

St Joseph's Acolyte Mass Cheat Sheet

This sheet gives an Acolyte a simple run down of the Mass and what roles need to be performed at each Mass.

Note the guide will refer to the 'Ambo Side' and 'Chair side' of the Sanctuary as it is important to know which side to be standing on so as not to have to cross in front of the altar and Tabernacle unnecessarily during the Mass.

Before Mass:

- 1, Vest into either an alb and cincture or preferably a black soutane and surplus (especially if you are MC)
- 2, Confirm the roster of servers so you know how many to expect
- 3, Confirm the Blessed Sacrament is present in the ciboria in the Tabernacle and ensure sufficient supply is in place
- 4, Ensure the altar is ready with two or 6 candles
- 5, Ensure the Ambo is ready with the lectionary open on the correct readings
- 6, Ensure the Prayers of the Faithful are open and ready on the correct Mass in the shelf of the Ambo
- 7, Ensure Father has a glass of water and his glasses and intentions for the Mass are placed on the edge of the altar nearest the chair
- 8, Ensure the book of collects is open and ready with the ribbon in place
- 9, Ensure the Missal is open and ready with the red ribbon in place for the collect and the correct preface and Eucharistic prayer is ready and ribbon in place, especially check this for feast days. Place the missal on the riser and place them both on the credence table.
- 10, Place the Chalice on the credence table ensuring the purifier, pattern, host, pall and corporal are on top of it in that order. If a chalice veil and burse can be used (we only have a white and green set) ensure the corporal is placed inside the burse which is placed on top of the veil
- 11, ensure a cruet of water is ready and covered with a finger towel and on the small plate
- 12, ensure the lavabo and jug with a towel is also ready on the credence table
- 13, ensure the open, bowl like brass ciborium is also standing by on the credence table
- 14, make sure the bells are on the ambo side and the key is in the Tabernacle door and ready
- 15, Check and confirm that the gifts for offertory are ready (wine and ciborium of host)
- 16, once the sanctuary is ready lay out the priest(s), deacon(s) and/or Bishop's vestments ready for Mass in order of Chasuble (or dalmatic in the case of a Deacon), stall, cincture, alb and finally amice if one is used. Then place the headset microphone on the far left of the vestments with a copy of the bulletin and hymn sheet for Father to check over before Mass. Father may also ask you for the intentions to familiarise himself with them prior to Mass beginning.
- 17, ensure your servers are ready and candles on the sanctuary are lit
- 18, say the St Steven's Guild prayer and get ready to process in

If there is a MC rostered you will not need to organise the servers and readers etc, but in the absence of a MC make sure all roles are accounted for.

Mass of the Catechumens (Liturgy of the Word)

Entrance

With a MC – you proceed with the cross (if you are carrying it) to the chair side and place the cross on the hooks and stay on the chair side

Without a MC – you do the above but after hanging up the cross proceed directly to the Ambo side in readiness for the readers

Collect

If there is an MC and you are not the book bearer you simply need to stay on the chair side and assist the priest where needed and ensure the book bearer is correctly placed

Without a MC you go down to the left side foot of the sanctuary after the collect and bring up the lector.

Readings

After the first reading if the psalm is to be sung you remove the lector from the ambo and take to the side if they are to read the second reading OR if they are only doing one reading you take them immediately down to the left side foot of the sanctuary again and they return to their seat.

Once the psalm is in its final verse you again retreat down to the left side foot of the sanctuary to collect the second lector for the second reading (if there is one) otherwise you prompt the initial lector to begin the second reading.

At the conclusion of the second reading the lector should then read the acclamation if it is not sung, once the acclamation has been read the lector is taken down to the left side front sanctuary steps and returns to their seat for the Gospel.

You then stay on the Ambo side.

In the case where there is an MC you would join the candle bearers in front of the altar for the Gospel acclamation so that you may be ready to come to the Ambo side for the presentation of the gifts.

Gospel

For the Gospel you simply stand to the side facing the priest, when the servers have returned the candles to the credence table you all sit down at the same time.

Sermon

After the sermon the priest will invite people to stand for the Profession of Faith, if Father Joseph is saying the Mass you will need to make sure the book bearer has the Profession of Faith open and ready from the book of collects.

