



THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

A Liturgical Vocabulary

Updated 25 October 2021

All members of the Altar Server Corps are expected to be familiar with the following terms. These are all integral parts of the Divine Liturgy, in which we can more consciously and actively participate the better we understand it. *It's not boring when you know what's happening!*

THE HOUSE OF GOD

The consecrated holy space where God dwells, where prayers are offered Him and where He is worshipped. Here the Sacraments are celebrated.

SACRISTY

The rooms where the priests and servers prepare themselves for Holy Mass, where the sacred vestments, vessels and linens are kept. *This is the domain of the pastor and the sacristan.*

VESTIBULE

Also known as the “narthex”, the equivalent in a home or office might be called the “entrance hall” or “lobby”, respectively.

CONFESSIONAL

The room in which sins are confessed and absolved. *Also called the “penalty box”.*

NAVE

The part of the church from which the people pray.

CHOIR

The area around the organ from whence the sacred musicians and singers pray in song.

SANCTUARY

The sacred area surrounding the altar, usually separated from the nave by steps, sometimes by an altar rail. *This is not a stage.*

ALTAR

The place where the holy sacrifice takes place. The altar represents Christ and is revered by a profound bow whenever approaching or leaving it.

SACRED MINISTERS

Sacred Ministers have sacred duties they celebrate or execute by virtue of their vocation. Their stable identity comes from ordination (Deacon, Priest & Bishop) or installation (Acolyte & Lector) by a bishop. They are listed hierarchically.

BISHOP

The chief shepherd of a diocese and successor of the Apostles, he possesses the fullness of the priesthood by virtue of episcopal consecration. He governs and guards the flock entrusted to him in submission to the pope, the successor of Saint Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, who is now Pope Francis. *The Bishop of Arlington since December 6, 2016 is the Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge.*

(Greek: επισκοπος *episcopos*, meaning “overseer”).

PRIEST

Ordained to act in the person of Christ the Priest, this collaborator of the bishop extends his ministry in the diocese by offering the Sacraments of Baptism, Penance, Eucharist, Marriage and Anointing of the Sick.

(Greek: πρεσβυτερος *presbyteros*, meaning “elder”).



DEACON

Ordained to assist the bishops and priests in their sacred duties he acts in the person of the Church by proclaiming the Gospel, preaching, teaching, baptizing and presiding at marriages.

(Greek: διακονια *diaconia*, meaning “service”).

SUB-DEACON

This minor Order still conferred in the Extraordinary Form. In the Solemn High Mass he vests in a tunic, chants the Epistle, assists the deacon at the altar in preparation of the chalice, and bears the paten during the Canon.

(Greek: συβ *sub*, meaning “under”).

ACOLYTE

Even though this term is commonly used to refer to anyone who serves in the sanctuary or even more specifically to the servers who will be assisting with the cruets and lavabo, an “acolyte” properly speaking is an adult male formally and permanently deputed with responsibilities previously entrusted to the sub-deacon of the traditional Roman Rite.

Currently, in the Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite, the Acolyte assists the priest and deacon at the altar. He is permitted to help in the distribution of Holy Communion when a great number of people are present at Holy Mass. In the absence of a priest or deacon, he even may expose the Blessed Sacrament for Adoration and visit the sick with the Holy Eucharist. His meditation on the Lord’s sacrifice should draw him to imitate the same mystery. This ministry, conferred by a bishop, is received by all candidates for the Holy Orders. In his absence, his liturgical responsibilities are taken up by other Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMs) and by altar boys.

(Greek: ακολουθος *akolouthos*, meaning “follower” or “attendant”).

LECTOR

Even though this term is commonly used to refer to anyone who reads at Mass, a “lector” properly speaking is an adult male formally and permanently deputed with responsibilities associated with the minor order of lector of the traditional Roman Rite.

In the Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite he is entrusted with the reading of Scripture in the liturgical assembly. He also ought to instruct children and adults in the faith and prepare them to receive the sacraments. He is to grow in wisdom and love by meditating constantly on Sacred Scripture. This ministry, conferred by a bishop, is received by all candidates for Holy Orders. Absent him, his liturgical duties are taken up by readers. (Latin: *lector*, meaning “reader”).

