

ALTAR SERVER INTRODUCTORY RITES

ABBREVIATIONS

USCCB	=	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
CB	=	Ceremonial of Bishops
PASTOR	=	Fr. Eugene Radosevich, Pastor of St. Luke, Eureka, IL
DOL	=	Dictionary of the Liturgy
CCCG	=	Catechism of the Catholic Church Glossary
CCT	=	Catechism of the Council of Trent
CMRR	=	Ceremonial of the Modern Roman Rite: The Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours (by Msgr. Peter J. Elliot, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1995.)
GIRM	=	General instruction of the Roman Missal: July 2000 (An English Language Study Translation by the Secretariat for the Liturgy of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops)

I. PRINCIPLES OF WORSHIP THAT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW

CMRR #4: ...These principles are: the need for God to be at the center of worship, the value of "noble simplicity", the continuity of our tradition, fidelity to the Church and the pastoral dimension of liturgy...

A. God at the Center

CMRR #5: All worship ought to be centered on God...

CMRR #6: Reverence in every gesture expresses the faith that is within us. It proceeds from "wonder and awe". Therefore reverence on the part of the [ministers]...should communicate to worshipers a sense of the sacred.

CMRR #6: Reverence should express devotion, the heart set on God, the undivided heart...They see a man whose gestures and words say, "God alone matters . . . together let us go to Him."

B. Noble Simplicity

CMRR #9: ...This principle may be summed up as "noble simplicity", the phrase which captures one of the liturgical intentions of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council.

CMRR #10: That ceremonial should be "noble" excludes both a casual and careless style and a pretentious and self-conscious ritualism... Nobility means offering the best for God: noble actions, gestures, and also noble altars vessels, vestments, etc.

CMRR #12: "Noble simplicity" is unfortunately often reduced to "simplicity. In practice this means carrying out rites in the easiest way possible, or using cheap objects for furniture, vessels and vestments...

CMRR #14: The pragmatic approach to noble simplicity in ceremonial is achieved through attention to fine detail: how one genuflects, how people move in harmony, knowing what object is required at this particular moment of worship, what to prepare in the sacristy, etc...

C. The Continuity of Our Tradition

CMRR #16: Continuity is the third principle which has direct bearing on good ceremonial. There is a recognizable continuity between the preconconciliar and postconciliar forms of the Roman Rite, ideally "the unity and coherence of the Church's tradition.

CMRR #17: ...An emphasis on the "sacred action" frees the liturgy from didacticism, from adding little homilies, explanations and directions.

CMRR #18: The close relationship between music and ceremonial is part of the continuity of our tradition. Ceremonial is inseparable from music because the faithful participate through watching and hearing at the same time... A community accustomed to good ceremonial usually expects good church music, and vice versa...

CMRR #21: The cathedral liturgy of the bishop is meant to be the model for all rites celebrated throughout the "particular Church", the diocese...Some of the problems in recent decades have been caused because various skills and customs have been forgotten...

D. Fidelity to the Church

CMRR #25: The fourth essential principle of good liturgy is fidelity to the Church. Fidelity is best understood in terms of "communion", an awareness of the nature of the Church which is favored in our times...Our fidelity is thus a concrete sign to our people of communion with our bishop and of our communion with Rome...

CMRR #26: As servants of the Church, each of us should regard the sacred liturgy as greater than ourselves...

CMRR #28: ...In the practice of liturgy, fidelity necessarily includes obedience, recognizing specific limits and accepting liturgical authority...

CMRR #30: Fidelity also requires an understanding of how "liturgy" is a form of worship which is distinct from other communal or personal forms of worship and prayer...

E. Pastoral Liturgy

CMRR #31: ...Therefore the fifth major principle for developing good ceremonial is pastoral concern for Christ's faithful. A truly pastoral liturgy can only be realized when it is formed by the preceding four principles: seeing liturgy as God-centered, seeking noble simplicity, maintaining the continuity of our tradition and being faithful to the liturgies of the Church...

CMRR #32: ...However, this is not the "creativity" of inventing novelties or of trying to entertain people...

