

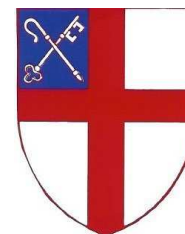
Lamps in Church

A White Lamp indicates the presence of the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle. The perpetual presence of the Blessed Sacrament means that Holy Communion is always available for the sick and the dying. It also reminds us that, as we enter the church we are immediately reminded of Our Lord's promise – to be with us always to the end of the world! A Red Lamp burns before a statue or Icon of a saint. A Blue Lamp signifies a statue of Our Lady Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Lamps help focus our attention and are welcoming and warming symbols of radiance. The Seven Lamps hanging in the Sanctuary before some altars represent the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Ghostly Strength, Knowledge, True Godliness and Holy Fear.

The above text has been prepared by the

**Diocese of the United Kingdom
ANGLICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

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**Why
Candles &
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**THE
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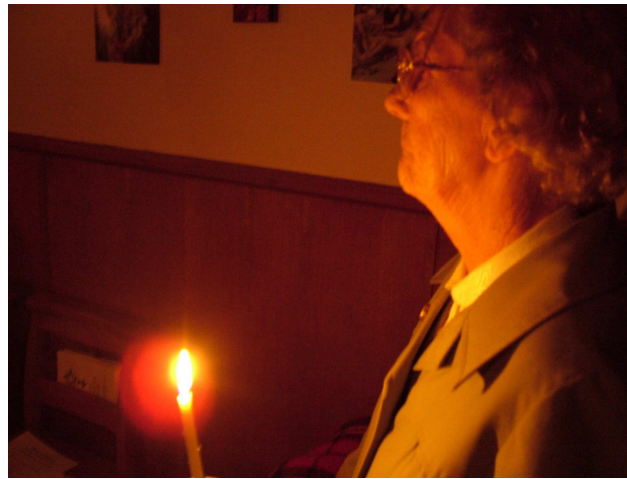
Candles & Lamps in Church

Light is something that most people take so much for granted, that we hardly give it a second thought. Nowadays most of our houses are lit by electricity, but not long ago people relied on gas, oil, and candle power for artificial light.

The need for light is fundamental. There can be no life without light. It will come as no surprise, then, to learn that images of light and darkness recur throughout the Bible. Almost the first thing that we read in the Old Testament (Gen.ch.lv.2) is that in the beginning "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep." The very first action of God in creation was to say, "Let there be light, and there was light and God saw that the light was good."(v3). In the New Testament too, light is a key image. The Gospel according to St. John describes Our Lord as "the light". Not the light created by God, but the Creator Himself! Our Lord, too, uses the image of light to teach His disciples, when He says that we should shine as lights exposed on hilltops, and not hide our faith.

The Paschal Candle

A Paschal Candle can be found in most churches, and it is easy to identify. It could well be taller and fatter than any other candle in the church, but it is certain to be the only candle to be decorated either with a decal or by being painted. From Easter to Ascension Day, it will be in a prominent position in the Chancel at the front of the church near the Altar. The Paschal Candle is named after the PASCH, the passion, death and resurrection of



the Lord. The candle represents Christ the light of the world. The Easter Vigil includes the first Mass of Easter, and is a dramatic re-presentation of the mysteries of creation and redemption. It begins in total darkness, but ends in a flood of candle-lit glory!

After Ascension Day the Paschal Candle is usually kept near the Baptismal Font for use during Baptisms.

Altar Candles and Processional Lights

The number of candles used to decorate altars can vary, but traditionally they are in combinations of two, four and six. A useful rule of thumb is that the more candles, the more important the altar is likely to be. Side and Lady Chapel altars normally have two, or sometimes four candles (two being lit for low mass, all four only being lit on high feast days). The High Altar would have anything up to six candles (seven when the Diocesan bishop is present).

The more obvious symbolism is that the altar represents the throne of God, from which the light of Christ shines upon His gathered people. You may also find it helpful to meditate

upon what the number and arrangement of the candles might suggest.

Candles carried in procession are a simple, but effective way of honouring both the cross which they accompany, and also the priest as he represents the person of Christ. Their use adds both dignity and colour to the Church's worship

Prayer (Votive) Candles

You may be fortunate enough to worship in a church which has a PRICKET STAND or a stand for holding VOTIVE or prayer candles. If you do, or when you go into a church that does, one will usually be found near a statue/shrine of a Saint or near to the Reserved Sacrament. Lighting a candle in prayer is a powerful symbol, full of meanings. Here are some helpful ideas: When we go, leaving the burning candle behind, we are reminded that our souls never leave the presence of God, in company with His Saints.

Prayer is not self-centred, it is God centred, and an important element is prayer for other people and causes. When lighting your candle, it is a very good idea to light a candle for those others you want to pray for. The candle will not be a substitute for the prayer of your heart, but an accompaniment. A small offering which, in honouring the Saint and giving glory to God, speaks both from the heart and to the heart. Lighting votive candles in church, when asking the prayers of the Saints and thereby to the greater glory of God, is a popular practice in our parishes. It is a devotional practice in which many millions of Christians around the world find a great deal of inspiration.