

I. GENERAL

SENIOR AND JUNIOR SERVERS

A senior server has served for at least one year and has entered eighth grade or higher. Senior servers should be prepared for roles with more responsibility, such as Master of Ceremonies, Thurifer, or Junior Sacristan. Senior servers are responsible for managing junior servers at mass and assisting in ongoing training. The lead senior server (or MC) has the responsibility of assigning tasks to the servers at Mass.

PREPARING FOR MASS

Servers should be in a state of grace to serve at Mass, meaning they should attend Mass each weekend and receive the Sacrament of Penance regularly. Altar Servers should come to Mass prepared to meet the Lord at His Holy Communion. They should consider whether they ought to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation ahead of time, and if needed, make appropriate arrangements.

Once an Altar Server puts on the alb and cincture or cassock and surplice, their conduct always must be professional and reverent. From the time they put on the Alb/Cassock before Mass until the time they take it off after Mass, an Altar Server is "on duty". Altar Servers must always show respect for the sanctity of the church and the sacred vessels. The care of the vessels and vestments is a primary responsibility of the Altar Server.

DRESS AND APPEARANCE

Junior servers wear albs. Senior servers wear Cassock and Surplice, or Alb and Scapular.

Cassocks or Albs should be clean and without wrinkles. The length of the cassock or alb should be at the ankle, touching the top of the shoe. Likewise, albs/cassocks should not drag on the floor.

What is worn underneath an alb may show through. For this reason, the server should be sure to avoid bold stripes and prints of any kind, which may distract those predisposed to distraction. It is recommended that servers wear solid colors, but white would be the most appropriate choice for shirts and blouses. Likewise, trousers, dresses, and skirts should also be of some solid color. Servers who wear cassocks should wear black shoes with black soles, black socks, black trousers, and a white shirt. Pant legs should not gather at the bottom of the feet and drag on the ground.

When a server outgrows his/her cassock/alb he/she should obtain a new cassock of proper length. Cinctures are tied with the knot on the left side of the server's waist. Servers should not wear sneakers, sandals, boots, athletic socks, open-heel or open-toe shoes.

Servers should not wear rings, earrings, or bracelets (including the rubber or string type). Girls may wear one set of stud or small hoop earrings,

If worn, necklaces are to be covered by a cassock/alb. Watches are fine.

Hair should have a neat and clean look, out of the way of the eyes, and tied back if long.

Hair color, nails, and makeup, if any, must be minimal and present a natural appearance.

GESTURES AND POSTURES

When we are a vested assistant at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, all of our gestures and postures are done with purpose. We are performing the reference they deserve.

Hands

When standing

Hands are joined, palm to palm, fingers together, right thumb locked over the left. However, this need not mean pressing the palms together in a tense way. This reverent and neat way of keeping hands joined only looks artificial if it seems forced. The priest, deacon, and servers observe the discipline of “hands joined” while in the sanctuary and while in procession.



When seated

Hands are on thighs.

When holding an object with one hand

It is preferable to the object being held or presented, is held or presented with the right hand. The left hand then should be placed over the heart of the altar server. If this is not possible, the free hand is placed over the heart. (Fr. Casey is left-handed and understands that this can be difficult for fellow lefties, but it's good to at least try to be uniform).

Standing

When standing, stand up straight. Balance your weight evenly on both feet, but do not lock your knees.

When standing or processing (if hands are not otherwise occupied), hands should be folded in front as if at prayer. Fingers should not be interlocked, and our hands should rest against our chest. Preferably our hands are held at a 45° angle from our body



Sitting

When seated, hands should be placed on the thighs, the back should be straight, and our attention should be focused on what is happening at the altar, chair, or ambo, respectively. While sitting, sit up straight, not slouching. The attention of the server should be on the priest, senior server, or MC in case he or she is needed. The feet should be directly in front of you. Legs should never be crossed. Keep your legs and feet still.

Kneeling

When Kneeling, your body should be upright and your hands should be in front of your chest, well above your waist. We kneel any time the Blessed Sacrament is exposed to show adoration and humility. We kneel many times during the Mass: after the Holy, Holy, Holy, before receiving the Eucharist, and while the Eucharist is still being given to the congregation. We may also kneel at communion.



Gestures and Posture in Procession

The procession is a sacred act. It is more than just a way for the priest to get to the altar. It is a very formal way of welcoming and glorifying Christ himself into our presence.

When you process, walk at a deliberate, but respectful pace. It should be just slower than you normally walk, yet not so slow that it seems entirely unnatural. If you are not the lead in the procession (crucifer, thurible, or MC, keep pace with the lead). When carrying something while processing, hold it reverently with both hands and slightly in front of you, not resting on your chest.

Bowing

There are two types of bows:

The Simple Bow (head bow): Lower your chin to your chest and hold it there briefly. There are several times in the Mass when this is done: at the name of Jesus, Mary, or the saint of the day. Also, when the three persons of the holy Trinity are mentioned together (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). If you are carrying something in procession, you make a simple



Head bow

bow to the Altar. For a simple bow, especially if you are carrying or holding something, your waist should never move only your head.

The profound bow (deep bow): With hands joined, bend at the waist and bow forward. This is used during the Profession of Faith, and when approaching and leaving the altar.



Deep bow

Genuflection

Everyone, servers included, should genuflect whenever crossing in front of the tabernacle (except when we're in procession, such as standing in line for Communion or returning to our seats afterward), or entering a pew, when Jesus is present Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Eucharist, either on the altar or in the tabernacle. His presence in the tabernacle is usually signified by the lit sanctuary light. When it is not lit, the Tabernacle is empty and open as on Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

As there is a Tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament in the Sanctuary, a genuflection should be made at the procession and recession, unless the server is caring something.

