**Sacramentals**

“Sacramentals are sacred signs instituted by the Church. They are sacred signs that bear a resemblance to the sacraments” (Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), no. 1667).

Sacramentals help to bring the reality of our faith into every aspect of our lives. They are not intended to replace the sacraments, which are the primary way we encounter Jesus Christ in this life, but are meant to extend the graces we receive into every aspect of our lives and to help prepare us to receive the graces of the sacraments more fully. As the *Catechism* states: “Sacramentals do not confer the grace of the Holy Spirit in the way that the sacraments do, but by the Church's prayer, they prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it” (CCC 1670).

Blessings hold first place among sacramentals. “There are blessings for persons, meals, objects, places, and special occasions” (USCCA, p. 296). In any blessing, someone or something is consecrated to God, usually with the Sign of the Cross and Holy Water.

Exorcisms, too, are sacramentals. An exorcism involves the Church asking “publicly and authoritatively in the name of Jesus Christ that a person or object be protected against the power of the Evil One and withdrawn from his dominion” (CCC 1673).

Sometimes *objects* such as rosaries and medals are referred to as sacramentals but, technically speaking, they are not. Marcellino D’Ambrosio explains:

But actually, it is the ceremony by which these objects are blessed that are the sacramentals. Let’s look at a technical definition of the term “sacramentals”: *Sacramentals are liturgical ceremonies instituted by the Catholic Church that bear some resemblance to the seven sacraments and dispose the Christian to receive and cooperate with grace. Each includes a prayer of blessing accompanied by a sacred sign representing benefits obtained through the intercession of the Church….* The term “sacramental” is applied to the rite of blessing itself, not the object blessed. (The full text of this article is linked below.)