

## **Procedures and Guidelines for Sacristans**

UPDATED FEBRUARY 12, 2020

Thank you for being a liturgical minister at St. Mary+Our Lady of Peace! The role of the sacristan is vital to the celebration of the Mass and is of great assistance to the priests and deacons, allowing them to better perform their ministerial duties before, during and after the Mass.

### **ROLE OF THE SACRISTAN**

Sacristans set up the sanctuary and the credence table for the Mass, care for the paramenta (the chalices, cups, cruets, flagons, ciborium, purificators, books, and other items) used in the Mass, provide direction to our Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHCs), serve as EMHCs if needed and serve as altar servers. The performance of their various duties allows for an ordered and prayerful Mass. Their service is both an honor and a blessing to the Celebrant of the Mass and to the faithful in attendance.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR ELIGIBILITY**

**Sacristans must meet the following requirements:**

- Be a practicing Catholic, distinguished in their Christian life, faith and morals
- Be at least 18 years of age
- Have received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist
- Demonstrate a deep reverence for and devotion of the Holy Eucharist
- If married, the marriage must be a valid Catholic marriage

### **SPIRITUALITY**

Sacristans should strive to live the Catholic Faith in spirit and in truth. Regular Mass attendance, daily prayer (especially meditation on the scriptures and Eucharistic Adoration), regular confession, and participation in faith formation and the life of the parish are key. To distribute the Blessed Sacrament, the true presence of Jesus Christ, sacristans should heed the Lord's invitation to ongoing conversion and friendship with Him. We cannot give what we do not have, so we rely on the Lord to fill us with his strength.

### **PROCEDURES**

Sacristans shall check MSP two days prior to Mass and again shortly before Mass to see if the volunteer schedule is full, who they will be serving with, and to help in finding substitutes if needed.

The sacristan should be familiar with the duties of the other volunteers and to help assure that these duties are being performed. The sacristan may recruit altar servers at his/her discretion.

### **Arrival at Mass**

Arrive 30 minutes prior to Mass to have time to properly prepare all items for Mass and to assist others as needed.

- The sacristan is responsible for determining the number, if any, of extraordinary ministers needed for that Mass. The sacristan should locate EMHCs that are scheduled and discuss who is doing which duties during the distribution of Communion, such as who is distributing at each station, who is distributing to overflow areas and the cry room, etc.

- The sacristan may ask others trained as extraordinary ministers but not scheduled to serve as needed, including on a 'provisional' basis. Please refer to the instructions for extraordinary ministers for additional information.

Observe proper decorum in the sanctuary and the sacristy, keeping conversation to a minimum and as quiet as possible. Respect the silence of the sanctuary, remembering that noise from the sacristy is inconsiderate to those in prayer. Engage the priest(s) in conversation only as necessary, respecting their time to prepare for Mass.

Ensure that the proper number of candles (two candles for daily Mass, four for Sundays and six for Feast Days and special Masses) is on the altar, that the altar area is neat and free of any unneeded items and has the proper items needed for the Mass. Assist the other volunteers, the deacon, the altar servers and musicians as needed in setting up the sanctuary and preparing for Mass.

If a visiting priest is the celebrant, greet the priest when he arrives and ask if he has any special instructions or preferences for the Mass. Typically, a deacon will be assigned and will assist the sacristan in determining any special needs. You may need to help the priest find vestments, demonstrate the use of the lavalier mic, and assist with setup of the Roman Missal.

If no deacon is available, and the priest has not performed this duty, the sacristan shall check the Tabernacle to see how many consecrated hosts are present. Make note of the number of low gluten hosts as well. If fewer than three low gluten hosts are consecrated, place a pyx and a sufficient number of low gluten hosts on the credence table. Leave the Tabernacle key in the Tabernacle for the start of Mass.

Set up the credence table with the Mass paramenta, using instructions posted in the sacristy.

