

St. Michael Catholic Church

Sacristan Guidelines

2/18

Every liturgy needs a sacristan. If you don't see one, be prepared to step in.

Arrive at the Church plenty early. Please dress appropriately. You represent the parish.

Offer assistance to anyone who appears to need it

If you are asked a question, try your best to answer correctly or find someone who may know.

Setting up for Mass

On the credence table near the choir, place the Roman Missal with a folded corporal on top; then the tray of chalices with wine and purificators; then the large priest chalice, water, and the bowl for hand washing with a small towel inside, then two empty bread plates.

It helps the young servers get it right, if the credence table is always set up the same.

Check that the candle lighter has wick and that there is a lighter or matches.

Light the candles at the ambo and altar. Ask the servers to help when appropriate.

On the credence table near the font, place the large silver tray.

On the ambo, ensure that the Lectionary is open to the correct readings and that the Prayers of the Faithful and Announcements are on the ledge to the left of the Lectionary.

Get the Tabernacle key. Check the number of consecrated hosts in the Tabernacle and then place the appropriate number of unconsecrated hosts needed in the large silver bread dish.

Put wine for the priest and deacon in the silver pitcher. Then put the bread and wine on the small table near the entrance to the nave.

Make sure the sound system is on.

Be prepared for additional instructions from the priest or liturgy coordinator.

See that Ministers are Present

Be sure that we have the servers, lectors and Eucharistic ministers we need, actively recruiting if necessary to replace someone not there. Recruit a gift bearer family, trying to work in new people that represent a cross section of the assembly. If needed, rehearse with the ministers so that they know their roles. Check that greeters and ushers are ready.

Five minutes before Mass, get the hook and assist the servers as they ring the outdoor bell.

Two minutes before Mass, tell the servers to line up with cross and candles.

With 3 Servers – Cross Bearer, two Candle Bearers

With 2 Servers – Cross Bearer, other Server

With 1 Server – Cross Bearer

St. Michael Catholic Church

During Mass

Help where needed.

During the readings, count all individuals attending Mass and record the number in the sacristy.

During the collection, help the gift bearers to get ready to carry forward the bread, wine and money basket.

During the sign of peace help the Eucharistic ministers to line up (2 x 2):

Breads 1 & 2, Cups 2 & 4, Cup 6 and remaining cups.

During the Lamb of God process forward, leading the Eucharistic Ministers to the front pew. Receive the bread there from the priest and then go to a station to receive the cup.

During Communion make sure that there is a minister at each station.

Check to see if the Bread ministers have enough consecrated hosts. Bring more when needed

Take the collection basket from the altar and place it near the baptistery.

At the conclusion of Communion, be prepared to assist the priest if no deacon is present.

Return the tabernacle key to the sacristy.

When no Deacon is Present

If no deacon is present, inform the lectors of this.

Lector 1 carries in the Gospel book, Lector 2 reads the Prayers of the Faithful, and Lector 1 reads the announcements.

When there is no deacon, you will need one more cup minister.

If you are not expecting a deacon and one shows up, then you will need one less cup minister.

For Communion, the sacristan goes to the altar and receives right after the priest receives.

Then turn around and serve the cup to the other ministers, also handing them a purificator.

Gluten-free Hosts

For those who request a 'gluten-free' host, ask at which cup station they wish to be served.

Consecrated 'gluten-free' hosts are kept in a pyx in the tabernacle.

Watch for the person and serve him/her at the step just before he/she gets to the cup.

After Communion, return the pyx to the tabernacle.

When the 'gluten-free' pyx is empty, get 4-5 new gluten-free hosts from the cupboard, put them in the pyx, and place it in the large silver bread dish for consecration.

St. Michael Catholic Church

After Mass

Take the tray to the sacristy and purify the vessels. Use the small sink to reverently rinse out the small consecrated particles—it drains to the ground, not the sewer.

Then wash the vessels with soap in the large sink. Return everything to the cupboards.

Check that the servers have put out all candles and carried items from the credence tables to the sacristy.

Bring the collection basket to the sacristy as soon as you can after mass.

Place the collection money in the next numbered plastic bag provided. There must be two unrelated people to witness all money handling. Be sure to write the date, which Mass, and both witnesses must sign your names on the bag. (This is an Archdiocesan audit requirement.)

The St. Vincent collection goes into a separate bag (properly noted).

Place bag(s) in the safe, checking that they go all the way down.

Return the money basket to the usher closet.

Check to see that all fans are off, windows are latched and the sound system and lights are off. The choir director usually turns off the sound system.

Helpful Notes

Keep records of how many hosts and how much wine is needed for various occasions.

The ciborium holds about 250 consecrated hosts.

A bag contains about 500. A bowl holds about 200.

Emergencies

When an emergency occurs during the liturgy, the sacristan takes charge.

Be prepared to call 911. Our address is 1512 Pine Avenue, Snohomish, WA 98290.

Know where the wheel chair and first aid kit are located.

Every emergency is unique. Just be prepared to assess the situation using your best judgment and then act! Do not wait for someone else to make the decision.

After the emergency is dealt with, it is good to inform the deacon or priest, so that he may inform the assembly of the outcome.

If a mess of any kind is created, it is the duty of the sacristan to clean it up.

Just as you cleaned up after your own children when they couldn't help it, so it is a privilege to clean after an unfortunate child of God.