Profession of Faith (Creed)

If there is no MC once you hear "We Believe in one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic..." proceed down to the left front of the sanctuary again ready to bring up the lector for the prayers of intercession (prayers of the faithful), bring them up and ensure the Lectionary has been removed and placed in the shelf of the Ambo and place the prayers of the faithful book on the ambo ready.

Prayers of Intercession (Prayers of the Faithful)

Once they are said you can show the lector back down again and back to their seat, and signal the candle bearers to get ready to go down to collect the people bringing up the offertory.

Mass of the Faithful (Liturgy of the Eucharist)

Offertory

If there is an MC after the Creed and the POF you go straight to the credence table and collect the missal off the risers and lay it out on the altar, you then collect the Chalice and take it to the altar, remove the veil, lay out the corporal and pattern with the host upon it and make ready for the offertory.

This preparation of the altar is the responsibility of the Acolyte or MC, but must be done regardless.

A server may bring the chalice to the MC or Acolyte whilst they are at the altar to speed things up.

Once you have prepared the altar the offertory procession should be nearly at the foot of the sanctuary the priest will receive the gifts pass them to the servers flanking him and then proceed to the altar. You ensure that the servers get ready for the presentation of the water and wine and the washing of the hands.

** note a solemn mass (with a thurible) the priest's hands are not washed until after the altar has been censed. If the altar is to be censed you need to remove the missal accordingly and replace once censuring is complete.

Then the priest's hands are washed.

**If it is a solemn Mass the servers, after washing the priest's hands retreat to the sacristy with the thurifer and head out the side door around to the foyer ready to do torches for the consecration.

You need to make sure this is all done and the Priest has everything he needs, check to see that the bells are out and if you have a server to ring them, that they are ready or if you are ringing the bells that you too are ready.

Sanctus

Once the Sanctus starts you move to credence table area and when the Sanctus is finished knell with the bell ringer and any other servers present.

Consecration

The bells are rung once at the transubstantiation ("Lord let your spirit come upon these gifts..." when the priest's hands are outstretched.

The bells are rung three times (three medium rings in row) for the major Elevation of the Host and the Precious Blood. This should be "ring, pause, ring, pause, ring."

Do not place the bells back on the ground until the priest has invited the congregation to profess their mystery of faith "dying you destroyed our death, rising..." this way when you place the bells back down if you happen to knock them no one will hear them ring.

Doxology

"Through Him, with Him, in Him..." when this is complete all servers stand

**if it is a solemn mass the torch bearers, boat bearer and thurifer will then stand up, bow and retreat back down the nave and head around the side back on to the Sanctuary through the sacristy.

Sign of Peace

At the sign of peace all servers should be back on the sanctuary, bow to the priest to offer their peace and then the priest hands are sanitised by a server and the Missal is removed from the altar. At this point you should go to the Tabernacle, genuflect then open the door and genuflect again before removing the Blessed Sacrament. Remember Our Lord is also a King, 'Corpus Christi Rex', when you greet a monarch you always bow when you receive them and bow again when you retreat, Our Lord is not only King by Divine Life itself so we genuflect on our right knee accordingly out of respect.

You then take the ciboria down to the low altar and place them down, removing the lids. As you are leaving the presence of our Lord again you genuflect or profound bow before moving to the Chair side of the Sanctuary in readiness to bring up the extraordinary ministers. If there is a MC you still stand on the chair side in readiness to receive communion from the priest.

Angus Dei

“Lamb of God...” Once the Agnus Dei is completed you, the servers, the MC and the congregation are all kneeling.

The Fraction & Priest's Communion

The priest will then break the host in three pieces, retaining two half-moon sized pieces and placing a small fragment into the Chalice.

The priest will then reveal the exposed host above the chalice or pattern by saying “This is the Lamb of God, who takes away...” once the priest has received communion of the host he then drinks from the Chalice at which point a server will ring the fourth bell (a single bell) to indicate the precious blood has been consumed.

At this point all servers rise and if there is no MC, you proceed down to the foot of the sanctuary and collect the extraordinary ministers, ensure they all profound bow to the altar (not the tabernacle because Our Lord is exposed and present on the altar) and bring them up single file behind the chair ready to receive communion from the priest.

If there is a MC you simply receive communion with the Extraordinary Ministers when they are brought up by the MC.