CMRR #36: ...In willing the best, one strives to give the faithful the finest forms of worship which raise them to participate with joy in the foretaste of heaven and pledge of eternal life. A sense of celestial splendor is evident when the Eucharist is celebrated reverently and well.

THE PARTS OF THE MASS AND THEIR MEANING

USCCB: The Mass follows a “fundamental structure which has been preserved throughout the centuries down to our own day” (CCC #1346). Though the Mass is one united act of worship, it consists of many parts, each with its own purpose and meaning. The entries in this document follow the order in which the parts occur in the Mass and have been adapted from the USCCB website¹, or the GIRM.

II. REVERENCE

PASTOR: Just as “the cathedral liturgy of the bishop is meant to be the model for all rites celebrated throughout the "particular Church", the diocese...” (See above), so too, some of the actions of the priest are the model for the other ministers.

A. The Hands

CMRR #188: All liturgical gestures made with the hands are significant... Such use of the hands never distracts the people but is an expression of peace and an invitation to prayer and recollection.

CMRR #189: 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.

CMRR #192: At no point in the liturgy is there any need to be uncertain about the position of the hands. In particular: (a) when handling an object with one hand, the other hand always rests flat on the breast, fingers joined naturally; (b) when the celebrant, deacon and servers sit, they rest their palms flat on the knees, fingers together, elbows bent in a relaxed way. The celebrant is free to use his hands as he wishes, with obvious discretion, during the homily and when

¹ <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/upload/parts-of-the-mass.pdf>
<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/index.cfm>
<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/liturgy-of-the-word/index.cfm>
<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/liturgy-of-the-eucharist/index.cfm>
<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/concluding-rites/index.cfm>

reading notices. But he should not add gestures of his own at other times.

B. The Sign of the Cross

CMRR #193: The celebrant should make the sign of the cross clearly and without haste. He begins with hands joined, then makes the sign with the whole right hand, fingers joined together from forehead to breast just above where the left hand rests ("In the name of the Father and of the Son"), then to the left shoulder and finally to the right shoulder ("and of the Holy Spirit"). He immediately joins his hands once more.

CMRR #194: ...All assisting in the liturgy should make these signs in the same way, reverently and clearly.

C. Bow

GIRM #275: A bow is a sign of the reverence and honor given to persons or what represents those persons...

CMRR #201: There are two bows in the modern Roman Rite: the bow of the body, or deep bow, and the bow of the head.

CMRR #202: A bow of the body is made to the altar..., before and after an incensation and when it is specified in various rites. It is always made to the bishop on approaching or before leaving him and when passing in front of him during ceremonies. This bow should be gracious and unhurried. The body inclines forward from the waist, so that the hands could touch the knees, but they are kept joined as usual.

CMRR 203: A bow of the head is made at the mention aloud of the three Divine Persons (during the first part of the "Glory be to the Father"), at the holy names of Jesus, Mary and of the saint in whose honor the liturgy is being celebrated...

D. Genuflections

CMRR #197: Adoration of Jesus Christ is expressed by the genuflection...

CMRR #198: In genuflecting... The right knee touches the place where the right foot stood. The action should be made, with hands joined, without haste and in a spirit of prayer...

GIRM #274: A genuflection, which is made by bending the right knee to the ground, signifies adoration, and for this reason is reserved to the Most Blessed Sacrament and to the Holy Cross, from the solemn adoration in the liturgy of Good Friday until the beginning of the Easter Vigil. Three genuflections are made during Mass by the priest celebrant: after the showing of the Eucharistic bread, after the showing of the chalice, and before communion...If there is a tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament in the sanctuary, the priest, deacon and other ministers genuflect to it when they approach or leave the altar, but not during the celebration of Mass itself. Otherwise, all who cross before the most Blessed Sacrament genuflect, unless they are involved in a procession. Ministers who are carrying the processional cross or the candles bow their heads in place of a genuflection.

