

ENCOURAGEMENT

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What's it called ??

One of the jobs of a catechist is to try to teach the children the correct names for the various things that are used on the altar including vestments, vessels and altar linen. This has a double purpose of emphasising how important the various articles are and to instil reverence and correct usage but also in the hope, that maybe some of them will become altar servers, lay readers or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

Correct names are not just a nicety or something that isn't all that important. Just imagine a doctor during an operation referring to the scalpel as 'the thing you cut people open with' or wasting time trying to explain what he really needed urgently! We are quite happy to use different names for the ordinary everyday things such as cooking utensils knives and forks and do not shy away from these, yet it is quite common for people not to know the correct names or terms for sacred vessels.

Each article worn by the priest or server, has a specific function and purpose as does each vessel.

One reason for this is that the altar has been a domain of priest and deacons and perhaps servers. It was rare for anyone else to be there pre Vatican Council. The exception for this was during a Nuptial Mass where the couple if they chose, could be on the altar. It is also true that the language of the altar often has Latin roots and history and the names did not necessarily trip off the tongue easily.

There are very many different things that are use in any Liturgy and add solemnity to it. Many have long traditions over the centuries. Perhaps the best known are the Candles on the altar, the Sanctuary Lamp which tells us that the Lord is present in the *Tabernacle* (or tent) and the tabernacle itself. The side table at the side of the Altar is noticed but rarely referend to as the *Credence table* upon which are placed the vessels used during Mass, and if there is no offertory procession bread and wine before consecration. Of course the obvious thing is the altar

table itself which has within it the relics, usually of a Saint. Hence it is kissed at the start of Mass and also because it is the altar upon which the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus. Obvious to all too is the lectern, or to give it its correct name the *Ambo*. Upon this is placed *The Lectionary*, hence the name and this is the book of the readings from both the Old and New Testament which are read in two-year cycles and each with a year A, B and C. there are three such lectionaries one for Sunday one for weekdays and one for special occasions.

The presider's chair is also important not just for the priest to have a rest, as one little boy said, but to point out who is offering the sacrifice to the Lord. All these things are on the *Sanctuary*, often called the Altar which actually is the name for the table.

The smaller things are of course the sacred vessels some better known than others.



We are all familiar with *The Chalice* (Cup) which can be gold or silver. But there are many other sacred vessels which are used each with a specific function. With the Chalice we can see the *Ciborium* which unlike the chalice has a lid. The word ciborium derives from the Greek word 'Kiborion', which refers to a cup-shaped vessel, reflecting its ancient roots in Christian liturgical tradition.

It is where the Hosts are kept during Mass and after consecration. Any consecrated hosts left are placed in the Tabernacle in the Ciborium as part of the reserved sacrament and for the sick and housebound. It can also be a smaller rounded version but with a

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I will go to the Altar of God, to God my joy and my delight. Psalm 43

lid on as well. (There is often a small round bowl too, for taking up the host to the altar at the offertory which rests on the side table often at the back of the church.) Together with this is the *Paten*, on which the larger Host used by the priest to elevate the Host and consume it is placed. This too is taken up at the offertory of the gifts.

The largest of the Sacred vessels is the *Monstrance* which is used for Exposition and Adoration. It can be very large or quite small depending on the circumstance but deliberately made so that all can see the Lord.

There are also containers which are glass which contain the Water and unconsecrated Wine before Mass. These together with the *Lavabo* or wash bowl for the priest to wash his fingers, sit on the Credence table. Sometimes these are placed on the altar table if there is no alter server or space is limited.

Other than glass there are altar linen which have a specific purpose. There is the *Pall* which sits over the Chalice and is small and square but more usually known are the three *The Corporal, the Purificator* and *the Fingercloths*. The first is the Corporal which has a cross embroidered on it. It is a large square which sits over the Altar cloth and upon which the sacred vessels are place. The Purificator is here to clean the chalice and ciborium and other vessels such as the paten. The cleansing has to be meticulous and is done after Holy Communion in case there are any sacred particles left. These too have a cross embroidered on them. The Finger cloths are part of the *Lavabo* or washing of the fingers. The priest usually says the following "*Lord, wash away my iniquity; cleanse me from my sin.*"

There are other vessels that are hidden and used for special celebration like the *Thurible* which contains the incense to incense the altar table. At a funeral the person in the coffin is also incensed.

In many organisations and groups that serve people there are uniforms by which we recognise the job that they're doing for example Nurses, Firefighters and the Police. While vestments are not quite the same, they do perform a special role in the liturgy. They also have spiritual and historic significance.

In pride of place is the *Stole* which the priest wears around his neck and droops down the body. These can be more or less ornate and go with the liturgical colours as the occasion requires, so green, white, red

and purple, sometime black. It is the sign of the priesthood of the wearer. The deacon wears his differently, crossbody. In the ordination ceremony the stole is placed around the neck of the priest. The word "stole" comes from the Latin "stola," which originally referred to a long robe but came to designate this vestment. The stole also represents the authority Christ gives to His ordained ministers to teach, sanctify, and govern. This authority does not belong to the individuals themselves but comes from Christ through the sacrament of Holy Orders. The stole makes visible this invisible spiritual reality, helping both ministers and faithful understand the nature of priestly service. A priest hearing confession wears this without any other vestment.

The *Alb*, meaning white, is long garment and the *Chasuble* in the various liturgical colours are well known to people. The Chasuble represents the travelling cloak or coat, and the Alb is tied with rope or *Cincture* (girdle) and both have ancient roots.

It goes back to early Christianity.

In these days of shortages and the need for the lay faithful to take on many responsibilities according to their estate, it is important to know more about such things. To end on a lighter note. A little boy learning about the priest's hat of days past, called the Biretta cheerfully called it a Lambretta, (of course a motorcycle.) But my favourite is a little girl who learning of the Dalmatic which the Deacon wears instead of a Chasuble told everybody with glee that he wore Dalmatians round his neck!!! I am sure the dogs did not mind. Smile. Blessing *Halina Holman* ©

Feast Days in September

3rd St. Gregory the Great

5th St. Teresa of Kolkata

6th Twenty-third Sunday of Ord. Time

8th Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary

12th The Most Holy Name of Mary

13th Twenty-fourth Sunday of Ord. Time

14th The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

15th Our Lady of Sorrows

16th Saints Cornelius & Cyprian

17th St. Hildegard of Bingen

20th Twenty-fifth Sunday of Ord. Time

21st St. Matthew, Apostle & Evangelist

23 St. Pius of Pietrelcina (Saint Padre Pio)

24th Our Lady of Walsingham

26th Saints Cosmas & Damian

27th Twenty-sixth Sunday of Ord. Time

29th Sts. Michael, Gabriel & Raphael, Archangels

30th St. Jerome