

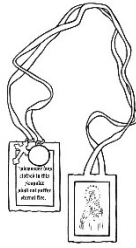
SACRAMENTALS



WHAT ARE SACRAMENTALS?

“Sacramentals are sacred signs by which effects, especially spiritual effects, are signified in some imitation of the sacraments and are obtained through the intercession of the Church.” (Can. 1166)

Humans are tactile creatures, meaning we use our senses to experience the material world. Thus, we respond to touch, images, smells, tastes, and sounds. Sacramentals help the material world come alive and be a part of our faith. They help prepare us to receive and cooperate with grace.



WHAT SACRAMENTALS ARE NOT:

Sacramentals are NOT trinkets, talismans, magic, or superstition. They are not meaningless gestures or “lucky” items. They are not spiritual “get out of jail free” cards, and they do not absolve sins.

“Sacramentals do not confer the grace of the Holy Spirit in the way that the sacraments do, but by the Church's prayer, they prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it.” (CCC 1670)

HOW ARE SACRAMENTALS NOT SUPERSTITION OR MAGIC?

Sacramentals are not a source of power. Rather, they are imbued with a blessing that derives from God's Will alone. A Sacramental is a sign and bearer of God's blessing.

To believe an object (e.g. a statue) or gesture (e.g. the Sign of the Cross) is powerful on its own is to engage in superstition and a form of idolatry. To presume an object can wield powers on its own is to practice magic. The

difference between faith and magic is that faith seeks to cooperate with and serve the Will of God. Magic, however, seeks to bend God to our will.



WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SACRAMENT AND A SACRAMENTAL?



A **SACRAMENT** is an outward, visible sign instituted by Christ to give grace. Sacraments bear grace because they are the actions of Christ Himself. There are seven Sacraments: Baptism; Confirmation; Holy Eucharist; Anointing of the Sick; Penance; Matrimony; and Holy Orders.

A **SACRAMENTAL** is instituted by the Church as a sign of the power of the Sacraments. They are anything set apart or blessed by the Church to encourage and increase pious devotion, and they aid in fixing our minds on virtues and avoiding evil. Sacramentals “do not confer the grace of the Holy Spirit in the way that the sacraments do” (CCC 1670), but with the prayer of the Church they prepare us to receive and cooperate with grace.



WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF SACRAMENTALS?



Blessings (CCC 1671) – Blessings of persons, meals, objects, etc. come first. “The Church imparts blessings by invoking the name of Jesus, usually while making the holy sign of the cross of Christ.”

Consecrations / Dedications (CCC 1672) – Not to be confused with sacramental ordination, “certain blessings have a lasting importance because they consecrate persons to God, or reserve objects and places for liturgical use.”

Exorcisms (CCC 1673) – “When the Church asks publicly and authoritatively in the name of Jesus Christ that a person or object be protected against the power of the Evil One and withdrawn from his dominion, it is called exorcism.”

A note about blessings (CCC 1669): “Sacramentals derive from the baptismal priesthood,” which means lay people *may* preside at *certain* blessings. However, “the more a blessing concerns ecclesial and sacramental life, the more is its administration reserved to the ordained ministry.”

SACRAMENTALS



CAN THE CHURCH CHANGE THE NUMBER OF SACRAMENTALS?

Yes! The Apostolic See alone can do this:

Can. 1167 §1. The Apostolic See alone can establish new sacramentals, authentically interpret those already received, or abolish or change any of them.

EXAMPLES OF SACRAMENTALS:



This list of Sacramentals is not exhaustive, but here are some common Sacramentals. Make sure to take religious items to a Priest for blessing; ask for the *Rituale Romanum*.

- Crucifix
- Holy water
- Blessed salt
- Rosary
- The Sign of the Cross
- Blessings
- Holy oils
- Miraculous Medal
- Scapulars
- Devotional medals
- Holy statues / images
- Ash Wednesday ashes
- Palm Sunday palms
- Blessed candles

HOW DO I PROPERLY DISPOSE OF BROKEN SACRAMENTALS?

Any item that is blessed should never be discarded in the trash. These items have been dedicated to God for sacred use. The proper method of disposal is burning and/or burial.



Palms, for instance, are burned and their ashes used on Ash Wednesday. Broken items should be buried. If you are unsure if an item is blessed, or if you are unable to dispose of it properly, please take it to a Catholic church. They will be able to properly dispose of it.



WHAT IS HOLY WATER?

The use of holy water is rooted in the Old Testament. When the Israelites entered the Temple, they had to undergo purification by immersion in a mikvah. This ritual purification prefigures our Christian Baptism.

We recall our Baptism when we devoutly bless ourselves with holy water, make the sign of the Cross and say, "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Or, in Latin, "*In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti.*"

Holy water is water that has been blessed by a priest, usually with the traditional rite found in the *Rituale Romanum*. Some blessed salt is added as a sign of purity, but it also acts as a preservative. There are different types of holy water: Epiphany water; Easter water; Gregorian water; etc.

Holy water is used in the sprinkling rite (*asperges*) to remind us we are sinners in need of repentance and to renew our Baptismal promises. The laity are encouraged to use holy water in their homes as a constant reminder of our Baptismal promises. It is a powerful Sacramental!

WHAT IS BLESSED SALT?

Blessed (exorcised) salt is primarily used in the blessing of holy water in the traditional blessing found in the *Rituale Romanum*. The priest uses the following blessing, usually in Latin:



God's creature, salt, I cast out the demon from you by the living + God, by the true + God, by the holy + God, by God who ordered you to be thrown into the water- spring by Eliseus to heal it of its barrenness. May you be a purified salt, a means of health for those who believe, a medicine for body and soul for all who make use of you. May all evil fancies of the foul fiend, his malice and cunning, be driven afar from the place where you are sprinkled. And let every unclean spirit be repulsed by Him who is coming to judge both the living and the dead and the world by fire.

The laity are also permitted to use exorcised salt. You should keep it in a separate container marked as "Blessed Salt" so as not to mix it up with the other salt in your home. Remember, it is not a magic weapon! It should be used with reverence and while saying a short prayer to ask for grace from Almighty God.

Blessed salt can be sprinkled in small amounts on your property, throughout your home, at your threshold, or even used in cooking.