

# 1 Before Mass

- Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to Mass. Male servers should wear black pants, black socks, black shoes, and a shirt without a collar. Female servers should wear solid colors, white or black socks, and white or black close-toed shoes.
- As soon as possible on arrival, male servers should put on cassocks and female servers should put on albs with cinctures. [INSERT PICTURE SHOWING CORRECT FIT]
- About 10 minutes before the start of Mass, one server should light the candles around the church with a brass candle-lighter.
- If incense is being used, the thurible should be cleaned out (dump cold ashes into the sacristy trash can) and four coals should be lit [PICTURE] and placed in the thurible.
- The servers present decide how to divide the roles among themselves. One server must be the crucifer. If there are at least three servers, two more can be candle-bearers.

If there will be incense, one server will have to be the thurifer. If there is a fifth server, they should be the boatman. Otherwise, the thurifer will have to carry the boat (incense holder).

One server will additionally have to hold the missal, and one server will have to ring the bells during the consecration<sup>1</sup>. These duties can be assigned in addition to any others.

If there is incense, the crucifer should be responsible for ringing the bells.

## 1.1 Behavior During Mass

- When not holding anything, fold your hands with your right thumb over your left thumb.  
If you are holding something in one hand, place the other hand over your heart.  
When seated, place your hands on your knees.
- When approaching or leaving the altar, bow. If you are carrying something, nod your head instead.
- When turning around, turn to your right. If there is another server next to you, turn towards them instead.
- Try not to speak unnecessarily or fidget. Remember to act respectfully at all times and to use good posture.
- When carrying the cross or candles, rest them on your shoe instead of on the floor.
- When carrying the cross, make sure to carry it upright, Jesus forward, and spread your hands apart enough that you can hold it steady.
- Pay attention to the Mass, and also keep an eye on the priest so you can see any signals you might be given.

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<sup>1</sup>Traditionally, the crucifer would perform these roles. However, having the crucifer be in charge of the missal causes some disturbance when the servers go to set up the altar.

## 2 Introductory Rites

- Five minutes before Mass begins, the servers and the priest should pray together in the sacristy. Then, all servers should get their processional items (candles, crucifix, or thurible) and proceed to the narthex.

The procession is led by the crucifer, with the two candle-bearers (if present) standing just behind and to either side of the crucifer. Any other servers stand behind the candle-bearers.

If there is incense, the thurifer and boatman will approach the priest, who will put incense in the thurible. The thurifer and boatman will then go in front of the crucifer and lead the procession.

- The procession begins when the words to the entrance song start. The procession pauses as each server reaches the altar, giving a nod (if carrying something) or a full bow to the altar before continuing around the right side.

Servers should return their processional items to their places and take their seats. Note that the person responsible for the missal should sit next to the missal.

If there is incense, instead of returning to their seats, the thurifer and boatman stand behind the altar. After reverencing the altar, the priest will take the thurible and incense the altar. When the thurible is returned to the thurifer, they should return the thurible to its stand and go to their seats<sup>2</sup>.  
[DIAGRAM]

- The priest greets the people, we pray the Penitential Act and the Kyrie, and the Gloria is sung (if appropriate for the liturgical season).
- When the priest says "let us pray," the server designated to hold the missal should already be in front of the priest with the missal.<sup>3</sup> This will require some judgement and foresight on the server's part! When the priest folds his hands again after reading the prayer, you may return to your seat.

## 3 The Liturgy of the Word

- The first and second readings are proclaimed<sup>4</sup>.
- When the music for the Alleluia starts, both candle bearers stand and retrieve their candles from the ambo before going to the near corners of the altar base. Once there, they wait for the priest to come get the book of the Gospels. When the priest turns around, the servers also turn (towards each other) and lead a procession back to the ambo. The servers should continue to hold their candles until the priest has finished the reading, after which they should put the candles in the holders and return to their seats to listen to the homily<sup>5</sup>.

[DIAGRAM]

If incense is being used, at the same time that the candle bearers move out, the thurifer and boatman should bring the thurible and boat to the celebrant's chair and kneel in front of the priest. The priest

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<sup>2</sup>GIRM 123

<sup>3</sup>GIRM 127

<sup>4</sup>GIRM 128-130

<sup>5</sup>GIRM 131, 133, 134, and 136

will put incense in the thurible, after which the boatman can return to his seat and the thurifer should go stand behind the ambo. When the priest arrives at the ambo with the book of the Gospels, he will take the thurible and incense the book<sup>6</sup>.

## 4 The Liturgy of the Eucharist

### 4.1 Preparing the Altar

- The crucifer gets the processional cross and proceeds to the back of the church to meet with the people who will bring up the gifts. However, if the crucifer is the only one serving, they will have to stay and help set up the altar.

