

THE DEACON AT MASS

Diocese of Lexington 2024

At the Eucharistic Liturgy the Deacon:

- Proclaims the Gospel
- Sometimes Preaches
- Voice the needs of the people in the Prayer of the Faithful
- Ministers to the priest
- Prepares the altar and serves the celebration of the Sacrifice
- Distributes Communion to the faithful – especially under the species of wine
- Gives directions regarding people's gestures and posture

“When there is a deacon present at the Eucharistic celebration, he should exercise his ministry wearing sacred vestments.” (USCCB)

- a. The Worship Office will send a plan sheet. The deacons should carefully read the plan sheet well ahead of the liturgy, and ask for any clarifications from the Director of the Office.
- b. The deacon should arrive in sufficient time to meet with the Master of Ceremonies (if applicable) and familiarize himself with the church building and its arrangement. If others have prepared the liturgy, the deacon should meet with them.
- c. The deacon should become familiar with the books and other liturgical objects that he will be using, as well as the processional routes that he will be taking.
- d. The deacon should be skilled at public proclamation of the scriptures and should practice the reading(s) and prayers assigned to him with due diligence.
- e. The deacon should make sure that the items needed for preparing the altar are available and check that the ribbons of the liturgical books are in the appropriate places.
- f. The deacon should familiarize himself with any texts that he will be proclaiming (e.g., gospel reading, intercessions).
- g. The deacon should introduce himself to the servers and, with the Master of Ceremonies if one is to serve, rehearse or review any of the liturgical actions as necessary.
- h. The deacon should assist the bishop/priest-celebrant with any needs he may have prior to the start of Mass.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

CB *Ceremonial of Bishops*

GIRM *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (third typical edition)

IOM *Introduction to the Order of Mass* (USCCB)

RM *Roman Missal* (third typical edition)

RS *Redemptionis Sacramentum*

USCCB *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*

The Deacon at Mass With the Bishop

Introductory Rites

1. Procession
 - a. If carrying the Book of the Gospels (slightly elevated, about face-level), **the deacon precedes any vested ordained ministers**. On reaching the sanctuary, the reverence (bow; or genuflection if the tabernacle is present) is omitted and he places the Book on the altar. **He then kisses the altar and goes to his place.**
 - b. If not carrying the Book of the Gospels, he processes either behind the deacon carrying the Book of Gospels, or, if the Book of Gospels is not used, processes alone or with the second deacon in front of any concelebrants (or if no concelebrants, in front of the MC). On reaching the sanctuary, the reverence (bow; or genuflection if the tabernacle is present) is made, **then the deacon(s) kiss the altar and go to their places.**
 - c. *If incense is being used:* Deacons will wait with the thurifer after kissing the altar, and assist with the incensing as usual, one preceding the Bishop and one following. After the incensation the deacons and Bishop go to their places as usual.
2. As needed, the deacon assists the bishop with the incensation, if applicable:
 - Server/thurifer brings the thurible (**if more incense is needed the thurifer or MC will have placed it in the thurible prior to bringing the thurible CB 131**)
 - Deacon takes thurible and hands it to the bishop (top of chain goes to left hand)
 - Deacon(s) accompany the bishop as he incenses the altar (rubrics state no bow to altar when incensing it) and cross (bow to the cross before and after for incensing); (if 2 deacons – one precedes and one follows; if 1 deacon: precede the bishop)
 - When finished, deacon takes thurible and gives it to the server
2. After the incensation the deacon(s) goes to the chair with the bishop, sits next to him (deacon to proclaim the Gospel sits to bishop's right), and assists him as needed.
4. Penitential Act: Deacon's role pertains ONLY to the Third Form
 - a. If the Third Form is used, the deacon may announce the invocations after the bishop's invitation and a moment of silence. It is recommended that the texts in the Missal be used. **The deacon is to let the MC know if he needs the Missal before Mass begins.** If the deacon composes his own, he is to recall that these are not to be a listing of sins but Christological titles or remembrances of Christ's deeds on our behalf:

NOTE: It is recommended that all the texts that will be used in the liturgy be written out. This practice prevents last-minute preparations, poor word choice, and inadvertent error in doctrine. It is currently permissible for new invocations to be composed—following the pattern of the seven models given in the Roman Missal. If you are going to exercise that option, please be aware that they are to be Christocentric in nature. Therefore:

 1. The invocations are all directed to Christ. They are not directed to the Three Persons of the Trinity, or to the Father or Holy Spirit.

