



St. Paul's Cathedral

Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, California



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May 12, 2004

Verger Customary

From: Head Verger, St. Paul's Cathedral, San Diego

To: All Vergers, St. Paul's Cathedral, San Diego

Subj: VERGER CUSTOMARY AND POLICIES

Ref: (a) Acolyte Customary for 8:00AM
(b) Acolyte Customary for 10:30AM
(c) Acolyte Customary for Evensong
(d) Thurifer Customary for 10:30AM
(e) Thurifer Customary for Evensong
(f) Verger Customary for Special Services

Purpose: To establish a uniform system for the Vergers of St. Paul's Cathedral to perform their duties and liturgical functions.

Cancellation: All previous versions of Verger Customaries.

Background and Discussion: Since the early days of the Church, laypersons have been commissioned to assist the clergy in the conduct of Liturgy. The position of verger developed in Medieval England where they served as "protector of the procession". They walked before clergy, deans and bishops as they processed within the precincts of the church or cathedral. A large mace or virge was carried.

Today, the verger assists in planning services, oversees the preparation for each service and marshals the procession. The virge, today, is a symbol of the office held by the verger. Superscript reference numbers refer to the "Changes" page found at the end of this document.

Responsibilities: The Verger is responsible to the Head Verger who in turn is responsible to the Canon Liturgist.

Customary: The following paragraphs explain the basic nature of the duties held by the Verger and explains the way certain actions and function during the Liturgy should be carried out.

1. Vestments. The Verger of St. Paul's Cathedral, San Diego wears a purple cassock and a white anthem. The anthem is a sleeveless, open front vestment worn over the cassock. The

Compass Rose (symbol of the Anglican Communion) is worn on the left breast. The badge of St. Paul's Cathedral, San Diego Vergers is worn four inches below the Compass Rose¹. Shoes should be polished or clean and have soft soles to reduce noise.

2. The virge. The virge is a staff, about a meter long, with a Cross or other Christian symbol attached to the end of it. The virge is the Verger's symbol of office and carried for ceremonial purposes. While in procession (the Entrance and the Exit) the virge is pointed out at a 45 degree angle. The virge should be held as close to the end as possible with the hand close to the abdomen and the ornament pointed out. While verging someone, or otherwise in motion during the Liturgy, the virge is held with the top portion resting against the shoulder. While standing and waiting for a period of time (i.e. the Lessons or Gospel) the virge may be held in the crook of the arm.

3. The Verger of the Day. Each Sunday there will be a Verger assigned as the Verger of the Day (VOD). The VOD will be the lead Verger for ~~all services on that Sunday~~². The VOD arrives at 7:00AM to set up for the 8:00AM service, is the Lead Verger for the 10:30AM service ~~and also verges the 5:00PM Evensong~~³.

4. The 8:00AM Eucharist. With the assistance of the Sacristans the VOD ensures the Sanctuary is properly set. The following items must be checked:

- a. The Office and Altar Lights are in place.
- b. The Acolyte chairs are in place.
- c. The Celebrant, Preacher and Assisting Priest chairs are in place.
- d. The Altar is properly placed.
- e. The cushions for the Dean's stall and the Canon Liturgist stall are placed.
- f. The microphone at the Dean's stall is hooked up.
- g. Bulletins are placed in chairs that will be used.
- h. The Altar Book is set (use the blue notebook on the Press for ribbon placement).
- i. The Lectionary is set (verify that Lessons match the bulletin. If they don't, ask the Canon Liturgist or the Celebrant to clarify).
- j. The Gospel Book is set.
- k. The microphone and Lectionary are placed in the Pulpit.
- l. Make sure the Acolyte, Chalice Bearer and Lector are present.
- m. Double check the Credence Table for proper set up.
- n. Check with the Clergy to see if anything else needs to be done.
- o. Assist the Sacristans if they need it.
- p. Make sure the sound box is turned on and the proper wireless microphone switches are turned on.

Once the service begins, you should wait until all microphones have been used so you know they are working properly. Once you are comfortable that everything is ok, you need not stay if you do not wish to.

See Ref (a) for questions on Acolyte movements for this service.

