

How to Outfit a Sacristy

Properly stocking your parish sacristy requires a good checklist of initial needs as well as a regular schedule to replace consumables before they run out. This article provides suggestions for both. I will start with the standard things that every parish needs and then also provide a list of items you should have if you want to fully follow the General Instruction of the Roman Missal.

Altar Linens

First, let's take a look at your [altar linens](#). These typically include purificators, lavabo towels, corporals and altar cloths.

You will first need to calculate how many purificators you use on a weekly basis in your parish. Don't forget to include weekday Masses as well as funerals and weddings. Take this number and multiply it by two since you will probably have a week's worth at a time out for laundering. I would recommend adding another half week to your stock to cover lost or damaged purificators.

Next, calculate the number of corporals you will need. Basically, you need one per Mass so again, two weeks worth plus a couple of extras. You don't need as many extras because these don't get the same kind of use that purificators get.

Finally, count the number of lavabo towels you need. This number can be about the same as the number of purificators unless you use a towel for more than one Mass before laundering it. I don't recommend this unless you have "fluffy" towels that have time to dry between Masses.

As far as altar cloths go, you probably only need the one kept on the altar and a spare since these don't get dirty very often unless your parish has a Mass celebrated according to the Missal of Blessed John XXIII. This missal requires that there be three linen cloths on the altar for Mass.

Liturgical Metalware

Your sacristy is going to need, at the minimum, a [chalice](#), a [ciborium](#) and a [communion plate](#) (paten) for distributing Holy Communion to the Faithful. If your parish has a Mass celebrated according to the Missal of Blessed John XXIII you will also need a [chalice paten](#). Most chalices come with one.

If more than one person distributes Holy Communion, you will need a corresponding number of ciboria and patens.

For distribution of Holy Communion under both Species, the standard practice is to have two chalices for each station where someone is distributing Hosts. The deacon can distribute the Precious Blood from the priest's chalice as one of the chalices for distribution under both Species. Another option is to purchase [intinction ciboria](#) which can actually be a more cost-effective approach to distributing Holy Communion.

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There should be enough communion plates, also called patens, for each place where someone is distributing the Precious Body. These can be held by altar servers or by the individual communicants to prevent the Host from falling on the floor.

Your parish should also have six [candlesticks](#) for use at the altar. Six lighted candles are required for benediction and various other numbers for different liturgical celebrations.

Liturgical Glassware

The glass items for the sacristy can also be metal but because they are frequently in contact with water it is probably better to use glass to avoid the hassles of metal corrosion. Glass items that you will need include [wine and water cruets](#), a [wine flagon](#) if your parish distributes Holy Communion under both Species and a [lavabo bowl](#).

Note that the General Instruction of the Roman Missal does not allow for the use of glass chalices, ciboria or patens.

The glassware, like the metalware for your parish, should not be misappropriated wine and vinegar salad dressing dispensers or candy dishes. Items meant for liturgical use should be made specifically for that use.

Candles

Proper stocking of candles requires planning and frequent monitoring of your supply. You are going to need to make sure that you have altar candles and votive candles in the proper sizes. If you use processional candlesticks you will also need to make sure you have enough candles in stock for these as well.

Keep a supply of [wax tapers](#) on hand for your [candlelighter](#).

Vestments

While most priests own their own vestments, it is a good idea for a parish to have a set of its own Mass vestments for visiting priests or if something gets forgotten. Also, new priests may not have all the liturgical colors and may not be able to afford them.

The parish should own, at a minimum, two sizes of [albs](#), a couple of white [cinctures](#), a [stole](#) in each of the four major liturgical colors (white, red, green, violet) and a [chasuble](#) in each of the same colors. Stoles usually come with the chasubles as a set.

If your parish has a deacon or frequently has a deacon assisting at Mass, you should also have a set of [deacon's stoles](#).

Altar server vestments are a little more tricky since you can have such a variation in the size and

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number of servers. Here are some suggestions for different situations:

If your parish has a solemn Mass, you are going to need to outfit at least five servers or acolytes at one time. Hopefully your parish has a good mix of ages for servers so I recommend that you have vestments for two “tall”, two or three “medium”, and two or three “short” servers.

If your parish doesn't ever have a solemn Mass, you probably will never have more than three servers at a time. In this case, you can probably get away with one “tall” set, two “medium” sets and two “short” sets.

What type of vestments you get for your servers will depend on the local tradition in your parish. Most parishes use [altar server albs](#) with cinctures but some parishes still use [cassocks](#) and [surplices](#). If your parish does use albs, make sure that the albs aren't too thin, allowing street clothes to show through.

If you use albs and cinctures, you can stick with plain white cinctures or you can get ones to match the liturgical color of the season. Either way, you will need to get a variety of lengths so that all the servers have a cincture that when tied has ends that hang about to the knee. This isn't liturgical law, it's just nice to be consistent.