2. The invocations are based on a Christological title, or on what Christ has done for us. They are not to be a listing of our sins or failings.
 3. Images, titles, and events are suitably drawn from the readings of the day or from the feast or season being celebrated.
 - b. Another minister, such as the cantor, may announce the invocations for the Third Form. *RM*
 - c. Note that the *Kyrie, Eleison* alone is not the Penitential Act. *GIRM* 51-52
5. Sprinkling Rite: Replaces the Penitential Act and the *Kyrie*
- a. **If the sprinkling rite is used the bishop prefers to carry the bowl/bucket himself. The deacon(s) remain at their place.**
 - b. Alternatively, in a large assembly, the bishop may ask the deacon to assist in the sprinkling.
 - c. “If the greeting and blessing take place at the door, the bishop may sprinkle the people during the entrance procession” (IOM #74).

Liturgy of the Word

1. The deacon listens attentively to the readings, takes part in the silences, and actively participates in the responses. If no qualified reader is available the deacon proclaims the other readings, in addition to the gospel.
2. Gospel Procession: *GIRM* 175
 - a. The gospel acclamation begins and all stand, **except for the bishop.**
 - b. The deacon, standing, assists the bishop with the incense (if being used), holding the incense boat while the bishop imposes and blesses the incense. Deacon gives the boat back to the thurifer, who moves away.
 - c. The deacon makes a profound bow before the bishop (**who is still seated**) and asks in a low voice: “Your blessing, Father”
 - d. The bishop responds, making the sign of the cross: “May the Lord be in your heart and on your lips that you may proclaim his gospel worthily and well, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (at which time the deacon makes the sign of the cross and responds, “Amen”).
 - e. The deacon then goes to the altar, bows and takes up the Book of the Gospels, and following the thurifer and candle bearers (if present), and all proceed to the ambo.
 - f. Keeping his hands together and maintaining good eye contact, the deacon greets the assembly: “The Lord be with you.” He then announces the reading (A reading from the holy Gospel according to...) as he makes the Sign of the Cross on the Book with his thumb. He then signs himself with the three crosses (forehead, lips, breast) in like manner.
 - g. If incense is being used, he is handed the censer, bows, incenses the Book of the Gospels – using three “double” swings of the censer – bows again, hands the censer back to the thurifer, and then proclaims the Gospel.
 - h. At the conclusion, he makes eye contact with the assembly and announces, “The Gospel of the Lord”, *without elevating the Book*. **He then takes the Book of Gospels open to the bishop to kiss. On occasion, the bishop may offer a blessing with the Book of Gospels after kissing it. The bishop in this case will hand off the crozier, take the Book, closing it, and make the sign of the cross with the Book. The deacon should move out of the way for this to happen. The deacon moves out of**

the way for the bishop to go to the ambo for the homily, then the Book of Gospels may be taken to a side table (or other appropriate place) or given to the MC. Deacon sits as usual for the homily.

- *Note: on Easter Sunday and on Pentecost day, the Sequence is sung before the Gospel Acclamation.*

3. Normally, the bishop preaches the homily.

4. A period of silence is observed after the homily. *GIRM* 45, 56, 66

5. Dismissal of the catechumens: The bishop will dismiss any catechumens.

6. The Creed is said by all – no role for the deacon unless the people need to be cued to stand.

7. The Universal Prayer/Prayer of the Faithful:

- After the bishop introduces the Prayer of the Faithful, the deacon (normally) announces the intentions from the ambo or another suitable place. If sung, he may defer to the cantor *GIRM* 71, 138, 177, 197
- Deacon moves to ambo after or near the end of the Profession of Faith (or the period of silence following the homily if the Creed is not said as on weekdays). Note: Deacon is at the ambo and ready prior to the introduction by the bishop.
- Bishop introduces the prayers
- Deacon announces the intentions and the people respond with words or silence after each invocation. The response may also be sung.
- Deacon remains at the ambo while the bishop concludes.
- Deacon(s) moves to the altar to begin the preparation of the altar after the concluding prayer and all reply, "Amen."*

