

Order for Blessing and Consecration of Bells

Instructions (rubrics) are shown in this font.

Words that are spoken (or titles) are shown in this font.

✝ This cross means the people make the sign of the cross upon themselves.

✝ This cross means the priest makes the sign of the cross upon himself or others, or upon objects as a sign of power.

Pre-service preparations

The bell to be consecrated should be thoroughly cleaned inside and out, and be suspended so the lip of the bell is about 3 or 4 feet above the ground (1000 - 1200mm).

Four small crosses should be marked on the bell before the service using chalk. These should be on the upper part of the bell (out)sides, and represent north south east and west.

Four small crosses should be marked just on the inside of the lip of the bell again for the north south east and west. These need to be as close to the lip as possible to allow access during the service.

Seven small crosses should also be marked on the outside lip of the bell, again in chalk, to indicate where the oil should be applied. They should be equally spaced, the circumference worked out and divided by seven will give the distance apart.

An Acolyte or other assistant should precede the bishop as he walks around the bell, the assistant wiping the chalk crosses off just before the bishop applies Holy Oil to the spot.

Thymiama should be prepared beforehand and a brazier with glowing embers or hot charcoal. Thymiama is ground myrrh, resin and incense. In the absence of thymiama, use plenty of a fragrant blend of incense. Holy water needs to be available.

The Invocation

Bishop: In the name of the Father ✝ and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: R/. Amen.

A hymn may be sung.

A reading may follow here. (Rev 21: 2 - 7 being suitable)

The Asperges

The bishop takes the aspergill and sprinkles the bell inside and out while saying:

Bishop: *In the name of the Most High God, I exorcise all evil and dark influence from this bell. May they be for ever banished and driven from this bell which we are about to dedicate to His service.*

In the power of the ✠ Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy ✠ Spirit.

All: R/. Amen.

The Consecration

The bishop takes upon his thumb some of the oil for the sick. He makes a cross using the oil on the outside of the upper side of the bell, just after the acolyte removes the chalk. The bishop starts with the North, then (moving round the bell past the east) the south, the west and finally the east. While saying:

Bishop: *In the name of the Most High God, Amen. I invoke the holy Archangel Raphael; I anoint this bell for the healing of Christ's faithful followers; that those who hear it shall be helped and strengthened in soul and body, through Christ the Lord of earth and heaven.*

All: R/. Amen.

The bishop intones this prayer, moving around the bell and making the sign of the cross with the oil for the sick upon the seven places marked on the lip of the bell.

Bishop: *O Christ you are the great exemplar of all divine virtue. Pour down Your blessing upon this bell, that its voice may arouse the hearts of Your faithful to the discernment of, and the will to copy, Your ✠ strength, Your ✠ wisdom, Your ✠ lovingkindness, Your ✠ beauty, Your ✠ justice, Your ✠ devotion and Your ✠ guiding power, so that Your servants being of grace made perfect in You, may attain the glory which You have ordained for them. Oh God who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God throughout ages of ages.*

All: R/. Amen.

A deacon reads the gospel for the day. Alternatively 1 Corinthians 13: 1 - 3. A priest may then briefly expound the words of the reading. A short homily or speech thanking sponsors or donors for the bell(s) may be delivered.

The bishop then takes sacred chrism upon his thumb and anoints the four points inside the lip of the bell saying:

Bishop: To the *Glory* of ✠ *God Most High*.
And of His servants:
✠ *Mary, Queen of Heaven*,
Blessed ✠ *Michael the Archangel*.
and the holy ✠ *St (name)*,
I solemnly dedicate this bell. May its sound peal forth ever
to the praise of *God* and the blessing of those who hear it;

The bishop makes five large crosses in the air over the whole bell and continues...

Bishop: May it be ✠ hallowed and ✠ consecrated to *God's* service for ever, in the name of the ✠ *Father* and the ✠ *Son* and the Holy ✠ *Spirit*.

All: R/. Amen

The thymiama (or incense) is sprinkled into the glowing charcoal and the brazier is placed under the bell. As the fragrance rises into the bell the bishop intones:

Bishop: As the sweet savour fills this bell and rises up before You, so pour down Your Holy Spirit, the fragrance of Your all powerful blessing upon this bell and upon your servants who will ring it. That it may call out your blessing on your people. One *God* now and forever...

All: R/. Amen.

The bell is left with the brazier beneath it, while a hymn is sung.

Blessing of the Ropes.

This service is intended to be part of the blessing of bells. It can however be used separately on other occasions such as when the ropes are renewed or replaced.

The rope or ropes should be draped over a trestle, with the sally (coloured part) facing the congregation and priest. The bishop is seated.

or

The acolyte or assistant brings the ropes to be blessed (in the tower) and lays them before the bell or bells, or places them on the trestle.

Priest: In the name of *God*, I exorcise all influences of evil that they may be banished from these ropes which we are about to dedicate to His service. In the power of the ✠ *Father* and of the ✠ *Son* and of the Holy ✠

Spirit. Amen.

The ropes are sprinkled with Holy Water and censed.

Priest: Let us pray...

Almighty and everlasting God, these ropes will toll the bells which we have dedicated to You. Those who ring the bells call the faithful to service, and remind your people of Your omnipotent presence in their community. Without these ropes the bells have no voice; with them the hands of the ringers bring the sweet sound of Your presence to be heard by all. May these ropes of many threads be like Your church: each one, like us, insufficient alone, but bound together made strong in faith and in service. May these ropes connect us to your Spirit in the same way they connect the bell to those that ring them. May their vertical attribute remind us of the need to look ever heavenward and direct our prayers to You.

All: R/. Amen

The bible reading, exposition or homily may be given here if not already given.

The priest shall take the 'Sally' part of the rope between his hands and pray:

Priest: As the hands that ring the bells hold this rope, so may the ringer and the hearer of the bell alike be blessed. As the sound of Your clarion leads us on to a closer relationship with You, so the relationship of this rope and the hands of your servants be strengthened. Strengthen and re-affirm the hands that use this rope and impart Your power and blessing on those who serve you in this way. Amen.

At the doorway, the priest makes the sign of the cross and says:

Priest: ✠ Peace be to this tower and all that ring these bells.

The ropes, if not already in place, are brought in and laid on the floor (in the shape of a cross if possible) underneath where they will hang.

Priest: O God who in Your providence has appointed a wondrous ministry of angels, we pray that You send down your holy angel to ✠ bless and to ✠ hallow this tower, these bells, and the ropes that work them. And that those who serve here may know the power and love of † Christ our Lord and our Master in the good works they do here; through the same Christ

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our Lord.
All: R/. Amen.

A Hymn is sung

The service continues in the church with Eucharist or a blessing given by the bishop and the service concluded.

As always, feel free to adjust this service to suit your needs.