

~From the Administrator~

January 10, 2010

Dear Parish Family,

With the Christmas and New Years holidays behind us, it's time to look forward to some events that will be coming up.

On Tuesday, January 26th, Bishop Cistone will be offering Mass at 10:00am for the students at our school for "Catholic Schools Week." After Mass, the Bishop will visit classrooms and tour our facilities.

Dominic Finnerty and Gary Hauck are moving right along with the construction of the new altar. The bishop will return to St. Joseph the Worker on Sunday, February 14th to consecrate the new altar. On that day, the two regular Sunday Masses at 8:30am and 10:30am will be combined into a single Mass at 9:30am, so that everyone will have the opportunity to be present for the Mass of Consecration of the new altar with the bishop.



I want to thank you for your patience as I work out the bugs with using incense for important holy days. Please be assured that most of our Masses will remain "smoke-free." I realize now that keeping the incense in the sacristy during the whole Mass was not a very good idea. From now on, whenever incense is used, the altar server will take it out the back door of the sacristy and into the garage to keep the smokiness in the church to a minimum.

Let us continue to pray for each other. God bless you!

Fr. David

HOLY SMOKE! The history of incense at Mass

INCENSE is an aromatic substance which comes from the sap of certain resinous trees and used for religious worship. The word 'incense' is also used to signify the smoke or perfume arising when incense is burned.

Nature

In ancient times incense for the most part came from two particular trees, namely the *Boswellia sacra* of Arabia Felix, and the *Boswellia papyrifera* of India, both of which belong to the *Terebinthian* family.

Use

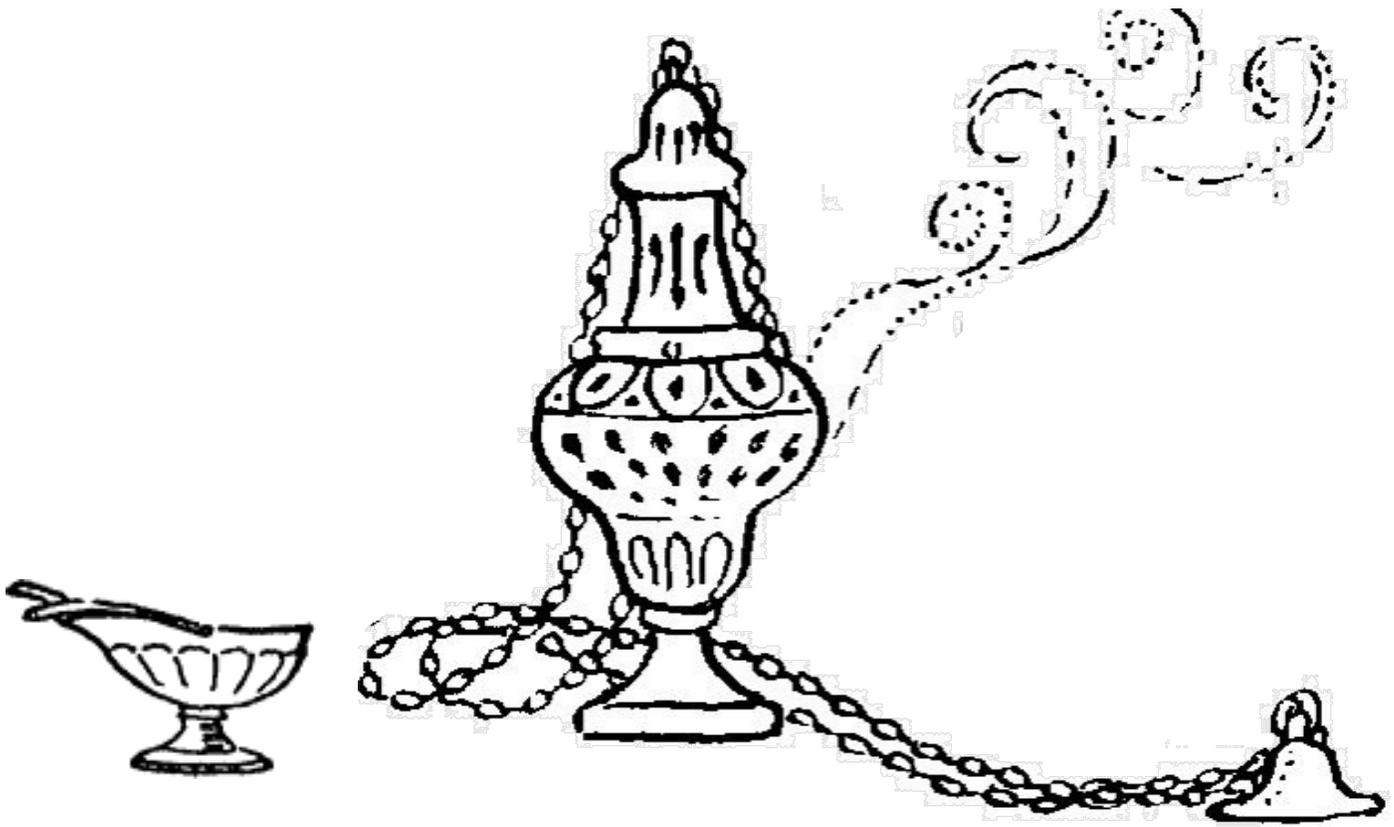
The use of incense was very common in the ancient world. In Jewish rituals it was used extensively, especially in connection with the thanksgiving offerings of oil, fruits, and wine, or the unbloody sacrifices (Leviticus 6:15). By the command of God, Moses built an altar of incense (cf. Exodus 30), on which the sweetest spices and gums were burned; and to a particular branch of the Levites was entrusted the task of offering incense daily (1 Chronicles 9:29).

