

Number Thirteen: Why “Chalice” and not “Cup”?

In the Eucharistic Prayers during the consecration, where God transforms ordinary bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ His Son, the priest uses the words of Jesus at the Last Supper. In the New Missal during the consecration of the wine into the Blood of Christ, the priest prays: “Take this all of you and drink from it, for this is the *chalice* of my blood...”. Using the word “*chalice*” instead of “cup” helps us remember the Cross as well as the Last Supper because we only use chalices for Mass, whereas we drink from cups all the time in daily life. The Mass is not only the Last Supper – a sacred meal – it is also the Offering of Christ on the Cross – a sacred Sacrifice. Also “*chalice*” reminds us that we are participating in the Heavenly Banquet when we celebrate Mass and not just a festive meal shared with our friends at home. The special altar vessels we use – the chalice, paten (the plate) and the ciborium (the covered dish) - are made of precious metals to remind us of the most precious substance they contain, the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ in the Eucharistic Species.