

October 29, 2020



Helloooooo! Oops - so windy this morning my letters got away from me! (Sorry ~ bad humor but I couldn't resist!)

Last night of the Parish Mission. We are still on so see you there.

1. Today's Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/102920.cfm>

2. **The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus:** God, having created and knowing our human nature well, gives us tools to use our senses in His worship and service. One such means is the use of bells. Not only do they alert us (hopefully not waking us from sleep or distraction), but they have other important functions. The attached article explains

more. Three yellow bell icons.

3. Quote of the Day: St. John of Kronstadt Russian Orthodox Priest

Stay safe if you are out and about!

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Why are bells sometimes used during Mass?



[Pascal Deloche](#) | [Godong](#) | [Photonostop](#)

Bells have been a common part of divine worship since Moses.

Depending on the church you attend, you may hear the sound of bells ringing at pivotal points in the Mass. While it is no longer a universal practice in the Catholic Church, it points to an ancient historical practice that awakens our senses during the liturgy.

In describing the vestments worn by the priests of Israel like Aaron, God explains to Moses how bells should be sewn on them.

On its skirts you shall make pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet stuff, around its skirts, with bells of gold between them, a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, roundabout on the skirts of the robe. And it shall be upon Aaron when he ministers, and its sound shall be heard when he goes into the holy place before the Lord, and when he comes out, lest he die. (Exodus 28:33-35)

Bells were an integral part of divine worship, both to sound a joyful noise before the Lord and to ward off evil spirits. This particular feature of bells is still preserved

in the *Roman Ritual* blessing of bells where the priest prays, “At its sound let all evil spirits be driven afar.”

As Christianity grew, bells were slowly added to the liturgy in various ways. At first bells were mounted in towers outside of churches to call people to worship, but soon enough handheld bells were used for similar purposes. For example, it is believed St. Patrick used such a handbell and “whenever Saint Patrick had set up a new Christian community or parish somewhere in Ireland, he would choose one of his disciples to lead it after he left, and present them with a bell to call the parishioners’ to prayer, and to use during religious ceremonies.”

More in line with the Old Testament, small bells were adapted in Eastern Churches in various ways, such as bells that were attached to the thurible that carried incense used at divine worship.

In the Roman Rite handbells were eventually used by altar servers to mark important moments during the Mass. It currently remains an option, as it is noted in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, “A little before the Consecration, if appropriate, a minister rings a small bell as a signal to the faithful. The minister also rings the small bell at each elevation by the Priest, according to local custom” (No. 150).

The bells have great spiritual power and alert our senses to what is unfolding before us. They not only provoke our attention, but are also a “joyous noise” at the pivotal moments in the Mass when God comes down from Heaven and takes the appearance of bread and wine.

It is not meant to be a distraction, but another way to praise God and focus our wandering attention. Or as the Psalmist sings, “Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that breathes praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!” (Psalm 150:5-6)

The consecration of a bell is a very solemn function, and its origin must be sought far back in the eighth century, if not earlier. It has always been the practice of the Church to bless any objects that were used in the service of God. As the role of the bells is a very solemn and imposing one, it was not likely that in their case a solemn ceremonial of inauguration would be omitted. When the bells are blessed, they become sacramentals.

Sources: aleteia.org and catholicculture.org