LITURGICAL ASSISTANTS

Assistants to the Sacred Ministers perform crucial roles in service to the pastor and parish. They are listed alphabetically.

ALTAR BOY

By serving as thurifer, boat bearer, book bearer, crucifer, candle bearer, miter bearer and crosier bearer, the altar boys assist the priest *and also have the best seat in the house*.

CRUCIFER

The server who carries the processional cross. (Latin: *crux*, meaning “cross”).

CANDLE BEARER

The server who carries a candle on a tall candlestick. Candlebearers serve in pairs and, in procession, they usually flank the processional cross. (Latin: *candere*, meaning “to shine”).

THURIFER

The server charged with the thurible. (Latin: *thus* or *thuris*, meaning “incense”).

CANTOR

The cantor, along with the choir, organist and other musicians, leads and sustains the people in singing. (Latin: *cantor*, meaning “singer” or “musician”).

SPECIAL MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION

These extraordinary ministers are commissioned by a priest or deacon to distribute Holy Communion (in the Ordinary Form of the Mass) to the parish community when a priest, deacon or acolyte is not available.

READER

Entrusted with proclaiming Scripture at Holy Mass and other liturgical celebrations, the reader also leads the general intercessions in the absence of a deacon as well as the psalm in the absence of a cantor.

SACRISTAN

Sacristans prepare and maintain all that is necessary for Holy Mass: sacred vessels, linens, vestments and books, not to mention all the flammables: charcoal, incense, candles and misbehaving altar servers. (Latin: *sacer*, meaning “holy”).

USHER

The ushers welcome the faithful, collect the offertory, keep an eye on the safety of the church, and maintain the dignified order of the liturgical celebration.

SACRED ACTIONS

Sacred actions are the gestures of our prayers. By means of ritual they teach us how to pray as well as express the inner disposition of our soul.

ABLUTION

Washing of the hands after coming into contact with the Blessed Sacrament. Notice that the priest's fingers are being held together because they have come in contact with the Sacred Host. When pouring water over his fingers be sure not to touch his unpurified fingers with the glass of the cruet. (Latin: *abluere*, meaning "to wash clean").



BOW

The simple bow (of the head) is made at the name of the persons of the Holy Trinity, Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the saint in whose honor the Mass or the Divine Office is being celebrated.

A profound bow (of the body from the waist up) is made when passing the altar during Mass if the Blessed Sacrament is not present on the altar itself, to the priest before and after incensation as well as to the bishop.

CHANT

The official music of the Roman Liturgy and one of the oldest written forms of music.

(Latin: *cantare*, meaning "to sing").

GENUFLECT

A genuflection, made by bending only the right knee to the ground, is an act of adoration, and is therefore reserved for the Blessed Sacrament whether exposed, reserved in the tabernacle or present on the altar after consecration; the Holy Cross is rendered a genuflection from the time of solemn adoration in the liturgical celebration of Good Friday until the beginning of the Easter Vigil. Keep your back straight and head up. (Latin: *genu*, meaning "knee"; *flectere*, meaning "to bend").

INCENSE

The pillar of smoke indicative of the presence of God since the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt, this sweet fragrance beautifies the house of God and symbolizes our prayers rising up to heaven. *Jasmine and Rose are among Father Pollard's favorite kinds of incense. Sawdust is not incense.*

(Latin: *incendere*, meaning "to burn").

KISS

By a kiss, the priest and deacon reverence the altar at the beginning and end of Holy Mass as well as Lauds (Morning Prayer) and Vespers (Evening Prayer). In the absence of a bishop, the priest or deacon who reads the Gospel kisses it afterward. It is another sign of reverence given the Holy Cross on Good Friday.

In the Extraordinary Form, the *solita oscula* (usual kiss) is made to every object handed to the priest and then the hand of the priest... or close to the priest's hand.