Exactly when incense was introduced into the religious services of the Church it is not easy to say. Its use in the Jerusalem Temple and the references to it in the New Testament (cf. Luke 1:10; Revelation 8:3-5) would suggest its early use within Christian worship. The Liturgies of St. James and St. Mark from the fifth century refer to using incense at Mass. A Roman book from the seventh century mentions that it was used when the bishop processed to the altar and on Good Friday. The pilgrim Etheria saw it used on Sundays in Jerusalem. Almost all Eastern liturgies use it at Mass, particularly at the Offertory. In the Roman Liturgy incensation at the Gospel of the Mass appears very early; at the Offertory in the eleventh century, and at the beginning of Mass in the twelfth century. While incense is generally burned; the incense grains embedded in the Easter candle are not burned.

Symbolism

Incense, with its sweet-smelling perfume and high-ascending smoke, is a symbol of our prayers and those of the Saints. Enkindled in our heart by the fire of God's love, we exhale the odor of Christ as a pleasing offering to God. (*Excerpted from Catholic Encyclopedia*)





WHAT IS A THURIBLE?

thu·ri·ble

\ˈthuːr-ə-bəl, ˈthyuːr-, ˈthər-\ *noun*

[Middle English *thurribul*, from Latin *thuribulum*, from *thur-*, *thus* incense, from Greek *thyos* incense, sacrifice, from *thyein* to sacrifice. 15th century]

A **thurible** or censer is the vessel used in the Christian liturgy for the burning of aromatic incense placed on lighted coals. Censers of ceramic or metal were widely used in Egypt, in the ancient Middle Eastern civilizations, including the Jewish, and in the classical world. Because they were destined chiefly for religious worship, above all in funeral rites, they were often the object of artistic effort. The shapes varied. Both an open bowl with a handle or with chains for carrying and a closed receptacle with openings for smoke to escape were known.

The earliest evidence of the **thurible** in Christian usage is found in the 4th century, when the Roman emperor Constantine is said to have donated several to the Church of Saint John Lateran in Rome. Their purpose was to add fragrance to the church. The first strictly liturgical use in the West dates from the 7th century, when **thuribles** were employed in ritual gestures of honor for the bishop and the book of Gospels. In the course of the centuries, the Christian **thurible** assumed various artistic and often highly ornate shapes. Whether in the earlier open or the subsequent more closed form, it has generally been carried by means of three or four chains attached to a central ring. In the Eastern liturgies the **thurible** plays a far more prominent role than it does in those of the West.

(Excerpted from Encyclopedia Britannica.)

