

How to Dispose of Old Copies of the Sacramentary

The information below was published in the *Newsletter* from the Committee on Divine Worship of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Volume XLVII, March – April 2011.

The Secretariat of Divine Worship has received a number of timely inquiries regarding the disposition of copies of the current *Sacramentary* once the new *Roman Missal, Third Edition* has been implemented.

There is relatively little written about exactly what to do with liturgical books which have been replaced by updated or revised editions, but some related writings, as well as some common sense, can provide a context. The *Book of Blessings*, no. 1343, indicates that the *Sacramentary*, the *Lectionary*, and other liturgical books are counted among those articles used in the Sacred Liturgy which ought to be blessed using the rite provided for that purpose, the Order for the Blessing of Articles for Liturgical Use (nos. 1341-1359). The Latin *De Benedictionibus, editio typica*, however, does not explicitly mention the *Missale* among the articles that are properly blessed.

Whether or not the *Sacramentary* has been blessed by an official rite, it is appropriate to treat it with care as it has been admitted into liturgical use. Its disposal should be handled with respect. The Secretariat recommends burying the *Sacramentary* in an appropriate location on church grounds or perhaps in a parish cemetery if there is one. Some have even suggested following a custom used in various Eastern Churches whereby liturgical books or Bibles are placed in the coffin of the deceased as a sign of devotion and love for the Liturgy. In lieu of burying old liturgical books, they could be burned, and the ashes placed in the ground in an appropriate location on church grounds. It is advisable to retain a copy of the *Sacramentary* for parish archives or liturgical libraries.

The USCCB recommends:

- Bury it in an appropriate location on church grounds or a parish cemetery (*if there is one*)
- Bury it in the coffin of the deceased (*perhaps a priest's funeral*) if they had a specific love and devotion for the Liturgy
- Burn it, collect the ashes, and bury them in an appropriate location on church grounds
- Keep a copy for parish archives