”¹ and “Noah’s Ark,” the word “nave” is derived from the Latin word for “ship,” *navis*, and has come to mean the body of the church. It is the place where the people sit.

THE SANCTUARY

Sanctuary - The sanctuary is the part of the church where the Priest stands during Mass. It is usually elevated from the nave, where the people sit.

Altar - The altar is the table where the Priest celebrates the Church’s sacred meal - the Eucharist. This sacred meal makes present the sacrifice Jesus made for us by dying on the Cross. It is also a thanksgiving meal where we give thanks to God for sending the person of Jesus to show us the ways to live in the presence of God’s Love. An altar is dedicated by a bishop before it

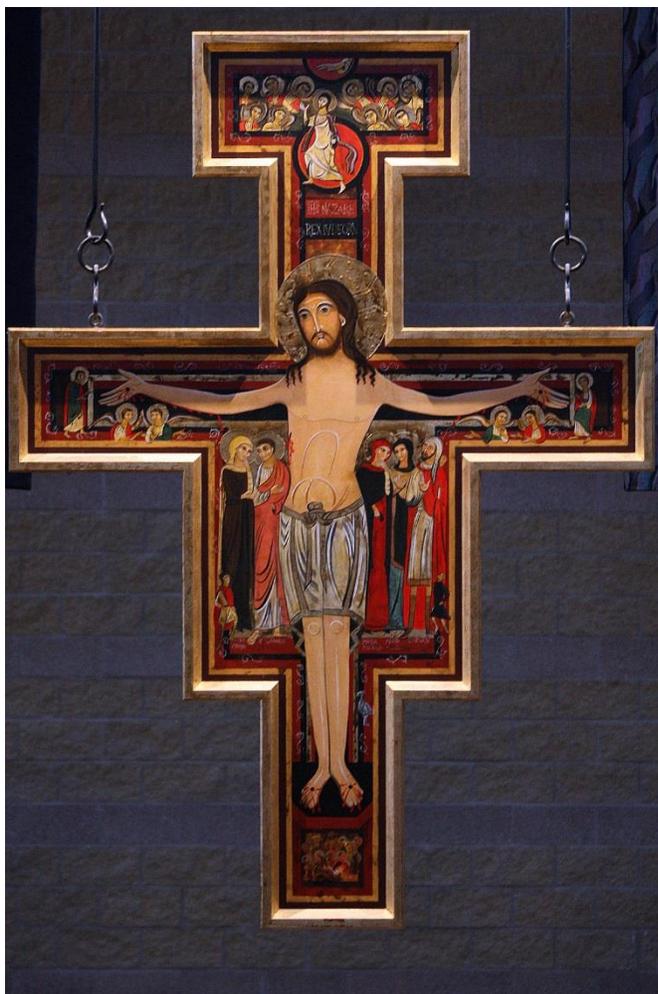


¹ “The Barque of Peter” is a reference to the Catholic Church. The terms refers to Peter, the first Pope, who was a fisherman before becoming an Apostle of Jesus. The pope is often said to be steering the Barque of St. Peter.

is used to celebrate Mass because it is the place where the sacrifice of the Mass is offered – the very body and blood of Christ.²

Ambo – The word Ambo is a Greek word that means “step” or “elevated.” During Mass, the Word of God is read from the Ambo. This helps to remind us that what believers are hearing is important and worthy our special attention. The Ambo is reserved for only the readings, the responsorial psalm and the Exsultet (Easter proclamation, the homily and for the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful).

Presider’s Chair – The Priest celebrating Mass sits on the presidential chair during some parts of the Mass. Every Catholic church has a presider’s chair. In a cathedral, the chair is called a cathedra, because it is reserved for the bishop or archbishop of the diocese – it is not used by any other priest or clergy.



Crucifix – A crucifix, a cross with the figure of Jesus, is always clearly visible during Mass. The crucifix reminds us that Jesus died and rose again to new life. Protestant denominations don’t typically have a cross with a corpus, or body of Jesus. The cross that hangs in the sanctuary at St. Francis of Assisi is called a San Damiano Cross. It is an icon cross because it contains images of people who have been a part in the meaning of the cross. They are:

1. Christ Crucified: Christ is represented both as wounded and as strong. He stands upright and resolute.
2. Major witnesses: The five center figures represent the witnesses of the crucifixion and witnesses of Jesus as Lord. On the left if Mary, mother of Jesus, and John. On the right are Mary Magdala, Mary, mother of James, and the centurion who represents a Christian witness.