The Baptism of the Lord — A Reflection by Archbishop Fulton Sheen

IN ALL COUNTRIES, when the head of a government wishes to visit another government, he sends messengers. So, John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way of Christ, to announce the conditions of His reign and government. John, despite the prophecies that were made about him, disclaimed that he was the Messiah, and said that he was only:

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness.”

JOHN 1:23

Even before he met the Messiah, Who was his own cousin, he announced the superiority of Christ:

*“One is to come after me Who is mightier than I,
So that I am not worthy to bend down
And untie the strap of his shoes.”*

MARK 1:7–8

John considered himself unworthy to untie the shoes of Our Lord, but Our Lord would surpass him in humility as He would wash the feet of the Apostles. The greatness of John consisted in the fact that to him was given the privilege of running before the chariot of the King and saying, “Christ has come.”

John used symbols as well as words. The chief symbol of the washing away of sin was a cleansing by water. John had been baptizing in the Jordan, as a token of repentance, but he knew that his baptism did not regenerate or quicken the dead soul. That is why he made a contrast between his baptism and the baptism that later on Christ Himself would confer; speaking of the latter, he said:

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire.

MATTHEW 3:12

The day on which John and Jesus met in the Jordan, there awakened in John the deepest and most reverent humility. John felt the need of a Redeemer, but when Our Lord asked him to baptize Him, John was reluctant to do so. John immediately recognized the incongruity of submitting Our Lord to a rite which professed repentance and promised cleansing:

*It is I, he said That ought to be baptized by Thee,
And dost Thou come to me instead?*

MATTHEW 3:14

How could he baptize One Who had no sin? His refusal to baptize Jesus was recognition of His sinlessness.

*But Jesus answered, Let it be so for the present;
It is well that we should thus fulfill all due observance.*

MATTHEW 3:15

The object of His baptism was the same as the object of His birth, namely to identify Himself with sinful humanity. Had not Isaiah foretold that He would be “numbered with the transgressors?” In effect, Our Lord

was saying, “Suffer this to be done; it does not seem fitting to you, but in reality, it is in complete harmony with the purpose of my coming.” Christ was not being this as a private Person, but as a representative of sinful humanity though Himself without sin.

Every Israelite who came to John made a confession of his sins. It is evidence that Our Blessed Lord did not make any such confession, and John himself admitted that He had no need of it. He had no sin to repent of and no sin to be washed away. But He was identifying Himself with sinners all the same. When He went down into the river Jordan to be baptized, He made Himself one with sinners. The innocent can share the burdens of the guilty. If a husband is guilty of a crime, it is pointless to tell his wife not to worry about it, or that it is no concern of hers. It is equally absurd to say that Our Lord should not have been baptized because He had no personal guilt. If he was to be identified with humanity, so much so as to call Himself the “Son of Man,” then He had to share the guilt of humanity. And this was the meaning of the baptism by John.

Many years before, He had said that He must be about His Father’s business; now He was revealing what His Father’s business was: the salvation of mankind. He was expressing his relationship to His people, on whose behalf He had been sent. In the temple at the age of twelve, it had been His origin that He emphasized; now in the Jordan, it was the nature of His mission. In the temple, He had spoken of His Divine mandate. Under the cleansing hands of John, He made clear His oneness with humanity.

Later on, Our Blessed Lord would say:

The law and the prophets lasted until John’s time.

LUKE 16:16

He meant that long centuries had born faithful witness to the coming of the Messiah, but now a new page was turned, a new chapter written. From now on, He was to be merged with the sinful population. He was committed henceforth to live among, and minister unto, the victims of sin; to be betrayed into the hands of sinners and to be accused of sin though He knew no sin. As in His infancy He was circumcised, as if His nature was sinful, so now He was baptized, although He had no need of purification.

There were three rites in the Old Testament which were “baptisms” of sorts. First was a “baptism” of water. Moses brought Aaron and his sons to the doors of the tabernacle and washed them with water. This was followed by a “baptism” of oil, when Moses poured oil upon Aaron’s head in order to sanctify him. The final “baptism” was one of blood. Moses took the blood of the ram of consecration and put it upon Aaron’s right

ear and upon the thumb of his right hand and upon the great toe of his right foot. This ritual implied a gradual consecration. These baptisms would have their counterpart in the Jordan, the Transfiguration, and Calvary.