If your parish uses cassocks and surplices you will need to make sure that the surplices are not too large for your servers. They should come down to about the waist and should slide off one shoulder. Cassocks and surplices come in black and red. Some parishes get a set of each color and use the red set for major feasts such as Holy Days of Obligation and Easter.

You should also own a [cope](#) and [humeral veil](#) for benediction.

Other Liturgical Items

Apart from these items your sacristy should also have a [thurible \(censer\) with incense boat and spoon](#), [thurible stand](#), [incense, charcoal](#), an [aspergillum \(water sprinkler\)](#), a [monstrance](#) and a [candle lighter / snuffer](#) and [processional crucifix](#). Make sure that your monstrance contains a lunette – the small metal piece that holds the Host inside the monstrance. For some reason these tend to get lost.

You should also have a set of tongs and a lighter for lighting the charcoal in the thurible. It is possible to light the charcoal with matches but is much easier when using a lighter of some kind.

For baptisms you should have a pitcher or a [baptism shell](#) for pouring the water. Your parish should also have a stock of [baptism candles](#) since these usually aren't provided by the parents.

You will also need to have a set of [oil stocks](#) for baptisms and anointing of the sick.

You should also have an extra [pyx](#) or two in case someone needs to take Holy Communion to someone outside of the church.

Liturgical Books

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Your parish should have copies of the following, properly bound and not in three ring binders: a [Roman Missal \(Sacramentary\)](#), [Lectionary for Sundays and weekdays](#), [rite of marriage](#), [rite of baptism](#) and [rite of funerals](#). You should also own [instructions for benediction](#) and a copy of the [General Instruction of the Roman Missal](#).

It might also be handy, now that the Missal of 1962 is allowed in any parish, to have a copy of the [Missale Romanum](#).

Non-Essential But Recommended Liturgical Items

While the following items are not required in a parish, if your parish wants to fully implement the General Instruction and not just a “bare-minimum”, you will need these.

Apart from the basic four liturgical colors, you should also have a set of black and a set of rose priest's vestments. Black may be used at funerals and on the Feast of All Souls. Rose is used on Laetare and Gaudete Sundays.

If your parish has a Mass celebrated using the 1962 Missal, you will also need a set of matching [maniples](#).

If you have solemn Masses with a Master of Ceremonies, you will need a cassock and surplice for him.

While not required, wearing an [amice](#) is a good way to help keep the albs and chasubles from getting sweat on them.

You should also have a set of [dalmatics](#) in the six liturgical colors for the deacon since the dalmatic is the “official” vestment for the deacon.

Chalice veils are required in the 1962 Missal and are highly recommended for the ordinary form of the Mass. Chalice veils in the correct color of the season are required for the 1962 Missal but may always be white in the Ordinary form of the Mass.

[Sanctus bells](#), also called altar bells, are recommended but not required for the ordinary form of the Mass but are required for the 1962 Missal.

A [Book of Gospels](#) is recommended for use in the ordinary form of the Mass.

Two or more [processional candlesticks](#) and [torches](#) are an optional item for solemn Masses. Torches are rarely seen except at Tridentine (1962 Missal) Masses.

Some parishes that use the Missal of John XXIII also require their altar servers to wear white gloves on major feasts such as Christmas and Easter.

If your parish celebrates the [Liturgy of the Hours](#), you will need copies of Christian Prayer or Shorter

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Christian Prayer or the Four-Volume Liturgy of the Hours depending on what the parish does.

If your parish celebrates Marian Masses, you should also own copies of the [Sacramentary and Lectionary for Marian Masses](#).

In order to help people who come for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, pamphlets with an [Examination of Conscience](#) and possibly holy cards with an [Act of Contrition](#) should be available.

Even though it isn't required, having a wax undercloth on the altar will help to protect your altar from spills.

Vesting Prayers are required for the extraordinary form of the Liturgy and can still be said for the ordinary form.

Seasonal Items

Each season has a couple of unique requirements for which you will need to plan ahead.

Advent

If your parish wants to have an [Advent Wreath](#), you will need to get a wreath and also make sure you have extra candles.

Feast of St. Blaise

At least one pair of long, thin candles for blessing throats.

Lent

You will need to order ashes for Ash Wednesday unless your parish saves and burns its own palm branches. [Ash holders](#) are also available. Remember, items for liturgical use shouldn't be the same thing you find at the fine dining section of Dillard's or Penney's.

Don't forget to order palm branches ahead of time for Palm Sunday.

There are reading aids available for reading the Passion on Good Friday.

Easter

If you don't use incense at any other time of year, at least use it at the Easter Vigil. Don't forget to order the charcoal and incense ahead of time.