In the composition of the Prayer of the Faithful, the following points should be kept in mind:

- "As a rule, the series of intentions is to be" (*GIRM* #70) for:
 - The needs of the universal church
 - Public authorities and the salvation of the whole world
 - People burdened by any kind of difficulty
 - The local faith community / assembly
 - Many parishes have the final intention for the dead, including the one for whom this Mass is being offered.
- The petitions are not prayers themselves; we are naming groups for the assembly to pray for; therefore, one of the following patterns is usually used:
 - For...that... (announcing who and what to pray for)
 - That... (announcing what to pray for)
 - For... (announcing who to pray for)
 - After the petition, the deacon should pause and make eye contact with the assembly and then say, "We pray to the Lord" (or the equivalent). Eye contact should be maintained as the people respond, in keeping with the dialogic nature of the prayer.
- Please note that these are "general" intercessions
 - They ought to be petitions that the assembly can, by and large, agree on.
 - They ought not become a "mini-homily" or a place to make a particular point.
 - They ought not single out individuals ("For Uncle George with cancer...") but may include individuals as part of a group ("For George, and for all who have cancer, ...").
 - They should not be secret ("For a special intention"); otherwise the assembly cannot rightly give its assent.
- They are petitions, not prayers of thanksgiving; the great prayer of thanksgiving follows shortly.
- The response by the people should be a general prayer that God would hear the invocation (e.g., Lord, hear our prayer). If the people are not familiar with the response, it should be announced before the intercessions and/or be included in a participation aid.

Liturgy of the Eucharist: Preparation of the Altar and Gifts

- Bishop remains at chair, deacon(s), assisted by servers, prepare(s) the altar – deacon(s) particularly take(s) care of the sacred vessels. **Note: this is a minor part of the Mass, and as such should be completed swiftly and efficiently, with both deacons assisting throughout.**
 - a. The deacon ensures that the necessary linens, vessels, and other necessary items are placed and properly arranged on the altar. While assisted by servers/acolytes, the care of the sacred vessels belongs to the deacon. *GIRM 178*
 - ✓ Corporal – 2 if necessary, **placed so that they meet/slightly overlap in the center of the altar.**
 - ✓ Missal. **The bishop does not use a missal stand and wants the Missal open to the Prayer Over the Gifts on the altar.**
 - ✓ Bishop's chalice, and other chalices for distribution *RS 105*: "Praiseworthy... use a main chalice of larger dimensions..."; **The Bishop prefers the large host to be brought up with the rest of the hosts in the vessel, no paten is needed except during COVID pandemic.**
 - i. Unless chalice is to be prepared at the credence table *GIRM 73*
 - ii. NOTE: if additional chalices are pre-filled and left, suitably covered on the credence table, they are brought to the altar by the deacons *after* the gifts have been received (*Newsletter* September 2004 Bishop's Committee on the Liturgy)
 - iii. NOTE: **Bishop's chalice is not placed on the corporal**
 - ✓ Purificators (at least one for each chalice)
 - ✓ Pall (optional *GIRM 118, c, 142*) **A pall may be brought only if needed (insects, etc.; normally the Bishop does not use a pall; NOTE: a pall is used/all vessels are covered during the pandemic)**
 - b. **The Missal is placed to the far left of the corporal; additional chalices are to be placed on the far right of the corporal, allowing ample space in the center so that the symbolism of one bread one cup shared by all may be prominent. The bishop does not want the deacon to turn the pages of the Missal for him.**
 - c. The deacons assist the bishop in receiving the gifts. The Bishop will receive the gifts from the people, then hand them off to the deacons, who then take the bread and wine to the altar. **Servers assist if needed. *GIRM 73, 178* The bishop usually returns to his chair - especially if there are many chalices to be poured**
 - d. It is to the bishop to place the bread and wine on the altar (*GIRM 140*). **The deacon takes the wine and prepares the chalice(s) by pouring wine into them. The second deacon either holds the vessel of bread (if only one pitcher of wine), or the server holds the bread while the wine is being poured. If necessary, the deacon places the vessel of bread off to the side, not on the corporal. *DEACON SHOULD NOTE THE NUMBER OF CONCELEBRANTS AND POUR THE APPROPRIATE AMOUNT OF WINE INTO THE MAIN CHALICE.***
 - e. Water is added to the main chalice. When adding the water, the deacon says inaudibly: "By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity." **The bishop approaches the altar, and a**

deacon hands him the vessel of bread. A deacon then hands the (main) chalice to the bishop.

