

Liturgical Vessels

Chalice - The consecrated gold or gilded silver cup used to hold the Precious Blood. Only priests or deacons are allowed to touch the Chalice (though sacristans may in the course of their duties). Pewter Chalices are "okay" for use during times of persecution but, even then, the inside of the bowl must be gilded. When Mass begins, the Chalice is covered by the folded purificator and the pall (see below).

Paten - The consecrated gold or gilded silver plate on which the Sacred Host is laid. Only priests or deacons are allowed to touch the Paten (though sacristans may in the course of their duties). A Communion Paten has a handle and is held under the chin of one receiving the Eucharist so that in case the Host is dropped, it won't fall to the floor.

Ciborium - A chalice-shaped vessel with a lid used to hold consecrated Hosts for distribution during the Communion of the faithful. It can be made of any material as long as the inside is gilded. It is kept in the Tabernacle between Masses, covered with a white veil (which can be decorated with precious metals).

Cruets - These vessels hold the water and wine before Consecration

Monstrance (or "Ostensorium" or "Ostensory") - A gold or silver vessel, often in a sunburst shape, with a clear glass area, called a "luna," for viewing the Sacrament. The Host is kept in place inside the crystal or glass frame by a crescent shaped gold or silver gilded clip called a "lunette." The monstrance is used during Benedictions and processions, etc., for adoration by the faithful. It doesn't require a blessing, but it should be blessed.

Aspersory and Aspergillum (or "Aspergill") - The Aspersory is a container for holding Holy Water. The Aspergillum is a stick-shaped implement with holes in it to dip into the Aspersory and catch the Holy Water for sprinkling the people and things. Because of Leviticus 14:49-52, Numbers 19:18, Psalm 50:9, etc., the aspergillum used to contain crushed Biblical hyssop (*Origanum syriacum*) to catch the water, but nowadays a small sponge is more often used.

Thurible (or "Censer") and Boat - A thurible is the incense burner used at Mass. It hangs from chains so it can be swung to incense people and things. The boat is where the incense is stored until it is placed in the thurbible.

Pyx - A small container, also called a custodia, used to carry the Sacred Host when taking it to the sick and homebound. It is made of the same material as the Ciborium -- gilt on the inside.

Altar Linens

Chalice veil - Small silk cloth, of the same color as the priest's vestments, used to cover the Chalice

Purificator (or "Mundatory" or "Purificatory") -Rectangular piece of linen or hemp used to wipe the Chalice before the Offertory and after Communion, the priest's lips and fingers. It requires no special blessing.

Pall - A blessed, stiff square piece of linen, sometimes decorated with a Cross or other embroidery, used to cover the Chalice to prevent impurities from falling into it. If it is embroidered or made of silk, the side touching the Chalice must still be made of linen. Another type of pall is the cloth used to cover coffins at Requiem Masses.

Finger Towels - These may be made of any material (preferably linen) and are used at the lavabo and after Communion

Corporal - A blessed square linen cloth which is spread out by the priest in the middle of the Altar. From the Catholic Encyclopedia, "after it [the corporal] is washed, bleached, and ironed, it is folded into three equal parts, both in its length and in its width, i.e. the anterior part is folded over the middle; then the posterior part is turned down over the anterior part; after this the part at the priest's right is folded over the middle, and finally the part at the priest's left is folded over these. The corporal is placed in the burse in such a manner that the edge of the last fold is towards the opening of the burse."

Burse - A 10-inch square container to hold the Corporal. The burse covers the chalice before the Mass, with the opening of the burse facing toward the priest. (The leather pouch used to hold the pyx is also called a burse)