



SACRISTAN INSTRUCTIONS

Transfiguration Catholic Church



SEPTEMBER 8, 2017

Purpose of the Sacristan Ministry: The Mass is the most perfect prayer that we can offer to God as a participation in the Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. Like the Apostles and the Holy Women preparing the Passover Meal to be celebrated by Jesus on Holy Thursday, the Sacristan is called to work humbly behind the scenes to see that everything is prepared for Mass to be celebrated.

Summary of Responsibilities: Many tasks need to be done before the liturgy can take place. The building must be opened, lit, and walked through to determine if it is ready for the celebration. Bread and wine must be in the proper place; vessels and books set out. The sacristan is also responsible to ensure that the proper numbers of lay ministers are available to assist during Mass.

Activities and Responsibilities prior to Mass: The following activities are required in preparation of any Mass and should be completed, or at minimum, supervised by the sacristan.

1. **Opening of the Church:** The sacristan should arrive 30 minutes prior to the start of the Mass to ensure that the church is open, lights are on, and the facilities are ready for the celebration.
2. **Ensure that the liturgical books are set for the Mass:** For Sunday Mass, this includes both the *Lectionary* and the *Book of the Gospels*.



Lectionary

This book contains the scripture readings for Mass. The sacristan is responsible for ensuring that the lectionary is on the ambo (podium), and open to the readings of the day. The proper readings of the day can be found in the ***Ordo*** which is found in the sacristy. (We may read either the normal daily readings or the special readings for the saint's day. Ask the celebrant.). There are three lectionaries, one for Sunday, one for weekdays and feast days, and one for special days (like Thanksgiving).



Book of the Gospels

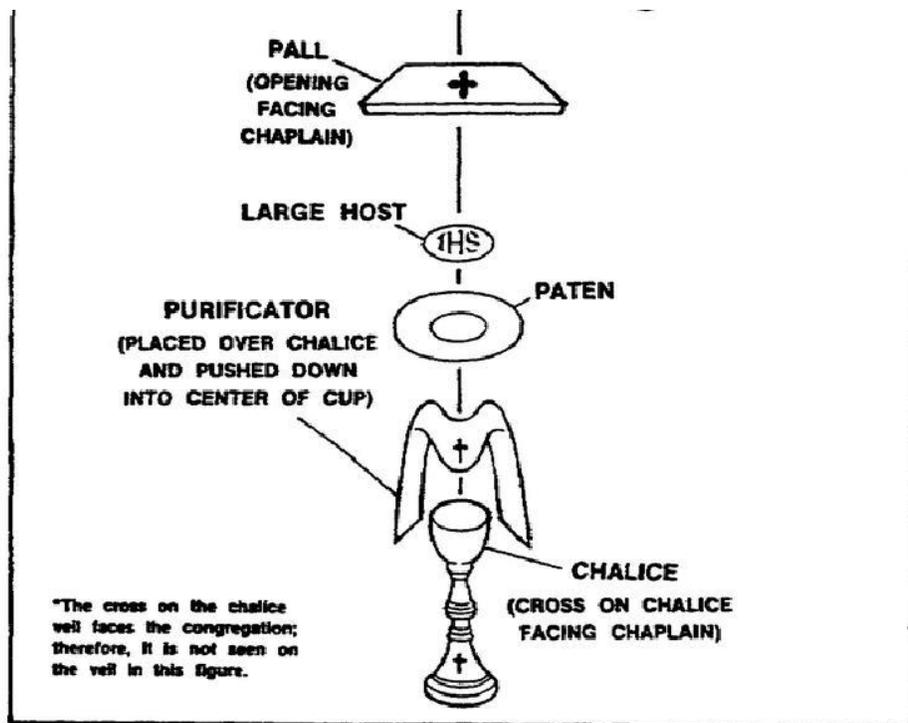
This book contains the Gospel reading for each Sunday of the three-year cycle, plus all solemnities, feasts, and ritual Masses that are celebrated throughout the liturgical year. It is carried in procession by the deacon or the second reader. The sacristan is responsible for ensuring that the Book of the Gospels is on the small table just inside the sanctuary with the ribbon placed on the proper reading. Just as the lectionary, the proper Gospel reading of the day can be found in the ***Ordo*** which is found in the sacristy. If there is a question about the proper readings of the day, the sacristan can verify them with the priest or the deacon.