An exception to the first rule involves the Thurifer, Cross-bearer, and Candle/torch bearers. They should not genuflect when carrying the processional Cross and candles/torches, but make a simple bow.

On Good Friday, the exposed Crucifix should be given the same reverence shown the Blessed Sacrament.

To make a proper genuflection: Begin in a standing position, facing the Tabernacle. Do not genuflect while moving. With your body erect, your hands and your eyes looking at the Tabernacle—move your right leg back about a half-step, bending your right knee toward the floor until it is even with the heel of your left foot. Pause briefly, then rise to your original standing position, with your feet together.

When you genuflect in your cassock or alb, it is best to move the left foot forward and keep the right foot stationary as you bend your knees.

Always genuflect on the right knee. Then when you rise, again keep the right foot stationary and draw back the left. In this way, you are very unlikely to trip up on your garment by getting it under the foot on which you put your weight when rising. If you do not have room to move your left foot forward, then of course you must



Single genuflection

move your right back, but then you must be careful in getting up to keep your garment out of the way of that right foot. This may require you to pull the garment forward with your hand as you kneel down and as you raise your knee. It is not necessary to make the Sign of the Cross when you genuflect, as you may when you are not serving.

Eyes

In general, our eyes should always be on the action of the priest or the direction of the MC. We should not be looking out at our families or any distractions from the congregation, but should be focused on the liturgical action.

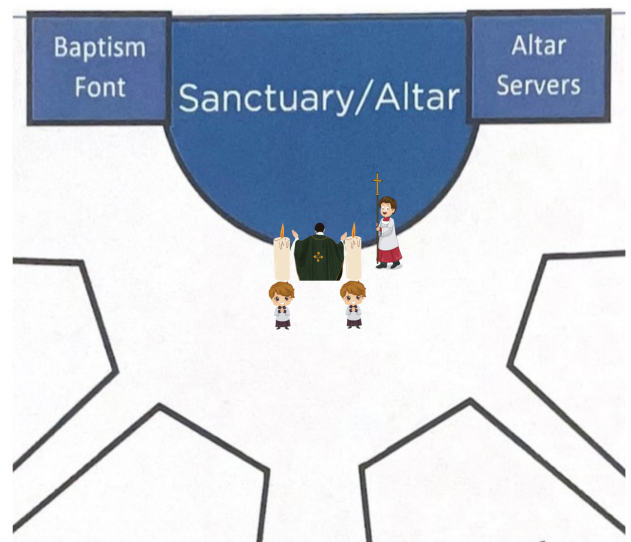
II. SUNDAY AND HOLY DAY MASSES

ORDER OF SUNDAY MASS (without incense or torches)

The servers arrive no later than 20 minutes before the start of Mass, and be vested and ready to go 15 minutes before the start of Mass. The priest will greet the servers and give them any special instructions pertinent to Sunday Mass. The crucifer should wear clean white gloves. The servers will respond appropriately when the priest says, “Procedemus in pace”, servers respond with “*In nomine Christi, Amen.*” (Let us proceed in peace, in the name of Christ, Amen.) as they all make the sign of the cross and gather for the procession.

Procession

When there is no incense, the crossbar leads the procession. The procession begins when the congregation begins to sing the lyrics to the opening hymn. The procession is slow and reverent. There should be AT LEAST two pews of space between each grouping of servers. When the procession reaches the sanctuary, the crucifer proceeds to stage right of the kneelers, the servers holding candles flank the priest on the inside of the kneelers. Any other servers present lined up behind the candles and remain there as the priest processes in as shown in the graphic (all face the altar).



When the priest genuflects, servers who are holding anything make a simple bow of the head. Servers not holding anything genuflect. Servers not holding anything are to genuflect regardless of what the priest does (if it is an order priest, who does not genuflect, the servers still genuflect).

Penitential Act

Stand and respond (prayer hands and eyes on action). If the Confiteor is prayed, servers strike the chest three times at the words “Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault”.

Collect

The book should be open to the Mass of the day (if it is Sunday, it should say the appropriate Sunday). As soon as the bookbearer hears the priest say the words “Let us pray”, retrieve the book and bring it to him. Move slowly- even if you are behind, a few extra silent moments are fine. Never open the book while moving. There are usually two times during the Mass when this happens – at the beginning before the readings, and again at the end after Holy Communion.



Note: There are exceptions during special Masses, which include sacraments, baptisms, funerals, etc. You will be told about the changes beforehand. Be alert and ready to hold the book whenever the priest motions to you that he needs the book, even if he has not yet said “Let us pray”. Hold the book with your hands on the edge of the bottom corners and rest the book against your chest. Watch the priest’s hands. When he closes his hands, bow your head (only) to the priest, then make a profound bow to the altar, and return to your seat.

First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, Second Reading

Sit and respond (eyes on action and hands on top of thighs)

Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia) and Gospel

Stand and respond (prayer hands and eyes on action)

Homily

Sit and listen (eyes on action)

Profession of Faith

Stand and respond (prayer hands and eyes on action). Make a PROFOUND BOW at the words “and by the power of the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.”

Universal Prayer

The book bearer should hold the liturgical binder for the priest. Stand and listen (prayer hands and eyes on action). Also, be prepared to prepare the altar.

Preparation of the Offerings

This is the part of the Mass where there is the most “action” for altar servers. Remember to always make a profound bow to the altar when approaching and leaving the sanctuary. The following are brought to the altar in this exact order: The Missal (with its stand) and the chalice (with paten, pall and purificator, and sometimes veil and burse), are the only items placed directly on the altar by servers. The rest of the items are given to the priest (or deacon if there is one) to place.

The missal and chalice are placed on the altar. Followed by the ciboria (ciborium singular) to be handed to the Priest or Deacon followed by the pyxides (pyx singular), which are brought to the priest, deacon, or MC.