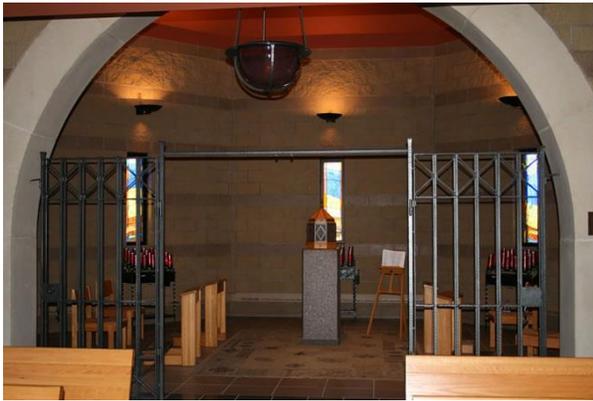
3. Minor witnesses: Two smaller figures represented are Longinus, the Roman

soldier who pierced the side of Jesus with a lance, and Stephanton, the soldier who offered Jesus the sponge soaked in vinegar.

² When an altar is dedicated by the bishop, it is anointed with the Sacred Chrism – the same Chrism used at Baptism, Confirmation, and Ordination of a Priest. The Chrism makes the altar a symbol of Christ, who, before all others, is The Anointed One, the Messiah.

4. Angels: Six angels are positioned at both ends of the crossbar.
5. Heavenly welcome: On the top of the cross, Jesus, fully clothed and carrying the cross as a triumphant scepter, is climbing out of the tomb and into the heavenly courts.
6. Right Hand of God: At the top of the cross is Jesus being raised from the dead to the right hand of God the Father.

BLESSED SACRAMENT CHAPEL



Tabernacle - The tabernacle is where the Consecrated Hosts, which have not been used during Mass, are kept. There is a red candle lit somewhere close to the tabernacle to remind us that Jesus is present in the hosts. These hosts are used for ministry to the sick and homebound. The tabernacle can either be located in a distinguished place, set aside to allow for private prayer or in the sanctuary, but never in a location that it distracts one's attention away from the altar of celebration.

Monstrance - The monstrance is the receptacle in which the consecrated host is held and displayed for adoration. It is also called an ostensorium.

ORDER OF PROCESSION

Thurifer with a Smoking Thurible / Incense - At times throughout the Church Year, incense may be used in the Mass. The word "incense" is derived from the Latin *incendere*, which means "to burn." Incense is a gum, spice, or other substance that when burned released a sweet fragrant smoke. The vessel used to hold the incense is called a thurible and the minister who carries it, the thurifer. The smoke conveys a sense of mystery and awe and it is a reminder of the sweet-smelling presence of our Lord. It adds a feeling of solemnity to the Mass. The visual imagery of the smoke and the smell reinforce the transcendence of the Mass linking Heaven with Earth, allowing us to enter into the presence of God. The smoke symbolizes the burning faith that should consume all Christians, while the fragrance symbolizes Christian virtue.



Processional Cross & Candles - A minister carrying a processional cross follows the thurifer. If incense is not used, the cross leads the procession. Ministers carrying lighted candles flank the cross. Traditionally there are two lighted candles in the procession but more can be used. The Ceremonial of Bishops suggests that seven candles be used for Mass with a bishop.

Lector with Gospel Book - A lector comes next in the procession. If there is no deacon, the lector may carry the Book of the Gospels. The lector holds the book "slightly elevated," the principle of which is to draw attention to the book. If the Book of the Gospels is already on the altar or if a parish does not have a Book of the Gospels, a lector may still process without it, but the procession of the lector is to give attention to the book. If a deacon is present at the Mass, he typically carries the Book of the Gospels.



Deacon - If there is a deacon, he enters alongside the priest, or he may walk immediately in front of the priest carrying the Book of the Gospels.

Priest - The priest who celebrates the Mass comes last in the procession. He offers the sacrifice in the person of Christ, stands at the head of the faithful, and presides of their prayer.

ITEMS USED AT MASS

Books

Lectionary - The Lectionary is the book(s) that contains a collection of scripture readings assigned for each Mass of the year. Prior to 2002, the Lectionary was carried in procession. In 2002, the General Instruction of the Roman Missal clarified that the Lectionary is not to be carried in the procession, but rather the Book of the Gospels because the Gospel has special significance among all the readings at Mass.

Book of the Gospels - As the name suggests, the Book of the Gospels is a book that contains the gospel readings for Sundays and Holy Days. Because it contains the words of Christ, it is placed upon the altar signifying Christ, thus unifying two primary symbols of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. In the course of the Mass, the altar and the Book of the Gospels are the only objects kissed by the deacon and priest.

