



ROLE DESCRIPTION OF SACRAMENTAL MINISTERS

Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

The appointment of a person other than a priest to assume primary responsibility for a parish faith community involves the establishment of a unique collaborative process based upon new and evolving roles and relationships. In order that the parties concerned have as much clarity as possible regarding their respective ministries, the following role description has been developed for use in the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings.

I. When a Pastoral Administrator is Appointed by the Bishop:

- A.** The vicar of the vicariate in which the pastoral administrator is to serve acts as “priest supervisor” (see I.C. of *Diocesan Policy Regarding Ministry of Pastoral Administrators*).
- B.** A “sacramental minister”, ordinarily a priest other than the vicar, is appointed to collaborate with the pastoral administrator in providing for the sacramental life of the parish to which he/she has been named.

II. Appointment of a Sacramental Minister is Guided by the Priest’s:

- A.** Capacity for collaborative ministry and regard for the witness this model of ministry can afford a faith community;
- B.** Understanding and support for the role of pastoral administrator as outlined in *Diocesan Policy Regarding Ministry of Pastoral Administrators*;
- C.** Ability to invest the necessary time and effort required, taking into consideration such factors as health, geographical proximity to the parish being served, other priestly assignments;
- D.** Willingness to meet with the pastoral administrator periodically to evaluate the working relationship and to promote:
 - 1. Mutual understanding, cooperation and support;
 - 2. Openness with regard to areas of pastoral concern;
 - 3. Resolution of difficulties should they exist;
 - 4. Communication that enhances the spiritual life of the parish.

III. Once Appointed, the Sacramental Minister(s) Serving within the Faith Community:

- A.** Presides at eucharistic liturgies on weekends and, as he is able, at other times as requested by the pastoral administrator;



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- B.** Cooperates with the pastoral administrator as he/she identifies suitable substitutes who can be called upon in case of need;
- C.** Recognizes the pastoral leadership of the pastoral administrator as he/she assumes various roles in parish liturgical celebrations;
- D.** Respects the diverse liturgical roles assumed by parish members (e.g., lectors, Eucharistic ministers, acolytes, cantors, etc.);
- E.** Informs himself as to the liturgical celebrations of special significance within the faith community (e.g., feast days, RCIA rites, First Eucharist, Confirmation, etc.) and recognizes the sacramental preparation processes established by the parish for each.

IV. Special Issues Affecting Sacramental Ministries Include the Following:

A. Baptism

The ordinary minister of baptism is a bishop, presbyter or deacon (Canon 861 §1). If the ordinary minister is absent or impeded, a pastoral administrator, catechist, or other lay person deputed for this function by the local ordinary may licitly confer baptism (Canon 861 §2/Canon 230 §3). When properly deputed by the bishop, a pastoral administrator may baptize infants.

Because children of catechetical age and those over the age of 14 are ordinarily baptized and confirmed at the same time by a priest, the baptism of such children is by a priest with faculties from the Diocese.

The preparation of parents (for baptism of infants), of children of catechetical age, or of adults for baptism takes place through the pastoral administrator who is also responsible for maintaining records.

B. Confirmation

The sacramental minister has the faculty in law to confirm an adult when he baptizes or when he receives that person into full communion with the Catholic Church (Canon 883 §2).

The preparation of candidates for reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation is entrusted to the pastoral administrator and/or those catechists assigned to this responsibility by him/her. The pastoral



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administrator records Confirmations taking place within the parish to which he/she is assigned.

C. Eucharist

When necessity warrants, a pastoral administrator or other lay person may preside over liturgical prayers and distribute Holy Communion in accord with the prescription of the law (Canon 230) and the guidelines of the Diocese (see "Statement on the Sunday Assembly When the Priest is Absent" issued June 1, 1991).

In the absence of a sacramental minister, or for other grave reasons, participation in the celebration of an alternative Sunday gathering for the building up of the community of faith is recommended. This parish celebration is to take place in accord with the prescription of the bishop (Canon 1248).

If circumstances warrant, the pastoral administrator or another Eucharistic minister may preside at exposition and reposition of the Eucharist (Canon 943).

The pastoral administrator is responsible for Eucharistic catechesis and for records pertaining to reception of First Eucharist.

D. Reconciliation

The sacramental minister ordinarily participates in Communal Reconciliation services scheduled and prepared by the pastoral administrator. He may also be asked to help the pastoral administrator find other priests to assist with individual confessions.

The sacramental minister is to be available on a regular basis for individual confessions.

Catechesis for the Sacrament of Reconciliation is the responsibility of the pastoral administrator.

E. Anointing

The sacramental minister may be called upon for Viaticum, anointings, the Apostolic Blessing and Confirmation in danger of death.



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A pastoral administrator or any Eucharistic minister of the parish may bring Holy Communion to a parishioner in danger of death.

The pastoral administrator arranges for communal reception of the Anointing of the Sick in the context of Sunday liturgy or at another time convenient for the parish and the sacramental minister.

F. Rite of Christian Burial

The pastoral administrator ordinarily presides at vigils and related rites and prayers, at Rites of Committal and at Funeral Liturgies Outside of Mass. Funeral Masses are ordinarily celebrated by the sacramental minister.

It is the responsibility of the pastoral administrator to confer with the family regarding arrangements for Christian burial, to prepare for rites, prayers and liturgies, and to confer with the sacramental minister regarding his availability or arrangements for substitute.

Funeral directors should be referred to the pastoral administrator for details regarding burials from his/her parish.

G. Marriage

The official celebration of marriage is ordinarily limited to presbyters and deacons. With prior favorable vote of the Conference of Bishops and with permission of the Holy See, however, pastoral administrators and other lay people may be officially designated as ministers of marriage.

When the sacramental minister is not the official minister at a marriage, the Vicar delegates the priest or deacon to assist at a marriage within a parish for which a pastoral administrator is primarily responsible but the pastoral administrator cannot so delegate (Canon 1111 §1).

In case of need the Vicar may grant permission for the marriage of members of a parish for which a pastoral administrator is responsible to celebrate their marriage within another church or oratory (Canon 1118 §1).

When the pastoral administrator is officially designated as a minister of marriage, the designation holds only within the parish for which he/she is responsible. The Vicar may not delegate a pastoral administrator to perform marriages in other parishes of the Diocese without prior authorization from the local ordinary.



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The pastoral administrator is responsible for preparing a couple for marriage according to guidelines and norms published by the Diocese, to complete all paperwork for the signature of the sacramental minister or Vicar, and to record the marriage within the parish record.

H. Preaching

Pastoral administrators assume, as a primary pastoral responsibility the obligation of reflecting on the Word of God with members of their parish in the context of the weekend liturgy.

In the absence of the sacramental minister, the pastoral administrator or his/her delegate preaches at the alternate Sunday or Saturday evening service. When the sacramental minister is present for liturgy, the pastoral administrator may also choose to preach in accord with his/her pastoral role (Canon 766).

A schedule for lay preaching is to be worked out as part of the liturgical calendar of the parish.

I. Remuneration

The Bishop determines the forms of remuneration received by sacramental ministers serving in the Diocese.

Approved by Bishop Anthony M. Milone
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