You will also need congregational candles with wax catchers and, yes parishes do forget, a Paschal / Easter candle. One year we had a parish call us on Holy Thursday asking if we had any Easter candles left!

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Sacristy Checklist For Liturgies in the Ordinary Form

Essentials:

Altar Linens:

- Altar Cloths (2)
- Purificators (two and a half weeks worth)
- Corporals (two weeks worth and a couple of extra)
- Lavabo Towels (two weeks worth and a couple of extra)

Metalware:

- Chalice (1)
- Ciboria (at least one or one for each distribution station)
- Common cups or extra chalices (two for each distribution station)
- Intinction Ciboria (if your parish chooses this option, you will need one per station and won't need the extra ciboria and chalices)
- Patens (one for each distribution station)

Glassware:

- Cruets (2)
- Wine Flagon (if you distribute Holy Communion under both Species)
- Lavabo Bowl (1)

Candles:

- Altar Candles (6 plus extra stock)
- Votive Candles (depends on the quantity and type of votive candle holders in your parish)

Other Items:

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- Thurible (censer) (1)
- Incense Boat (1)
- Incense Spoon (1)
- Thurible Stand (1)
- Incense
- Charcoal
- Tongs (1)
- Lighter (1)
- Monstrance (1)
- Lunette (1)
- Aspergillum (1)
- Processional Crucifix (1)
- Candlelighter / snuffer (1)
- Box of wicks for the candlelighter
- Oil Stock set (1)
- Pitcher or shell for baptisms (1)
- Pyx (1)

Mass Vestments:

- Green Chasuble (1)
- Green Stole (1)
- Red Chasuble (1)
- Red Stole (1)
- White Chasuble (1)

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White Stole (1)

Violet Chasuble (1)

Violet Stole (1)

Alb “tall” (1 or more)

Alb “medium” (1 or more)

Alb “short” (1 or more)

Clergy Cintures (2)

Cope (1)

Humeral Veil (1)

If you have a deacon:

Green Deacon's Stole (1)

Red Deacon's Stole (1)

White Deacon's Stole (1)

Violet Deacon's Stole (1)

If your servers wear albs:

Server Alb “tall” (2 or more)

Server Alb “medium” (2 or more)

Server Alb “short” (2 or more)

Server Cinctures (6 or more in varying lengths)

If your servers wear cassocks and surplices:

Server Cassock “tall” (2 or more)

Server Cassock “medium” (2 or more)

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- Server Cassock “short” (2 or more)
- Server Surplice “tall” (2 or more)
- Server Surplice “medium” (2 or more)
- Server Surplice “short” (2 or more)

Liturgical Books:

- Roman Missal (Sacramentary)
- Lectionary for Sundays and Weekdays (4 volumes)
- Rite of Baptism
- Rite of Marriage
- Rite of Christian Funerals

Non-Essentials:

- Rose Chasuble (1)
- Rose Stole (1)
- Black Chasuble (1)
- Black Stole (1)
- Amice (depends on the number of clergy who wear them)

If you have a deacon:

- Green Dalmatic (1)
- Red Dalmatic (1)
- White Dalmatic (1)
- Violet Dalmatic (1)
- Rose Dalmatic (1)
- Rose Deacon's Stole (1)

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Black Dalmatic (1)

Black Deacon's Stole (1)

If your parish wants the altar servers to wear cinctures in liturgical colors:

Green Cinctures (assorted sizes)

Red Cinctures (assorted sizes)

White Cinctures (assorted sizes)

Violet Cinctures (assorted sizes)

Rose Cinctures (assorted sizes)

Black Cinctures (assorted sizes)

If your parish has a Master of Ceremonies:

Clergy Size Cassock (1)

Clergy Size Surplice (1)

Other Items:

Green Chalice Veil (1)

Red Chalice Veil (1)

White Chalice Veil (1)

Violet Chalice Veil (1)

Rose Chalice Veil (1)

Black Chalice Veil (1)

Sanctus Bells (1)

Book of Gospels (1)

Processional Candlesticks (2 or more)

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Sacramentary for Marian Masses (1)

Lectionary for Marian Masses (1)

If your parish celebrates the Liturgy of the Hours:

Christian Prayer, Shorter Christian Prayer or the Liturgy of the Hours depending on your parish preference.

