

The following is a general outline of the routine duties of a sacristan:

- For each day's Mass you will set up the vestments, the altar, and prepare the Sacramentary and the Lectionary for the celebrant.
- On a regular basis you will be maintaining the holy water fonts and the various candles used in the sanctuary and elsewhere. Also, make sure that you have on hand a sufficient supply of altar breads and wine, candles, incense, charcoal, tapers, and matches.
- Inspect the altar cloths and celebrant's linens often to ensure that these items are always clean and in good repair. Arrange for the cleaning, laundering, pressing, and/or repair of vestments and linens, as needed.
- If the tabernacle is covered with a veil that can be changed to conform to the proper color of the liturgical season, day or event, it will be your responsibility to coordinate.
- You may be asked to supervise or execute the cleaning of liturgical areas and see to the care and watering of plants and flowers.

For the celebration of the Eucharist, the people of God normally are gathered together in a church or, if there is no church or if it is too small, then in another respectable place that is nonetheless worthy of so great a mystery. Churches, therefore, and other places should be suitable for carrying out the sacred action and for ensuring the active participation of the faithful. Sacred buildings and requisites for divine worship should, moreover, be truly worthy and beautiful and be signs and symbols of heavenly realities. *GIRM 288*

If you would like to find out more about this ministry, or would like to give your time to assist in this ministry, please free feel to contact any of the Sacristan or
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Ministry of Sacristan



"Come, blessed of the LORD! Why are you staying outside when I have made the house ready for you, as well as a place for the camels?" *Genesis 24:31*

While sacristans rarely deal with camels, they do deal with preparing the house of the Lord and the items necessary for every liturgy.

The Eucharist is the vital centre of all that the Church is and does. At its heart is the real presence of the crucified, risen and glorified Lord, who continues his saving work among us. The Second Vatican Council reminded us: 'the most holy Eucharist holds within itself the whole spiritual treasure of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Passover and our living bread'. (cf. One Bread One Body 3)

All who exercise a liturgical ministry need a proper preparation for their responsibilities. They are to have the competence to perform the particular ministry with which they have been entrusted. (cf. Celebrating the Mass 29)

This leaflet is one of a series of leaflets prepared for liturgical ministers to help them refresh their understanding of their role at Mass.

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WHAT THE CHURCH SAYS ABOUT ...

Any public event or celebration requires much behind-the-scenes activity. If the event is to have dignity and meaning there must be care and preparation. Planned events which involve a great number of people do not just "happen" they only become an event and give inspiration when they have been well prepared, when the setting and surroundings of the event have been carefully arranged, and when the people involved in the event are aware of their responsibilities.

The parish liturgy is the public event forming the very heart of the whole parish life. Everything that we do and are as a parish leads to and flows from the liturgical celebrations in the parish church. The liturgy proclaims what we are as a parish and at the same time provides the foundation and the impetus for our working together and growing as a community of worship, of witness and of service. Because of its crucial role in parish life, the liturgy is a public celebration requiring considerable behind-the-scenes preparation. That is where sacristans come in, because a large part of this preparation belongs to them. In a sense they are responsible for everything that is used in

the parish liturgy. Obviously, they are not responsible for the way the liturgy is celebrated nor for the people's participation in the liturgy. These are the responsibilities of the priest and of the people as a whole.

Because the parish liturgy is our communal worship of God, and because this service of worship draws us closer together as a holy people, the environment and materials used in the liturgy must all be conducive toward worship and community. As sacristan, they are generally in charge of this environment and these materials, and they must make sure that their areas of responsibility in the liturgy are fulfilled.

Their primary concern will be the externals of the liturgy which are important because they express and promote our inner spirit and attitudes as a worshipping community.

The first rule of the sacristy is: a place for everything and everything in its place. And the second rule is: cleanliness is next to godliness. Since everything in the sacristy pertains to the service of God, every attention should be given to making the sacristy a place worthy of its use.

Sacristan's Manual