3. **Ensure that the other lay ministers are present:** There are four main lay ministers required for each weekend Sunday, solemnity, feast, or ritual Mass. The minister schedule for these Masses can be found in the gathering space on the bulletin board and on the wall within the sacristy. Each minister assigned to the Mass is responsible for being present 15 minutes prior to Mass and signing in on the schedule posted in the gathering space. The sacristan is responsible for ensuring that the ushers, lectors, lay Eucharistic ministers, and altar servers are present. If they are not present by 10 minutes before Mass starts, the sacristan is responsible for finding a substitute for those not present.

4. **Ensure that all vessels and linens are set up for Mass:** There are sacred vessels and linens used for every Mass. The number of vessels, linens, and the color of linens vary based on the type or time of Mass being celebrated.

The Corporal (for Corpus in Latin and referring to the Body of Christ) should always be treated reverently, keeping it flat, not unfolding it, nor flapping it in the air. We do not usually use new corporals for each Mass, but would do so only if the corporal was stained with Precious Blood at the previous Mass. See Appendix A which illustrates each of the vessels and linens and describes their uses.

The sacristan assembles the chalice, purificator, paten, large host, and pall as shown here.



Once the chalice is assembled, it is carried to the credence table on the tray with:

- **wash basin**
- **hand towel**
- **water cruet(s) filled to capacity with water for purification during Mass**
- **communion cups filled about 1/3 to 1/2 full with wine for all Masses except 10:30 and the major Holy Days of Obligation when they are filled to about 2/3 capacity**
- **extra purificators, corporal(s) (based on chart on page 6)**
- **any pyx with the appropriate number of hosts in it**
- **tabernacle key**

The Eucharistic ministers will provide their pyxes to the sacristan prior to Mass with the numbers of the hosts that they will need. The sacristan will place unconsecrated hosts in the pyxes and place the pyxes on the credence table.



Figure 1 - Setup for Mass

After the sacristan places all the vessels and linens on the credence table, he or she places the tabernacle key in the tabernacle, opens it, and checks to see how full the ciborium is. Returning to the sacristy with the tray, the sacristan fills the wine cruet with wine and a ciborium with hosts based on the number of people anticipated at the particular Mass and places them on the small table just inside the sanctuary.



Always check the ciborium in the tabernacle to ensure that we have enough hosts for everyone at Mass, but not so much that we have a lot of consecrated hosts left over. We should never allow situations where we are concerned that we

may run out of the Blessed Sacrament during the Communion distribution. It is better to have too many consecrated hosts than not enough.

For weekday Masses (including Saturday mornings), the wine cruet and extra ciborium is placed on the credence table because there is no collection and no processional presentation of gifts during those Masses.

The number of vessels and linens taken to the credence table varies based on the Mass time, day, or Holy Day of Obligation. The following table shows the differences.

	Saturday 4PM	Sunday 8AM	Sunday 10:30AM	Holy Day	Weekday
Assembled chalice	1	1	1	1	1
Wash bowl & towel	1	1	1	1	1
Corporals	2	2	2	2	1
Extra purificators	2	2	5	5	0
Communion cups	2	2	4	4	0
Ciborium	1	1	At least 1	1	1 Small
Water cruets	1	1	2	2	1

*Funerals and Weddings are scheduled through the parish office and the office will reach out to schedule a sacristan for these events. Generally speaking, these events are set up like a weekday Mass (no communion cups, all other vessels are placed on the credence table, and readings are selected by the participants). Funerals may have the offerings brought from the back; check with whoever is coordinating the Mass.

5. Candles:

- a. Verify that the oil in the candles around the altar is at least half-filled, so there is no danger of running out in the middle of Mass.
- b. The candles by the Blessed Mother statue should be lit as soon as the sacristan arrives but not more than 30 minutes prior to every Mass.
- c. All other candles (at the altar, on the Advent wreath during Advent, and the Easter candle during Easter Season) are lit approximately 15 minutes prior to Mass start. The sacristan should always get altar servers to light the candles other than the ones at the Blessed Mother.
- d. Refill any empty votive candles at the Blessed Mother (located under the sacrarium).