Vesting Prayer Card (1)

Seasonal Items:

Advent:

Advent Wreath (1)

Pink Advent Candles (2)

Violet Advent Candles (6)

Feast of St. Blaise:

Long, thin candles (at least two)

Lent:

Ashes

Ash Holders

Palm Branches

Passion Supplements for Good Friday

Easter:

Congregation candles with wax catchers

Paschal / Easter Candle

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Sacristy Checklist For Liturgies in the Extraordinary Form

Essentials:

Altar Linens:

- Altar Cloths (6) Two of these should be long enough to reach the floor on each end of the altar.
- Cere-Cloth (*chrismale*) (1) This waxed linen cloth goes under the other three altar cloths.
- Purificators (two and a half weeks worth)
- Corporals (*corporale*) (two weeks worth and a couple of extra)
- Lavabo Towels (*manutergium*) (two weeks worth and a couple of extra)

Metalware:

- Chalice (*calyx*) (1)
- Ciboria (*pyxis, vas*)
- Patens (one for each distribution station)

Glassware:

- Cruets (*ampullae, hamulae*) (2)
- Lavabo Bowl (*pelvicula*) (1)

Candles:

- Altar Candles (6 plus extra stock)
- Votive Candles (depends on the quantity and type of votive candle holders in your parish)

Other Items:

- Thurible (*thuribulum*) (1)
- Incense Boat (*navicella, acerra*) (1)
- Incense Spoon (*cochlear*) (1)

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- Thurible Stand (1)
- Incense
- Charcoal
- Tongs (1)
- Lighter (1)
- Monstrance (*ostensorium*) (1)
- Lunette (*lunula*) (1)
- Aspergillum (1)
- Processional Crucifix (1)
- Candlelighter / snuffer (1)
- Box of wicks for the candlelighter
- Oil Stock set (1)
- Pitcher or shell for baptisms (1)
- Pyx (1)
- Altar Crucifix (1)

Mass Vestments:

- Green Chasuble (1)
- Green Stole (1)
- Green Maniple (1)
- Red Chasuble (1)
- Red Stole (1)
- Red Maniple (1)

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- White Chasuble (1)
- White Stole (1)
- White Maniple (1)
- Violet Chasuble (1)
- Violet Stole (1)
- Violet Maniple (1)
- Rose Chasuble (1)
- Rose Stole (1)
- Rose Maniple (1)
- Black Chasuble (1)
- Black Stole (1)
- Black Maniple (1)
- Amice (depends on the number of clergy who wear them)
- Alb “tall” (1 or more)
- Alb “medium” (1 or more)
- Alb “short” (1 or more)
- Clergy Cintures (2)
- Cope (1)
- Humeral Veil (1)

If you have a deacon:

- Green Dalmatic (1)
- Green Deacon's Stole (1)
- Green Maniple (1)

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- Red Dalmatic (1)
- Red Deacon's Stole (1)
- Red Maniple (1)
- White Dalmatic (1)
- White Deacon's Stole (1)
- White Maniple (1)
- Violet Dalmatic (1)
- Violet Deacon's Stole (1)
- Violet Maniple (1)
- Rose Dalmatic (1)
- Rose Deacon's Stole (1)
- Rose Maniple (1)
- Black Dalmatic (1)
- Black Deacon's Stole (1)
- Black Maniple (1)

If you have a subdeacon:

- Green Tunicle (1)
- Green Maniple (1)
- Red Tunicle (1)
- Red Maniple (1)
- White Tunicle (1)
- White Maniple (1)

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Violet Tunicle (1)

Violet Maniple (1)

Rose Tunicle (1)

Rose Maniple (1)

Black Tunicle (1)

Black Maniple (1)

For Servers:

Server Cassock “tall” (2 or more)

Server Cassock “medium” (2 or more)

Server Cassock “short” (2 or more)

Server Surplice “tall” (2 or more)

Server Surplice “medium” (2 or more)

Server Surplice “short” (2 or more)

Liturgical Books:

Roman Missal (*Missale Romanum*)

Breviary (*Breviarium Romanum*)

Martyrology

Ritual (*Ritulae Romanum*) which contains blessings and other liturgical services

It also may be possible to find the Epistles and Gospels in separate books.

If your parish has a Master of Ceremonies:

Clergy Size Cassock (1)

Clergy Size Surplice (1)

Other Items:

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- Green Chalice Veil (1)
- Red Chalice Veil (1)
- White Chalice Veil (1)
- Violet Chalice Veil (1)
- Rose Chalice Veil (1)
- Black Chalice Veil (1)
- Green Tabernacle Veil (1)
- Red Tabernacle Veil (1)
- White Tabernacle Veil (1)
- Violet Tabernacle Veil (1) Black is never used to cover the tabernacle.
- Rose Tabernacle Veil (1)
- Sanctus Bells (*parva campanula, tintinnabulum*) (1)
- Processional Candlesticks (2 or more)
- Vesting Prayer Card (1)
- Altar Cards (*tabella secretarum*) (1 set)

Seasonal Items:

Advent:

- Advent Wreath (1)
- Pink Advent Candles (2)
- Violet Advent Candles (6)

Feast of St. Blaise:

- Long, thin candles (at least two)

Lent:

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___ Ashes

___ Ash Holders

___ Palm Branches

Easter:

___ Congregation candles with wax catchers

___ Paschal / Easter Candle