

St. Basil the Great Catholic Church

Meaning of the Mass

2019-1-6

Monthly review - Sanctuary, Altar, Ambo, Ambry

The **sanctuary** is the area of the church elevated on steps. It is one of the holiest places in Brecksville (along with the Byzantine Catholic Church) because of what happens in the sanctuary and Who lives in the sanctuary. It is a sacred place and is due reverence.

The **altar** is a symbol for: (1) Christ Himself, (2) table for meal, (3) altar for sacrifice. Liturgical ministers bow to it and the priest kisses it. We laypersons offer our whole selves at Mass and we unite them to Jesus' sacrifice of Himself to the Father.

The **ambo** is the structure in the sanctuary from which the Biblical readings are proclaimed. It is also a type of table because "*Man does not live on bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.*" Since we need both word and bread, the two major sections of the Mass are called the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Before the Gospel, we trace crosses on our head, lips, and heart and can silently pray at that time "*May the Word of the Lord be on my mind, on my lips, and in my heart*".

The **ambry** is the compartment in the wall of our sanctuary containing the holy oils: Oil of Catechumens, Oil of the Sick, and Oil of Chrism. These oils are used variously in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, and Anointing of the Sick. Seeing these oils can remind us of loved ones who received these sacraments and give us a chance to pray for them during Mass.