


# Symbols, Rituals, Sacramentals & Cultural Traditions of the Catholic Church



RCIA, Our Lady of the Assumption

# What are symbols?



- ✦ Something that represents or stands for something else, usually by convention or association, esp a material object used to represent something abstract

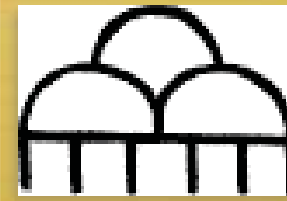
# Symbols



✧ Used throughout human history to communicate



✧ Expression of abstract thought, or to denote a group



# Symbols



- ✦ Greek meaning “to throw together.”
- ✦ Fire can be a symbol of...
- ✦ American flag is a symbol of...

# Symbols



## ✦ Nature Symbols

- ✦ **Darkness:** death, a time of waiting, waiting for rebirth
- ✦ **Light:** new life, a new moment
- ✦ **Water:** life & death, cleansing, rebirth
- ✦ **Fire:** action, passion, transformation

## ✦ Covenant Symbols

- ✦ **Consecrating with oil:** God's blessing & being chosen by God for a special role
- ✦ **Immersion in water:** turning away from sin, dying & rising.
- ✦ **Laying on of hands:** receiving the Holy Spirit & being designated for service

# Symbols in Sacraments



- ✦ Sacraments - not just man made symbols.
- ✦ Points to something beyond - to Jesus & his acts. Grace is received through the actions.
- ✦ Sacraments effect change in us & in the world because of God's power, not our own.

# Symbols in the Sacraments



## Sacrament

- ✦ Baptism →
- ✦ Confirmation →
- ✦ Eucharist →
- ✦ Penance →
- ✦ Anointing of the Sick →
- ✦ Holy Orders →
- ✦ Matrimony →

## Essential Sacramental Symbol

- ✦ Water, Trinitarian Formula
- ✦ Chrism, laying of hands
- ✦ Bread & wine, consecration
- ✦ Laying of hands, absolution
- ✦ Oil, prayer of priest
- ✦ Laying of hands, chrism
- ✦ Exchange of vows

# Rituals

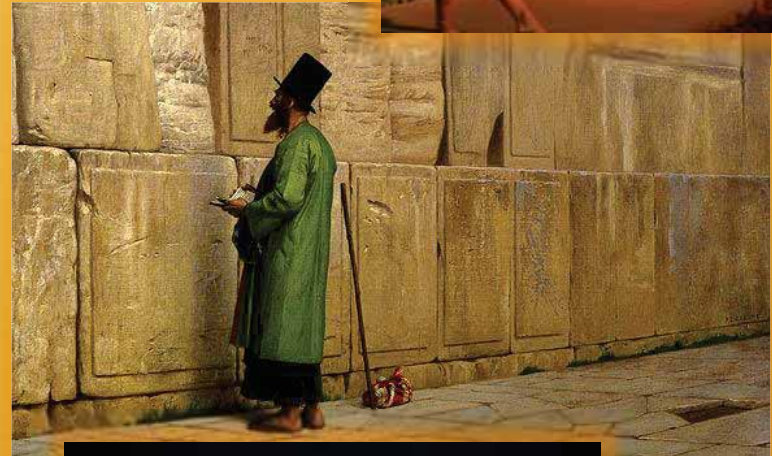


- ✦ Rituals are symbolic actions
- ✦ Catholic rituals engage the senses and evoke emotions
- ✦ Through ritual we open ourselves to God



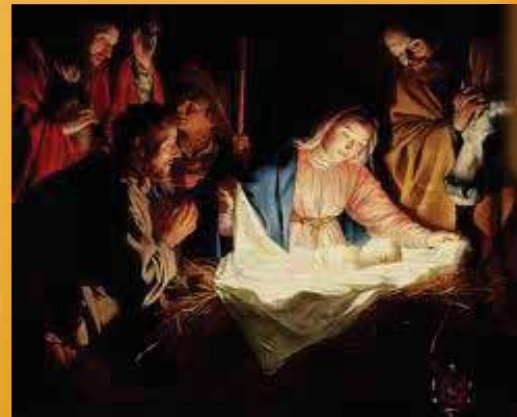
# What is a Ritual?

- ✦ 1. an established or prescribed procedure for a religious or other rite.
- ✦ 2. a system or collection of religious or other rites.
- ✦ 3. any practice or pattern of behavior regularly performed in a set manner.



# Rituals/Sacraments

- ✦ Celebrate in: words, actions, singing, music
- ✦ Rituals, specifically sacraments, help us feel the faith - religion comes to life in worshippers
- ✦ Rituals are also celebrated liturgically

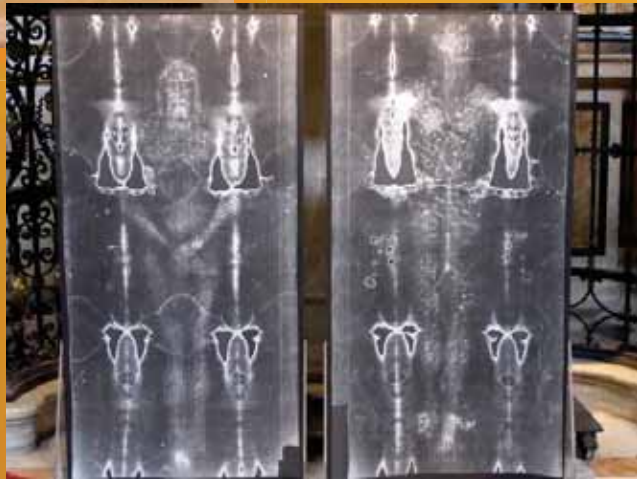


# Sacramentals



- ❖ Other symbols & rituals related to the sacraments but established by the Church
  - ❖ Use of sacramentals are encouraged & prepare us to receive graces
  - ❖ 1 Tim 4:4-5 God's creation is good & holy
- ✦ Holy water
  - ✦ Paschal Candle
  - ✦ Votive candles
  - ✦ Crosses
  - ✦ Medals & statues of Saints
  - ✦ Stations of the Cross
  - ✦ Blessed palm branches
  - ✦ Blessed ashes
  - ✦ Incense
  - ✦ Rosaries
  - ✦ Pilgrimages

# Relics



- ✦ Belongings of holy individuals
- ✦ In remembrance of the lives they lead
- ✦ 1st, 2nd, 3rd Class



# Cultural Traditions



- ✦ Guadalupanos – Our Lady of Guadalupe
- ✦ Dia de los Muertos – Day of the Dead
- ✦ Simbang Gabi – Filipino Christmas Celebration
- ✦ Italian Catholic Federation – St. Joseph's Day
- ✦ Many cultures in LA Archdiocese