- The sacristan should familiarize themselves with the anticipated attendance at the Mass, subtract the estimated number of consecrated hosts in the Tabernacle, and prepare the processional ciborium (and additional ciboriums if needed) with the appropriate number of hosts.
- While it is always better to have extras than to run out, the goal is to minimize the number of consecrated hosts that are left in the Tabernacle. If unsure of the expected attendance, prepare an extra ciborium with hosts and leave on the credence table for the priest or deacon to use if necessary. Be careful when doing so not to mix unconsecrated hosts with consecrated hosts, especially when cleaning up after Mass.
- Distribution of the Precious Blood:
  - If both species of the Eucharist are being offered to the congregation, then the flagon should be prepared with the appropriate amount of wine. Guidelines are posted in the working sacristy.
  - Two or four cups, each with its own purificator, are placed on the credence table.
    - Generally, two cups are sufficient for distribution of the Precious Blood.
    - However, if large numbers of Communicants are expected to attend Mass, more than two cups may better respond to the need for timely distribution, especially if taking Communion to the Social Hall (at OLP) or the Historic Chapel (at StM).
    - Do not take the Precious Blood to the balcony at StM.
  - If only the Host is being offered to Communicants, then place a only small amount (about one-quarter cup) of wine in the flagon.

Double check the credence table for the following:

- The Celebrant's Chalice set in the front left corner, with the following in order from bottom up:
  - Chalice
  - Purificator draped over the Chalice
  - Paten containing a large celebrant's Host
  - Pall
  - Corporal
  - Purificators for each cup
- Two or Four Cups as per above, set behind the Celebrant's Chalice
- Roman Missal on its stand to the far right of the table
- Lavabo Bowl is in the center rear of the table
- Additional Ciborium, if needed, behind or beside the Roman Missal
- Hand Towel in the lavabo bowl
- Glass cruet containing water in front of the lavabo bowl
- Tabernacle key is in the Tabernacle

Take the processional ciborium (tall base, hammered silver finish) and flagon to the table for the gifts at the entrance to the sanctuary. Turn on the baptismal font pump (except during Lent). Ensure that the lights in the sanctuary are turned on.

Just prior to the start of Mass, light the candles on the altar and ensure that the sound system is on.

### **During Mass**

If no deacon or altar servers are present at the Mass, the sacristan shall serve as altar server, following the priest's instructions. The sacristan may:

- Process with the cross at the start of Mass.
  - Retrieve the cross from the stand prior to the start of Mass.
  - When directed by the Celebrant, walk slowly down the center aisle toward the altar.
  - Do not stop or bow at the altar. Continue walking to the stand and place the cross in the stand.
- Ring the bells.
  - The bells are rung once (approximately 2 seconds) during the epiclesis, when the Celebrant extends his hands palm down over the offering of bread and wine.
  - The bells are rung three times when the Celebrant elevates the Consecrated Host.
  - The bells are rung three times when the Celebrant elevates the Chalice with the Precious Blood
- The sacristan may assist at the altar as instructed by the Celebrant.

The sacristan should be aware of the number of attendees at the Mass, whether any of the overflow areas are being used, and whether additional EMHCs will be needed. It is recommended that the sacristan stay close to the Hospitality Ministers, who are instructed to inform the sacristan if the Social Hall (at OLP) or the Historic Chapel (at StM) are in use so that the sacristan can prepare accordingly.

The sacristan should also be attentive to the clergy, assisting them during the Mass as needed.

### **After Mass**

The sacristan shall cleanse all vessels.

- Use a small amount of soap and hot water on each cup and the chalice, taking care not to scratch or twist the base of each. Rinse each thoroughly and dry with a cloth.
  - Do not use the purificators in the washing process.
- Place purificators and wash cloth used during the Mass in the used linens container.
- Return paramenta used in the Mass to their proper location.
- Return the key to the Tabernacle to its hook.
- Ensure that the altar candles are extinguished using the snuffer.
- Check to see that altar servers hung up their albs and their cinctures.
- Turn off the baptismal font pump, shut off lights in the sanctuary and turn off the sound system.
- If there is another Mass that same day, you may assist the next sacristan by leaving the paramenta set up.

Thank you for a job well done.

### **Appreciation for Your Service**

Do not underestimate the congregation's appreciation of the minister who shows reverence for the Eucharist and respect for the Celebrant of the Mass.