



DIOCESE  
OF BRIDGEPORT



PASTORAL  
LITURGICAL  
HANDBOOK  
FOR DEACONS

May 15, 2005

Dear friends in Christ,

I am happy to offer an introductory word to the Pastoral Liturgical Handbook for Deacons in the Diocese of Bridgeport. This is both a reference and a guide for deacons in fulfilling their ministry of Word and Sacrament. It is result of extensive consultation, careful study, and thorough preparation. I am very grateful to all those involved in its preparation, especially Deacon Tony Detje, Father Joseph Linck, and Father Dariusz Zielonka. I am particularly grateful to Monsignor James Maroney, Executive Director of the USCCB Secretariat for the Liturgy, for reviewing this text.

The Second Vatican Council teaches that the liturgy is the “source and summit” of the Christian life. It is also the “source and summit” of the deacon’s ministry of charity and justice. It is from the living Word of God proclaimed and from the death and resurrection of Christ re-presented, that the deacon finds the inspiration and strength to imitate the Lord “who came to serve and not be served.” Furthermore, in exercising his liturgical responsibilities, the deacon manifests the servant-hood of Christ by faithfully proclaiming God’s Word and by carrying out his functions reverently and according to the Church’s liturgical directives.

This handbook effectively brings together all aspects of the deacon’s liturgical ministry. It is fully in accord with the General Instruction on the Roman Missal. It provides important background and practical guidance. I ask that it be carefully read by all those involved in the conduct of the liturgy, most especially by priests and deacons. It is also an important document for those seeking information for priestly or diaconal ministry.

In issuing this handbook, I also wish to express my deep gratitude to the deacons of the Diocese of Bridgeport who serve so faithfully in parishes, schools, social ministries and so many other avenues of service. I pray that God will continue to bless you, your wives and your families and that you will find great joy in your service to the Lord and to the Church.

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ William E. Lori". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend William E. Lori  
Bishop of Bridgeport

## The Importance and Dignity of the Eucharist Celebration

### A. THE GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE MASS

“The celebration of Mass, as the action of Christ and the People of God arrayed hierarchically, is the center of the whole Christian life for the Church both universal and local, as well as for each of the faithful individually. In it is found the high point both of the action by which God sanctifies the world in Christ and of the worship that the human race offers to the Father, adoring Him through Christ, the Son of God, in the Holy Spirit. In it, moreover, during the course of the year, the Mysteries of Redemption are recalled so as in some way to be made present. Furthermore, the other sacred actions and all the activities of the Christian life are bound up with it, flow from it, and are ordered to it.

It is therefore of the greatest importance that the celebration of the Mass—that is, the Lord’s Supper—be so arranged that the sacred ministers and the faithful taking part in it, according to the proper state of each, may derive from it more abundantly those fruits for the sake of which Christ the Lord instituted the Eucharist Sacrifice of His Body and Blood and entrusted it to the Church, His beloved Bride, as the memorial of His Passion and Resurrection.

This will best be accomplished if, with due regard for the nature and the particular circumstances of each liturgical assembly, the entire celebration is planned in such a way that it leads to a conscious, active, and full participation of the faithful both in body and in mind, a participation burning with faith, hope, and charity, of the sort which is desired by the Church and demanded by the very nature of the celebration, and to which the Christian people have a right and duty by reason of their Baptism.

Even if it is not sometimes possible to have the presence and active participation of the faithful, which bring out more plainly the ecclesial nature of the celebration, the Eucharistic Celebration always retains its efficacy and dignity because it is the action of Christ and the Church, in which the priest fulfills his own principal office and always acts for the people’s salvation.

It is therefore expected that the priest celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice even daily, if at all possible.”<sup>1</sup> Likewise, it is

recommended that Deacons assist at the Eucharistic Sacrifice daily, when possible.

“Because, however, the celebration of the Eucharist, like the entire Liturgy, is carried out through perceptible signs that nourish, strengthen, and express faith, the utmost care must be taken to choose and to arrange those forms and elements set forth by the Church that, in view of circumstances of the people and the place, will more effectively foster active and full participation and more properly respond to the spiritual needs of the faithful.

The celebration of the Eucharist in a particular Church is of utmost importance.

For the diocesan Bishop, the chief steward of the Mysteries of God in the particular Church entrusted to his care, is the moderator, promoter, and guardian of the whole of its liturgical life. In celebrations at which the Bishop presides, and especially in the celebration of the Eucharist led by the Bishop himself with the presbyterate, the deacons, and the people taking part, the mystery of the Church is revealed. For this reason, the solemn celebration of Masses of this sort must be an example for the entire Diocese.

