

Table—The Disposition of Objects No Longer Needed for Sacred Use

Options (in general order of preference): ↓	Altar (1,2)	Relics (including altar stones [2])	Chalice; Paten; Tabernacle; Monstrance	Furnishings (4)	Ritual Books; Pews, Communion Rails, Kneelers, Reredos.	Artwork (5); Candelabra; Thurible
Reuse in Renovation (intact or modified)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Place in heritage room or archive	X	X	X	X	X	X
Return to donor	No	No	No	No	No	X
Donate [or sell (6)] to another Catholic church or chapel (incl. private chapel established in keeping with the law)	X	X Or transfer to the Diocesan Archives	X	X	X	X
Donate or sell to a museum (6,7)	No	No	No	No	X	X
May be sold or given to an individual or a non-Catholic church (6,7)	No	No	To another Catholic priest only (3)	No	X	X
Storage (in Church custody)	X	X	X	X	X	X
“Return to profane use” by decree (c.1212)	No	N/A	Blessed object ought to be returned to profane use by decree before disposition or destruction, even though destruction or the act of returning these objects to profane use itself cause the objects to lose their dedication or blessing <i>de facto</i> .			
Destruction (bury, burn)	X	X	X	X	X	X

(1) An altar may not be sold. An altar may not be relegated to profane use (c. 1239); though it does lose its blessing/dedication if it is destroyed (cc. 1212, 1238). If an altar is transferred to another Catholic church to be used as an altar, it does not need to be rededicated or blessed (*Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Chapter V, §22). If the altar cannot be removed from a church that has been reduced to profane status, it must be destroyed (after first having its blessing/dedication lost by decree). The altar stone / relics are to be removed and stored appropriately.

(2) Relics may not be sold (c. 1190).

(3) For example, to one newly ordained.

(4) For example, Ambo, Ambry, Chair, Confessionals, Font, Bells, Processional Cross, Stained Glass, Linens

(5) For example, icons, statues, Stations of the Cross.

(6) When selling an item, care should be taken that it would not subsequently be used for sordid purposes. Therefore, open auction with no way of controlling who is bidding or why would be an unsuitable means for selling sacred objects. To the extent possible, sales should be conditioned to prevent unseemly use of sacred items. Even though the blessing or consecration of the item is lost by sale, the fact that the item was once used in divine worship requires that it still be treated with respect.

(7) See canon 1171.

X = allowable alternative for disposition