Communion

You then also receive communion, turn to the servers and offer communion accordingly so the priest may immediately proceed to the nave to give communion

If you are also to be an extraordinary minister and there is no other suitably instituted Acolyte or MC to purify the vessels (remembering that other than priests and deacons the only lay people able to purify vessels are Acolytes) you must place the pall on the Chalice, although it is far better that the Precious Blood be consumed prior to communion taking place.

Post Communion

The only person who may purify vessels at the altar is the priest or deacon, an acolyte may purify but only at the credence table and if the acolyte is to purify, the Precious Blood must be consumed at the altar first. The Chalice may then be purified at the credence table BUT not before being consumed.

After communion is completed the extraordinary ministers bring up their ciboria, place them on the altar, give a profound bow in reverence to leaving the presence of Our Lord and return to the bottom right of the sanctuary steps. They will remain standing there until you replace the ciboria in the Tabernacle and close the door.

As soon as the priest has placed his ciboria or pattern on the altar he will have his hands washed by one or two servers and return to the chair to sit and pray.

You then replace the ciboria in the Tabernacle and return to the altar to fold up the corporal and place it back in the burse. A server should bring the burse forward for you to do this.

You now return to your seat on the chair side ready to take the cross (if you are carrying it) or do the book (if you are doing this).

It is very important to understand that as Acolyte you must remove and replace the host in the Tabernacle and be first choice for server to give Communion. These roles are not filled by a MC, but if you are both MC and Acolyte you must do both.

A MC can fold up the corporal however, and may do so from time to time.

It is important to remember that the MC is the head of Liturgical action on the sanctuary and only a priest or deacon may overrule him, but even this is frowned upon. A MC has a deep understanding of the Mass and the rubrics, it is quite common for a MC to know more about the Mass than the priest or deacon and this is not a bad thing. The role of priest is a very complicated one requiring a vast array of duties, pressures and needs. A priest needs to be able to rely on his servers and most of all his MC's to be able to direct and run the Mass and other sacred ceremonies correctly. But always remembering that the priest acts as Jesus, Our Lord, in the Mass and we need to be mindful of his ultimate authority in the Mass.

An Acolyte should never question a MC's actions or second guess them by asking the priest on the Sanctuary or during a ceremony. He may only do something contrary to the order given by the MC when instructed to do so by the priest or deacon.

General Rubrics:

This guide gives you a broad understanding of the liturgical actions of the Mass it does not tell you about general rubrics like showing the correct reverence and movement about the sanctuary etc. Therefore below I have outlined some general rules of when to do what. As always though if you are in doubt you need only ask for clarification from Derek or myself.

To be clear you must genuflect when:

- Leave or join the Sanctuary not holding anything
- Pass the direct line of the Tabernacle
- Open or close the Tabernacle
- approach or leave the presence of the Holy Eucharist

You must profound bow:

- If you are doing any of the above things whilst holding or carrying something, except a candle or torch when you do a modest bow
- Leaving or joining the sanctuary with lectors or extraordinary ministers
- Leaving or joining the presence of the priest, deacon or Bishop
- Approaching someone to cense them or retreating after censing them
- During the verse in the Creed "and by the power of the Holy Spirit He became incarnate of the Virgin Mary and was made man."

You must modest bow:

- When doing any of the things in the first two sections when carrying a candle or torch
- Whenever you speak or repeat the name "Jesus".

Remember that you only use one hand to carry a torch and must carry it with whatever hand is on the outside of your body when in procession, i.e. if you were walking down the nave towards the sanctuary and you were on the left hand side of the procession you would hold the torch with you left hand.

You also use only one hand to carry a towel, incense boat or single ciboria and you must place the spare hand over your chest.

When carrying the Chalice you must always use two hands; one at the stem of the base and one hand placed over the burse or corporal.

Remember that as the most senior server you need to set the example by LEADING BY EXAMPLE. You need to ensure that you are as mindful of the rubrics of the mass as a MC or Deacon would be. As the acolyte or MC you determine how the Mass runs and by your example lead the congregation in their reverence.

Thank you for your continued and much appreciated service to St Joseph's and I hope this guide helps to enrich your vital role in our sacred liturgy.

God Bless,

Hugh Jones
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