

## Catechism on the Liturgy II, 4

### **Catafalque**

A coffin-shaped wood structure used at Requiem Masses to represent the Faithful Departed, when the body or bodies are not present. It is covered with a black pall, as for a funeral. The word is from the Latin meaning “scaffold.”

### **Cathedral**

From the Latin meaning “chair,” it is the principal church of a diocese. Each Cathedral has a throne or chair in which the bishop alone may sit. The anniversary of the dedication of the Cathedral is celebrated by the whole diocese. It is the premier location of the authority of the Apostles in a diocese.

### **Celebrant**

From the Latin *celeber*, meaning “numerous” or in “great number.” So a celebrated feast is one to which many people come. The celebrant is the one who performs the Mass, and confects the Holy Eucharist.

### **Cerecloth**

A linen cloth waxed on the bottom side that is placed on top of the altar, before the altar cloth is spread over it. It is kept there until all traces of the holy oils used in the consecration of an altar are gone. Afterwards, it is kept in order to prevent any drops of the Precious Blood from seeping into the altar stone. It is also called a chrismale. The Latin word *cereus* means “wax.”

### **Chalice**

From the Latin *calix* meaning a kind of cup for drinking wine, it is a consecrated vessel used for the Precious Blood at the Mass. A chalice veil is used to transport the chalice to and from the altar. Chalices have three parts: the cup, the base, and the node separating the two. It should be made of precious metal, and the cup lined with gold.

### **Chancel**

From the Latin meaning “crossbar” or “screen,” it is that area of the church assigned to officiating clergy. In the middle ages it was raised to a tall height, and was expanded to cover not just the sanctuary but also the choir.

### **Chasuble**

From the Latin word *casula*, meaning “little tent”. It is a garment worn by priests and bishops for the celebration of the Mass. Originally it was a winter travelling cloak which took the place of the toga. Two basic styles are used, a full tent-like garment called gothic or semi-gothic, and Roman. The Roman style has no sleeves, and is very practical when the tabernacle is on the altar.

### **Chrism**

A blend of olive oil and balsam, blessed during the morning Mass of Sacred Chrism on Holy Tuesday, by the bishop, and used to anoint persons in Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders. It is used to anoint altars, bells, churches, sacred vessels, and baptismal water. It implies and is symbolic of grace and dedicated service to God.

### **Christening**

Another word for Baptism, it refers to the putting on of Christ and to the naming of a child.

### **Church**

From a word which means “assembly.” It signifies the society of the faithful who are united to Christ. Later the word began to be applied to the place in which the faithful met in order to worship. The first church in that sense was the cenacle, or the Upper Room, where the Last Supper was celebrated. Afterwards it was the best room in the house of one of the faithful. Before churches in

this sense, our ancestors used underground cemeteries in Rome called catacombs. Catholics would meet there as legally constituted “funeral associations”.

### **Church, Dedication of**

This is also called a consecration of a church. As the construction of a new church starts, a blessing and the laying down of a cornerstone or foundation stone is done, to give God’s blessing to the work, and remind the faithful that the physical structure is a visible sign of the Church, built with living stones.

### **Churching of Women**

This is the blessing of women after childbirth, which is an official or liturgical thanksgiving for her child, and also a blessing. It is also called the Purification of women – not because of any defilement during childbirth (the Sacred Vessels are purified after Holy Communion) but because the act of giving birth is so holy, that as a chalice is purified to return it to ordinary use, so a woman is

purified to return to the ordinary or daily routine.

### **Ciborium**

From the Latin *cibus* meaning “bread,” it is a consecrated vessel used to keep the hosts given to the faithful for their communions. The ciborium is veiled when consecrated hosts are in it, which reminds us of the manger; and the veil, His swaddling clothes.

### **Cincture**

A lengthy cord tied at the waist, to gather in the flowing robe of the alb, but which stands for purity. It is usually white to symbolize purity, but may also be the liturgical color of the day. The word is from the Latin, meaning to gird.

### **Clapper**

This is a wooden device which supplants the bell at the Mass, from after the Gloria on Holy Thursday until the Gloria of the Easter Vigil. It calls to mind the sound of the nails going into the hands and feet of our Savior.