AT NO TIME SHOULD THE TRAY BE PLACED ON THE ALTAR.

If there are empty ciboria, these do not go to the altar until the *Angus Dei* (Lamb of God) is sung. There should be no gap in the placing of these liturgical items on the altar. They should be done immediately one after the other. As soon as the Missal has been placed, the chalice should be placed next, etc. The server bearing the next item should be immediately following the one before him or her.

AT A BILINGUAL MASS, BOTH SPANISH AND ENGLISH MISSALS WILL BE PLACED ON THE ALTAR

General norms to remember during the preparation of the Altar:

- ❖ Remember to **bow** when approaching and leaving the altar (simple if you are carrying something, profound if you are not). Bow at the steps when approaching, and at the altar itself when leaving, to avoid congestion.
- ❖ Remember to correctly position your hands (folded if you are not carrying something, left hand over heart if one hand is occupied).
- ❖ Never run or appear “rushed.” even if you make a mistake, recover with reverence; chances are no one will notice this way.

- ❖ **The Missal is never to be pushed across the altar on its stand.** It is to be picked up and properly placed. Pushing the stand across the altar causes the altar cloth to bunch. Rather, the missal and stand both must be picked up to position.
- ❖ When handing something to the priest, such as a ciborium or cruet, always stand on the same side of the altar as the priest. NEVER stand beside the altar; you should be able to easily hand the priest whatever you are to hand him without ever having to reach across the altar, as shown in the graphic.



As soon as these items are placed, servers prepare to present the water and wine to the priest. Once the priest has offered the host, the server(s) should be present to present the water and wine. The cruets are presented to the priest with the handles facing out, the stoppers having been removed. They should be presented to the priest with the right hand. The servers should never hold the cruets by the handles.



Immediately following the presentation of the chalice, the servers should be at the priest's side to carry out the lavabo (the washing of the hands). One server holds a vessel of water and bowl; the other presents a finger towel. Again, the priest should not be waiting for the servers. They should be on the appropriate side of the altar, not beside the edge. If there is one server, he or she holds the bowl in one hand and the pitcher in the other, and drapes the towel over the arm holding the bowl. This should only be done if there is a shortage of servers, otherwise, the lavabo is always carried out by two.

**** WHEN INCENSE IS USED, THE PRIEST'S HANDS ARE WASHED AFTER THE ALTAR IS INCENSED, AS THE MISSAL IS PLACED**

Offerings/Gifts Brought Forward

At all School Masses, and on other occasions. Members of the congregation will bring forward the offerings of bread and wine. After the altar is prepared, but before the host is offered, two of the servers (along with the Priest) go to the bottom center step of the sanctuary. The priest then receives the gifts of bread and wine, respectively, and hands each to a server standing on each side of him. The priest will normally greet those giving gifts with a handshake. Following the reception of the offerings, the priest and servers will turn 180° and make a profound bow to the altar. The priest will return to the altar. The server who received the ciborium from the priest will return to the altar with the priest, hand the ciborium to him, and return to his or her place. The server who received the cruet of wine from the priest will remove the stopper if necessary, and line up near the credence table, along with the server, who is going to bring forward the cruet of water.

Preface

Stand with hands folded through the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy...) eyes on action.

Eucharistic Prayer

Kneel when the Sanctus is concluded.

Sanctus Bells

Bells are rung:

At the epiclesis (when the priest extends his hands over the bread and wine to become the body and blood of our Lord). Here, the bells are rung once, nice and loud.

When the host, which has become the body of Christ, is elevated, the bell is rung three times.

When the chalice containing the precious blood of our Lord is elevated, the bell is likewise rung three times.

When the priest (the principal celebrant) receives holy communion from the chalice, the bell is rung once.

Servers should bow as the priest genuflects.

Our Father

Stand and listen (prayer hands and eyes on action), HANDS REMAIN FOLDED during the Lord's Prayer. Do not hold hands or assume the posture of the priest.

Sign of Peace

Reverently greet the servers immediately around you. You should not leave your place, nor should you wave at family or friends in the pews.

Angus Dei (Lamb of God)

If there are any empty ciboria, they are brought to the altar at this time. They may be placed directly on the altar, especially if the priest is at the Tabernacle.

Holy Communion

The bells are rung as the priest receives the precious blood. After this, all servers stand and enter the sanctuary to receive holy communion. Servers may receive holy communion kneeling or standing. When all servers have received Holy Communion, the Missal (along with any other books, such as the Spanish Missal) is removed from the Altar.

Communion Patens

When assisting the priest with the Communion paten during Holy Communion the server must always hold the paten level from the time it is picked up from its storage place until it is returned to the priest or deacon after all have received. It must never be tilted or turned so as to spill any fragments of the Body of Jesus that may have been caught by it. It is the responsibility of the server holding the paten to protect the Body of Jesus from falling on the floor.

After the server has rung the bell at the communion of the priest, the servers will retrieve the patens. The servers holding the paten will receive the Body of Christ on the tongue while holding the patten under his or her own chin.

During communion, the server stands to the side of the Communion Minister and holds the paten in a way that should prevent the Sacred Host from hitting the ground for those receiving on the hand. The server holds the pate under the chin of the one receiving Communion on the tongue.

Senior servers will be responsible for filling or assigning this role.

