

# Sacristan Handbook for Sunday Masses

Saint Thomas Aquinas  
Catholic Church  
Pilot Point, TX

Updated as of June 2023

The Mass is a celebration of the Word and Eucharist. The Sacristan makes ready the celebration of Christ's ultimate gift to us, his Body and Blood. The bread and wine will be consecrated by the Priest during the Eucharistic Prayers and transformed (transubstantiation) into the Body and Blood of Christ. The actions of the Sacristan should always reflect the special nature of the ministry. As a sacristan, please be attentive to the details in the handbook. You are serving Jesus himself, who is present not only in the consecrated elements of bread and wine, but in the celebrant as well. Every priest who approaches the altar in the execution of this perfect prayer which is the Mass is acting *in persona Christi*, fulfilling the role of our Savior in an eternal action that places us in heaven with all the saints and angels. It is a perfect sacrifice which demands our best attempt at perfection.

Please arrive 30 minutes prior to Mass.

### BEFORE MASS

Prepare liturgical books and binders (Appendix pictures show where each book/binder is placed):

- Missal, closed, on its stand on table next to crucifer's chair near presider's chair
- Lectionary on ambo, open to first reading
- Evangeliary on table in sacristy and its stand on the altar
- Priest binder (color matches vestments) on table next to presider's chair
- Intercessions binder (color matches vestments) on shelf in the ambo
- Announcements are placed on lector stand opposite ambo

Prepare vessels, etc:

- Place key in tabernacle and check how many hosts are in tabernacle ciborium (full is about 175 hosts). The key is kept in the lockbox on the wall next to the doorway between the sacristy and sanctuary
- Placed on the credence table:
  - Empty choir ciborium (unless it has hosts because main ciborium is too full)
  - Water cruet filled with water from cold tap
  - Lavabo bowl and towel
  - Presider's chalice
    - If Fr Jason is celebrating, use his; if guest presider, use Twelve Apostles' chalice
    - Purificator is placed on top of chalice, then pall, then center corporal
  - (If gluten-intolerant person at Mass) small chalice
    - Prefilled with small amount of wine
    - Purificator on top
  - Spare purificators (2), hosts, and AA batteries (2)
  - Lighter
  - Hand sanitizer
- Side corporal is opened on corner of altar near credence table before 5 PM Mass and left there through 12:45 PM Mass



- Placed on gifts table:
  - Main ciborium
    - Based on regular attendance and number of hosts in tabernacle, add enough hosts to main ciborium for Mass
    - Place 3” host on top of small hosts
    - If more than 150 hosts are needed, place 150 hosts in main ciborium and remaining hosts in choir ciborium and place it on credence table
  - Wine cruet at least half full of wine



If incensed is used:

- Boat is  $\frac{3}{4}$  filled with incense and spoon is placed in boat
- 3 charcoals are placed in basin of thurible

Ensure the following:

- Bells are next to crucifer's chair
- Candles are ready. Replace any that are burned down
  - Sanctuary lamp
  - Altar candles
  - Processional candles

### AFTER MASS

All items are placed in their proper places:

- Tabernacle keys
  - One in the key lockbox
  - One in the safe
- Chalices and ciboria
  - After 5 PM and 12:45 PM, in safe
  - After 8 and 11 AM, on counter
- Lavabo bowl and cruets
  - After 5 PM and 12:45 PM, rinsed and placed on rack to dry
  - After 8 and 11 AM, if not empty, in fridge; otherwise on rack to dry
- Purificators rinsed and wrung dry in "sacrarium" bowl then placed on rack to dry
- Corporals
  - Reused for each Sat/Sun Mass
  - After 12:45 PM, they are treated the same as purificators
- Lavabo towel on rack to dry

Liturgical books and binders are kept in their places in the sanctuary except after their last use (11 AM Eng, 12:45 PM Spa) when they (including lectionaries) are returned to the shelf in the wall along the walkway between the sacristy and sanctuary.

**APPENDIX**

*PARTS OF THE CHURCH*

Narthex – a room/space between the church and the outside



Nave – the section of the church with pews



Sacristy – a room where vestments (vesting sacristy) and sacred vessels (working sacristy) are kept



Sanctuary – the raised area of the church for the altar and ambo



Altar – the table upon which the sacrifice of the Mass is offered



Ambo – the stand from which the readings are proclaimed and the homily is given



Credence Table – the table where the vessels are prepared for Mass



Tabernacle – the locked box for reserving consecrated hosts

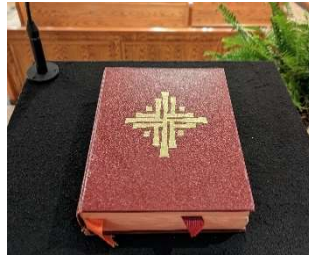


*LITURGICAL BOOKS*

Evangelary – the book which contains the Gospel readings



Lectionary – the book containing all the readings for Mass



Missal – the book which contains the prayers of the Mass



Priest/Intercessions Binder  
(color can also be white, red, or purple depending on the liturgical season)



*VESSELS, LINENS, ET AL*

Ciborium (pl ciboria) – the bowl(s) which hold the hosts (bread) used for the eucharist



Chalice – the cup used to hold the wine which is used for the eucharist



Paten – a plate which can be used to hold the host



Corporal – the linen cloth placed under the sacred vessels. It is intended to catch any fragments of the body of Christ or drops of the blood of Christ



Pall – the stiff piece of cloth which prevents dust/bugs from falling into the chalice or other vessels



Purificator – the linen cloth which is used to wipe the sacred vessels



Lavabo Bowl/Pitcher – the bowl and pitcher to *lavare* (Latin for “wash”) the priest’s hands



Thurible – the swinging censer which burns incense



Boat – the container for the incense





*VESTMENTS*

Alb – white vestment representing our baptism which enables participation in the Eucharistic celebration



Cincture – the rope-belt worn over the alb



Cassock – black vestment worn by clerics (bishop, priest, or deacon) or servers



Chasuble – the outer vestment worn by the priest



Dalmatic – the outer vestment worn by the deacon



Stole – the vestment worn by priests and deacons over the shoulders

*MINISTERS*

Acolyte – an instituted lay minister to assist the priest at the altar

Crucifer – the server who carries the cross

Deacon – the ordained minister who assists the priest at the altar and proclaims the gospel

Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (EMHC) – laity who assist the priest and deacon in distributing communion

Priest – the ordained minister who leads the celebration of the eucharist *in persona Christi* (in the person of Christ)

Sacristan – a minister who prepares the sacred vessels for Mass and can assist as a server

Thurifer – the server who carries the thurible