

Holy Water & Blessings

Church-instituted sacramentals; biblical blessing and cleansing roots

1. **1 Tim 4:4–5** ¹⁶⁷¹
Creation received with thanksgiving and prayer [A]
2. **Mark 10:13–16** ^{1668, 1671}
Jesus blesses children with his hands

— Old Testament roots —

1. **Ezek 36:25–27** ^{1432, 1668}
Clean water, a new heart, God's Spirit [A]
2. **Num 19:17–19** ¹⁶⁶⁸
Water and ashes for ritual purification [A]
3. **Ps 51:7, 10** ¹⁴³⁰
Cleansing sought with a renewed heart [A]
4. **Num 6:22–27** ²⁶²⁶
God gives Israel a prayer of blessing [A]

Holy water recalls Baptism and invokes God's blessing. Jesus blesses through touch; Israel's cleansing rites and Ezekiel's new heart illuminate its symbolism. Instituted by the Church, sacramentals dispose us through her prayer to receive grace and cooperate with it; they do not work automatically.

CCC 1432, 1667, 1668, 1670, 1671, 2111

Icons, Images & Crucifixes

Doctrine of sacred images; devotional expressions

1. **John 1:14** ^{1159, 2131}
The Word becomes flesh and dwells among us [A]
2. **John 3:14–15** ^{2130, 617}
The raised serpent points to Christ lifted up [A]
3. **Rev 5:6** ¹¹³⁷
The living Lamb appears as slain [A]

— Old Testament roots —

1. **Exod 20:3–5** ²¹²⁹
No graven images; do not bow to or serve them
2. **Exod 25:18–22** ²¹³⁰
God commands cherubim for the sanctuary

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Icons, Images & Crucifixes

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— Old Testament roots —

3. **Num 21:8–9** ²¹³⁰
God commands a serpent image; the bitten look and live [A]
4. **2 Kgs 18:4** ²¹¹³
The bronze serpent is destroyed when idolized

God commanded cherubim and the bronze serpent, showing that sacred images can serve true worship. Christian veneration rests on the Incarnation: the Son truly became man. Honor given to an image reaches the person represented; adoration belongs to God alone. A crucifix recalls the saving Passion of the risen Christ.

CCC 1137, 1159, 2130, 2131, 2132

Relics

Veneration and popular devotion; biblical material mediation

1. **Acts 19:11–12** ¹⁶⁷⁴
God heals through cloths from Paul [A]
2. **Mark 5:27–34** ¹⁵⁰⁴
Christ heals a woman who touches his garment [A]
3. **1 Cor 6:19–20** ²³⁰⁰
The body belongs to God; honor him in it [A]
4. **Acts 19:13–20** ²¹¹⁷
God's work is not a technique of magic

— Old Testament roots —

1. **2 Kgs 13:20–21** ¹⁶⁷⁴
A man revives on touching Elisha's bones [A]
2. **Wis 16:6–7** ^{2130, 2111}
God saves, not the object seen [A]

God worked miracles through Paul's cloths and Elisha's bones. These biblical precedents help explain why Catholics honor saints through their relics and respect their bodies in hope of resurrection. Relics have no power apart from God; biblical miracles neither promise a cure nor establish the authenticity of a particular relic.

CCC 1674, 2300, 2111

Vestments

Liturgical discipline with biblical precedent and symbolism

1. **Gal 3:27** ¹²⁴³
The baptized have put on Christ [A]
2. **Rev 7:9–14** ¹¹³⁸
The redeemed stand in white robes [A]

— Old Testament roots —

1. **Exod 28:2–4, 40–43** ¹⁶⁷²
Sacred garments for priestly service [A]

God appointed sacred garments for Israel's priests. Paul and Revelation use clothing to express life in Christ and the glory of the redeemed. The Church blesses baptismal and liturgical garments within this biblical tradition of sacred signs. Their present forms follow the Church's discipline; the Mosaic dress laws do not bind Christians.