When the service is concluded, you should go to the Sacristy to see if anyone requires your assistance and clean up the Sanctuary.

5. The 10:30AM Eucharist. Preparation for this service mostly involves making sure people have arrived since the furniture and other items have already been placed. The items you should check are:

- a. Make sure the Lectionary Book is reset to the first Lesson.
- b. Reset the Altar Book for the 10:30AM service (the blue notebook on the Press will guide you through ribbon placement).
- c. Place bulletins at the first hymn in all the chairs that will be used.
- d. Check the wireless microphones and make sure the sound box is properly set.
- e. The Head Acolyte will liaison with the Verger with regards to Acolytes (which Acolytes are present, which positions need replacements, etc.).
- f. The Head Thurifer will be responsible for accountability of the Thurifer.
- g. Make sure the Lectors and Intercessor have arrived.
- h. Double check the Credence Table for proper set up.
- i. Turn on the sound box before gathering to pray.
- j. Make sure the Procession is at the appointed place and is in order. The order is:

Verger

Brass Torch / Crucifer / Brass Torch

Choir

Children

Chalice Bearers

Verger

Thurifer

Silver Torch / Gospel Book / Silver Torch

Clergy

The Entrance. When the Procession begins in the Chapel you should start moving as the introduction music of the first hymn begins. If the Procession begins at the Font, wait until the first verse of the hymn to begin moving. Move the Procession to the Sanctuary at a dignified pace. The Lead Verger sits in the Sanctuary and the Second Verger sits in the Verger's seat behind the organ. The Lead Verger moves to the left of the Crossing and waits for the children in Procession. The Lead Verger then verges the children the Upper Room and returns to the Sanctuary⁴.

The Liturgy of the Word. The Second Verger is responsible for the Liturgy of the Word.

- a. At the conclusion of the Collect of the Day start moving towards the first Lector seated in the Queen's Pew. Stop in front of the Lector and nod. The Lector will return your nod. Lead the Lector to the Pulpit. At the conclusion of the Lesson, lead the Lector back the Queen's Pew, nod and return to your seat.
- b. Near the conclusion of the Psalm begin moving towards the second Lector and follow the procedure as with the first Lector. After you have led the Lector back to the Queen's Pew move to the center of the Crossing.
- c. The Gospel Procession moves into place. Once the Procession has turned towards you and you are satisfied that all is in order, turn and verge the Gospel Procession down the aisle to the point just past the center of the open area of the pews. When all are in place, move to stand mid-line of the Procession. When the Gospel is concluded, lead the Procession back to the Sanctuary and move back to your seat.
- d. The Preacher will have followed the Gospel Procession and will already be in the Pulpit. Once the Sermon is finished, lead the Preacher back to his or her seat and then return to your seat.
- e. At the Confession, go to the Upper Room and bring the children to the Queen's Patio. Inform the teachers that the children should not enter the church until the Peace⁵.

The Peace. At the Peace, the Lead Verger will ensure the Gospel Book and pillow are removed and placed on the lower shelf of the Credence Table. Also, stand by the Dean's stall during the announcements to hand off and take back the microphone if necessary.

The Offertory. The Lead Verger is responsible for all that goes on in the Sanctuary.

- a. At the Offertory sentence make sure the First Server is ready to move.
- b. Supervise the setting of the Table in accordance with Ref (b).
- c. When the Thurifer begins to cense the People (Ref (a)), place the Altar Book and bookstand on the Altar.

The Communion. At the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer ("...for thine is the kingdom...") have the First and Second Servers ready to take the chalices to the Table. The Verger should take the other paten. The Verger should remove the Altar Book and bookstand from the Altar. Place the Altar Book back at the Celebrant's seat and the bookstand on the lower shelf of the Credence Table.

During the administration of the Sacrament both Vergers should monitor the levels of Bread and Wine. When needed, the Chalice or Paten Bearer may come TO THE ALTAR to have the Sacrament refilled. The VERGER will refill the Chalices. Under no circumstances will Sacrament be carried to a Chalice or Paten Bearer.