- f. The empty flagon is handed to one of the servers; if necessary, the deacon may take it to the credence table.
- g. If incense is used, the deacon assists the bishop by holding the boat while incense is imposed.
 - ✓ Deacon takes thurible and hands it to the bishop (top of chain goes to left hand)
 - ✓ Deacon(s) accompany the bishop as he incenses the altar as at the entrance procession
 - ✓ One deacon incenses bishop, then the concelebrants, then the people, bowing before and after swinging the thurible in the usual way (3 “double swings”).
The other deacon remains near the Bishop, at his place on one side of the altar.
 - ✓ When finished, deacon gives thurible to the server.
 - ✓ The deacons remain in place at the altar during the Prayer Over the Gifts.

Liturgy of the Eucharist: The Eucharistic Prayer

- a. Bishop gives zucchetto to deacon on his right – deacon gives it to the MC or places it on the bishop’s chair if the chair is within easy reach.
- b. The deacon should find out which Eucharistic Prayer will be used and watch for the epicletic gesture in order to time when he kneels.
- c. The deacons’ location is to the far right and left of the altar, behind the Bishop. Deacons should not stand between any concelebrants and the altar (CB #153).
- d. Any concelebrants come near the altar after the people’s “Amen” after the Prayer Over the Gifts. Deacons stand behind the concelebrants (or to the far side steps near the altar if at the cathedral), but near enough to assist if needed. If the chalice must be covered by a pall, or if a lidded ciborium is used, the deacon is to remove the covers before the epiclesis. CB 155 The deacon may place the lids again, if needed, after the Consecration
- e. From the epiclesis through the elevation of the chalice, the deacons kneel if both are able. If not, they remain standing and make a profound bow as the bishop genuflects after each elevation. Otherwise, the deacon stands for the Eucharistic Prayer.
- f. No incense is to be used at the Consecration, nor should the bells be used during the Eucharistic Prayer.
- g. The bishop alone announces the memorial acclamation.
- h. At the final doxology, one deacon stands next to the bishop and elevates the (main) chalice while the bishop elevates the paten and intones the doxology. No other vessels are elevated—by either concelebrants or other deacons.
- i. The deacons do not intone or mouth the words of the doxology. After joining the assembly in the Amen, the deacon returns the chalice to the altar.