After Holy Communion

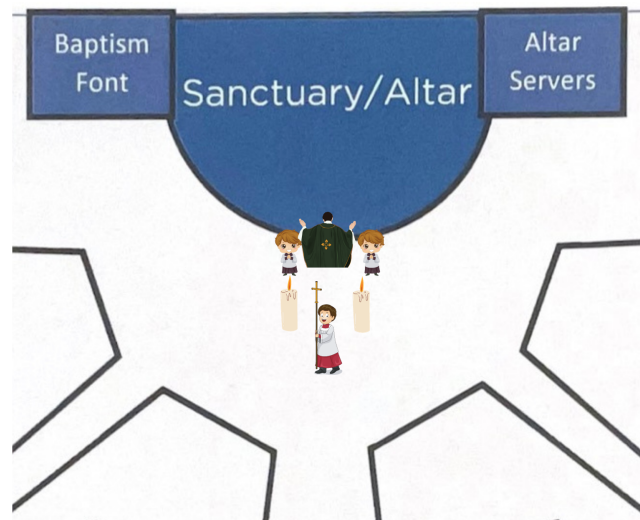
When the priest returns the ciborium to the Tabernacle, all servers should be standing. All servers will genuflect when the priest genuflects upon closing the tabernacle. A server immediately meets the priest at the altar with the water cruet. Water is poured over the fingers of the priest into a ciboria or the chalice. Servers line up to remove ciboria two at a time as they are purified. Lastly, the chalice (with purificator, paten and pall, and sometimes burse and veil) is assembled by the priest, and then removed by the server, the priest in the server bow to the altar together.

Post-Communion Prayer

The book is required as done at the collect. Again, leave when the priest closes his hands *unless* the priest needs the book for a solemn blessing which he will indicate by placing his hand on the book. In this case, leave when the priest closes his hands before the sign of the cross. Make a simple bow to the priest and a profound bow to the altar.

Final Blessing

During the final blessing and dismissal, servers should be preparing for the procession. The cross bearer will line up near the first pew with other servers in front of the cross in groups of two in reverse order of how they will processed in, as shown in the graphic, with everyone facing the altar. When the priest genuflects, servers carrying the cross or candles bow their heads simply, the rest, genuflect, and everyone turns 180° and recesses to the narthex.



Upon reaching the narthex, the candles flank the cross, all other servers face, the cross. The priest will say "Prosit" (Which is Latin for "May it profit us"). The servers will then respond "pro omnibus et singulis." (Latin for "For all and for one").

MASS WITH SOLEMN CEREMONIES (TORCHES AND INCENSE)

Some roles may be omitted due to a lack of servers.

Procession

In a solemn procession, we are led by the thurifer (and boat bearer slightly behind) followed by the cross-bearer, followed by candles (slightly behind) followed by up to six torches, followed by a deacon or concelebrating priest with the gospel book, followed by the principal celebrant. All are shown in the graphic.

When servers are forming a solemn procession, they do not wait for the priest to arrive at the foot of the sanctuary. Each server bows his or her head (or genuflects if not carrying anything) and goes to their seat. The thurifer (and boat) enter the sanctuary and stand stage right of the altar waiting for the principal celebrant to arrive and present him with the incense. The Crucifer and Torchbearers return the Cross and Torches to their respective stands and stand at their seats.

After he venerates the altar, incense is presented to the priest celebrant. The thurifer (and boat) wait as the priest incenses the altar. When the priest reaches the center of the altar, he will incense the crucifix. All servers in the sanctuary should turn and face the crucifix, and make a profound bow before, and after the priest incenses the crucifix. When the celebrant has finished incensing the altar, he hands the thurible back to the thurifer. The thurible is placed on its stand on the inside of the back sacristy.



Penitential Act, Gloria, and Collect

As a typical Sunday Mass

First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, Second Reading

As a typical Sunday Mass except:

During the **Psalm**, the **thurifer** (and boat) retrieve the thurible and incense from the back sacristy. Two **Torch Bearers** retrieve torches and line up in front of the sacristy door.

Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia) and Gospel

When the second reading has concluded, incense is presented to the priest at the chair (servers take a knee). After incense has been imposed, the **thurifer** leads the gospel procession, moving to the far left side of the Ambo. The cleric who proclaims the gospel proceeds to retrieve the Evangelary (book of the Gospels) in between the **torches**, all pause when he reaches the center of the altar and face the people. From the center of the altar when he elevates the gospel, he and the **Torch Bearers** turn right toward the ambo and process to the Ambo. The **first torchbearer** proceeds to the far side of the ambo, crossing the front, the **second** taking place on the near side of the ambo. After the gospel is announced, incense is presented to the cleric who incenses the Evangelary. The Thurifer gently swings the thurible, while the gospel is proclaimed. Following the proclamation of the gospel, the thurifer returns to the sacristy followed by the torchbearers, beginning with the one on the far side of the ambo, the second torchbearer follows, crossing in front.

Torchbearers return to their seats. Meanwhile, the thurifer or another server places one or two unlit coals in the thurible.

Homily

Sit and listen (eyes on action)

Profession of Faith

As usual.

Universal Prayer

Stand and listen (prayer hands and eyes on action). Also, be prepared to prepare the altar. **The book bearer** may be asked to hold the folder for the priest.

Preparation of the Offerings

This is the part of the mass where there is the most “action” for altar servers. Remember to always bow to the altar, when approaching, and leaving the sanctuary. The following are brought to the altar in this exact order: The chalice (with paten, pall, and purificator, and sometimes veil and burse, is placed directly on the altar by the server. Followed by the ciboria (ciborium singular) to be headed to the Deacon, MC, or Priest followed by the pyxides (Pyx singular). **AT NO TIME SHOULD THE TRAY BE PLACED ON THE ALTAR.** If there are empty ciboria, these do not go to the altar until the *Angus Dei* (Lamb of God) is sung.

As soon as these items are placed, servers prepare to present the water and wine to the priest. As soon as the priest has offered the host, the server(s) should be present to offer the water and wine.

WHEN INCENSE IS USED, THE MISSAL IS NOT PLACED UNTIL AFTER THE ALTAR IS INCENSED. AS THE PRIEST'S HANDS ARE WASHED AFTER THE ALTAR IS INCENSED, THE MISSAL IS PLACED.

