



# A Candle Recycling Project

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Some years ago I visited a parish where the main altar candles were made from resin and had receptacles at the top so that tea lights could be placed in them. This may not be everyone's "cup of tea" but it did strike me as very practical and economical.

In my own parish, as the stumps of each year's Paschal Candle accumulated in a storeroom, I had the idea to create some similar candles of my own. I brought out of my storeroom things old and new!

The photographs show the end result and we now use the candles as the main altar candles in both churches in the parish and in a small chapel at the main

church. They are quite easy to make as indicated in the following description.

The hardest part of the process is to cut the stumps of the old Paschal Candles. The candles I have produced are about 25 cm tall. To my surprise, I found wax a difficult material to slice through. I used a small handsaw and then a craft knife to get the ends as flat as possible.

Next I set about making the receptacles. These need to be lined with tough plastic so I got a parish handyman to cut some 50mm plastic pipe into slices 12mm high. So, the tops of the candles then need to be hollowed out with a craft knife, so that the plastic ring can slot inside. If you cut too big a hollow, molten wax can be poured around the ring to give a neat finish.

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I also cut some small cardboard disks lined with kitchen foil to sit inside the the receptacles, because I soon discovered that without these, the tea lights melt the wax beneath and become embedded.

Finally, simple bases or holders were used to stand the candles in. I found two black rusted holders in a cupboard that looked quite ugly and managed to buy four others for about £3.00 each. These were also in black so I decided to paint all six holders.

First I scoured them with tough abrasive paper to create a good surface and then I gave them two coats of a metal primer spray paint. They were finished off with another spray paint which was a “metallic gold” finish. From the distance they are viewed at, they look surprisingly convincing as expensive metal holders.

I appreciate that some may feel that no expense should be spared in the celebration of mass, but personally I was pleased to produce six altar candles that cost almost nothing. They cost about 8 pence per mass to use and produce no waxy stalactites and entail almost no maintenance.



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