KNEEL

A posture of humble adoration and prayer. Unless directed to do otherwise we kneel for the duration of the Eucharistic Prayer.

LAVABO

Not only a noun, "lavabo" is the first word of the traditional prayer for the priest when washing his hands after the offertory. It means "I will wash". Notice the position of the servers with the server holding bowl and cruet/ewer is on the right side of the other server who is holding the finger towel completely unfolded.



ORANS

Hands and arms lifted to heaven, the priest and sometimes the deacon adopt this ancient posture of prayer. Ordinarily, this gesture corresponds to moments when the priest is praying on behalf of all the faithful. Otherwise, he would hold his hands together when the priest and the faithful are all praying together.

PROCESS

Solemn walking. Unless you are holding something, hold your hands palms together and fingers straight. The server in front sets the pace by walking smoothly and as slow as he can without pausing. Servers and ministers keep an eye on the one in front of him, maintaining consistent distance.
(Latin: *processio*, meaning "advance").

PROSTRATE

This most humble gesture is a sign of complete sacrifice which is made by candidates for ordination before the laying on of hands, by those making profession of religious vows and by the priest and deacon at the beginning of the Good Friday liturgy.

(Latin: *sternere*, meaning “to stretch out”).

PURIFY

The reverent washing of sacred vessels after coming in contact with the Blessed Sacrament. The water used to purify is preferably consumed; otherwise it is poured into the earth by means of the sacrarium.

(Latin: *purgare*, meaning “to clean”).

THE SIGN OF PEACE

A ceremonial receiving and offering of the peace of Christ, originating from the altar, where the Lamb of God takes away the sins of the world. Made by means of a bow, a handshake or an embrace.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

The Christian “secret handshake” that identified believers during Roman persecution.

SING

“He who sings prays twice,” said Saint Augustine. *God gave you your voice; offer it up. Real men sing.*



SIT

Shoulders back, hands on your knees, eyes forward. Real men don't slouch. Keeping your body calm will allow you to pay better attention to the readings and the homily.

STAND

Stand up straight with your hands held together in prayer.

STRIKE THE BREAST

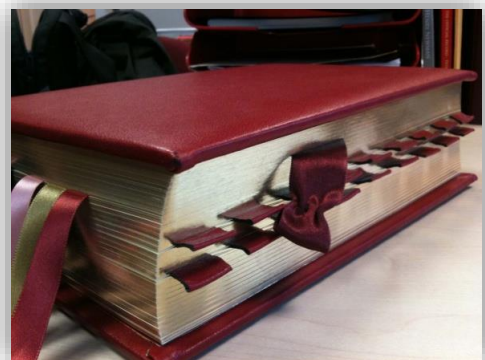
Penitential gesture made by all during the Penitential Rite and by the priest at the end of the Roman Canon.

SACRED BOOKS

Sacred books contain all the texts (prayers and readings) for the celebration of all rituals, blessings and sacraments, especially the Holy Mass.

THE BOOK OF BLESSINGS OR *BENEDITIONALE*

Contains the texts for blessing everything from tabernacles and holy water to boats and fishing gear.



THE BOOK OF THE GOSPELS OR *EVANGELIARIUM*

Contains the texts of the Gospels read at Holy Mass. When used on solemn occasions it is enthroned on the altar at the beginning of Mass.

THE CEREMONIAL OF BISHOPS OR *CEREMONIALE EPISCOPORUM*

Describes and establishes the norms for all liturgical celebrations at which a bishop is present. Serves as a handbook for ceremonies as well as a definitive interpretation of the liturgical reform.

THE DIVINE OFFICE

The official prayer of the Church, also known as “The Liturgy of the Hours” to which all monks, nuns, brothers, sisters, deacons and priests are bound to pray daily in its entirety. The five “hours” are Matins, Lauds, Terce/Sext/None, Vespers and Compline, called in English the Office of Readings, Morning Prayer, Daytime Prayer, Evening Prayer and Night Prayer, respectively. Outside of the Holy Mass it is the most important of the Church’s official prayers. All the faithful are encouraged to pray the Divine Office, especially Sunday Vespers.

