

Guidelines for Sacristans



(revised October 2010)

Thank you for agreeing to serve the parish as a sacristan. In essence, it is a ministry of “Mass coordinator,” making sure that everything is ready for the celebration of Eucharist and that the other ministries are ready to go. In this capacity you will need to know where everything is stored. But, even more, you will need to know the role of the other ministries as well. So, in addition to this booklet you will be given the guidelines for Lector, Communion Minister, Greeter, and Altar Server.

Each year we will review the expectations and procedures for those who are sacristans. The Eucharist is the heart of our worship and what binds us into the community we call Church. The ministry of sacristan can help our celebrations of Eucharist to be more fully prepared for and thus more calmly entered into. It is important that this service not become merely routine but continually challenge us to grow in our own faith, our trust in God, and our appreciation for the Eucharist.

Time Commitment and Scheduling

You will be scheduled on a rotating basis for specific Masses of your choice. The commitment will ordinarily be for twelve months, corresponding to the Church's liturgical year, renewable on an annual basis. We hope that many of you will continue year-by-year in this ministry but we want people to feel free to move off the ministry, if needed.

If this ministry is to be effective, we need the sacristan present and working **no later than one half hour prior to the scheduled Mass**. Anything later means that others will begin to do the sacristan's work, defeating the very purpose of this ministry.

What is Stored Where

Main Sacristy:

- Bread and wine: lower middle cabinet below long counter. If no wine is available there, you will have to go to the Sacristy Storage (see below).
- Plates and cups: upper right cabinets above long counter. For Sunday Masses we usually use one of the tall ceramic cups and 3 shorter but still larger matching cups. One large plate is used for the bread, and 3 smaller plates are put out for communion time.
- Book of the Gospels: upper left cabinet above long counter
- Corporals, purificators, towels: upper drawer as you face the mirror.
- Priests' vestments: left closet

- Altar servers albs: right closet (sizes range from 8=shortest to 18=tallest)
- Incense and charcoal: above altar server robes
- Special candle globes: cabinet above mirror
- Incenser: on stand in the room
- Funeral pall: behind sacristy door
- 9 volt batteries: upper drawer as you face mirror

Reconciliation Room (Sign-in Area): next to the sacristy

- Sign-in book
- Announcement/intercession binder
- Schedules for liturgical ministers
- Wedding rehearsal coordinator material
- Communication folders for parish council and commissions
- Extra "Sunday's Word," "At Home with the Word," and "Lectors' Workbooks"

Sacristy Storage: in hallway by office of director of liturgical music.

- Extra altar candles
- Baptismal candles
- Ironing board
- Extra 9-volt batteries
- Extra children's envelopes (literature racks should have a few packets always available)
- Cases of wine
- Extra candlestands, wax protectors, candle followers

Mechanical/Furnace room:

- Plant stands and extra wood stands
- Card tables

Custodial Supply Room: near the Mechanical/Furnace Room entrance

- Key for restroom paper towel dispensers
- Extra paper towels
- Clean up material

Ushers' Cabinet

- Baskets for collection, including the larger, main basket.
- Envelopes, if any, to be passed out for special collections
- Special instructions for the ushers that weekend
- Reserved seating signs
- AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) for emergency situations is kept next to the ushers' cabinet

Sacristan Responsibilities

1. Take an overall view to see what needs to be readied for Mass and to make sure all is in place.

When you first check-in and are ready to begin, take a quick tour of the whole church, noting if anything needs to be done. During that tour necessary lights can be turned on, thermostats checked, quick pick-up of worship aids accomplished, a look at the credence tables to see what is there and what is missing, checking the ushers' cabinet to see if any instructions are being conveyed to the ushers for that weekend, and so forth.

2. Altar Area and Credence Tables

Prior to Mass, nothing should be on the altar itself. The altar is the symbolic, central focus during the liturgy, along with the ambo. In checking the altar, note the draping of the altar cloth. At times it needs slight adjustments.

The Lector's Sunday Lectionary (or the Children's Lectionary for 9:30 and 11:30 from October through May) should be on the front of the ambo. If the Children's Lectionary is there, then the regular Sunday Lectionary is to be on top of the ambo. Lectors are asked to check the Lectionary themselves, to make sure that it is in the correct position. The sacristan can prepare it, but the Lectors should still be encouraged to check it themselves as a way to prepare for their own ministry.

The presider's chair should be free of any material. There is a side table next to that chair to be used for any books/papers.