Immediately, following the presentation of the chalice, the **thurifer** (and boat) present the incense to the priest who incenses the gifts, the altar, and the crucifix. When the priest incenses the crucifix, all face it and bow before and after he incenses. When the thurible is given back to the **thurifer**, unless there is a deacon, the server incenses the celebrant with three double swings, then any concelebrants together, (also with three doubles), then the people with three **single** swings (center, left, right). He only does this once from the middle step of the sanctuary.

Immediately after the priest is incensed, the washing of the hands takes place in the usual manner as the missal(s) are placed on the altar.

Preface

After the offertory, Thurible and torchbearers line up in the following order: three torchbearers, followed by the thurifer, followed by three torchbearers as shown in the graphic. During the Sanctus (Holy, Holy/Santo, Santo) they process evenly spaced in order until the thurifer is situated at the front and center of the sanctuary



Eucharistic Prayer

Kneel when the Sanctus concluded first bend the right knee, as if genuflecting, then bend the left knee. Torches are rested on the step firmly in front. When the host and chalice are elevated, respectively, the **thurifer** incenses the Blessed Sacrament with three double swings. At the *Mysterium Fidei* (The Mystery of Faith) all stand and return in the reverse order in which they came.

Bell Ringing

As normal (except on Holy Thursday when the crotalus is used)

Holy Communion

The bells are rung as the priest receives the precious blood. After this, all servers stand and enter the sanctuary to receive holy communion. Servers may receive holy communion kneeling or standing. **Due to the large number of servers, it is best that servers line up to receive Holy Communion two-by-two rather than in a line as at Masses with fewer servers.**

After Holy Communion

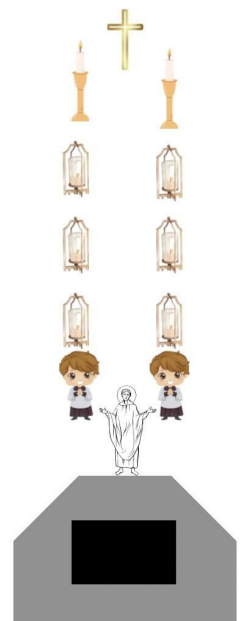
When the priest returns the ciborium to the tabernacle, all servers should be standing. All servers will genuflect when the priest genuflects upon closing the tabernacle. A server immediately meets the priest at the altar with the water cruet. Water is poured over the fingers of the priest over a ciboria or the chalice. Servers line up to remove ciboria two at a time as they are purified. Lastly, the chalice, purificator, paten, and pall are assembled by the priest and then removed by the server as the priest in the server bow to the altar together.

Post-Communion Prayer

Bring the book as done at the collect. Again, leave when the priest closes his hands UNLESS the priest needs the book for a solemn blessing which he will indicate by placing his hand on the book. In this case, leave when the priest closes his hands before the sign of the cross. Make a simple bow to the priest and a profound bow to the altar.

Final Blessing

During the final blessing and dismissal, servers should be preparing for the procession. The cross bearer will line up near the second pew with other servers in front of the cross in groups of two in reverse order of how they processed. As shown in the graphic, with everyone facing the altar. When the priest genuflects while servers, carrying the cross, or candles bow their heads. Others will genuflect. Everyone turns 180° and we recess to the narthex. NOTE: Incense is not carried out of the Church. The crucifer will lead the procession as shown.



Upon reaching the narthex, a circle is formed with the priest at the bottom and the cross at the top of the circle, the priest will say “Prosit” (Which is Latin for “May it profit us”). All profound bow. The servers will then respond “pro omnibus et singulis.” (Latin for “For all and for one”).

III. SERVING AT OTHER MASSES OR CEREMONIES

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

With one server:

Exposition:

The altar server leads the priest in and stays at the base of the altar as the priest proceeds into the Sanctuary to expose the Blessed Sacrament. After the priest returns to the base of the altar, the altar server hands him the Thurible and he will impose incense and incense the Blessed Sacrament as the hymn “*O Salutaris*” is sung. (NOTE: Incense is not blessed by the priest when the Blessed Sacrament is on the Altar). As he incenses, the server will hold back the end of the cope for the priest. After a moment of prayer, they both go to sit down in the pews.

At the half-hour mark, the server will place at least one unlit coal in the thurible with tongs.

Benediction

As the “*Tantum Ergo*” begins, the priest and server return and kneel at the foot of the sanctuary. The server will retrieve the thurible and boat and present the boat to the priest. The priest will put incense in the Thurible. The Altar server will take the Boat from the priest and then hand the Thurible to the priest. During the singing, the priest will incense the Blessed Sacrament. The server holds back the side of the cope for the priest. The priest and server bow their heads before and after the Blessed Sacrament is incensed. After the incensation, the priest will say/chant the response and prayer. During the prayer, the server puts the incense on its stand and brings the Humeral Veil to the priest, handing him the clasp ends while placing the Veil over the shoulders of the priest. When the priest has fastened the clasp, the server will straighten the veil if necessary. The server, then, goes and retrieves the thurible and prepares for Benediction by kneeling in front of the altar near the middle (the thurifer should not kneel at a kneeler for this). At three points (usually the top, bottom, and the side of the cross pattern the priest makes with the Blessed Sacrament) the server swings the thurible with a double swing in a successive pattern for each point. After Benediction

and Divine Praises/Bendito, the priest will come down from the sanctuary. When the Tabernacle is closed, the server and all should stand. The server will take the Veil from the priest and return it to its place. Both genuflect and recess.