The Bishop should therefore be insistent that the priests, the deacons, and the lay Christian faithful grasp ever more deeply the genuine meaning of the rites and liturgical texts and thereby be led to an active and fruitful celebration of the Eucharist. To the same end, he should also be vigilant that the dignity of these celebrations be enhanced. In promoting this dignity, the beauty of the sacred place, of music, and of art should contribute as greatly as possible.”

### B. DEACONS AND THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

All those involved in a liturgy should arrive at least twenty (20) minutes before the celebration begins, to prepare mentally and spiritually. The Deacon and/or minister should assist the Celebrant in the practical preparation, pray and/or greet the people.

When fulfilling his ministry within the Eucharistic Liturgy, the Deacon wears an alb, (the alb should be one that covers the street clothes; however, if it is not, an amice may be worn) cincture (optional), stole of proper liturgical color (worn over his left

shoulder, across and fastened at the right side), and the dalmatic of proper liturgical color (no longer optional on Sunday). In the Diocese of Bridgeport, a cross is presented to Permanent Deacons at the time of his ordination. This cross must never be worn outside the alb, since it is not a part of liturgical vesture (NOTE: The stole is always worn under the dalmatic).

If a Deacon is functioning in his proper liturgical role, he always stands and sits to the immediate right of the Celebrant. If a second Deacon is present and functioning, he stands and sits to the immediate left of the Celebrant. If there is a Deacon of the Gospel (a third Deacon), he may sit next to one of the other two Deacons, or wherever appropriate. This remains the same whether Concelebrants are present or not.

Before the liturgy begins, the Deacon should be aware of the options chosen, including penitential rite and use of incense.

When he is present at the Eucharistic Celebration, a Deacon should exercise his ministry, wearing sacred vestments. For the Deacon:

- a. Assists the Celebrant and remains at this side;
- b. Ministers at the altar, with the chalice as well as the book;
- c. Proclaims the Gospel and may preach the homily. As a “rule of thumb” the Deacon should preach at a minimum of two Masses one Sunday a month, and for all Baptisms, Weddings and Wakes when he is the presider, or requested by the family.
- d. Guides the faithful by appropriate introductions and explanations, and announces the intentions of the Prayers of the Faithful;
- e. Assists the celebrant in distributing Communion, and purifies and arranges the sacred vessels;
- f. As needed, fulfills the duties of other ministers himself if none of them are present;
- g. Announces conclusion of Mass.

## C. DEACON’S ROLE IN THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

### One Deacon with a Book of Gospels

#### 1. *Introductory Rites*

##### a. **Entrance Procession and Reverence to the Altar:**

Carrying the Book of Gospels slightly elevated, the deacon precedes the Celebrant as he approaches the altar (or walks at the priest’s right side when not carrying the Book of Gospels).

When he reaches the altar, if he is carrying the Book of the Gospels, he omits the sign of reverence and goes up to the altar. It is particularly appropriate that he should place the Book of the Gospels on the altar, after which, together with the Celebrant, he venerates the altar with a kiss. If, however, he is not carrying the Book of the Gospels, he makes a profound bow to the altar with the Celebrant in the customary way and with him venerates the altar with a kiss. If the tabernacle is directly behind the altar and within close proximity to the altar, the Deacon and the Celebrant will genuflect to the tabernacle.

##### b. **Incensation of the Altar:**

If incense is used, the acolyte will bring the thurible and boat to the Celebrant. The acolyte will hand the boat to the Deacon. The Deacon will open the boat and hold it close to the thurible, while the Celebrant places incense in the thurible. When the Celebrant is finished, the Deacon closes the boat and hands it to the acolyte, who passes the thurible to the Deacon. The Deacon then offers the thurible to the Celebrant. The Celebrant and the Deacon move to the center of the altar (with the Deacon to the right of the Celebrant), face the altar, and bow to it. The Celebrant incenses the altar. The Celebrant and Deacon bow to the altar again. The Deacon begins a slow procession to the right, around the altar, and leads the Celebrant to the middle of the altar in front.

Upon arrival at the middle of the front of the altar, both the Deacon and Celebrant bow to the altar. The Celebrant incenses the crucifix. The Deacon and Celebrant bow to the altar and the Deacon starts the procession again to the back of the altar. The Celebrant returns the thurible to the Deacon, who hands it to the acolyte.

