

Study Lesson #45

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ABOUT SACRAMENTALS: - - - - -ABOUT SACRAMENTALS: - - - - -

Sacramentals are signs. They remind us of God, the saints and spiritual truths. They are something like sacraments, but there is this big difference: The sacraments were instituted by Christ to produce grace OF THEMSELVES and are signs of His direct action on souls. The sacramentals were instituted by the Church and obtain graces for us INDIRECTLY by arousing us to those acts of virtue which draw down God's graces on us.

What are sacramentals?

Sacramentals are holy things or actions of which the Church makes use to obtain for us from God, through her intercession, spiritual and temporal favors.

How do the sacramentals obtain favors from God?

The sacramentals obtain favors from God through the prayers of the Church offered for those who make use of them, and through the devotion they inspire.

What are the chief benefits obtained by the use of the sacramentals?

The chief benefits obtained by the use of the sacramentals are:

- (1) actual graces
- (2) the forgiveness of venial sins
- (3) the remission of temporal punishment
- (4) health of body and material blessings
- (5) protection from evil spirits

Which are the chief kinds of sacramentals?

The chief kinds of sacramentals are:

- (1) blessings given by priests and bishops
- (2) exorcisms against evil spirits
- (3) blessed objects of devotion.

Which are the blessed objects of devotion most used by Catholics?

The blessed objects of devotion most used by Catholics are: holy water, blessed candles, ashes, palms, crucifixes, medals, rosaries, scapulars, and images of Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints.

Examples of other sacramentals which are not in the possession of individual Catholics but are used by them together are: a church building, the ceremonies of Benediction, the Stations of the Cross.

How should we make use of sacramentals?

We should make use of the sacramentals with faith and devotion, and never make them objects of superstition.

Using sacramentals with faith means believing in what they represent and treating them as signs of spiritual things. We break the FIRST COMMANDMENT by superstition in using them as good luck charms.

The Blessed ashes that are distributed in small packets may be brought home and used around the house - in the garden, in the yard, any place that might be used by the members of the family. You might wish, simply, to keep them in the packet as you would any other blessed object.

THE WORLD WAS MADE FOR PRAYER (St. Francis DeSales), and everything around and about us should help us in our human attempts to pray.