

favors especially through her prayer. A sacramental is anything set apart or blessed by the Church to excite good thoughts and to help devotion, and thus secure grace and take away venial sin or the temporal punishment due to sin.

Sacramentals are divided into prayers, pious objects, sacred signs, and religious ceremonies. Some are a combination, that is they fall into two or more classes. The Rosary, for example, is a pious object and a prayer. The Sign of the Cross is a prayer and a sign. The crucifix, pictures and statues are pious objects. The ceremonies performed in the various sacraments are also sacramentals, like the extending of the hands in Confirmation.

The sacraments are necessary for salvation; the sacramentals are not necessary. Nevertheless, the prayers, pious objects, sacred signs and ceremonies of Mother Church are means to salvation. They help us to win life-giving graces. They must never take the place of the sacraments.

Types of sacramentals include the following: liturgical year; liturgical hours; Sign of the Cross; genuflection; bowing the head; bows; prostrations; folding hands; blessing of people; churching of women; exorcism; salt; ashes; oil; water; fire; candles; rosaries; scapulars; blessed medals; Agnus Dei; crucifixes; icons; statues; altars; washing of the feet; church buildings; vestments; wedding rings; religious habits; liturgical vessels; bells; incense; and blessed palms.

****(www.fisheaters.com/sacramentalsintro.html)

WHAT TO DO WITH OLD SACRAMENTALS

****Sacramentals represent something very sacred and dear to us and must be treated with reverence and respect. Old sacramentals should be burnt or buried. If you have old palms from Palm Sunday, or holy cards that bear the image of Our Lord or the saints, they could be placed in a fireplace and burned. Old rosaries, crucifixes or statues could be broken beyond recognition and buried in the back yard or garden. The point is that we should never find a statue standing up in a trash can on the sidewalk, or any blest object in a situation that it would end up in the dump.

If you don't know what to do with an item, give it to your priest. Remember how you would want your most treasured items treated by someone else and treat sacramentals one step above.

****(www.ipadre.net/2010/08/13/)

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Introduction to Sacramentals

**A sacramental is a sacred sign, that signifies effects obtained through the Church's intercession. As outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church Sec. #1668, they bear a resemblance to the sacraments. By them men are disposed to receive the chief effect of the sacraments, and in various occasions in life are rendered holy.*

*(www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/p2s2c4a1.htm)

***Another characteristic of sacramentals is found in Sec. #1670. 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. For well-disposed members, the faithful, the liturgy of the sacraments and sacramentals sanctifies almost every event of their lives with the divine grace which glows from the Paschal mystery of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ. From this source all sacraments and sacramentals draw their power. There is scarcely any proper use of material things which cannot be thus directed toward the sanctification of men and the praise of God.*

There are various forms of sacramentals, In Sec. #1171 we read that blessings of persons, meals, objects, and places come first. Every blessing praises God and prays for his gifts. In Christ, Christians are blessed by God the Father "with every spiritual blessing." This is why the Church imparts blessings by invoking the name of Jesus, usually while making the holy sign of the cross of Christ.

Sec. #1672 continues that certain blessings have a lasting importance because they consecrate persons to God, or reserve objects and places for liturgical use. Among those blessings which are intended for persons - not be confused with sacramental ordination - are the blessing of the abbot or abbess of a monastery, the consecration of virgins and widows, the rite of religious profession and the blessing of certain ministries of the church (readers, acolytes, catechists, etc.). The dedication or blessing of a church or an altar, the blessing of holy oils, vessels, vestments, bells, etc., can be mentioned as examples of blessings that concern objects.

Besides sacramental liturgy and sacramentals, Sec. #1674 states that the catechesis must take into account the forms of piety and popular devotions among the faithful. The religious sense of the Christian people has always found expression in various forms of piety surrounding the Church's sacramental life, such as the veneration of relics, visits to sanctuaries, pilgrimages, processions, the stations of the cross, religious dances, the rosary, medals, etc.. These expressions of piety extend the liturgical life of the Church, but do not replace it.

SACRAMENTALS CAN BE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS:

1. Sacramentals are sacred signs instituted by the Church. They prepare men to receive the fruit of the sacraments and sanctify different circumstances of life (Sec. #1677);
2. Among the sacramentals, blessings occupy an important place. They include both praise of God for his works and gifts, and the Church's intercession for men that they may be able to use God's gifts according to the spirit of the Gospel (Sec. #1678).
3. In addition to the liturgy, Christian life is nourished by various forms of popular piety, rooted in the different cultures. While carefully clarifying them in the light of faith, the church fosters the forms of popular piety that express an evangelical instinct and a human wisdom and that enriches Christian life.

**(www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/p2s2c4a1.htm)

****Because they are voluntary, sacramentals can supply the externals that make the Catholic way of life singular and outstanding. Used properly, sacramentals, remind a person to be "closer to God," to be constantly and effectively reminded of the power of His love and glory, of His protection, forgiveness and mercy. It means that I will cross myself when I pass a church to remind myself of His passion. I will make a novena to God's saints for their prayers. I will do these things because I am weak, distractible and forgetful, and need to remind myself of True Realty.*

When Catholics hang crucifixes and holy images in their homes, it is to remind them of God and His works. They cross themselves, bless themselves and their homes with holy water and oil. They pray the Angelus at 6am, 12 noon and 6pm in remembrance of the Incarnation. They kiss the Bible or holy objects they have accidentally dropped. Catholics who choose to weave the use of sacramentals into their daily lives experience a richer, more textured Catholicism.

***(www.ewtn.com/library/answers.htm)

****In an article published in 1950, by Fr. Arthur Tonne, titled "Talks on Sacramentals," he sums up how to view sacramentals:*

Of themselves, they do not save souls, but they are the means for securing heavenly help for those who use them properly. A sacramental is a sacred object or religious action which the Catholic Church, in imitation of the sacraments, uses for the purpose of obtaining spiritual