If you see an area of the facility that needs maintenance, please tell the parish administrator. Sometimes this can be accomplished by simply writing a note and dropping it into the safe.

St. Michael Catholic Church

Attitude and Reverence

The sacristan is a liturgical minister whose job is to make sure the other ministers do their jobs well and the worship experience is as natural as possible. The sacristan may need to discretely prompt or direct another minister on occasion, or even cover a gap or two. This means the sacristan has to pay attention to the entire mass as it occurs, even when busy outside of the nave. The sacristan also needs to be as non-distracting as possible, moving things and directing people only when needed, hopefully without drawing attention. When attention is unavoidable, the sacristan appears focused, natural and reverent.

The sacristan genuflects outside of the liturgy and bows during the liturgy as noted in the guidelines. The sacristan models the attitude of an involved and thoughtful worshipper.

Incense

If incense is used in any liturgy, it is the job of the sacristan to put the stand and boat in the proper place, light the charcoal at the proper time and later safely dispose of the hot coals. You also may need to instruct the server-thurifer, if he or she has questions.

The liturgy coordinator or priest will tell you and the thurifer the times at which incense will be needed. Plan to light the charcoal about 10 minutes before the censor will be used.

On those occasions when incense is used three times (entrance, Gospel and offertory) you will need to add a second charcoal in preparation for the last time.

The censor is placed outside of the back door between uses, so that the smoke does not distract the choir and assembly.

When there is Benediction

Before mass, put the monstrance on the credence table and the humeral veil over the back of the server pew. Ask the priest if incense will be used.

Purification and Washing

Out of respect for the sacred species, the communion vessels are purified before washing.

Purification consists of rinsing the vessels by pouring a little water into the largest vessel, sloshing it gently to rinse the inside, pouring it into the next smallest vessel and repeating. When the last vessel has been purified the sacristan drinks what remains. Or, if necessary, you may dilute the contents with clear water and pour it into the sacrarium (small sink).

Once the purification is done, then wash the vessels normally, with hot water and detergent. You might need to borrow the towel from the hand washing to place the drying vessels on.

St. Michael Catholic Church

When consecrated wine is spilled

At the time of the spill, it is best to cover the spot with a clean purificator to avoid people walking on the spot. (The purificator may absorb some of the spilled consecrated wine.)

After Mass is over, try to blot up any consecrated wine if possible, then continue to clean the carpet or floor with a wet towel and purificator as best you can.

The important part of cleaning up is that all purificators and towels used to clean the spill must be rinsed in the sacrarium (the small sink) in the sacristy before being placed in the laundry.

When there are no Servers

In the absence of at least one altar server, the sacristan needs to assume their duties.

Become familiar with what the servers do. Be prepared.

It may be at the last minute that you determine that you must fill in.

Wearing an alb is preferred, but not required. Use your judgment or ask the priest.

Server duties include the following:

- Carry in the processional cross.

- Bring the Roman Missal to the priest for the Opening Prayer.

- Set the altar when the Offertory Song begins: Corporal, Roman Missal, tray of cups, purificators and chalice. Bring the Gospel book holder to the credence table.

- Assist the priest when receiving the gifts. Stand to his left.

- Then go first up to the altar, around to the other side, turn around and hand the bread to the priest, then the wine. Then wash the hands of the priest.

- Return the tray with bowl, towel, water and wine pitcher to the credence table.

- Ring the bell at the Consecration.

- During communion bring the Roman Missal to the credence table.

- Bring the Roman Missal to the priest for the Communion Prayer.

- Carry out the processional cross.

When there are no Ushers

At times you may find yourself without any ushers to receive the collection (Holy Days, etc.).

Try your best to recruit some ushers. But if you can't, then put a basket on the gifts table for people to use as they exit. Tell the priest to announce this.

St. Michael Catholic Church

Bilingual Liturgies

On bilingual liturgies, there usually are volunteers from the sign-up sheets.

It is good to have a balance of ministers from both communities.

Lector 1 does the first reading in English and Lector 2 does the second reading in Spanish.

Lector 2 also reads the Spanish part of the Prayers of the Faithful.

Handling the Advent Wreath

During the season of Advent the sacristan needs to lower the wreath and raise it back up.

Lower it as the priest approaches the wreath.

Raise it after the candle lighting while the priest is walking back to the Presider's chair.

Before mass on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sundays of Advent, light the previous week's candles.

After mass, extinguish all candles.

The Paschal Candle

During the Easter Season (Easter Sunday through Pentecost), light the Paschal Candle before mass.

Extinguish it after mass.

When there is a Visiting Priest or Bishop

Greet the visiting priest. Answer his questions. Show him where things are.

Ask if he would like you to show him how we serve Eucharistic Ministers at St. Michael.

If a bishop arrives before our pastor or deacon, greet him warmly and answer his questions.

The pastor usually attends to the bishop's needs.

Handling a Penance Service

A communal celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a Liturgy of the Word followed by individual reconciliation with several priests.

Set up for a Liturgy of the Word. Put the readings on the ambo and light the candles.

Put the holder for the Gospel book on the altar.

Penance Services usually are bilingual. The liturgy coordinator or priest will instruct the lectors.

Ask if there are any extra instructions for you, as sacristan.

Recruit one or two servers. They will carry in the cross and hold the candles at the Gospel.

There is no collection. Neither ushers nor Eucharistic Ministers are needed.

At the end of the Liturgy of the Word, when the priests go to their Confession stations, your job is done for the evening.