**c. Greeting the Assembly:**

After the incensation, the Deacon and Celebrant go to their chairs (with the Deacon always to the immediate right of the Celebrant). The Deacon stands beside him while the Celebrant greets the assembly.

**d. Penitential Rite:**

The Deacon stands at the right side of the Celebrant during the Penitential Rite. If the third form is used, the Deacon may recite or intone the tropes. However, a choir may do this instead of the Celebrant or Deacon.

**e. Gloria:**

The Deacon continues to stand at the right side of the Celebrant during the Gloria and joins with the assembly in prayer.

If the acolyte is not present, the Deacon may assist the Celebrant with the book for the opening prayer. Otherwise, he continues to stand at the right side of the Celebrant.

**2. Liturgy of the Word**

**a. First Reading:**

The Deacon sits at the immediate right of the Celebrant while the lector proclaims the reading.

**b. Responsorial Psalm:**

The Deacon sits next to the Celebrant and joins in with the cantor and the assembly in singing of the Responsorial Psalm.

**c. Second Reading:**

The Deacon sits at the immediate right of the Celebrant while the lector proclaims the reading.

In the absence of a lector, the Deacon reads the first two readings and the Gospel.

**d. Gospel:**

If incense is to be used at the Gospel reading, the acolyte comes forward with the thurible and boat at the beginning of the Gospel Acclamation.

The Deacon stands, accepts the boat from the acolyte, opens the boat, and holds it close to the thurible. The Celebrant places incense on the charcoal. When the Celebrant is finished, the Deacon closes the boat and hands it to the acolyte.

The acolyte returns to his place.

The Deacon makes a profound bow before the priest and asks for the blessing, saying in a low voice, "Father give me your blessing." The priest blesses him, saying, "The Lord be in your heart and on your lips that you may worthily proclaim His Holy Gospel." The Deacon signs himself with the Sign of the Cross and responds, "Amen".

After receiving the blessing, the Deacon proceeds to the altar, bows, and lifts the Book of Gospels. He then goes in procession to the place where the Gospel is proclaimed.

The procession is comprised of:

- One acolyte carrying the thurible
  - Two acolytes carrying candles
  - Deacon carrying the Book of Gospels
- (Note: During Easter season, eliminate candles)

When the procession arrives at the ambo, the two altar servers with lit candles stand on either side and face

each other, the altar server with the thurible faces the assembly and stands to the left of the Deacon; the Deacon places the Book of Gospels on the book stand, looks at the assembly, and says: (with hands joined) “The Lord be with you.” The assembly responds: “And also with you”. The deacon then says, “A reading from the Holy Gospel according to \_\_\_\_\_.” The Deacon makes a sign of the cross with his thumb on the book, his forehead, his lips, and his heart.

(*Note:* This is the only formula and words to be used)

Incense is now used to venerate the Word. The Deacon takes the thurible, and incenses the book three times. Incensing is done three times to the center, three times to the left of the book, and three times to the right of the book. The thurible is returned to the server.

The Deacon then proclaims the Gospel reading. At the conclusion of the reading he says: “The Gospel of the Lord.” He says this without hand gestures and without raising the book off the stand.

While the people respond “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ,” the Deacon raises the Book of Gospels, kisses the reading, and prays silently: “May the words of the Gospel wipe away our sins.”

When the Bishop is Celebrant, the Deacon brings the Book of Gospels to the Bishop for reverencing.

The Deacon then closes the Book of Gospels raises it again, and the procession returns to the altar. The Deacon places the Book of Gospels in the center of the altar lying flat, while the altar servers return to their places. The Gospel Book may also be placed on the credence table or other appropriate place.

If the Celebrant is delivering the homily, the Deacon returns to his seat; or if the Deacon is preaching he returns to the ambo and begins.

### 3. *Creed*

The Deacon remains at the right side of the Celebrant and visibly joins in prayer with the assembly.

### 4. *Prayers of the Faithful*

After the introduction by the priest it is the Deacon himself who proclaims the intentions of the Prayers of the Faithful, from the ambo. The Deacon is the primary minister of the Prayers of the Faithful and other options (Lector, other lay people) are not be considered unless it is a special liturgy with special considerations or a Deacon is not present.

The Celebrant concludes the General Intercessions with a prayer.

### 5. *Preparation of the Gifts*

After the Prayers of the Faithful, while the priest remains at the chair, the Deacon prepares the altar, assisted by the acolyte, but it is the Deacon’s place to take care of the sacred vessels himself.