With two servers:

Exposition:

The altar servers lead the priest in and stay at the base of the altar as the priest proceeds into the Sanctuary to expose the Blessed Sacrament. After the priest returns to the base of the altar, the Thurifer hands him the boat and he will impose incense and incense the Blessed Sacrament as the hymn “O Salutaris” is sung. (NOTE: Incense is not blessed by the priest when the Blessed Sacrament is on the Altar). As he incenses, both servers will hold back the ends of the cope for the priest. After a moment of prayer, all go to sit down in the pews.

At the half-hour mark, the thurifer will place at least one unlit coal in the thurible with tongs.

Benediction

As the “Tantum Ergo” begins, the priest and servers return and kneel at the foot of the sanctuary. The thurifer will retrieve the thurible and boat and present the boat to the priest. The priest will put incense in the Thurible. The thurifer will take the Boat from the priest and then hand the Thurible to the priest. During the singing, the priest will incense the Blessed Sacrament. The servers hold back the sides of the cope for the priest. The priest and servers bow their heads before and after the Blessed Sacrament is incensed. After the incensation, the priest will say/chant the response and prayer. During the prayer, the thurifer remains in place, holding the thurible while the other server stands, genuflects, and brings the Humeral Veil to the priest, handing him the clasp ends while placing the Veil over the shoulders of the priest. When the priest has fastened the clasp, the server will straighten the veil if necessary. The server, then, goes second and prepares for Benediction by kneeling in front of the altar near the middle, while allowing space for the priest to ascend the Sanctuary steps of benediction (the thurifer should not kneel at a kneeler for this). At three points (usually the top, bottom, and the side of the cross pattern the priest makes with the Blessed

Sacrament) the thurifer swings the thurible with a double swing in a successive pattern for each point. Meanwhile, the second server rings the bells thrice. After Benediction and Divine Praises/Bendito, the priest will come down from the sanctuary. When the Tabernacle is closed, the servers and all should stand. The server will take the Veil from the priest and return it to its place. The thurifer returns the incense and boat to the stand. All genuflect and recess.

FUNERALS

Funerals are a time of grieving for families, so it is especially important that you show respect for God by being attentive not only to the needs of the priest but also to be sensitive to the needs of the family that may be struggling through the loss of a loved one. If you are requested to serve any Funeral Mass, please try to arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass begins. In general, a funeral Mass is very similar to a normal Sunday Mass. Here are some things that differ from a regular Sunday Mass.

- Before the entrance procession (or at the foot of the altar when there are cremated remains), a server presents the vessel with holy water to the priest.
- After the priest blesses the casket and the pall and cross are placed, we turn and process in.
- After communion, there will be a closing prayer. This is followed by “The Final Commendation.” The priest will use incense to incense the casket at the foot of the altar. One server will hold the book for the priest and the other will assist with the thurible.
- While the priest is incensing, the cross-bearer will prepare for the recession
- At the very end of the Mass, the priest or deacon will say “In peace let us take our brother/sister the place of rest.”
- If there is a casket, the priest will require the Holy Water again in the narthex.

WEDDINGS

Wedding Masses

A wedding Mass usually begins with a procession of the bride and her attendants; perhaps the groom and his attendants may be part of the procession and maybe the couple’s parents as well. The priest and servers are also part of the procession. You should line up in front of the priest and lead him down the main aisle. One of you may carry the processional cross and lead the procession to the sanctuary. If there are two others, they carry candles.

A wedding Mass is much like any other mass, except a Rite of Marriage book may take the place of the usual missal. After the entrance procession, Mass continues as usual. Listen carefully to the prayers, readings, and homily. The wedding ceremony takes place after the homily so be ready to help the priest as he ends his homily.

One server joins the priest as he stands facing the bride and groom. After the couple exchanges vows, a server brings the Holy Water and Sprinkler to the priest. The priest may also ask a server to hold the wedding book for the exchange of vows.

The rest of the Mass will be as normal.

The processional Cross will follow the bride and the groom.

Weddings without Mass

If it is a nuptial service, everything is the same as a wedding Mass, with the exception that immediately following the Universal Prayer is the Lord's Prayer followed by the Nuptial Blessing and final blessing.

QUINCEAÑERA MASSES

These are as a normal Sunday Mass except that there may be a procession with gifts and the priest may ask a server to hold the book when he gives a blessing to the young lady after communion.

IV. Particular Roles and Responsibilities of Senior Servers

Master of Ceremony (MC)

An MC is a Cassocked server who has been serving at SES for at least two years. The MC is responsible for the duties of all servers. If at all possible, he should have no other responsibilities (such as thurifer or Cross). The MC should arrive at least a half hour before Mass and should have reviewed with the priest the requirements of that Mass. The MC will assign all tasks. The MC treats all serves with kindness and respect, in turn, the servers owe the MC their respect and must follow his directives.

Thurifer

Incense is one of the most ancient and richest signs of prayer and worship in our liturgy. We read about frankincense as one of the gifts of the Magi at the nativity of Our Lord. We read of the prayers of the faithful rising as incense in the throneroom of heaven in Revelation. It was used in the Temple of the Old Testament. It is a fragrant perfume offered to God.

The two components of incensing are the thurible and the **boat** that holds the incense and is scooped into the **thurible**.

At Mass, Incense is used:

- ❖ During the processional and to incense the altar and cross at the beginning of Mass.
- ❖ To honor the Lord at the reading of the Gospel.
- ❖ At the preparation of the gifts to honor the offerings, the cross, the altar, the clergy, and the people.
- ❖ After each consecration to honor the Lord at the elevation of the host and chalice.

Responsibilities of a Thurifer

- ❖ Holding the thurible open to enable the priest to put incense in it, after which he blesses it with the Sign of the Cross without using any formula of words (unless the Blessed Sacrament is on the Altar).

- ❖ Carrying the thurible in procession (gently swinging if needed to keep the charcoal burning).
- ❖ Presenting the thurible to the priest or deacon when they need to use it.
- ❖ Incensing (in the absence of a deacon) the priest, concelebrant(s), and the people after the priest has incensed the offerings at Mass.

