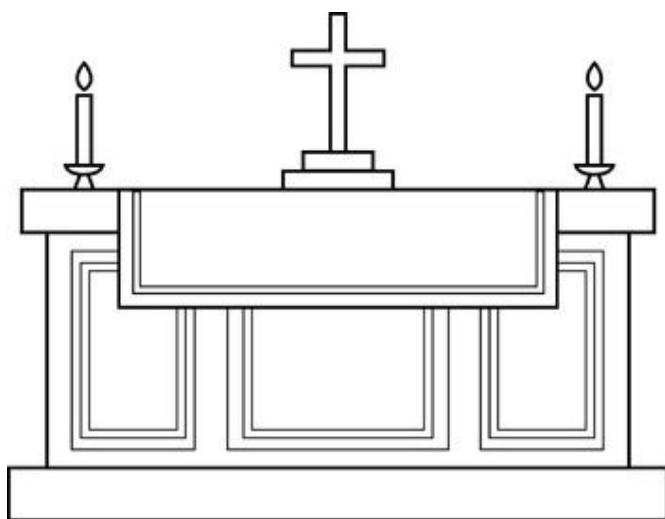


Understanding the Mass Candles

*Each week, we are explaining a different part of the Mass - the items that are used, the parts of the church, and the roles of the people who help us celebrate Mass. This week, our topic is **Candles**.*

In different parts of the church, you will see **candles**. In a Catholic church, traditionally the candles are made from natural materials, often from bees' wax. Candles are a symbol of sacrifice. The candle sacrifices itself as it burns away in order to give light and heat to those around it - just as Jesus died to warm us with His love and to guide us with His light.



The very first place you will see candles is on the altar. These candles are lit during Mass to remind us of the presence of Jesus, who is the light of the world.

The second place you will see a candle is close to the tabernacle. This candle is lit inside a red glass called a **Sanctuary Lamp**, and it tells us that the Body of Jesus is truly present there. We can make a donation to sponsor the sanctuary lamps in memory of a loved one, or for a particular intention, and this is shown in our

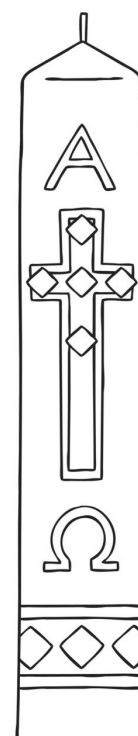
weekly parish newsletters so others can pray for our intention too.

The third place you see a candle is near the Baptismal Font - the place where people are baptised. There is one large candle here, which is called the **Paschal Candle**. A new candle is blessed and lit every year at Easter, then used on special occasions including baptisms and funerals.

During Advent, we also light candles each week in the **Advent wreath**, as a symbol of how we are preparing to welcome Jesus at Christmas.

You may also see candles in other parts of the church, including in the Lady Chapel (if you have one in your church) and in front of statues or paintings of saints.

These candles are for people to buy and light themselves, as a symbol of their prayers to God, which we offer in faith. The candles are also a sign that we want our prayer to continue even after we leave the church.



¹ *Our Parish Church*, Rev Jude Winkler (1993); *Diocese of Westminster Being an Extraordinary Minister for Holy Communion* (2024)