

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH GENERAL INFORMATION

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Hierarchy

The body of clergy, ranked according to subordination of levels, composing a system of Church government and authority.

Pope

As direct successor of St. Peter, the Pope is the visible head of the Catholic Church with supreme power in matters of faith, discipline and governing.

Cardinal

Appointed by the pope as advisors and heads of various tribunals and offices within the Papacy.

Patriarch or Archbishop

Acts as chief bishop of a given national territory (as in Patriarchs of Eastern Uniate Churches in union with Rome) or of a regional area comprised of a number of dioceses (as Archbishop in the Latin Western Church).

Bishop

Administers an area of parishes that make up a diocese.

Pastor

Priest assigned by the bishop to a specific parish to administer the sacraments and fulfill all duties of administration of the parish.

Parochial Vicar

Priest assigned by the bishop to assist the Pastor in his duties.

Deacon

An ordained cleric without jurisdictional authority who is in transition to the priesthood (Transitional Deacon) or one who assists the Pastor in the administering of certain sacraments, assisting at Mass and other parish spiritual ministries (Permanent Deacon).

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The Parish – Variations and Styles

The Catholic Church may seem totally uniform, but closer scrutiny soon shows that this is not the case, especially when considering the local parish. In size and character, in style and management, parishes are as varied as the colors of the spectrum. There are sprawling suburban parishes where worshipers by the thousands converge each Sunday after having traveled many miles and parking in stadium sized parking lots. These congregations may be as mobile as their mode of transport.

There are inner city parishes, sandwiched between skyscrapers and suffering from urban blight. Their parishioners include the homeless, the victimized, the poor. Small rural parish churches dot the open prairies of the Midwest. There are intimate neighborhood parishes where generations of family members have worshipped. Each parish assumes the character of those who comprise it, since the parish basically is people. Parishes vary, too, according to size, location, ethnic origins, and leadership.

A parish is usually set up when there is sufficient evidence that a viable community of the faithful can flourish. A parish is given the name of a saint or truth of faith, for example, St. Joseph Parish or Holy Trinity Parish. Most often territorial with clearly defined boundaries, a parish is the responsibility of the pastor under the authority of the Bishop. The Catholic population is determined by a census of the area.

Ethnic parishes, established for persons of the same cultural background, nationality, and language were most prevalent when waves of immigrants settled in a particular neighborhood. The people retained their own language and customs of their native land.

Today, ethnic parishes stemming from Europe are fading from the scene. However, there is a rise in Hispanic parishes, especially in urban centers and the Southwest. Sometimes, a parish is set up for a specific group of people at military bases or on college campuses. A mission parish is set up when there are enough parishioners to warrant a parish. Such a parish maybe administered by a resident pastor or may be administered by a neighboring resident pastor.

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The Parish Complex

The parish church is an important center for one's faith life. Here one receives the Sacraments, gives worship, and participates in prayer. The parish attempts to minister to the spiritual needs of all its members.

The architectural style of a church reflects the faith for which it was built. Whether made of stone, brick, wood, marble, or clapboard, the parish church stands as a testimony of Christ present today. The pointed spires of church steeples dominate many skylines and are an ever-present reminder of people's need to turn to God in prayer, like hands folded in prayer. Churches also have been modeled on Greek and Roman temples with rounded domes and sturdy columns.

Architecture reflects the thinking of the times. And so, since Vatican II, the trend has turned to reverential simplicity or modern styles. For an interesting study, drive around your town and note the variations of architecture in all the churches.

When immigration of Catholics was at its height, the education of the children received priority. In order to preserve and pass on the faith and to provide for a well-rounded education, parochial schools were set up by most parishes. In fact, the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884 ordered that, where possible, every parish Church should have a school.

Parochial schools usually have been staffed by members of religious orders or communities, both male and female, and may live in religious communities. However, the parochial school system, while still part of parish life, has undergone drastic change, due to rising costs, fewer vocations to the religious orders, and government regulations, such as busing, certification requirements, and aid to private schools. Many schools have either closed completely or consolidated. Because of fewer vocations to the religious orders, lay personnel make up the majority of parochial school staffs.

These changes ought not to be regarded as the demise of the parochial school system or a weakening of faith. Today, there still are about seven thousand parochial elementary schools in the United States.

Parishes also are becoming more aware of the need to provide for the continuing religious formation of all its people, not just its children. Adult education and continuing adult spiritual formation programs have received more attention in recent years.