Boat Bearer

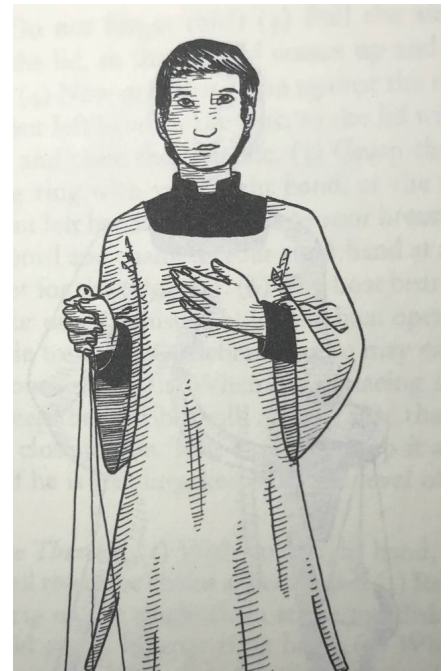
The boat boy or boat bearer is a junior altar server position. The role of a boat boy is to assist the thurifer, the senior altar server who carries the thurible. The boat bearer carries the boat, a small metal container, which holds the supplies of incense. The boat has a small spoon inside which is used to transfer the grains of incense onto the red-hot charcoals in the thurible. Although at times the boat bearer transfers the incense himself, more usually he simply holds the boat open as the priest performs this task.

Carrying the Thurible

If you are tall, carry it in your right hand, just below the top disk, fingers gripping the chain. You can hold the boat in one hand and the thurible swings with the other hand. If you are not carrying the boat as well, place your hand over your heart. If you aren't tall enough put the loop over your thumb and wrap the chain once or twice as needed around your hand.

Swing the bowl gently along your side. Do not overswing or the coals will spill out. Never swing it in front of you! Swinging keeps the coals alight and incenses the path.

To stop swinging lift your swinging hand up as the thurible is swinging to shorten its path and it will come to a halt. This takes practice.



Presenting the Thurible to the Priest

When presenting the thurible to the priest it is important to do so in a manner that is comfortable for you, and practical so that Father does not have to bend or stoop down.

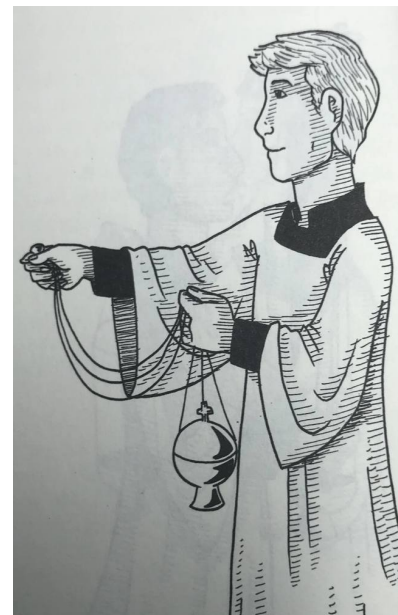
The procedure should go like this:

- ❖ With one hand, hold the thurible just under the disk (top of the chain).
- ❖ With your other hand, place your thumb through the ring which moves the center chain.
- ❖ Pull down on the chain so that the thurible is open with adequate room.
- ❖ With the remaining fingers of the hand pulling the chain, grasp all of the chains just above the top of the open thurible.
- ❖ Lift your left hand so that the thurible is level with the natural position of the hands of the priests.



This procedure is carried out standing at the beginning of Mass and at the Altar. It is done by kneeling (on at least one knee) when presenting the thurible at the chair before the gospel, and kneeling beside the priest at Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Hand the top ring to the priest to transfer the thurible. He will take it as he is comfortable holding it.



Incensing

To incense a person or object, face them and bow your head. Take the chains in your right hand about 6 inches above the bowl, holding the top of the chains against your chest, and raise the bowl to your eye level, never lower.

Have the chains running across your right hand, with the bowl hanging over the side of your first finger, secured by your thumb. You can then aim and control your incensation.

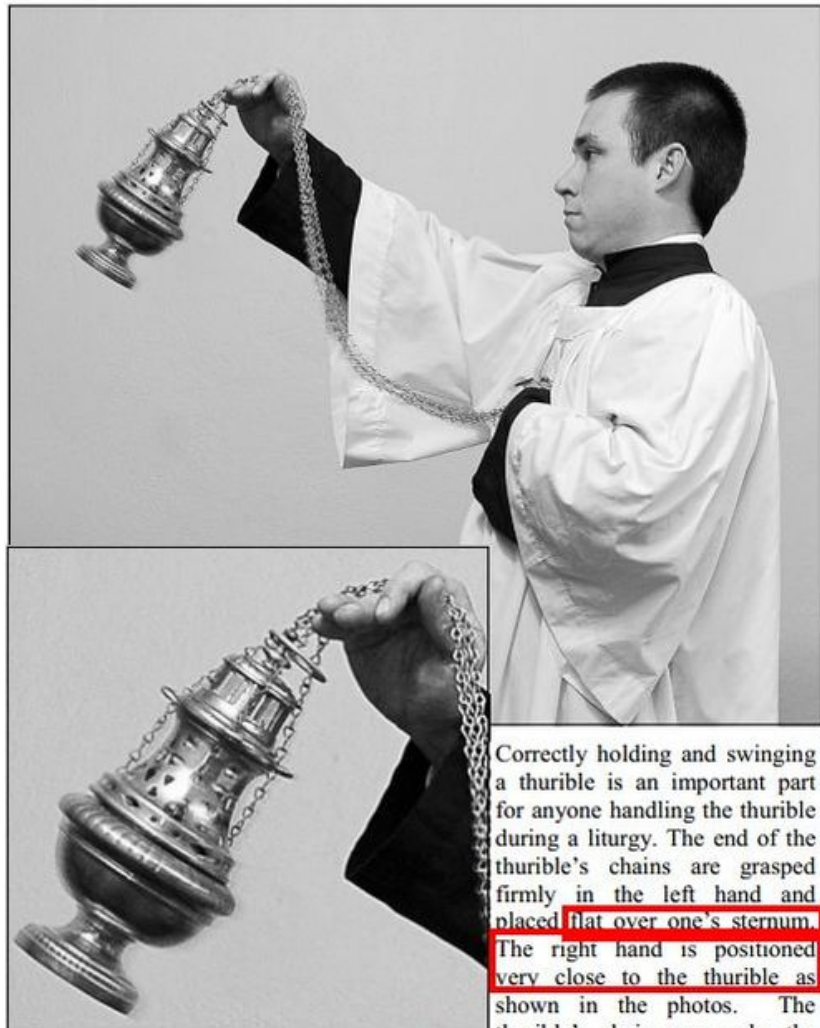
Holding the bowl well away from your face, push with your elbow and a little flick with your hand to move the bowl forward. It doesn't need to hit the chains on its return unless that makes it easier.