The baptism of Jordan was a prelude to the baptism of which He would later speak, the baptism of His Passion. Twice afterward did he refer to His baptism. The first time was when James and John asked Him if they could sit on either side of Him in His Kingdom. In answer, He asked them if they were ready to be baptized with the baptism which He was going to receive. Thus his baptism of water looked forward to His baptism of blood. The Jordan flowed into the red rivers of Calvary. The second time He referred to His baptism was when He said to His Apostles:

*There is a baptism I must be baptized with
And how impatient I am for its accomplishment.*

LUKE 12:30

In the waters of the Jordan He was identified with sinners; in the baptism of His Death, He would bear the full burden of their guilt. In the Old Testament, the Psalmist speaks of "entering into deep water" as a symbol of suffering which is manifestly the same image. There was a fitness in describing agony and death as a kind of baptism.

The Cross must have been looming up in His thoughts now with increasing vividness. It was no afterthought in His mind. He was temporarily immersed in the waters of the Jordan only to emerge again. So would He be immersed by the death on the Cross and the burial in the tomb, only to emerge triumphantly in the Resurrection. He had proclaimed His mission from the Father at the age of twelve; now He was preparing Himself for oblation.

*So Jesus was baptized,
and as He came straight up out of the water,
Suddenly heaven was opened,
And He saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove
And resting upon Him.
And with that, a voice came from Heaven, which said,
This is my Beloved Son,
In Whom I am well pleased.*

MATTHEW 3:16

The sacred humanity of Christ was the connecting link between heaven and earth. The voice from heaven which declared Him to be the Beloved Son of the Eternal Father was not announcing a new fact or a new Sonship of Our Blessed Lord. It was merely making a solemn declaration of that Sonship, which had existed from all eternity, but which was now beginning to manifest itself publicly as Mediator between God and man. The Father's good pleasure, in the original Greek, is recorded in the aorist tense, to denote the eternal act

of loving contemplation with which the Father regards the Son.

The Christ Who came out of the water, as the earth had come out of the water at creation and after the Flood, as Moses and his people had come out of the waters of the Red Sea, was now glorified by the Holy Spirit appearing in the form of a Dove. The Spirit of God never appears in the figure of a Dove anywhere save here. The Book of Leviticus mentions offerings which were made according to the economic and social position of the giver. A man who could afford it would bring a bullock, and a poorer man would offer a lamb; but the poorest of all had the privilege of bringing doves. When the mother of Our Lord brought Him to the temple, her offering was a dove. the dove was the symbol of gentleness and peacefulness, but above all it was the type of sacrifice possible to the lowliest people. Whenever a Hebrew thought of a lamb or a dove, he immediately thought of a sacrifice for sin. Therefore, the Spirit descending on Our Lord was for them a symbol of submission to sacrifice. Christ had already united Himself symbolically with man in baptism, in anticipation of His submergence into the waters of suffering; but now He was also crowned, dedicated, and consecrated to that sacrifice through the coming of the Spirit. The waters of the Jordan united Him with men, the Spirit crowned Him and dedicated Him to sacrifice, and the Voice attested that His sacrifice would be pleasing to the Eternal Father.

The seeds of the doctrine of the Trinity which were planted in the Old Testament began here to unfold. They would become clearer as time went on: the Father, the Creator; the Son, the Redeemer; and the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier. The very words the Father spoke here, "Thou art My Son," had been prophetically addressed to the Messiah a thousand years before in the second psalm.

Thou art My Son, I have begotten Thee this day.

PSALM 2:7

Our Blessed Lord would tell Nicodemus later on:

*Believe Me, no man can enter into the kingdom of God
Unless birth come to him by water,
And from the Holy Spirit.*

JOHN 3:5-6

The baptism in the Jordan closed Our Lord's private life and began His public ministry. He had gone down into the water known to most men only as the son of Mary; He came out ready to reveal Himself as what He had been from all eternity, the Son of God. He was the Son of God in the likeness of man in all things, save sin. The Spirit was anointing Him not just for teaching, but for redeeming.

*Excerpted from: Life of Christ,
©1958 by Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen.*