THE GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS OF THE ROMAN MISSAL

Found at the beginning of the *ROMAN MISSAL*, this document contains the directions for Holy Mass. In the *Missale Romanum* of 1962 and earlier, this section of the book is call *Ritus Servandus*.

HOLY COMMUNION AND WORSHIP OF THE EUCHARIST OUTSIDE OF MASS

Guides the Exposition, Adoration and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, Eucharistic Processions as well as the distribution of Holy Communion outside of Holy Mass.

LECTIONARY OR *LECTIONARIUM*

Contains the Sacred Scripture readings for Holy Mass, it is about the same size as the *ROMAN MISSAL*, yet has no tabs and only a few ribbons.

EPISTOLARIUM

Used in the Extraordinary Form, it holds the Epistle for the Sub-Deacon.

ORDO

This is the priest and sacristan’s “cheat sheet”, indicating exactly what Masses and prayers are offered on any particular day of the year.

ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

Contains the rituals for wake, funeral, burial and memorial services.

PASTORAL CARE OF THE SICK: RITES OF ANOINTING AND VIATICUM

The little book priests take with them to visit the sick and dying.

THE ROMAN MISSAL OR *MISSALE ROMANUM*

Previously called the *SACRAMENTARY*. this red leather-bound book contains the instructions, prayers and ceremonies of the Holy Mass; it usually has several colored ribbons and several colored tabs made of plastic or leather.

ROMAN PONTIFICAL

Contains the rites of ordination to the episcopate, presbyterate and diaconate.

SACRED VESSELS

Sacred vessels hold the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. You should know where these items are in the sacristy and how to assist the priest or deacon with them reverently.

ABLUTION CUP

Also called the “purification cup”, this glass bowl with gold cover sits next to the tabernacle as well as on the credence table. Those whose fingers have come in contact with the Blessed Sacrament use the water it holds to abluete their fingers.



CHALICE

The most sacred of all the vessels, this cup holds the wine for consecration, after which it holds the Precious Blood of Christ. It often has a long stem, and is made of a precious material, often silver or gold. It remains veiled during the Liturgy of the Word.

(Latin: *calix*, meaning “cup”).



CIBORIUM

Often resembling a chalice or sometimes a bowl except for that it usually has a cover, the ciborium holds the Blessed Sacrament distributed for the communion of the faithful as well as that reserved in the tabernacle.

(Latin: *cibus*, meaning “food”).

CUSTODIA

This vessel holds the lunette with the Blessed Sacrament inside the tabernacle.

(Latin: *custodia*, meaning “guarding”).

LUNETTE

This small glass case holds the Blessed Sacrament which will be adored in the monstrance. It is made to fit snugly in the monstrance and the custodia.



MONSTRANCE

The most ornate sacred vessel, it contains the Blessed Sacrament during Exposition, Benediction and Procession.

(Latin: *monstrans*, meaning “to show”).

PATEN

A round plate that holds the bread to be consecrated, it is made of the same material as the chalice.

(Latin: *patena*, meaning “pan”).

PYX

A small round container with a hinged lid resembling a watch case and usually made of gold, it is used to bring the Blessed Sacrament to the sick.

(Latin: *pyxis*, meaning “a box”).

SACRED OBJECTS

These items are found in the sacristy, nave and sanctuary. You should know where to find them and how to handle them with reverence and competence.

ALTAR CARDS

These framed cards placed on the altar provide for the priest various prayers that would not be read conveniently directly from the Missal.

AMBRY OR AUMBRY

The box or case attached to a wall of the church where the holy oils are kept.

ASPERSORY

The container used to carry holy water. *What you probably have been calling the "holy water bucket".*

(Latin: *aspersere*, meaning "to sprinkle").



BOAT

A little vessel which holds the incense, it always contains a small spoon for scooping. Incense is sweet smelling gums and spices taken from trees, usually burned with foreign substances to make the smoke thicker and sweeter. Because the smoke of burning incense ascending to heaven reminded men of the ascent of prayer to God, we find records of its use in the Old Testament.