In order to accommodate itself to the diverse needs in the Church, parishes may include an all-purpose community center in their plans with facilities to serve different and varied groups. The Scouts, Knights of Columbus, Rosary Society, Legion of Mary, Prayer Groups, Bible Study Groups, all may find space to gather in the parish facilities. A parish reaches beyond its boundaries to the needs of the community. You may find a day-care

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center, food pantry, AA meetings, shelter for the homeless, a thrift shop or library facilities.

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Inside A Catholic Church

Each Catholic Church is identified with two principal areas; the sanctuary and the worshipping area for the parishioners. The sanctuary area is comprised of the altar, tabernacle, presider's seat, and the pulpit (ambo). The body of the worshippers area contains the pews and kneelers

Sanctuary

Altar

The Altar occupies the center and prominent location of the sanctuary. It is an elevated surface, tabular in form, on which the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered. The earliest Christian altars were of wood, and identical in form with the ordinary house tables. From approximately the ninth century, altars were made primarily of stone.

Altar Candles

Candles, placed on or near the altar, are required to be lit at all Masses. At a pontifical high Mass celebrated by the Pope, seven candles are lighted. At a solemn high Mass, usually celebrated in Cathedrals presided over by a Bishop, six candles are lighted. At a high Mass, which is celebrated on major holy day, at least four candles are required. At low Mass celebrated by any bishop, four candles are usually lighted. At a regular Mass celebrated by any priest inferior to a bishop only two candles may be used.

Ambo (Pulpit)

An ambo is an elevated desk or pulpit from which the Epistle and Gospel are chanted or read, and all kinds of announcements are made to the congregation.

Book of the Gospels

The Word of God is an essential part of Catholic faith. The Book of the Gospels is carried solemnly at the entrance procession, incensed at solemn occasions, and enthroned in a prominent place in the sanctuary.

Presider's Chair

The place of leadership for the celebration of the assembly and directing prayer where the celebrant sits.

Processional Cross

A crucifix which is carried at the head of a procession, and which is usually mounted upon a long staff or handle

Sacristy

A room called the sacristy which means "holy place", is where the sacred vessels, vestments, and other items used during liturgy are prepared and stored. In a small sink, the **sacrarium**, the sacred vessels are washed after being used at Mass.

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Sanctuary

The most sacred and focal point in a Catholic Church is the sanctuary, where the liturgy is offered. An altar is the chief furnishing in the sanctuary. It is elevated and faces the people, either in the front of the church or in the center with pews surrounding it. The altar is the table of the Lord's Supper and the sacrifice. It is unadorned when not in use. Within the sanctuary, chairs for the celebrants and participants, a pulpit, and/or a lectern, for the proclamation of the Word and the Homily, hold prominent positions.

Sanctuary Lamp/Tabernacle Lamp

The Church prescribes that at least one lamp should continually burn before the tabernacle, not only as an ornament of the altar, but for the purpose of worship. It is also a mark of honor. It is to remind the faithful of the sacramental presence of Christ, and is a profession of their love and affection. It signifies Christ who is the "*true light, which enlightens everyone*" (John 1:9). The lamp is usually suspended before the tabernacle by means of a chain or rope or it may also be placed in a bracket at the side of the tabernacle. The altar-lamp may be made of any kind of metal, and of any shape or form.

Tabernacle

The tabernacle contains consecrated hosts, which are used at Communion or taken to the sick. This cabinet-like receptacle is kept locked and secured. A Catholic shows respect for the Eucharist by genuflecting on one knee or bowing when one passes the tabernacle or enters the pew.

Worshipping Area

Art Works

Art works and other symbols, which enhance one's faith, are appropriate in a church setting. These can be frescos, stained glass windows or hanging artworks.

Baptistry

In most churches, a separate place is reserved for baptisms. This baptistry can either be a simple font with a bowl or a separate room. Baptism is usually done by pouring water on the head of the person being baptized. But baptism by immersion, in which the person is briefly submerged in water, is permitted and some churches may have a pool-like baptismal font.

Confessional

To an outsider, the most foreboding and curious feature of a Catholic Church is **the confessional**. This darkened alcove where one "goes to confession" **has often been a stumbling block for prospective converts**. The shift in theology of Vatican II aimed to make the confessional less ominous, although private confession of sin still is a vital aspect of Catholic belief and practice.

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Cry Room

Other facilities to serve specific needs also may be provided. Some churches supply a cry room, fitted with a glass front, for parents with babies. Ramps and pews reserved for those in wheelchairs make it possible for the disabled to join in worship. This is all in an effort to be sensitive to the needs of others.