Liturgy of the Eucharist: the Communion Rite

- a. For the Lord's Prayer – bishop and concelebrants' gesture is "with hands extended" as he prays this prayer. The deacon does not normally mimic the gesture of the priest, therefore he prays the prayer with his hands joined. *CB* 159
 - b. After the bishop has said the prayer for peace and the greeting "*The peace of ...*" and the people have made the response "*And with your spirit*" the deacon may invite all ("if appropriate") to exchange the sign of peace, saying, with hands joined and facing the people: "*Let us offer each other the sign of peace.*" *GIRM* 181
 - c. Deacon's sign of peace is with the bishop (**after at least 2 concelebrants – *CB* 161**) and those in the sanctuary.
 - d. During the end of the sign of peace/just before the fraction rite the servers bring the deacon the other vessels needed for distribution of the consecrated hosts.
 - e. **The bishop breaks the large host. Deacons may help fraction into vessels.**
 - f. **When there are many concelebrants: as one deacon continues to fraction into ciboria, one deacon takes one of the vessels with consecrated hosts and pass in silence to concelebrants, who take one. Deacon returns vessel to the altar. With one or a few concelebrants, the Bishop will offer the consecrated hosts to them. NOTE: during COVID intinction is used for Bishop and concelebrants, and the deacon does not receive from the Chalice.**
 - g. After the bishop's communion under both species, the deacon(s) receive(s) under both kinds from the bishop himself and then assists the bishop in giving communion to the people (other deacons, extraordinary ministers, the faithful). **Concelebrants go to the altar to receive from the main chalice.** Deacon(s) may also assist in giving sacred vessels to extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.
 - h. The deacon should be familiar with the usual communion practices of the community where he is serving: the location of the communion stations, the path of the communion procession, the manner in which Extraordinary Ministers receive communion and their vessels, how the choir and those unable to be part of the communion procession are to receive, etc.
 - i. If Communion is given under both kinds, the deacon ministers the chalice. *GIRM* 182
 - j. Deacons and EM's consume what is left of Precious Blood in their chalices (if not consumed by the priest). This should be done at the altar or the credence table, not "on the run".
 - k. The deacon collects any remaining Consecrated Bread to be reserved in the tabernacle. Care should be taken with any fragments remaining on the corporal or in the sacred vessels. *GIRM* 183
 - l. The deacon purifies the vessels at the credence table. *GIRM* 183 The purification of the chalice is done with water alone or with wine and water, which is then drunk by whoever does the purification. The paten is usually wiped clean with the purificator. *GIRM* 279. Vessels may also be left suitably covered to purify after Mass. **The Bishop's preference is that all purification is done at the credence table – even when a priest is purifying. During Covid the Bishop purifies the chalice and sometimes all the vessels**
 - m. Corporal is removed from the altar either by the deacon or a server, carefully folding it in on itself.
- Regarding Communion from the Tabernacle: "It is preferable that the faithful be able to receive hosts consecrated in the same Mass" (RS 89). "It is most desirable that the faithful, just as the Bishop himself is bound to do, receive the Lord's Body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass...so that even by means of the signs Communion may stand out more clearly as a participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated" (GIRM 85). cf IOM 134*

Concluding Rite

- Deacon may make announcements after the Prayer After Communion, unless the pastor prefers to himself. *GIRM* 184 The announcements are not made from the ambo.
- Greeting by bishop: “The Lord be with you.” R. “And with your spirit.”
- If bishop is going to use solemn blessing or prayer over the people, the deacon then says, “*Bow down for the blessing.*”
- After the bishop's final blessing, the deacon, with hands joined, dismisses the people, using one of the 4 options found in the Missal. see The Order of Mass #144
- **The deacons and concelebrants do not kiss the altar. On cue from the MC, they proceed to in front of the altar, where the Bishop joins them after kissing the altar. All make the sign of reverence (bow/genuflect) together, then turn and process out: deacons together in front of concelebrants or MC.**

The Confirmation Mass

1. Up to and including the proclamation of the Gospel, all is the same.
2. After the Gospel, all are seated, the bishop receives the mitre, and the candidates are presented.
3. The bishop gives the homily.
4. The candidates renew their baptismal promises – deacons stay seated.
5. The bishop invites all to pray, lays hands on the candidates and says the prayer. **Near the end of the prayer (asking the Lord to give them the gifts of the Holy Spirit: “... the spirit of wisdom and understanding, ...” one deacon goes to the credence table and gets the bishop’s small vessel of Chrism oil, leaving the lid on the credence table. During the pandemic, sanitizing wipes are used after each anointing, therefore the second deacon or concelebrant gets those.**
6. After the prayer, the people respond, “Amen”, and the deacon takes the open vessel of oil and stands on the bishop’s right. The bishop dips his thumb each time into the vessel and anoints each candidate. **The deacon with the sanitizing wipes stand behind the Bishop and offers a wipe after each anointing (deacon holds the wipe). After the Bishop wipes his thumb on the wipe, the deacons places that wipe in a small baggie, and takes out another wipe.**
7. After all to be confirmed have been anointed, the deacon returns the vessel to the credence table and replaces the lid. **The baggy with the used wipes and any remaining wipes are also returned to the credence table.**
8. While the bishop washes his hands, the deacon goes to the ambo for the Universal Prayer.
9. The rest of the Mass is as usual.
10. There is a solemn blessing for this Mass!