

Chapter 22: Sacramentals and Devotions

Sacramentals are objects, actions, prayers, places, etc., which help us become aware of Christ's presence. The spiritual value of the sacramental depends on our personal faith and devotion, which is not true of the sacraments. The Lord works through the sacraments even when our faith is weak.

Popular devotions vary from place to place, ethnicities, backgrounds, etc.

* Actions: the Sign of the Cross, bowing, genuflecting, blessings, adoration, church processions

* Objects: the Bible, holy water, candles, statues/icons, holy pictures, blessed ashes/palms, rosaries, relics, incense, scapulars, crucifixes/crosses, religious medals, church buildings, priests' vestments

* Places: the Holy Land, Rome, places of pilgrimage like Fatima, Lourdes, Mexico City, and Assisi, retreat houses like Gethsemani in KY and St. Meinrad in southern IN

* Sacred time: Holy Days, saint's feast days, days of prayer, fasting, and abstinence (Sept 29, Feast of Archangels, March 9, St. Dominic Savio, Nov. 17, St. Elizabeth of Hungary)

* Blessings: persons, meals, objects

February: Blessing of the throats – Feast of St. Blaise

Feb/Mar: Ashes on Ash Wednesday

Lent: Stations of the Cross

March: Palms on Palm Sunday

Good Friday: no Mass but Adoration of the Cross service

Holy Sat: (Polish) blessing of food baskets

Easter: (Polish) procession before Mass

May: May crowning

June: Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

November: All Saints / All Souls (Día de los Muertos (Hispanic))
Dec. 12: Our Lady of Guadalupe
Christmas: (Polish) Oplatki - (Italy) children bring their baby Jesus statues for a blessing -
(Hispanic) La Posada

Relics: 2 Kings 13:20-21 – man was being buried and a band of marauding Moabites was spotted so his family threw him into Elisha's grave real fast, and as soon as the dead man touched the bones of Elisha, he came back to life.

Fasting: OT and NT

VESTING PRAYERS FOR THE PRIEST:

Give virtue, O Lord, to my hands, that every stain may be wiped away; that I may be enabled to serve You without defilement of mind or body.

For the Amice, while placing it over his head, he says:

Place, O Lord, on my head the helmet of salvation, that I may overcome the assaults of the devil.

For the Alb, while vesting with it, he says:

Purify me, O Lord, from all stains and cleanse my heart, that, washed in the Blood of the Lamb, I may enjoy the eternal delights.

For the Cincture, while girding himself, he says:

Gird me, O Lord, with the cincture of purity, and quench in my heart the fire of concupiscence, that the virtue of continence and chastity may remain in me.

For the Stole, while placing it upon his neck, he says:

Restore to me, O Lord, the state of immortality which was lost to me by my first parents, and, although I am unworthy to approach your sacred mysteries, grant me eternal joy.

For the Chasuble, while placing it upon his shoulders, he says:

O Lord, who said, "My yoke is sweet and my burden light," grant that I may carry it so as to obtain your grace. Amen.

Why do priests wear a chasuble at Mass? And what's a chasuble?

The Roman casula went out of style ages ago, but the Church held on to it through the centuries.

When attending Mass, you'll always see the priest wearing a distinctive garment unlike anything in modern-day fashion. It typically has some sort of embellishment or symbol on it, and comes in several different colors.

What is it and why do priests still wear them?

Since ancient times, whenever a priest celebrated the sacrifice of the Mass he would put on a large poncho-like garment called a *casula* (chasuble) that covered his ordinary clothing. This vestment developed from the ordinary Roman attire of a farmer, who wore the large poncho to protect him from the elements. It eventually became associated with Christians in the 3rd century.

As the fashion trends shifted the chasuble ceased to be an ordinary garment but was still used by priests. By the 8th century the chasuble was reserved for clergy members and began to be ornamented in a way that reflected its sacred function.

At first the chasuble was large and bulky, and required the help of other attendants at the liturgy to gather the many folds to better facilitate the movements of the priest. Over time it was cut down in shape, most extreme in the case of the "fiddleback" style chasuble during the last few centuries.

The symbolism of the chasuble can be found expressed in the traditional prayer that a priest prays before putting it on: *O Lord, who has said, "My yoke is sweet and My burden light," grant that I may so carry it as to merit Thy grace. Amen.*

The chasuble is seen as the "yoke of Christ" and reminds the priest that he is "another Christ" in the sacrifice of the Mass and to "put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth" (Ephesians 4:24).

Additionally, the chasuble symbolizes the "seamless garment" worn by Christ when he was led to his crucifixion. This further accentuates the connection between the priest, the Mass, and the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. A common ornamentation of the chasuble is a large cross on the back or front of the vestment to further cement the symbolism. The color of this vestment is coordinated with the symbolic color of the liturgical season or feast.

For these reasons, the Church holds onto this ancient garment, reminding the priest (and the people) that the Mass is not an ordinary event, but one that is sacred and like nothing else on the face of the earth.