Décor

Church décor varies. It may be decorated in striking bold colors, subdued pastels, or plain plaster. Paneling, murals, frescoes, marble columns, mosaics, or wooden beams are a few of the many options for interior church designs. Furthermore, seasonal decorations enhance or call attention to particular church seasons or celebrations.

Music

Music has always played an important role in worship. The organ usually dominates the choir area, sometimes found in a loft or at the front, back, or side of the church. With the liturgical renewal, other instruments, such as guitars, flutes, violins, trumpets, pianos, and electronic keyboards have come into use.

Nave

The **nave** of the church, where the congregations gather for worship, ordinarily is equipped with pews and kneelers, which are arranged either in rows or in a circle around the altar. In large cathedrals or basilicas, the nave may be bare and have room for standing. Today some churches also use movable furniture to accommodate different sizes of congregations.

Pews and Kneelers

- Pews – seats for the assembly
- Kneelers – furniture piece so assembly can kneel in adoration and reverence
- During the first one and a half centuries there was no general seating in the place where the Eucharist was celebrated – the assembly place was open and the congregation stood (or knelt on the floor) and would surge toward the ambo for the homily or to greet the bread and wine, etc. **It was an active place.**
- Middle Ages – benches or pews were introduced to bring “order” to the assembly – this curbed the activity that was going on and brought a “sit and see” mentality.

Poor Box

Some churches have preserved the ancient custom of remembering the poor and less fortunate, by providing a **poor box** at the entrance. It is in keeping with the custom of the early Christians who “shared all things in common.” (Acts 2: 44)

Reconciliation Room

The Sacrament of Reconciliation today is meant to be a healing experience of the compassionate Christ, and so one no longer need to confess in the darkness of the confessional. One can opt for a face-to-face confession in which the person who

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confesses faces the priest and, in an informal way, asks to be forgiven and healed. To accommodate this option, churches have reconciliation rooms with soft chairs and ample lighting.

Some churches also make room for both preferences by a creative innovation. The confessional has been altered so that one side can be used for traditional closed-box, anonymous confessions, and the other side with the screen removed is replaced with a comfortable chair and light for face-to-face confessions.

Stained Glass Windows

No matter what the décor, an air of reverence and quiet pervades the church, which is conducive to prayer. This is partly due to the lighting effects. Since the Middle Ages, multicolored stained-glass windows have been used in churches to add to the devotion. The exquisite artistry of Bible scenes and saints etched in glass provided meaningful visual aids for the commoners who were illiterate. The stained glass windows were often called the “Bible of the Poor”. Modern churches still use stained glass, but often they are designed with contemporary liturgical symbols.

Stations of the Cross

The fourteen stations of the cross, which portray the Passion and death of Jesus, adorn the walls or back of the church. These stations usually are plaques, statues, or simple crosses. Early Christians traced the steps of Christ in Jerusalem during his Passion. After the Moslems conquered the Holy Land, the pilgrimages temporarily ceased and “stations” were placed in churches as a pious devotion. In 1731, the general features of the stations became uniform and special blessings and indulgences were attached to meditating on Christ’s Passion. In order to complete the Paschal Mystery theology, some parishes have unofficially added a fifteenth station, Resurrection.

Statues

Devotions to the saints take a secondary position in a Catholic’s faith life since Vatican II reemphasized the importance of liturgy and the sacraments. But in many churches statues of saints or angels may be on a pedestal, in a niche, or on a side altar. There are fewer or no statues in modern churches. However, statues of Mary, St. Joseph, the Sacred Heart, and St. Anthony retain their popularity.

Vigil Lights

Vigil lights, glass vials containing candles, or in line with modern technology, small electric lights triggered when a coin is put into the slot, may burn before the statues or in a separate stand. A candle is lit as a prayer for a special intention or for the soul of a loved one. Catholics believe prayers can assist the dead who may be in purgatory to atone for their sins. A candle, too, symbolizes a constant presence. One’s prayers continue through the light left burning when we cannot be present.

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Vestibule

We enter the church through the foyer, which is called a vestibule. In years gone by, when people walked to church, this area served as a shelter from the elements as well as a gathering place. Announcements and reading material is also available here. Since Vatican II, the vestibule serves liturgical functions – may serve as a vesting place for the priest and the starting point for the entrance Procession on Sundays and feast days.