[DIAGRAM]

- The server responsible for the missal should pick it up. Then all servers walk together to the credence table. Bow to the altar on the way.
- Servers bring the following to the priest, in the order listed below<sup>7</sup>. Except for the missal, the items should be handed to the priest and not just placed on the altar.
  - The priest’s chalice
  - Any ciboria and chalices (with purificators)
  - The missal, on its stand
- The priest will move to the front of the altar to receive the gifts. One server will go stand on the priest’s right side. This server will be given the vessel of wine.<sup>8</sup>
- The server with the vessel of wine will return to the credence table and unstopper the vessel. Another server will get the cruet of water from the credence table, and both servers will go stand at the back right edge of the altar. After the priest has filled all the chalices and both servers have their vessels back, they should return to the credence table<sup>9</sup>.
- If there is incense, the thurifer and boatman should approach the priest, who will fill the thurible and incense the altar. He will then hand the thurible to the thurifer, who should incense the priest. If you are incensing a single person, do three sets of three swings directly at the person being incensed. If you are incensing a group, swing to the left, right, and center. The thurifer will then go incense any concelebrating priests, and then the congregation, in the same manner. The congregation should stand for the incensation; if they don’t, the thurifer should gesture for them to stand<sup>10</sup>.
- The server with the water should pick up the lavabo bowl. A second server should take the towel, and these two servers should go together and stand by the altar. Hold the towel open for the priest,

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<sup>6</sup>GIRM 132

<sup>7</sup>GIRM 139

<sup>8</sup>GIRM 140

<sup>9</sup>GIRM 142

<sup>10</sup>GIRM 144

and not draped over your hands. The priest will hold his hands over the bowl, and the server with the water should pour it over the priest's hands. Don't be shy! When the priest moves his hands, stop pouring. After the priest has dried his hands, both servers should return to the credence table<sup>11</sup>.

## 4.2 Consecration

- About at the middle of the *Holy, Holy*, the servers should go stand around the altar [IMAGE]. One of them should bring the hand sanitizer. The server responsible for ringing the bells should be next to the bells.
- If there is incense, servers will instead be at the front of the altar. The candle-bearers will get their candles and flank the rest of the servers. The thurifer should be in the middle with the thurible, and the boatman should be on one side of the thurifer with the boat. The crucifer should be on the other side of the thurifer. The server responsible for the bells will have to bring the bells to the front of the altar.
- At the end of the *Holy, Holy*, all servers kneel on the edge of the altar.
- When the priest extends his hands over the chalice (the epiclesis), the server with the bells rings them once (for about three counts).

If there is incense, the boatman should (quickly!) spoon incense into the thurible at this point.

- When the priest elevates the Host, the server with the bells rings them three times (allow the sound of the bells to fade somewhat before starting to ring them again)<sup>12</sup>.

If there is incense, the thurifer should incense in three sets of three (three swings, a break, repeat three times). The server with the bells should try to synchronize with the thurifer.

The same thing should be done when the priest elevates the Chalice.

- After the elevation of the Chalice, if the servers are at the front of the altar, they should stand and return to the credence table. The candle-bearers should return their candles, and the thurifer and boatman should return the thurible and boat. Then all servers should go to the back of the altar and kneel in the same way as in a Mass without incense.
- Servers should stand for the Our Father. After the Our Father and the Lamb of God, the priest will sanitize his hands. Then, all servers should stand to receive communion. Once all servers have received communion, they should kneel again. The EMHCs<sup>13</sup> will also need hand sanitizer<sup>14</sup>.
- After the priest and EMHCs have gone to distribute communion, one or two servers should retrieve the missal from the altar and return the stand to its place under the credence table. Then, all servers line up behind the altar, bow, and return to their seats, taking the missal with them.

All servers will kneel at their seats until the Eucharist has been distributed to everyone.

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<sup>11</sup>GIRM 145

<sup>12</sup>GIRM 150

<sup>13</sup>Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

<sup>14</sup>GIRM 152

### 4.3 Clearing the Altar

- Once the musicians have begun to receive communion, the candle bearers should go to the credence table and prepare to bring the cruet of water to the priest. If there are no candle bearers, send any two servers (or if there is only one server, they'll have to go!).
- The priest will face the credence table, holding the chalice. A server should then bring the cruet of water and pour it into the chalice, over the priest's fingers. When the priest opens his fingers, you should stop pouring.
- The priest will then clean out the chalices and ciboria and place them at the edge of the altar. Servers should go take these items back to the credence table as they are placed<sup>15</sup>.
- After all ciboria and communal chalices have been removed from the altar, one server should take the cover for the priest's chalice to the altar. After the priest has finished assembling the chalice, the server should take it back to the credence table.
- Once the altar is clear, all servers should form a line behind the altar, bow, and then return to their seats. Any servers still kneeling at their seats should stand to meet the returning servers, then all servers should be seated together.

## 5 Concluding Rites

- The server responsible for the missal should prepare to bring it up to the priest. When the priest says "let us pray", bring the missal to the priest, who will read the benediction. When the priest closes his hands, the server can return to their seat<sup>16</sup>.
- When the music starts for the final song, the crucifer should get the crucifix and the candle bearers should get their candles. They then process to the back of the altar, led by the crucifer. When the priest bows to the altar, all servers bow as well. Then all servers turn around in unison and process out into the narthex. All servers should immediately kneel to receive a blessing from the priest.

[DIAGRAM]

NOTE Do *not* process out with the thurible!

## 6 After Mass

- Once there is enough room for the servers to get back into the church, they should return the candles and cross to their proper places before returning to the sacristy.
- Before removing their cassock, one server should take the brass candle lighter and extinguish all the candles in the church.

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<sup>15</sup>GIRM 163

<sup>16</sup>GIRM 165

- After candles have been extinguished, all servers may remove their cassocks and surpluses or albs and cinctures and hang them up on the rack. If any garments are damaged, place them in the designated pile and notify the sacristan.

Unless the servers have any other duties, they are free to go once they have hung up their garments.