If the Book of Gospels is on the altar, it must be removed with dignity and without ceremony, and placed in a worthy place. Then the Deacon places the corporal, the necessary sacred vessels, and the Roman Missal on the altar. The Roman Missal should be placed according to the choice of the Celebrant and open to the appropriate page.

The creases in the corporal are there for a practical reason: retaining host fragments. Therefore, place the corporal on the altar with the “points of the creases down and the “fold” facing you, in the center of the altar with the bottom of the corporal at the edge of the altar nearest to the Deacon. The paten should be placed off the corporal and just to the right. The chalice (wine vessel – not in offertory procession) should be placed on the lower corner of the altar where the Deacon will pour the water and wine after

the reception of the gifts. Any ciboria containing unconsecrated hosts (and not in offertory procession) should be placed appropriately on the corporal to the right so as to allow future placement of paten, chalice, and vessels.

*Note:* Corporal or corporals of sufficient size must be used so as to accommodate the number of sacred vessels used.

Deacon assists the Celebrant in accepting the gifts brought in procession. Deacon returns to the altar, places the gifts, and offers the paten to the Celebrant. The Deacon pours sufficient wine into the chalice. The Deacon then pours a very small amount of water into the chalice. While pouring the water, the Deacon prays quietly:

“By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Jesus Christ, who humbled Himself to share in our humanity.”

If one chalice is not sufficient for Holy Communion to be distributed under both kinds to the Priest concelebrants or Christ’s faithful, several chalices are placed on a corporal on the altar in an appropriate place, filled with wine. It is praiseworthy that the main chalice be larger than the other chalices prepared for distribution.

The Deacon offers the chalice to the celebrant.

If incense is used, the acolyte will bring the thurible and boat to the Celebrant. The server will hand the boat to the Deacon who will open it and hold it close to the thurible while the Celebrant places incense in the thurible. When the Celebrant is finished, the Deacon closes the boat and hands it to the server. The altar server then hands the thurible to the Deacon who offers it to the Celebrant. The Celebrant and Deacon move to the center of the altar (with the Deacon to right of the

Celebrant), and face it. The Celebrant incenses the gifts. The Deacon begins a slow procession to the right around the altar and leads the Celebrant to the middle of the altar in front. The Deacon and Celebrant bow to the altar, the Celebrant incenses the crucifix, and they bow again. The Deacon starts the procession again to the back of the altar. If the crucifix is the processional cross, they circle the altar without stopping and then separately incense the crucifix.

The Celebrant and Deacon face each other and the Celebrant hands the thurible to the Deacon. They bow to each other and the Deacon incenses the Celebrant three times (three each time). They bow to each other again. N.B. The thurible should be carried from place to place as follows:  
Held at full length in the right hand with the elbow bent; the left hand should be placed on the chest.

The Deacon then incenses as follows (see page 31 and 32):

- Cardinal (if present)
- Archbishop, Bishop (if present)
- Priests
- Other Deacons, (if present)
- Congregation

If incense is used, the washing of the Celebrant’s hands by the Acolyte occurs while the Deacon is incensing.

## **6. Eucharistic Prayer**

The Deacon should stand to the right and slightly behind the Celebrant.

When Concelebrants are present, they join the Celebrant around the altar just prior to the preface. The Deacon moves out of the way to allow the principal Concelebrants to move closer to the Celebrant; the Deacon or Deacons stand to the right (and left) of the Celebrant but one step back.

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* indicates that the Deacon is to kneel from the Epiclesis (Celebrant extends his hands, over the chalice) until the Celebrant shows the cup at the end of the Consecration. The Deacon must be standing when the Celebrant (Concelebrants) is (are) reciting the Doxology.

If there is a pall on the chalice, the Deacon removes the chalice pall before he kneels; when the Celebrant is genuflecting after the Consecration of the Blood, the Deacon covers the chalice.

If a Deacon is not able to kneel easily due to age or physical capabilities, he should stand.

If the Deacon is standing from the Epiclesis to the Doxology, the following applies:

- After the consecration of the Body, the Celebrant genuflects.
- The Deacon should bow toward the altar while the Celebrant is genuflecting.
- If the chalice is covered, the Deacon should remove the cover immediately following the reverence after the consecration of the Body.
- After the consecration of the Blood, the Celebrant genuflects. The Deacon should bow toward the altar while the Celebrant is genuflecting.
- The cover is replaced on the chalice by the Deacon as the Celebrant invites the assembly to recite or sing the Memorial Acclamation.