When a Catholic steps into the Church, he or she dips his or her fingers into a **holy water** font at the door and blesses him or herself. This gesture not only has its origins in the ancient practice of purification before prayer, but it serves as a reminder of one's baptism. In making the sign of the cross, a Catholic ought to also renew one's baptismal commitment in his or her heart.

These are the main features one can expect to find in a Catholic Church. Each church has its own character and décor. Some of what was expressed here is not essential, but all expressions are helpful.

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Principal Mass Materials

Altar

- “Table of the Lord” – where the “sacrifice of the cross is made present under sacramental signs (General Instruction of The Roman Missal)”
- Early Christian communities only had one altar which was the presence of the one Christ, and which they gathered around for the sacred mysteries (it was the focal point).
- Made of natural materials only – preferably stone, but wood, etc. is acceptable.

Altar Candles

Candles are used in the Catholic Church at all liturgical celebration. They symbolize joy and praise of God. Candles can be of beeswax or of oil.

Altar Cloths

Two Altar cloths are usually used during the celebration of the Mass. Altar cloths must be made of linen or hemp. The lower cloth must cover the whole surface of the table (mensa) of the altar. The top altar-cloth must be single and may extend over the sides of the altar.

Ambo/ Lectern

- “Table of the Word” – that is why the lectern and the altar are designed in a similar fashion, material, etc.; they are both tables from which we receive Jesus.
- Carry over from Jewish synagogue bema, a raised area with a reading desk where the Word of God was proclaimed.

Celebrant

The priest who presides at the liturgy is the celebrant. If more than one priest celebrates, the Mass is **concelebrated** and the priests are **concelebrants**. When the pope presides, it is a **Papal Mass**. These externals help us understand better what the Mass means. They also aid us in greater devotion

Corporal

A white linen cloth about 9 inches square, usually somewhat smaller than the breadth of an altar, upon which the elements of the Sacrifice are placed. The corporal is spread in the center of the altar and the Sacred Host and chalice are placed on it during Mass.

Cruet

A cruet is a small vessel used for containing the wine and water required for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Cruets filled with water and wine are usually brought up at the Presentation of Gifts. A crucifix, on the altar, on a stand, or suspended on the wall, reminds us that the Mass re-enacts the Paschal Mystery.

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Holy Water

A “Rite of Sprinkling” may take the place of the Penitential Rite at Mass. This ritual takes the place of the *Asperges*, which was a popular tradition in pre-Vatican II times.

Lectionary

The Lectionary is a liturgical volume containing passages to be read aloud during the Mass. It is usually placed on the Ambo before Mass begins and it contains the first two readings of the day and the responsorial Psalm. Hymnals and missalettes which contain the hymns and Mass prayers are usually provided for the congregation in the pews.

Liturgical Vessels

Usually the vessels to be used in the liturgy are placed on a small table in the sanctuary or in the aisle and are brought to the priest during the Presentation of the Gifts. The **chalice** or cup, which must be made of durable non-corrodible material, is the most important vessel. During Mass, the wine in it will be changed into the sacramental Blood of Christ. Each priest usually had his own chalice. A small flat dish called a **paten** holds the large **host** which the priest uses at Mass. This host is larger than the ones received by the congregation because it is easier to see when it is elevated at the consecration. In a cup-like vessel called the **ciborium** are the quarter-sized hosts for the people’s Communion. These wafers of unleavened bread are usually made by pouring batter, made with flour and water, onto waffle irons inscribed with liturgical symbols. The thin flat sheets are cut out as hosts to be used at Mass for consecration into the Body of Christ.

Sacramentary

The Sacramentary contains the prayers the priest says during Mass and is placed on the altar.

Sanctuary Lamp/Tabernacle Lamp

Is usually lit near the tabernacle as a mark of reverence and to indicate the Eucharist is present. In some churches, the sanctuary lamp may be hung from the ceiling over the sanctuary area.

Tabernacle

- Place of reservation for the Holy Eucharist that has been consecrated from earlier masses and are in reserve for distribution. The Holy Eucharist may also be taken to those who are ill at any time.
- Ornamented, solid and unbreakable.

The Book of the Gospels,

The Book of the Gospels is carried in by the Deacon or lector and contains the Gospel reading for the day. The Book of the Gospels is placed on the altar during the entrance procession.