The credence (serving) table for the altar servers is on the west (tabernacle) side behind the altar area. The towel, bowl and cruet of water for the washing of hands goes there, along with the corporal, and main chalice (with purificator). The candle lighting equipment is there as well (check the top drawer if you need a lighter or matches). NB: it is not the sacristan's responsibility to put all that on the credence table. That is the altar server's responsibility. However, if no server shows up or they come too late, the sacristan needs to be prepared to do it.

The credence table for the communion ministers is on the east (ambo) side behind the altar area. The extra cup (s) and plates (ciboria) are placed there with the necessary number of purificators. The top drawer has extra corporals and purificators for emergencies. The bottom part of the cabinet has some extra chalices for emergencies.

The table for the gifts is at the back of the church by the main aisle, west side. The servers place the bread and wine for the Mass on this table. Sacristans place the Book of the Gospels on it and check to see that the ushers' main basket is placed beneath the table.

3. *Tabernacle*

The tabernacle key is kept in the tabernacle key slot during the Masses. If it is not there, check in the sacristy, top drawer (as you face the mirror). The key is put back into that drawer after the Sunday 11:30 Mass, and, during the weekdays, after the Wednesday morning Mass.

It is good to check the tabernacle to see how many consecrated hosts are present. Even if the number is overflowing, one does not reduce the usual number of hosts prepared for Mass, since the Church asks that people receive communion from bread consecrated at the Mass. If you know that the ciborium in the tabernacle is full, you need to forewarn the communion ministers to leave one of the communion plates in the tabernacle after communion is finished. If there are less than 30 hosts in the tabernacle, to be on the safe side, you need to put out a few more than the usual number of hosts.

4. *Baptismal Font area and Holy Water Fonts*

The baptismal font is not a place for setting papers or other materials. The only thing on the font should be the sprinkler (aspergillum) and bucket. For Masses with baptisms, the sacred chrism is also present, along with a small stand for the additional candles/towels. For Masses with a blessing of children prepar-

ing for baptism or for RCIA candidates, the oil of catechumens is placed either on the baptismal font or on a separate stand in the altar area (between the ambo and altar on the second to top step). The sacristan will need to check with the priest where to place the oil. The Easter candle is lit during the Easter season, for Masses with baptism or confirmation, for funerals, and certain other special occasions.

The holy water fonts at each entrance should be checked to see if they need cleaning and/or filling. Bring them to the sacristy to clean. Dip them in the baptismal font to fill with blessed water.

5. *Preparing Bread, Wine, and Vessels*

In the main sacristy the plates (ciboria), cups (chalices) and cruets are kept in cupboards above the sink. It is the responsibility of the sacristan to prepare these vessels for Mass. The altar servers put them in their proper places (directed by the sacristan). Only if no altar server shows, does the sacristan do that.

For all Masses one larger plate is used as the main ciborium. One large host and a sufficient number of small hosts are placed in it. [The medium size hosts are used for weekday Masses.] Although at each Mass a final determination needs to be made on the spot, once the opening hymn is finished and late-comers are present, the following are typical numbers:

	<u>Bread</u>	<u>Wine</u>
5 p.m.:	200 hosts	2 cups (cruet of wine 2/3 full)
8 a.m.	125 hosts	2 cups (cruet 1/2 full)
9:30 a.m.	275 hosts	4 cups (cruet 3/4 full)
11:30 a.m.	225 hosts	2 cups (cruet 2/3 full)

6. *Checking with Each Ministry:*

Prior to Mass, the sacristan needs to make a mental checklist of what is needed for each ministry and, when necessary, check in with the ministers.

Music: Anything out of the ordinary happening? Special handouts? Is the sound system on and working? If there is to be a special speaker making an extended announcement at the beginning, the music ministers need to be informed. If they are going to do a prelude, the lectors need to know.

Greeters: If there is a food drive, sharing tree or other special collection of material going on, they need to know where to have people put things. If no greeter shows up and an usher is available, they need to be asked to step in.

Ushers: Check on the ushers' cabinet doors. Any special collection envelopes needing to be passed out? Anything else that might affect the ushers?

Lectors: Have both lectors checked in? In not, is there a possible sub in the church, if needed at the last minute? Lectionary out and in place? Book of Gospels on gift table and ready for the entrance procession? Any special announcements happening?

Communion Ministers (via Mass Captain): If other than the usual number of CMs are needed.

Altar servers: Let them do the work, if possible but oversee their preparing for Mass. Organize them for

opening procession. Give special instructions if it is a Mass with baptism or other special occasion.

Children's Liturgy of the Word: Special Children's Lectionary out on ambo for 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. Masses?