Doxology – The Deacon stands to the right of the Celebrant and raises the chalice while the Celebrant raises the paten with the host until the people have responded, “Amen.” The Deacon does not recite the Doxology with the Celebrant.

The Deacon should be turned slightly toward the Celebrant and the chalice should be elevated to a position where the middle of the stem of the chalice is on the same level as the

paten. The chalice and paten should be close together.

After the assembly has responded “Amen,” the Deacon should place the chalice back on the corporal carefully and gently, and place the chalice pall on the chalice (if a chalice pall is used).

## **7. *The Celebrant leads the Lord’s Prayer***

During this time, the Deacon is at the Celebrant’s right side, slightly behind him and visibly joining in the prayer. The Deacon does not raise his hands and arms in a ministerial gesture (ie the priest raises and extends his arms inviting all to prayer). The deacon may either raise his hands close to his body or hold his hands together in a prayerful stance.

After the Celebrant has said the prayer at the Rite of Peace and the greeting (The Peace of the Lord be with you always) and the people have responded (And also with you), the Deacon invites all to exchange the sign of peace. He faces the people and, with hands joined, says “Let us offer each other the sign of peace”. (This is the only word formula to be used. No elaborations) Then he himself receives the sign of peace from the priests and may offer it to those other ministers who are closer to him.

In ordinary circumstances, the Celebrant alone performs the fraction. If there is a large number of hosts to be broken, the Deacon may assist the Celebrant in the breaking during the “Lamb of God.” However, a large number of hosts should be broken before the Mass begins, if the Celebrant agrees.

If Concelebrants are present, the Deacon carries the paten to each Concelebrant and lets him take a portion of a host, while saying nothing.

At Diocesan Masses where other Bishops or Cardinals are present, the Bishop will offer the Eucharist to Bishops, Archbishops, and Cardinals.

Just prior to the priests' Communion, the Celebrant will genuflect. The Deacon should bow toward the altar at that time.

After the priests' Communion, The Deacon receives Communion from the Celebrant under both species depending upon numbers, circumstances, and logistics, the Deacon will step away for a moment to allow concelebrants to approach the altar for the Precious Blood. The Deacon then assists the Celebrant in giving Communion to other ministers (server, acolyte, lector, choir, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist), with the Deacon administering the chalice.

The Deacon then assists in distributing Communion to the assembly, preferably the Precious Blood.

Since the priests and deacon are ordinary ministers, they must not sit to allow an extraordinary minister distribute Communion.

After Communion has been distributed, the Deacon returns to the altar and collects any remaining consecrated hosts. All consecrated hosts are placed in a ciborium and returned to the tabernacle. The Deacon carries the chalice and cups to a side table where he may purify them in the usual way.

N.B. Another option is to cover the vessels with a purificator and leave them on a corporal on a side table, to be purified after Mass.

The corporal should be folded carefully so that any possible particles will not be shaken on to the altar or floor. Corporals should not be left on the altar from one mass to another.

The Deacon, acolyte, or altar server returns the Book of Gospels to its proper place, lying flat on the altar.

## 8. *Concluding Rite and Recessional*

If there are any brief announcements, they should be made after the final prayer and before the final blessing. These can be made from a chair or the lectern by a lector, cantor, Deacon, or Priest.

If a solemn blessing is used, after the Celebrant says, "The Lord be with you," and the assembly responds with, "And also with you," the Deacon says, "Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing."

After the blessing, the Deacon dismisses the people (see Roman Missal).

The Deacon reverences (kisses) the altar with the Celebrant and leaves at the right side of the Celebrant.

### *Notes:*

1. If incense is not used, eliminate those references. Nothing changes.
2. If a Book of Gospels is not used:
  - eliminate all references to the Book of Gospels;
  - the proper place in the entrance procession or recessional for the Deacon is at the right side and just slightly behind the Celebrant.

### *Two Deacons with a Book of Gospels*

#### *Note:*

For reference in this material, the Deacon who sits to the right of the Celebrant will be referred to as the "Deacon of the Mass;" the Deacon who sits to the left of the Celebrant will be referred to as the "Deacon of the Word."