CANDLELIGHTER/EXTINGUISHER

Long wooden or brass pole with a taper and snuffer at the end opposite the handle.

CANDLE

The light of a burning candle indicates the presence of God. Some candles are carried in procession.

CREDENCE TABLE

Table on which all the sacred books, vessels and objects are kept during the liturgy when not in use in the sanctuary.

CRUCIFIX

The image of the crucified Lord which is processed into church and then placed on or near the altar. All churches must have one during the Holy Mass.

CRUETS

Two vessels which hold the wine and the water to be used at Mass. They are usually made of glass or metal, and are covered to prevent dust or insects from getting inside.

HOLY OILS

Blessed and consecrated by the bishop at the Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday morning, these three oils (Oil of the Sick, Oil of the Catechumens, Holy Chrism) are used to heal, to exorcise and to baptize, confirm, ordain and consecrate, respectively.

HOLY WATER FONT

Located at the church entrances, holy water reminds us of our baptism and can cleanse us of venial sin.



LAVABO

The glass bowl or dish over which the priest washes his hands after the offertory (or after the gifts and he have been incensed) while he prays a portion of Psalm 25. *You have probably been calling it "the bowl"*. A silver ewer and basin are used to wash the hands of a bishop. (Latin: *lavare*, meaning "to wash").

PASCHAL CANDLE

Also called the "Easter Candle", it is blessed at the beginning of the Easter Vigil and processed into the dark church by the deacon; it burns throughout Eastertide as well as at all baptisms and funerals.

PULPIT

The large stand from which the Sacred Readings are proclaimed and the homily given. Commonly called the "lectern" or "ambo".

RELIQUARY

A vessel in which relics are sealed are kept, it can take the form of a small case with glass cover or an ornate stand resembling a small monstrance. Relics may not be exposed for public veneration unless enclosed in reliquaries.

SACRARIUM

Next to the regular sink in the sacristy, this sink (covered by a lid when not in use) goes straight into the ground. *Remember, blessed objects may not be thrown away but must be burned or buried.*

SANCTUARY LAMP

Candle which burns near the tabernacle to indicate the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

SEDILIA

The chair of the main celebrant.

SPRINKLER OR ASPERGILLUM

A short rod with a perforated metal bulb at the end, used for sprinkling at blessings and at the Asperges (or Sprinkling Rite) at the beginning of Mass. (Latin: *aspergere*, meaning “to sprinkle”)

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Depictions of the fourteen events between Our Lord’s conviction and execution.

TABERNACLE

The shrine in which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, to which we always genuflect out of reverence.

TAPER

Wax-covered wick used to light candles on its own or in a candlelighter.

THURIBLE

A vessel in which incense is burned over charcoals, it consists of a metal body with separate lid enclosing a pan for the charcoal and incense. It is carried by three chains attached to the body, with a fourth chain raising and lowering the lid. Incense is a perfume burned on certain occasions, as at solemn Holy Mass and Benediction. Burning incense is symbolic of our prayer rising up to God. As the sweet smelling incense rises aloft, so should our prayers to the Good God. It is also called a “censer”.



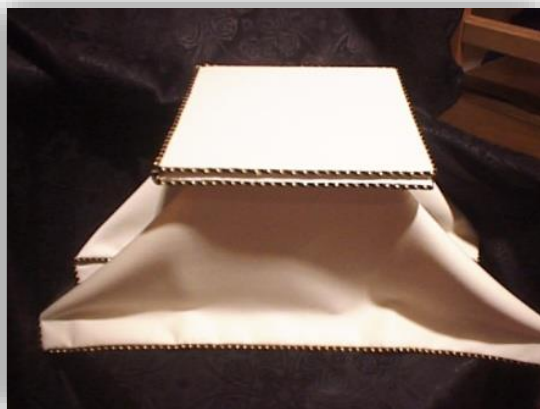
(Latin: *thus* or *thuris*, meaning “incense”).

SACRED LINENS

Sacred linens are used only for liturgical celebrations. They are afforded great care as they come into contact with the Blessed Sacrament.