CCC 1145, 1243, 1672

Incense & Candles

Liturgical signs and devotional objects

1. **Rev 8:3–4** ^{1137–1139}
Incense rises before God with the prayers
2. **Luke 1:8–10** ¹¹⁴⁵
The people pray during Temple incense [A]
3. **John 8:12** ¹²⁴³
Christ is the light of the world [A]
4. **Matt 5:14–16** ¹²⁴³
Let good works shine to glorify the Father [A]

— Old Testament roots —

1. **Ps 141:2**
Prayer is likened to incense
2. **Exod 25:31–37** ¹¹⁸⁹
God commands lamps for the sanctuary [A]

In the Temple and Revelation, incense accompanies prayer. Sanctuary lamps, Christ's light and his disciples' good works give meaning to sacred lighting. The Church expresses these biblical themes through the baptismal candle and through incense and candles honoring the Gospel book. Particular ceremonies take shape within her liturgical tradition.

CCC 1139, 1154, 1189, 1243, 2111

Sign of the Cross & Bodily Prayer

Bodily expressions of faith; a later devotional gesture

1. **Matt 28:19** ²¹⁵⁷
Baptized in the name of Father, Son and Spirit [A]
2. **Gal 6:14** ^{1235, 2157}
Glory in the cross of Christ [A]
3. **Luke 22:41–42** ²⁷⁰²
Jesus kneels in prayer to the Father
4. **Phil 2:9–11** ²⁶²⁸
At Jesus' name every knee should bow
5. **Rev 22:8–9** ²⁰⁹⁶
The angel refuses worship; worship God

— Old Testament roots —

1. **1 Kgs 2:19**
Solomon bows in honor of his mother [A]

The sign of the cross invokes the Trinity and recalls Christ's saving Passion. Jesus' kneeling shows how the body shares in prayer. Solomon's bow before his mother expresses honor; the angel's refusal of worship reserves adoration to God. The Church's traditional gestures give bodily expression to these biblical truths.

CCC 1235, 2157, 2702–2703, 2096

Rosary & Hail Mary

Marian devotion shaped by Scripture and the Church's prayer

1. **Luke 1:28** ²⁶⁷⁶
Gabriel greets Mary as full of grace
2. **Luke 1:42–43** ^{2676, 2677}
Elizabeth blesses Mary and her child
3. **Luke 1:48** ⁹⁷¹
All generations will call her blessed
4. **Luke 2:19, 51** ²⁷⁰⁸
Mary keeps and ponders these things in her heart [A]
5. **John 2:1–11** ²⁶¹⁸
Mary presents a need; directs servants to Jesus [A]

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Rosary & Hail Mary

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6. **1 Tim 2:1-6** 2634, 2635
Intercede for others; Christ is one mediator [A]
7. **Rev 5:8** 956
Elders hold incense bowls: the saints' prayers [A]

The Hail Mary joins Gabriel's and Elizabeth's biblical greetings to the Church's prayer for Mary's intercession. At Cana she brings a need to Jesus and directs others to him. Her intercession depends entirely on Christ, the one mediator. The Rosary's later pattern of beads and decades guides meditation on his life, following Mary's example.

CCC 2618, 2635, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2708

Repeated Prayer & Novenas

Biblical perseverance and forms of prayer; later devotional schedules

1. **Matt 26:44** 2701
Jesus prays again with the same words
2. **Matt 6:7-9** 2608, 2700
Reject empty phrases; pray as Jesus teaches
3. **Luke 18:1-8** 2613
Persevere in prayer without losing heart
4. **Acts 1:12-14** 2623
The disciples persevere in united prayer [A]
5. **Acts 3:1** 2698
Peter and John keep an hour of prayer [A]
6. **1 Thess 5:17** 1174
Pray constantly

— Old Testament roots —

1. **Ps 136:1-3** 2589
A repeated refrain praises God's mercy
2. **Dan 6:10** 2698
Daniel prays three times each day [A]

Jesus repeats his own prayer while rejecting trust in many words. The Psalms repeat praise; Daniel and the apostles observe regular prayer. Novenas give biblical perseverance a nine-day form developed in Christian devotion. The disciples awaiting the Spirit model prayer that perseveres and trusts God; no formula guarantees the requested outcome.