Priest: Anything special happening at that liturgy that needs to be communicated to other ministers? Any use of banners or extra candles that will involve people other than the usual ones in procession?

7. *Entrance Procession:*

The sacristan helps organize the entrance procession. Depending on the number of altar servers there will either be a cross-bearer, a cross-bearer and extra server, or a cross-bearer and two candles. The order of procession is as follows: special banners, cross, candles, lector with Book of the Gospels, extra servers, priest.

8. *After Mass:*

The Mass captain is responsible for cleaning the cups and plates. The sacristan can then make sure the proper number of clean plates/cups are left on the counter for the next Mass, if appropriate. Candles are extinguished after the Saturday 5 p.m. and Sunday 11:30 a.m. Masses. They are left burning at the other two Masses.

Miscellaneous

1. *Lights*

The lights in the restrooms work on automatic switches. All other lights need to be switched on in six places, if not already done. (1) At either entrance one of the switches controls the fluorescent lights along the back. (2) The main body of lights are switched on by a button in the light panel by the men's restroom. The light for the restroom hall is on the wall opposite the women's restroom. For most Masses the "full lighting" button will be used. To turn off these lights hit the "off" button nearby. (3) The backlighting for the altar area is controlled by two switches on the back wall just outside the restroom area. (4) The lights for the icon and bells on the east wall are controlled by two switches next to the thermostat on the back, east-side wall. (5) The lights for the entranceway to the Activities Center are on a switch in that hallway. (6) The lights for the sacristy hallway, sign-in room (Reconciliation room) and sacristy are in self-evident spots.

All the above switches should be on for all Masses, unless otherwise indicated. There are two canister type lights by the Disciples' room which are not controlled by any of these switches. For special occasions these are turned on, and the switch is inside the Disciples' room. The lights inside the Disciples' room are ordinarily off (except for the Christmas season with its special lighting and Easter with its overflow Masses).

2. *Sound System*

The sound system has two controlling switches, which need to be turned on/off in the proper order. When turning on the sound system, the switch at the

right corner of the equipment behind the organist goes on first. Then the switch in the sacristy (as you enter, on your left). The volume control for the speakers should usually be set at "7". When turning off the sound system after the Saturday 5 p.m. Mass and Sunday 11:30 a.m. Mass (not between Masses), the switch in the sacristy is turned off first (the volume control can stay at "7"), and then the switch by the organist.

The sound system can be tricky, since it has so many controls. Ordinarily no volume controls should be touched. The receiver for the wireless mic of the cantor is on top of the equipment by the organ and goes on/off when the one main switch is flipped. The receiver for the wireless mic of the priest is by the east credence table and is controlled by one of the two backlighting switches mentioned in #1 above. In the case of both wireless receivers, they are not supposed to be turned on or off individually. If they do not show the green "on" light when the main switches are flipped, it is possible that they need to be powered up directly with their own on/off button, but that should rarely, if ever happen.

Ordinarily we use rechargeable batteries for all the wireless mics. In an emergency, extra AA or 9-volt batteries for the cantor's and priest's wireless mics are in the sacristy storage annex, in the cupboards top left. Especially for the 5 p.m Saturday Mass and the 8 a.m. Sunday Mass it would be a good practice to check with the music minister to see if all the mics' rechargeable batteries have been changed. The chargers are in the electrical outlet by the sink and below the window.

3. *Thermostats*

The two main thermostats are on the east and west back walls of the inner area of the Church. You can

use the arrow buttons to change the temperature temporarily, if needed. After two hours they go back to their pre-programmed temperature.

During the fall and spring seasons, fresh air can be blown in through the system by turning on the fan in the furnace room. If you think it would be best to have no heating/cooling but only the fresh air and fans blowing, let the priest or a staff member know.

4. Exit doors

The two main entrances should have both outside doors unlocked by placing the clasp over the crash bar. They remain that way until the end of the day, when the clasps are removed. Ordinarily, the outside doors are not left open. At the end of Mass ushers prop them open temporarily but then they should be re-closed to save on cooling/heating. Ordinarily, the inner set of doors are to be kept shut.

5. Gluten-free Hosts

A few of our parish members have celiac disease or severe allergic reaction to wheat. We keep gluten-free hosts in the kitchen freezer. If asked, take a pyx from the top drawer (counter by mirror in the sacristy), and place the special host(s) in the pyx. Then place the pyx on the plate with all the regular hosts. Please make sure the pyx you use is completely cleaned and free of any particles, before placing the gluten-free host in it.

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