ALTAR CLOTH

This large white linen covers the altar at all time, except for the period between the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday to the Easter Vigil.



BURSE

A case made of cloth and stiff material which, for reasons of convenience and reverence, holds the folded corporal when not used on the altar.

(Latin: *bursa*, meaning “hide” or “skin”).

CHALICE VEIL

We use a veil to cover what is beautiful and sacred. This large piece of cloth covers the chalice, purificator, paten, pall and corporal when they are not in use. It is either white in color or matches the color of the day. It is removed at the Offertory and replaced after the vessels are purified.

CORPORAL

A large white cloth folded in three from both sides, forming a square; it rests on top of the pall. The most important of the holy linens, it is spread on the altar at the Offertory. The sacred vessels are placed on the altar on top of the corporal. The corporal often has a cross stitched onto the front, central square. (Latin: *corpus*, meaning “body”).



FINGER TOWEL

This cloth is used by the priest to dry his hands after washing them with water at the lavabo.

PALL

A square piece of cloth, starched stiff or stretched over a stiff board, which covers the chalice. It protects the Precious Blood from foreign objects which may fall into the chalice.

PURIFICATOR

A white cloth placed over the chalice and used to purify the chalice after the Precious Blood has been consumed. The purificator often has a red cross stitched onto it. It rests on top of the chalice and under the paten. The funeral pall, a completely different thing, covers the casket during the Funeral Mass.

SACRED VESTMENTS

Vestments are special garments worn by the clergy, at the celebration of the Holy Mass, administration of the Sacraments, in procession, when giving blessings, and in general whenever exercising their official priestly duties. They are listed in the order in which they are worn.



CASSOCK

The black robe reaching down to the feet and buttoned in the front. For priests it is black, for bishops violet, for cardinals red, and for the Pope white. Also known as the “soutane”.

SURPLICE

A large-sleeved tunic of half length made of cotton or linen, it is worn over the cassock by those attending liturgical ceremonies in choir, walking in procession and administering the sacraments.

(Latin: *superpellicium*, meaning “over the chest”).

AMICE

A white piece of cloth which covers the neck and shoulders of the priest or deacon. It is secured with long pieces of white ribbon. This first of the sacred clothes put on by the priest serves to cover his street clothes when the alb does not completely. It also protects the chasuble and stole from perspiration.

(Latin: *amictus*, meaning “garment” or “covering”).

ALB

A long white tunic, going from the neck to the ankle, it was adapted from the undertunic of the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations, although some historians find its origin in the garment described in Exodus 29:39. White in color, it symbolizes the self-denial and chastity befitting a priest. It hangs down to the ankles, reminding him that he is bound to practice good works to his life's end. (Latin: *albus*, meaning “white”).



CINCTURE

A rope belt which fastens the alb around the waist. It symbolizes purity and chastity. (Latin: *cinctura*, meaning “girdle”).

MANIPLE

A short narrow strip of cloth that hangs from the left arm of the priest. Mandatory in the Traditional Mass, it serves as a liturgical handkerchief and so alludes to the tears and sorrow of the Passion of Christ.

STOLE

A type of scarf which hangs over both shoulders of the bishop and priest, over the left shoulder of the deacon. It symbolizes authority.

TUNICLE

This sleeved garment is worn by a sub-deacon over all of his other vestments.

DALMATIC

This sleeved garment is worn by a deacon over all of his other vestments.



From L to R: Dalmatic, Chasuble and Dalmatic.

CHASUBLE

The uppermost vestment worn by the priest, completely enveloping him, it symbolizes the yoke of Christ, that is, the carrying of the cross. It is worn only during Mass, and is the color of the day.

(Latin: *casula*, meaning “little house”).

COPE

The mantle used for Benediction, processions and other occasions outside of Holy Mass. When carrying the Blessed Sacrament a white cope is always worn.



HUMERAL VEIL

Worn by the priest or deacon carrying the Blessed Sacrament in procession and giving Benediction. It is also worn when a relic of the True Cross is carried in procession. The sub-deacon wears a humeral veil to hold the paten during the Roman Canon of the Traditional Mass. It covers the shoulders, arms and hands.