CCC 2608, 2700, 2613, 2623, 2698, 2111

Fasting & Abstinence

Biblical penitential practice; ecclesial discipline

1. **Matt 6:16-18** 1434
Jesus teaches fasting before the Father
2. **Matt 9:14-15** 1438
Jesus says his disciples will fast
3. **Acts 13:2-3** 1434
Antioch's leaders fast and pray before sending
4. **Rom 14:6**
Eating or abstaining can honor the Lord [A]
5. **1 Tim 4:1-5** 299
God's creation is good; receive food with thanks

— Old Testament roots —

1. **Dan 10:2-3** 1438
Daniel abstains from meat and wine [A]

Jesus teaches fasting; Antioch's leaders fast before mission. Daniel practices abstinence, and Paul allows eating or abstaining in the Lord's honor. Catholic penance gives up good things for conversion, prayer and charity. The Church applies these biblical principles through common penitential days, including Friday.

CCC 299, 1434, 1438, 2043

Lent & Ashes

Biblical penitential signs; later liturgical observance

1. **Matt 4:1-2** 540
Jesus fasts forty days in the desert [A]
2. **Matt 11:21** 1430
Jesus speaks of repentance in ashes [A]
3. **Matt 6:1-4** 1434
Give alms without seeking applause

— Old Testament roots —

1. **Joel 2:12-13** 1430
Return with fasting and a changed heart

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Lent & Ashes

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— Old Testament roots —

2. **Isa 58:5-7** 1430, 1434
True fasting seeks justice and feeds the hungry
3. **Dan 9:3-5** 1434
Prayer, fasting, sackcloth and ashes [A]
4. **Jonah 3:5-10** 1430
Ashes accompany a turning from evil [A]

Lent unites the Church to Christ's forty days in the desert. Biblical ashes express repentance; Joel calls for conversion of heart, and Isaiah joins fasting to justice and care for the hungry. The Church's annual observance, including Ash Wednesday, gives these biblical patterns a communal form ordered to prayer, repentance and charity.

CCC 540, 1430, 1434, 1438

Celibacy & Vows

Gospel counsel; different ecclesial disciplines; vowed life

1. **Matt 19:10-12** 1618
Celibacy can be for the Kingdom
2. **1 Cor 7:7-8** 1620
Different gifts; Paul commends singleness
3. **1 Cor 7:32-35** 1579
Undivided devotion to the Lord
4. **1 Cor 9:5** 1580
Apostles could be accompanied by wives [A]
5. **1 Tim 4:1-5** 1620
Reject teaching that condemns marriage
6. **Acts 21:23-26** 2102
Paul joins men fulfilling vows [A]

Jesus calls some to celibacy for the Kingdom; Paul affirms different gifts and the goodness of marriage. The Latin Church normally chooses celibate priests; Eastern Catholic Churches also ordain married men as priests and deacons. Acts offers a Jewish precedent for vows; religious profession is a distinct Christian dedication to God.

CCC 1579, 1580, 1618, 1620, 2102, 2103

Spiritual Fatherhood

Ministerial relationship and a customary title

1. **Matt 23:8-12** 239, 1551
Call no one on earth father; one Father in heaven
2. **1 Cor 4:14-15** 1549
Paul becomes a father through the Gospel
3. **1 Thess 2:11-12** 1549
Apostolic care is like a father's care [A]
4. **Eph 3:14-15** 239
Every family is named from the Father [A]
5. **Mark 10:42-45** 1551
Christian leaders serve, not dominate

Jesus says to call no one on earth father and commands humble service. Paul nevertheless describes his fatherhood through the Gospel. Catholics read these passages together: a priest's spiritual fatherhood serves God's unique Fatherhood and leads people to him. The title calls for humble care, never superiority or domination.

CCC 239, 1549, 1550, 1551

Guardian Angels

Doctrine of angelic care; Catholic synthesis concerning guardians

1. **Matt 18:10** 336
The little ones' angels behold the Father [A]
2. **Heb 1:14** 331
Angels are sent to serve the heirs of salvation
3. **Acts 12:6-11** 334
God sends an angel to rescue Peter
4. **Rev 22:8-9** 2096
Angels are fellow servants, not gods

— Old Testament roots —

1. **Ps 91:11-12** 336
God commands his angels to guard
2. **Tob 12:12-15** 336
Raphael presents prayers and brings help

God sends angels to guard and serve his people. Jesus speaks of the little ones' angels; Peter's rescue and Raphael's mission show their care. The Catechism teaches lifelong angelic care and an angel beside each believer as protector and shepherd. We honor these servants of God; we worship God alone.

CCC 331, 334, 336, 352, 2096