III. PASTOR'S REMARKS

PASTOR: Parents must remember that serving at Mass is a great privilege that demands that altar servers display model behaviors, manners and most especially reverence. For example, being reverent means that each server audibly says, chants or sings the responses during Mass. From the moment we enter the church to the moment we step out the door we must put on your "game face." This means that we should harness our energy and enthusiasm and direct it toward serving the priest – who himself is serving, *in persona Christi*, that is, in the person of Christ, -- in the type of dignified manner that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass deserves.

PASTOR: Horseplay in the Church building, whispering to your friends during Mass about what happened last night at the movies, stretching and yawning, day dreaming, swinging ones legs when sitting, are all examples of things that you should NOT do when serving. I am relying on parents to

correct their child (after Mass) when they have not acted appropriately. If you cannot pay attention or refrain from goofing off, please do not serve that day. People close to your own age will look to you to for leadership on how to worship at each celebration. From the way you fold your hands, pick up a book and sing, or just sit attentively and listen to the reader or homily, will demonstrate to others how they are to be reverent toward the Eucharist and not distracting to people who have come to worship and give thanks to God.

PASTOR: Out of reverence for the bishop, priest, or deacon, if the server needs switch to the other side of the priest, in order to better assist him, always, try to pass behind the celebrant if at all possible and practical. **Generally speaking, never move or “cut” in front of the one presiding.**

PASTOR: Remember to amplify your reverence by always dressing appropriately for Mass.

THE ORDER OF MASS

INTRODUCTORY RITES

GIRM #46: “The rites that precede the Liturgy of the Word, namely, the Entrance, the Greeting, the Penitential Act, the Kyrie, the Gloria in excelsis (Glory to God in the highest) and Collect, have the character of a beginning, an introduction, and a preparation. Their purpose is to ensure that the faithful, who come together as one, establish communion and dispose themselves properly to listen to the word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily”

ENTRANCE RITE

USCCB: The Mass begins with the entrance chant/song. The celebrant and other ministers enter in procession and reverence the altar with a bow and/or a kiss. The altar is a symbol of Christ at the heart of the assembly and so deserves this special reverence.²

² <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/introductory-rites/index.cfm>

CCC #1383: The Altar...the altar, around which the Church is gathered in the celebration of the Eucharist, represents the two aspects of the same mystery: the



altar of the sacrifice and the table of the Lord. This is all the more so since the Christian altar is the symbol of Christ himself, present in the midst of the assembly of his faithful, both as the victim offered for our reconciliation and as food from heaven who is giving himself to us..."The altar represents the body [of Christ] and the Body of Christ is on the altar."

GIRM #304: Altar Cloth...there should be at least one white cloth, its shape, size and decoration in keeping with the altar's design. When, in the dioceses of the United States of America, other cloths are used in addition to the altar cloth, then



those cloths may be of other colors possessing Christian honorific or festive significance according to long-standing local usage, provided that the uppermost cloth covering the mensa (i.e., the altar cloth itself) is always white in color.

GIRM #120: When the people are gathered, the Priest and ministers, wearing the sacred vestments, go in procession to the altar in this order:

- a) the thurifer carrying a smoking thurible, if incense is being used;
- b) ministers who carry lighted candles, and between them an acolyte or other minister with the cross;
- c) the acolytes and the other ministers;
- d) a reader, who may carry a Book of the Gospels (though not a Lectionary), slightly elevated;
- e) the Priest who is to celebrate the Mass. If incense is being used, before the procession begins, the Priest puts some into the thurible and blesses it with the Sign of the Cross without saying anything.

DOL: Incense Boat...A small oblong receptacle, usually in the shape of a little vessel, which holds incense that is transferred to the thurible with a spoon.



DOL: Thurible...A vase or vessel wherein mixtures of various aromatics, incense, are burned over lighted charcoal. (It is also called a censer)...**Thurifer...**The minister or acolyte (i.e., server) in charge of the thurible whose duty is to make sure sufficient burning charcoal is available. He carries the thurible itself together with the incense boat so that incense can be added at the proper times.



Thurible Stand...a stand which is designed to hold the thurible and the incense boat.