(Latin: *humerus*, meaning “shoulder”).



ZUCCHETTO

This skullcap is worn by priests, bishops and cardinals in the colors appropriate to their rank, which are black, purple and scarlet, respectively. During Holy Mass, it is removed before the Prayer over the Gifts and replaced after the sacred vessels have been purified. The word literally means "small gourd", which comes from the Italian word for "pumpkin", which is "zucca". The pope wears a white zucchetto but it does not usually float a few inches over his head.



BIRETTA

A square cap with three ridges or peaks on its upper surface, worn by deacons, priests, bishops and cardinals. It is removed briefly and placed over the heart in order to bow the head. Like the zucchetto its color depends on the one wearing it, black for priests, purple for bishops and scarlet for cardinals.

(Latin: *birrus*, meaning "cloak to keep off rain").



MITRE

This tall twin-peaked head covering is worn only by bishops. Resembling the head dress of the Jewish priests, it is worn while processing, seated, addressing the people, conferring a sacrament and giving a solemn blessing. (Latin: *mitra*, meaning “headdress”).



CROSIER

Also known as the “pastoral staff”, this symbol of the bishop’s authority is carried in his left hand.

VIMP

A simple veil that hangs over the shoulders of the mitre or crozier bearer with which the objects are held.

LITURGICAL YEAR

Fifty two weeks of the year the Church celebrates the whole Paschal Mystery of Christ, from Incarnation to Ascension, awaiting His promised return. Bishops Conferences may modify their liturgical calendars.

ADVENT

The joyful season of penitential preparation for Christmas.

CHRISTMASTIDE

The celebration of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.

LENT

Forty days of fasting and prayer to prepare for Easter, the greatest solemnity of the year.

HOLY WEEK & THE SACRED TRIDUUM

The week before Easter, beginning with Palm Sunday, Shrove Tuesday and Spy Wednesday, followed by the last three and most important days of Holy Week: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

EASTER

The solemn feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Called the “Solemnity of Solemnities”.

PENTECOST

The solemn feast of the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, fifty days after Easter.

SEASON OF THE YEAR

What we call “Ordinary Time”, thirty-three to thirty-four weeks dedicated to the whole mystery of Christ.

SOLEMNITY

Every Solemnity except for Annunciation (*March 25*), Birth of John the Baptist (*June 24*) and Sacred Heart is a Holy Day of Obligation in the Roman Calendar. National conferences of bishops have the authority to modify the designation of Holy Days of Obligation and/or transferring them to the following Sunday.

Each Sunday of the year is a Solemnity, especially Easter Sunday, Pentecost Sunday and Christ the King. The other Solemnities are:

Mary the Mother of God, *January 1*;

Epiphany, *January 6*;

Saint Joseph, Husband of Mary *March 19*;

Ascension, *forty days after Easter*,

Corpus Christi, *eleven days after Pentecost*;

Saints Peter and Paul, *June 29*;

Assumption, *August 15*;

All Saints Day, *November 1*;

Immaculate Conception, *December 8*; and

Christmas, *December 25*.

Underlined are the Holy Days in the US, *57 in all!*

LITURGICAL COLORS

GREEN

Color of hope, for the Season of the Year or Ordinary Time.

RED

Color of fire for the Holy Spirit and of blood for martyrs who shed their blood for Christ.

VIOLET

Color of humility and penance, used during Advent and Lent as well as during funerals.

WHITE

Color of purity and joy, used for Feasts of Our Lord, Our Lady and for saints who were not martyrs. Related to white, **Gold** is also permitted at all times, most especially for solemn Feasts.

BLACK

Color of sorrow, may be used on All Souls Day, in funerals and in Masses for the Dead.

ROSE

Used on only two Sundays, the Third Sunday of Advent called “Gaudete Sunday” and the Fourth Sunday of Lent called “Laetare Sunday”, to symbolize the joyful anticipation of Christmas and Easter, respectively.

Ite, Missa est!