- 6. **Setting up for Adoration:** Adoration is generally held on two occasions during the week: after 9AM Mass on Saturdays and at 5PM prior to the Thursday 6PM Mass. To set up for Adoration, the sacristan brings the uncovered monstrance from the sacristy cabinet to the credence table to be ready for Father to place it on a corporal on the altar.

7. **Activities and Responsibilities after Mass:** The following activities are required at the end of all Masses and should be completed or at minimum supervised by the sacristan.
 - a) Ensures all candles are extinguished (**except** the perpetual candle and votive candles).
 - b) Locks tabernacle and removes key.
 - c) Using a soft cloth, – NEVER USE PAPER TOWELS TO CLEANSE THE VESSELS – wipes down the vessels of any finger prints, oils, or lipstick missed during cleansing at the altar.
 - d) Carries all vessels and linens to the sacristy.
 - e) Empties the water cruets and places them upside down on paper so that they completely dry out.
 - f) Places soiled linens in the linen net which is in the sacristy next to the sacrarium.
 - g) Put away clean linen in the appropriate drawers.
 - h) Returns vessels to their place (**including** monstrance if adoration was involved).
 - i) Turns off all lights in the sanctuary (**except** after 8AM Sunday Mass).
 - j) Ensures that there is someone to lock up the church and turn on the alarm (**except** after 8AM Sunday Mass).
8. **Activities carried out on an occasional basis:** The following activities are required, should be completed or at minimum supervised by the sacristan.
 - a) Check and refill all liquid candles as necessary (usually done before or after Saturday AM Mass).
 - b) The sacristan scheduled for the third Sunday of the month after the 10:30AM Sunday Mass, cleanses all the vessels with a mild soap and soft cloth – NEVER USE PAPER TOWELS TO CLEANSE THE VESSELS – anything except a soft cloth scratches the vessels.
 - c) The sacristan for the 10:30AM Sunday Mass empties the ablution bowl into the sacrarium sink, refills it with water and places it and a clean purificator at the tabernacle.
9. **Scheduling:** The sacristan schedule will be published monthly at the same time as the other ministry schedules.
 - a) A call for unavailability will go out a week or so before the end of each month by the scheduler – it is the responsibility of each sacristan to respond in time for their own absences.
 - b) Schedules are only provided for the main weekend Masses and Holy Days of Obligation.
 - c) Sacristans are responsible for finding their own replacements if they are not going to be able to fulfill their published schedule.
 - d) The parish office will reach out to sacristans for weddings, funeral, weekday Masses, etc. if additional volunteers are needed.

VESSELS



Chalice (CHAL-is)

The cup that holds the wine that becomes the Blood of Christ.



Paten (PAT-en)

The plate that holds the bread that becomes the Body of Christ.



Ciborium (si-BORE-ee-um)

The covered cup that holds the Hosts for communion distribution and for reservation of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.



Communion Cups

The cups that hold the Precious Blood for distribution to the people.



Wine and Water Cruets

The cruets that hold the wine and the water that the priest uses to fill his chalice for consecration, and to cleanse his hands, and to purify the vessels after communion.



Wash basin

The bowl used by the priest to wash his hands during the Eucharistic prayer.



Ablution bowl

The small covered dish that holds the water used by the deacon and the Lay Eucharistic Ministers to purify their hands of particles of the hosts after distributing communion. The ablutio bowl is located next to the tabernacle.



Monstrance

The ornate demonstration device used to hold a consecrated host during periods of adoration and benediction.



Communion Pyx

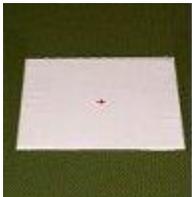
The covered travel container used by ministers of the Eucharist to carry communion to those in the hospital or home bound.

LINENS



Corporal

The white linen cloth on which are placed the vessels containing the bread and the wine that will become the Body and the Blood of Christ.



Pall (PAHL) The stiff, square, white cover that is carried over the paten on top of the chalice. The pall is used by the priest or deacon to ensure nothing falls into the Precious Blood in the chalice during the Mass.



Purificator

A white cloth used to cleanse the chalice and the communion cups. It resembles a napkin.



Hand Towel

A small towel used by the priest to dry his hands after cleansing them during the Eucharistic prayer.