



MEMORANDUM

TO: Clergy and Parish Liturgy Coordinators
FROM: Deacon Modesto Cordero, Director, Office for Worship
RE: **Proper procedures when a Bishop attends liturgical celebrations in choir dress**
DATE: December 2, 2025

This memorandum outlines the preparations and key considerations for welcoming a Bishop who attends a liturgical celebration in choir dress and is not presiding within the Diocese of Orange. The following guidelines are drawn from the *Ceremonial of Bishops* as well as the specific preferences of the Bishop of Orange.

Preparing for the Mass

A Bishop may, at his discretion, attend a liturgical celebration in which he is neither presiding nor concelebrating. In such instances, he is considered “*in choir*” and wears the appropriate choir dress: purple cassock, rochet, purple mozzetta, pectoral cross, purple zucchetto, and purple biretta (CB 63). The Bishop brings his own choir vesture, so the parish does not need to prepare these items.

The parish **must** provide a stole in the appropriate liturgical color for use during the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Additionally, a chair with arms as well as a kneeler should be placed in the sanctuary in a dignified and visible location—never behind the ambo. The stole may be placed on the kneeler for easy access.

A second chair should be placed next to or slightly behind the Bishop’s chair for his master of ceremonies or attendant.

When in choir, the Bishop may join the entrance procession, walking behind the priest–celebrant and assisting deacons. If multiple Bishops are present, they process according to hierarchical order within our diocese:

1. Bishop Thanh Thai Nguyen
2. Bishop Timothy Freyer
3. Bishop Kevin Vann



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Alternatively, the Bishop may choose to remain already seated.

During the Mass

While in choir, the Bishop participates as a member of the congregation. If he wishes to preach the homily, he puts on a stole and moves to the appropriate place to speak.

A Bishop in choir may also confer sacraments. In such cases, he removes the mozzetta and puts on a stole and cope of the appropriate color, along with the miter and crosier as needed (CB 179). When the rite is complete, he removes the cope and stole and resumes wearing the mozzetta.

During the incensation, after the priest incenses the gifts, altar, and crucifix, the deacon incenses the priest–celebrant first, then the Bishop(s) in choir, followed by the concelebrants and assembly.

The Bishop wears his zucchetto throughout the Mass except from the conclusion of the prayer over the gifts until the Blessed Sacrament is reposed in the tabernacle

Because the Bishop participates as a member of the assembly when in choir, he receives Holy Communion in the usual manner. The priest–celebrant offers the Body of Christ after the assisting deacons have received; the deacon then offers the Precious Blood. If no deacon is present, the priest returns the ciborium to the altar before offering the chalice to the Bishop. The Bishop may also choose to self-communicate.

After the Prayer after Communion, the Bishop may offer brief remarks or address the community. The parish should prepare a microphone for this purpose.

During the recessional, the Bishop processes out in the same order as during the entrance.

Please feel free to contact the Office for Worship, (714) 282- 3041/ 4283 or email at mcordero@rcbo.org / jvenegas@rcbo.org should you have any questions.

Abbreviations

CB International Commission on English in the Liturgy, Ceremonial of Bishops, 1989