This takes practice!! Practice before Mass!

When done, return the bowl to your right side, bow to the person or sacred object and return.

<http://www.smellsbells.com/incense.pdf> Retrieved 1nov2012

Correctly Swinging a Thurible



Correctly holding and swinging a thurible is an important part for anyone handling the thurible during a liturgy. The end of the thurible's chains are grasped firmly in the left hand and placed flat over one's sternum. The right hand is positioned very close to the thurible as shown in the photos. The thurible's chain runs under the thurifer's pinkie, ring and middle fingers. It runs under the index finger and then over the top of the thumb. Other methods simply don't give the level of control necessary for properly manipulating a thurible.

Photograph courtesy of the Romanitas Press

Swings

There are two types of swings - a **single swing** and a **double swing**

- ❖ With a **double swing** you swing twice and return.
- ❖ With a **single swing** you swing once and return.

Number of Swings

- ❖ **Celebrant and groups of concelebrants** incensed with **three double swings**.
- ❖ **Congregation** is incensed with **three single swings**.
- ❖ **The Blessed Sacrament (both when elevated at Mass and at Benediction)** is incensed with **three double swings**.



Procession

<u>Cue</u>	<u>Starting Mark</u>	<u>Final Mark</u>	<u>Action</u>
Singing starts or Direction from the MC	Rear of the Church, in front of the cross	Behind the altar, two feet from the right edge	Begin processing down the aisle, carrying the thurible and swinging it. When you reach the end of the aisle, bow of the head, move to final mark. The priest (and deacon) will meet you.

Gospel Procession

<u>Cue</u>	<u>Starting Mark</u>	<u>Final Mark</u>	<u>Action</u>
Psalm Begins	Altar server Chair	Back Sacristy	When the psalm begins, retrieve the thurible and go to the next starting mark, carrying the thurible.
Reader Says “The Word of the Lord” after 2nd Reading	In line, in front of torches	In front of the priest	Before the gospel acclamation begins go to kneel in front of the priest. Wait for his cue to present the thurible. Then, go down the stairs to lead the gospel procession.

Gospel Procession begins	In front of Torches	Behind the ambo, on the far side	Lead the procession progressing to Ambo, pausing at the far edge of the altar, then move to the mark (candle holders will take their positions followed by deacon/presider)
"A reading from the Holy Gospel..."	Behind the ambo to the left about 4-5 steps	Immediately behind ambo facing the deacon or priest	Hand the thurible to deacon or priest When the deacon or priest returns the thurible, swing it to create smoke behind him as he reads.
"The Gospel of the Lord"	Behind the ambo about 4-5 steps	Altar Server Pew	The thurifer will reverently turn to his left, walk to the back sacristy to the thurible stand, replace the thurible with the boat in its stand, add two unlit charcoals, and return to his seat.
Offertory			
<u>Cue</u>	<u>Starting Mark</u>	<u>Final Mark</u>	<u>Action</u>
Chalice is placed on the altar	Altar seating area	Back Sacristy doorway	When the chalice is placed, bring the thurible to the mark.

The priest presents the Chalice	Sacristy Doorway	Behind the altar, two feet from the right edge	Present the thurible to the priest. When the priest hands the thurible back, incense the priest (and any concelebrants) and the people in the manner described above. Return to the back sacristy.
Consecration			
<u>Cue</u>	<u>Starting Mark</u>	<u>Final Mark</u>	<u>Action</u>
“The Lord be with you” “Dominus Vobiscum” “El Senor este con ustedes”	Back Sacristy	Altar server area, in line between torches	When the priest begins the preface, Go to the thurible, and add some incense. Then line up with the torches in the middle.
Sanctus Holy, Holy Santo, Santo	Altar Server area, Between torches	Kneeling at the foot of the altar	When the " <i>Sanctus</i> " begins, proceed with the torches to the foot of the Altar and kneel when the singing has concluded.
Elevation of the Body	Kneeling at the foot of the Altar	Kneeling at the foot of the Altar	Incense the Body of Christ "triple double" (2 swings, 3 times)

Elevation of the Chalice	Kneeling at the foot of the Altar	Kneeling at the foot of the Altar	Incense the Blood of Christ "triple double" (2 swings, 3 times)
"The Mystery of Faith" "Mysterium Fidei" "...de nuestra fe"	Kneeling at the foot of the Altar	Altar Server Pew	When the presider says or chants "<i>mysterium fidei</i>", stand and process with torches to the back sacristy and replace the thurible. That is the last action of the thurifer during the Mass

ARTICLES USED AT MASS