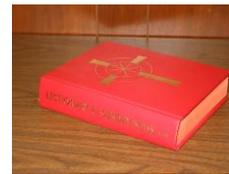
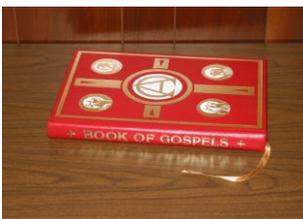


GIRM #308: Cross...There is also to be a cross, with the figure of Christ crucified upon it, either on the altar or near it, where it is clearly visible to the assembled congregation. It is appropriate that such a cross calls to mind for the faithful the saving Passion of the Lord, remain near the altar even outside of liturgical celebrations.



BC#129: It is preferable that the processional cross be placed near the altar and serve as the altar cross, otherwise it is put away. The candlesticks are placed near the altar on a side table or at some nearby place in the sanctuary (chancel). The book of the Gospels is placed upon the altar.

GIRM #349: Lectionary & Book of the Gospels...In a particular way, care must be taken that liturgical books, particularly the Book of the and the Lectionary, which are for the proclamation of the God and hence enjoy special veneration, really serve in a liturgical action as signs and symbols of heavenly realities, and hence are truly worthy dignified, and beautiful.



Gospels intended Word of

GREETING RITE

USCCB: All make the Sign of the Cross and the celebrant extends a greeting to the gathered people in words taken from Scripture.³

PENITENTIAL ACT OR THE RITE OF BLESSING AND SPRINKLING OF HOLY WATER

The Penitential Act follows the greeting. At the very beginning of the Mass, the faithful recall their sins and place their trust in God's abiding mercy. The Penitential Act includes the Kyrie Eleison, a Greek phrase meaning, "Lord, have mercy." This litany recalls God's merciful actions throughout history. On Sundays, especially in Easter Time, in place of the customary Penitential Act, from time to time the blessing and sprinkling of water to recall Baptism may take place.⁴

DOL: Sprinkler...A ritual object used to sprinkle holy water, usually made of metal with a hollow handle and a sponge at the ball-shaped top that water can be sprinkled from. Formerly it was frequently a branch of hyssop or boxwood. It is also called aspergill or aspersorium. (The "holy water bucket" is the vessel used to hold the holy water during and the sprinkler when it is not in use.)



today

GLORY TO GOD

USCCB: On Sundays, solemnities, and feasts, the Gloria follows the Penitential Act. The Gloria begins by echoing the proclamation of the angels at the birth of Christ: "Glory to God in the highest!" In this ancient hymn, the gathered assembly joins the heavenly choirs in offering praise and adoration to the Father and Jesus through the Holy Spirit.⁵

PASTOR: The adult server goes to the altar and removes the Roman Missal/Sacramentary from its stand and holds it for the priest celebrant at the Celebrants or Presider's Chair.

³ <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/introductory-rites/index.cfm>

⁴ <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/introductory-rites/index.cfm>

⁵ <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/introductory-rites/index.cfm>

DOL: Sacramentary...The volume of presidential prayers for the officiate of the Eucharist and for any rites connected with Mass.



DOL: Cushion...A pillow upon which the Sacramentary rests when placed on the altar. In many areas it is replaced by a **book stand**.



GIRM #310: Celebrant's Chair or Presider's Chair...The chair of the priest celebrant must signify his office of presiding over the gathering and of directing the prayer. Thus the best place for the chair is in a position facing the people at the head of the sanctuary, unless the design of the building or other circumstances impede this: for example, if the great distance would interfere with communication between the priest and the gathered assembly, or if the tabernacle is in the center behind the altar. Any appearance of a throne, however, is to be avoided...



COLLECT (OPENING PRAYER)

The Introductory Rites conclude with an opening prayer, called the Collect. The celebrant invites the gathered assembly to pray and, after a brief silence, proclaims the prayer of the day. The Collect gathers the prayers of all into one and disposes all to hear the Word of God in the context of the celebration.⁶

⁶ <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/introductory-rites/index.cfm>