After the Communion, have all Sacrament brought to the Sacristy. Do not leave Sacrament on the Credence Table. The Acolytes will retrieve the Corporal as stated in Ref (b).

The Exit. After the Blessing, the Final Hymn will begin. Once the hymn begins, get your virge and move across the Sanctuary to line up the choir for the Procession out. The order and procedure for the Exit Procession can be found in Ref (b).

After the Service. When the service is over, go back to the Sacristy and start to put all the equipment that was used for the service. You should assist the Sacristans with anything they may need help with. Once all equipment is put away and the Sacristans no longer need any help, ~~the Second Verger is finished for the day. The VOD is finished until Evensong⁶.~~

6. Evensong. Evensong is at 5:00PM every Sunday. The ~~VOD~~⁶ is responsible for this service. Preparation is as follows:

a. Set the large Bible for the readings. Use the bulletin as your reference for the readings. Use Post-It Notes® to mark the first and last verses. At the last verse mark “Here endeth the Lesson” for the Lector.

b. Make sure the Office Lights are in place. Note that the Altar Lights are NOT used at this service.

c. Make sure the Altar is properly placed.

d. Remove the Altar Cover.

e. Place the Bible and microphone in the Pulpit.

f. Place the microphone in the Dean’s stall.

g. Place the cushions in the Dean’s and Canon Liturgist’s stalls.

h. Place bulletins in seats that will be used.

i. Review any musical changes with the Canon for Music.

j. Make sure the Acolyte is present and knows the patterns for this service (see Ref (c)).

k. Make sure the Thurifer is present and knows the patterns for this service (see Ref (e)).

l. Make sure the Lector is present.

m. Turn on the sound box and make sure the appropriate wireless microphones are on.

n. The Procession begins at the Font.

The Entrance. There will be a Prelude. When the Prelude is finished and the Choir is in place, have the Usher ring the bell. The Organist will begin to play. Move the Procession at a dignified pace to the Sanctuary. The Verger moves to the Verger’s chair behind the Organ.

The Readings and Canticles. Near the end of the Psalm, verge the Lector for the first lesson. The first Canticle is the Magnificat. The censuring takes place at this time (See Ref (e)). Near the end of the Magnificat verge the Lector for the second lesson. The second Canticle is the Nunc dimittis. Near the end of the Nunc, verge the Homilist to the Pulpit. Verge the Homilist back to his/her seat after the homily.

The Exit. At the next to the last verse of the final hymn the Crucifer will get the Cross. During the last verse of the hymn, move to the Crossing. The Verger faces the Altar and the Crucifer faces the Verger. As the Organ begins the Postlude, wait for the Choir to start moving and then turn and verge the Procession out.

After the Service. Make sure all the equipment is returned to the proper places and the Sanctuary is cleaned and straightened up. Once everything is put away and everything is in order, make sure the Sacristy is locked and you are finished for the day.


7. Special services. See Ref (f) for special services.

Conclusion: This Customary covers the very basic issues of the three services on Sundays. The Verger is responsible for making sure good order is maintained throughout the services and to take care of any problems that may arise during the service. Always keep an eye on the Canon Liturgist, other Clergy and the other Verger so that you may assist them if needed. You should be familiar with the set up of the Sacristy and the Priests' Sacristy so you can retrieve items during the service.

Understand that this Customary is not all inclusive and there may be issues that will arise that are not covered here. The Head Verger may be notified of errors in this Customary or you may request additions to this Customary through the Head Verger.

Always be flexible while performing your duties and be ready for sudden changes at any time. Remember that one of the jobs of the Verger is to ensure the People are able to worship in an environment free of distractions.

The point of contact for questions concerning this customary is the Head Verger.

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Head Verger
St. Paul's Cathedral, San Diego

Changes

1. This patch was approved and added by the Canon Liturgist and Vergers (August 2004).
2. The VOD will be the Lead Verger for the 10:30AM service (Change August 2004).
3. The Second Verger will verge the 5:00PM Evensong service.
4. (Change September 2004).
5. (Change September 2004).
6. The VOD is finished for the day. The Second Verger will verge Evensong (June 2004).