



ACOLYTES

AKOLOUTHOS (ACOLYTE)

The word Acolyte comes from the Greek word: AKOLOUTHOS, meaning one who serves or an attendant. It used to be the highest of what were called the 'minor' orders, just below Deacon. So you had Bishop, Priest, Deacon, and Acolyte.

The Patron Saint of acolytes is Saint Vincent of Saragossa, Spain, who was a deacon and martyred in the year 304.

Becoming an Acolyte

In a sense, becoming an acolyte is a vocation, a calling. The reason why some of you may become acolytes is because in some positive curious way God is encouraging you to become a part of this spiritual, historic and sacred ministry. You, as acolytes, will be serving God by assisting in the ritual and ceremony of the liturgy and will also be serving as leaders, setting an example for the congregation to follow.

Concerning Ritual, Ceremonial, and Reverence

Ritual refers to the prescribed form of words of an act of worship and also has been used to indicate the ceremonial of worship. All ritual should help us express our devotion to God.

Ceremonial is a means of bringing sanctification into the emotional and sensory experience of human beings. It is a method of expressing the most sublime ideas of the human soul.

Reverence is taking pains to give to God the best that human beings can offer.

The **acolyte** plays a vital role in the ceremonial, ritual and reverence of the liturgy. What the acolyte does and how she or he does it helps to “set the mood” for all who take part in the liturgy.

In our liturgy, not only are the faculties of hearing and speech used in worship, but also the faculties of sight, smell, tasting and touch, and at times the hushing of these faculties in mystical silence. All of the mind and body can be used and consecrated to God in our Eucharistic feast.

SYMBOLS

Symbols are a form of communication, words are symbols. Symbols point to or are indicative of something other than themselves. Symbols are a focus of communication and can also represent something of mystery or something spiritual which may enlighten our understanding. Anything that has meaning or says something to us can be a symbol.

The symbols used in worship are used to enrich our worship and to make us more aware of the meaning contained within the liturgy.

SYMBOLS TO ELEVATE OUR SPIRIT AND ENRICH THE SERVICE.

- *The two altar candles are lighted, telling us that Christ will be coming in the Communion.
- *The Procession is used to symbolize a pilgrimage, to represent the journey of our soul to God and also into the world.
- *The processional cross represents Christ's victory over death.
- *The torches remind us that Christ said he is the "light of the world"
- *The Gospel Book represents the actions and teachings of Jesus.
- *Flags and banners remind us that the Eucharist is a celebration.
- *The Thurible burns the incense which represents (1) the prayers of the faithful ascending to God, (2) the Glory of God filling the church (3) the purification and sanctification of the people, objects and sacred spaces within the church. It also allows us to associate our sense of smell with the 'holy'.
- *The Sanctus Bell is used to call our attention to, or to set apart special moments within the liturgy.

A final thought on our liturgy

“There are times when your feelings run so deep that there are simply no words to express them. But you know they need to be expressed anyway and God has given us the gift of ritual so that we can give tangible expression to those things that are going on inside of us that cannot be adequately expressed in words.”

Quoted from Fr. Dennis G Michno, author of *A Priest's Handbook/ The Ceremonies of the (Episcopal) Church*.

All this we do:
Amori Christi et Ecclesiae
(for the love of Christ and His Church)