Roman Missal - The Roman Missal is the book containing the prescribed prayers, chants, and instructions for the celebration of Mass in the Roman Catholic Church. Published first in Latin under the title *Missale Romanum*, the text is then translated and, once approved by a "recognition" by the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, is published in modern languages for use in local churches throughout the world.

Bread & Wine



Host - The bread that is used for the Eucharist is called a host. The Church's Code of Canon Law regulates exactly how this bread is prepared. In keeping with the Last Supper narratives, the Church has always regarded bread and wine as the only matter essential for the Eucharistic meal and sacrifice. The bread is made of wheat and should have the appearance of real food.³

Wine - The Code of Canon Law states that the wine used for Eucharist be "natural, from the fruit of the vine, and not spoiled" (Canon 924.3). It must be made from grapes and should be without any added substance. It may be "corrupt," and thus invalid matter, if it has turned to vinegar.

Vessels

Ciborium & Chalice - The ciborium is the vessel used to hold the Hosts which becomes the Body of Christ. It is also used to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. The chalice is the cup used at Mass to hold the wine which becomes the Blood of Christ.

Flagon - The vessel that contains the wine which will be consecrated at Mass for the communion of the people. It is brought forward in the procession of the gifts.



Cruet - The vessel that holds the water for commingling the water and wine and to wash the priest's hands.

Lavabo Bowl - The bowl over which the priest washes his hands during Mass.

Linens

Corporal - A white linen cloth on which are placed the vessels containing the bread and wine during Mass which will become the Body and Blood of Christ.

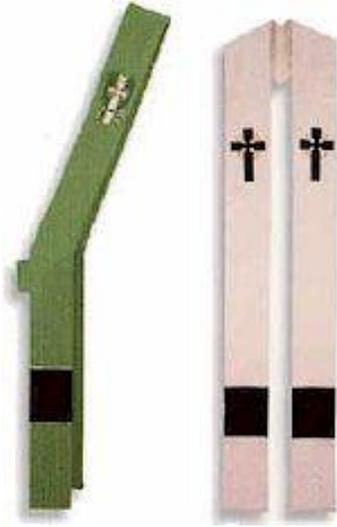
Purificator - A white cloth used to cleanse the chalice. It resembles a napkin.

Finger Towel - A towel used by the priest to dry his hands after the hand washing.

³ Persons who suffer from celiac disease may be given permission from the local bishop to receive communion in the form of bread which is low in gluten content. There is no such thing as a "gluten-free" host because bread without any gluten is invalid matter. Scientists have found trace amounts of gliadin in low gluten hosts and canonists deem that to be valid matter. Medical professionals have found that these low gluten hosts do not harm someone with celiac disease.

Vestments

Alb - A long white garment which can be used by all liturgical ministers. It is a reminder of the baptismal garment worn when the new Christian “put on Christ.”



Stole - A long scarf-like garment worn by both priests and deacons. According to the manner in which it is worn, it is the mark of the office of the priest or the deacon. A priest wears it around the neck, letting both sides hang down in front. The deacon wears it over his left shoulder, fastening it at his right side. Its color varies according to the feast or liturgical season.

Chasuble - A sleeveless outer garment, slipped over the head, hanging down from the shoulders covering the alb and stole of the priest. It is the proper Mass vestment for the presider and its color varies according to the feast or liturgical season.

Dalmatic - A loose-fitting outer garment, similar to the chasuble, but with open sides and wide sleeves. It covers the alb and stole of the deacon and is the proper Mass vestment for the deacon. Like the chasuble, the color varies according to the feast or liturgical season.

Vestments of a Bishop

Mitre - A tall pointed hat, made of two pieces, and worn by a bishop. It reminds us of the tongues of fire that fell upon the Apostles on the first day of Pentecost.

Zucchetto - The skullcap worn by a bishop. Its color is proper to the office of the minister.

Bishops: amaranth (violet)

Cardinals: scarlet (red)

Pope: white

Crozier - A staff resembling a shepherd’s crook and reminds us that the bishop is the chief shepherd of the flock of Christ in any given area.



LITURGICAL COLORS

GREEN

Worn during "Ordinary Time." Ordinary does not mean ordinary in the sense of common or normal. Ordinary means counting, as in the 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

RED

Worn on Passion (Palm) Sunday, Pentecost Sunday, and on the Feast Days of Martyrs including the Apostles and Evangelists.

WHITE

Worn during the Christmas and Easter seasons and celebrations of Mary, the Angels, the Saints who were not martyrs, All Saints, and other festive occasions. Also worn for funerals.

VIOLET

Worn during Advent and Lent.

ROSE

Worn on the 3rd Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) and the 4th Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday).