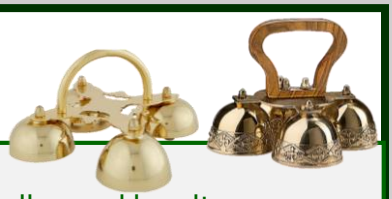
The Ringing of Bells at Mass



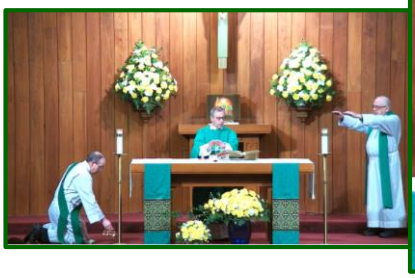


In the Roman Rite handbells were eventually used by altar servers to mark important moments during the Mass – see below.

The bells have great spiritual power and alert our senses to what is unfolding before us. They not only draw our attention, they 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.

Bells are not meant to be a distraction, but another way to praise God and focus our wandering attention. 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)*







During the Eucharistic Prayer, the server first rings the bells at the moment when the priest extends his hands over the bread and wine with his palms facing downward – an act of calling upon the Holy Spirit to come down from heaven that is referred to as the "epiclesis." This single ring is meant to draw attention to the proximity of the moment of the consecration.**

Then comes the two sets of three rings: one set at the elevation of the Body of Christ...





...and the other at the elevation of the chalice with the Blood of Christ – calling to attention this moment when Christ literally appears for all to see in the sacrament.**





* aleteia.org/2018/01/18/why-are-bells-sometimes-used-during-mass/
* stbensduluth.org/blog/fr-joel-hastings/use-of-bells-in-the-church