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The Sign of the Cross

One of the most familiar and ancient catholic gestures, the sign of the cross, in a concise way, expresses the basic truths of the faith: the Trinity, and the redemption by Jesus on the cross, by the words, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

The most common way to make the sign of the cross is by touching the forehead, the chest, and the left and right shoulders with the fingertips of the open right hand. A priest blesses by tracing the cross in the air with his palm outstretched or while holding a crucifix. He may trace a cross with his thumb on the object or the person he blesses.

Vestments

Since ancient days, the priest has worn vestments derived from the Romans as the distinguishing garb for Mass. An **alb** is a long loose garment reaching to the floor. The **stole**, the symbol of authority and of the priesthood, is draped around his neck. The **chasuble**, which means “little house”, is a flowing colored outer garment. Its style and color vary with the seasons.

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Postures at Mass

Postures are the communal choreography of the liturgy; ways of expressing participation.

Postures developed and changed to the needs and customs of the time.

Basic attitudes

- Standing (praising God)
- Kneeling (adoring God, penitent before God)
- Sitting (receptive to God)
- Genuflection (abbreviated form of kneeling to give honor and recognition)

Genuflection

- Kneeling involves both knees; genuflection involves only one knee.
- Developed socially at imperial court:
 - A court custom that showed a gesture of honoring another.
 - A kiss or bow of the head could be attached to this gesture
- Borrowed, no real Christian meaning.

Kneeling (Greek – “to fall down”)

- A gesture of adoration and supplication introduced in the Middle Ages. Developed socially in army and civic ceremony – an imperial court custom honoring king, Pope, bishop.
- Given a Christian meaning – to adore, worship, venerate, revere – often associated with a kiss or bow.
- Became a form of adoration / honor of the Blessed Sacrament
- OT and NT references:
 - Ps 95:6 fall down in worship Mt 27: 29 on bended knee they mocked him
 - Dn 6:11 – 12 kneel in prayer Mk 1: 40 leper pleaded on knees
 - Is 45: 23 every knee bend
- Posture required at the more solemn parts of the Mass – at the consecration and prayers giving verbal glory and honor to God

Standing

- A gesture of respect to the word of God in the Gospel.
- Developed socially as a servant stands before a seated master.
- Given a Christian meaning – stand on Sunday because of the Lord’s resurrection (the day the Lord raised).
- OT and NT biblical references:
 - Gn 18:22 and 1 Sam 1:26
 - Mk 11:25 and Mt 6:5
- Posture required at different points in the liturgy.

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- At Mass, people assume same posture as celebrant except at the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
- Gesture at common prayer (e.g. at the start of Mass and at the recitation of the Lord's Prayer).

Sitting

- Listening to the Word and Homily, being receptive to the message

Added Thoughts

- Gestures depend on the country, building, and social custom

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Candles

Light also plays an important role in religions. Candles are used not for the purposes of illumination, although they may have originated for that reason. Candles symbolize joy and praise of God. They are used in the Catholic Church at all liturgical celebrations, as well as by persons for private devotion. Candles are blessed solemnly on February 2, known as Candlemas Day, and the Paschal Candle is blessed at the Easter vigil. Catholics keep blessed candles in their homes as protection and to be burned in times of need as a symbol of prayer.

This theme is also obvious in the practical and symbolic use of candles. These often took the form of small terracotta oil lamps, plain or decorated with Christian symbols. The first evidence of their use as sacramental comes from the 2nd century, an ancient daily evening prayer service at the twelfth hour (6pm) in homes and house-churches. The ritual is called *Lucernare* (Latin *lux*, “light”). This practice evolved into Vespers, one of the daily Hours. It is also considered the origin of the blessing of the Easter Fire and Easter Paschal Candle.

Christians carried candles in funeral processions from the 3rd century on, burned them at the tombs of martyrs and other dead, and, from the 4th century, before relics and images of saints. When worship assemblies occurred in the catacombs because of persecutions, candles were practical fixtures. Even then, however, they were considered an honor to the dead buried there, especially martyrs.

Candles continued to be a feature of public worship and churches when the church became free under civil law in 313 A.D. Only from the 7th century, however, is there evidence of their symbolic use at Mass. By then they were carried in the opening procession and Gospel procession and placed around the altar. In the 11th century they were placed on the altar for the first time. The use and number of candles at Mass were determined by church law only from the 17th century.

The symbolic use of candles at Mass were probably influenced by civil practices. High-ranking officials had the privilege of being accompanied in public by a light-bearer. This practice seemed to have been transferred to high-ranking church people, especially bishops, once Christianity obtained a privileged position in the Roman Empire. It was only natural that lights or candles eventually honor the presence of the most important person present, Christ himself symbolized by the altar. The candle that is kept burning before the presence of Christ in the revered Eucharist, popularly called the tabernacle light, or sanctuary light, reflects the meaning. This tradition began in England in the 13th century and was made obligatory everywhere in the 17th.

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Liturgical Art

Purpose of Liturgical Art

- The disclosure of the ultimate - of holiness
- To be a reminder of God's faithfulness and activity
- To reveal who God is

Goal of Liturgical Art

- Intended to lift up the human spirit (emotion, intellect, will) to an encounter with the Holy Spirit
- Purpose is not to decorate

Requirement of Art

- Must be of artistic merit and authenticity worthy to enhance the act of worship
- Must be of a quality, appropriateness, and beauty able to bare the weight of mystery, awe, reverence, and wonder.
- Able to serve, not interrupt, the liturgy / worship.
- Able to shape the imagination and lead to an encounter of the divine, allowing one to experience the art and much more beyond it.

Examples of Liturgical Art

- **Permanent:** Statues, sculptures, paintings, mosaics, stained glass
- **Temporary:** Seasonal / thematic hangings, plants, arrangements
- **Western art:** Images rooted in human experience and circumstance
 - Experience: Jesus as a Semitic Jew, as a classical 19th century European male
 - Circumstance: Jesus as a shepherd, as a teacher, as a King, on the cross
- **Eastern art:** Icons (sacred imagery) affirming God's acting in humanity; in the material; icons invite one to transcend the material; to enter into the reality represented

Priority of Liturgical Art

- **Communal art:** Baptismal font, presider chair, altar table object should be apparent, dignified, of beauty, speak of simplicity
- **Personal / Devotional:** Saints, stations of the cross, etc. It is not to demand attention but add to the overall space and the honor given it
- **Art accents:** Plants, flowers, lighting, hangings, vestments, vessels, color, material and fabric add to the overall space. Tabernacle hangings, vestments – also burial shrouds

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Precepts of the Roman Catholic Church

The precepts of the Church are special duties that Catholics are expected to obey and fulfill (CCC 2041).

- To worship God by **participating** in Mass every Sunday and on holy days of obligation. Holy days of obligation are:
 - January 1 –The Solemnity of Mary
 - Ascension of our Lord (40 days after Easter)
 - August 15th, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
 - November 1st, All Saints’ Day
 - December 8th, Immaculate Conception of Mary
 - December 25th, Christmas Day
- To receive the sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year (CCC 2042).
- To receive Holy Communion during the Easter season (CCC 2042).
- To observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church e.g. Good Friday (CCC 2043).
- To help provide for the needs of the Church (CCC 2043)

The Ten Commandments or Decalogue

1. You shall not have other gods beside me.
2. You shall not invoke the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.
3. Remember the Sabbath day—keep it holy.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor’s goods.

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The Seven Sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church

Sacraments of Initiation

Baptism
Confirmation
Eucharist

Sacraments of Healing

Reconciliation
Anointing of the Sick

Sacraments of Service

Marriage
Holy Orders

The Beatitudes

The Beatitudes are a set of blessings Jesus told to His disciples.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, / for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, / for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, / for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, / for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, / for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart, / for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, / for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, / for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Theological Virtues

Faith
Hope
Charity (Love)

Moral (Cardinal) Virtues

Prudence
Justice
Fortitude
Temperance

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The Spiritual Works of Mercy

Admonish the sinner;
Instruct the ignorant;
Council the doubtful;
Comfort the sorrowful;
Bear wrongs patiently;
Forgive injuries and hurts;
Pray for the living and the dead;

Corporal Works of Mercy

Feed the hungry;
Give drink to the thirsty;
Clothe the naked;
Visit the imprisoned,
Shelter the homeless;
Visit the sick;
Bury the dead;

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Wisdom,
Understanding,
Counsel,
Fortitude,
Knowledge,
Piety, and
Fear of the Lord.

The Fruits of the Holy Spirit

Charity	Generosity
Joy	Gentleness
Peace	Faithfulness
Patience	Modesty
Kindness	Self-control
Goodness,	Chastity

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH GENERAL INFORMATION

Catholic Values Today

Give witness to Jesus Christ
Respect for Human Dignity
Respect for Creation and the Environment
Love one another
Justice
Care and Compassion
Service
Forgiveness
Faithfulness
Honesty and Integrity