### **1. *Introductory Rites***

#### **a. *Entrance Procession:***

The Deacon of the Mass enters in procession at the right side of the Celebrant. The Deacon of the Word carries

the Book of Gospels and enters in front of the other ministers and the Celebrant (and Concelebrants). Upon entering the Sanctuary, he does not genuflect or bow before the altar. Instead he proceeds around to the back of the altar and places the Book of Gospels lying flat in the middle of the altar. The Deacon of the Word then moves slightly to the left of center and awaits the arrival of the Celebrant (and Concelebrants). The Deacons and Celebrant (and the Concelebrants) reverence the altar together, with the Deacons on either side of the Celebrant. If the tabernacle is directly behind the altar within proximity to the altar, the Deacon and Celebrant will genuflect to the tabernacle.

**b. Incensation of the Altar:**

If incense is used, the acolyte will bring the thurible and boat to the Celebrant. The acolyte will hand the boat to the nearest Deacon. The Deacon will open the boat and hold it close to the thurible, while the Celebrant places incense in the thurible. When the Celebrant is finished, the Deacon closes the boat and hands it to the acolyte. The acolyte then hands the thurible to the Deacon of the Mass. The Deacon then offers the thurible to the Celebrant. The Celebrant and Deacons move to the center of the altar (with the Deacons on either side of the Celebrant), and face it. The Celebrant incenses the altar, and the Deacon of the Mass leads the Celebrant to the middle of the altar in the front, with the Deacon of the Word following the Celebrant.

Upon arriving at the middle of the front of the altar, both the Deacons and Celebrant bow to the altar. The Celebrant incenses the crucifix. The Deacons and Celebrant bow to the altar and the Deacon of the Mass starts the procession again to the back of the altar. The Celebrant returns the thurible to the Deacon of the Mass who hands it to the acolyte.

**c. Greetings of Assembly:**

After the incensation, the Deacons and Celebrant go to their chairs (with the Deacons always to the

immediate right and left sides of the Celebrant). The Deacons stand beside him while the Celebrant greets the assembly.

**d. Penitential Rite:**

The Deacons stand at the sides of the Celebrant during the Penitential Rite. If the third form is used, the Deacon of the Mass may recite or intone the tropes. However, a choir may do this, instead of the Priest or Deacon.

**e. Gloria:**

The Deacons continue to stand at the side of the Celebrant during the Gloria and join with the assembly in prayer.

**f. Prayer:**

If an acolyte is not present, the Deacon of the Word may assist the Celebrant with the book for the opening prayer. Otherwise, he continues to stand at the side of the Celebrant.

**2. Liturgy of the Word**

**a. First Reading:**

The Deacons sit on either side of the Celebrant while the lector proclaims the reading.

**b. Responsorial Psalm:**

The Deacons sit next to the Celebrant and join in with the cantor and the assembly in singing the responsorial psalm.

**c. Second Reading:**

The Deacons sit on either side of the Celebrant while the lector proclaims the reading.

In the absence of a lector, the Deacon of the Mass will read the two first readings and the Deacon of the Word will read the Gospel.

**d. Gospel:**

If incense is to be used at the Gospel reading, the acolyte comes forward with the thurible and boat at the beginning of the Gospel Acclamation.

The Deacons stand and the one of the Deacons, accepts the boat from the acolyte, opens the boat and holds it close to the thurible. The Celebrant places incense on the charcoal. When the Celebrant is finished, the Deacon closes the boat and hands it to the acolyte.

The acolyte returns to his place.

The Deacon of the Word makes a profound bow before the priest and asks for the blessing, saying in a low voice, Father, give me your blessing. The priest blesses him, saying, “The Lord be in your heart and on your lips that you may worthily proclaim His Holy Gospel.” The Deacon signs himself with the Sign of the Cross and responds, “Amen”.

After receiving the blessing, the Deacon proceeds to the altar bows and lifts the Book of Gospels. He then goes in procession to the place where the Gospel is proclaimed.

The Procession is comprised of:

- one acolyte carrying the thurible
- two acolytes carrying candles
- Deacon of the Word carrying the Book of Gospels  
(*Note:* During the Easter season, eliminate candles)

When the procession arrives at ambo, the two altar servers with lit candles stand to either side and face each other, the altar server with the thurible faces the assembly and stands near the Deacon; the Deacon of the Word places the Book of Gospels on the book stand, looks at the assembly and say (with hands joined): “The Lord be with you.” The assembly responds: “and also with you.” Deacon: “A reading from the Holy Gospel according to \_\_\_\_\_.” The Deacon of the Word

makes the sign of the cross with his thumb on the book, his forehead, his lips, and his heart. (NOTE: this is the only formula and words to be used)

Incense is now used to venerate the Word. The Deacon turns toward the server with the thurible and takes the thurible. He then incenses the book three times. Incensing is done three times to the middle of the book, three times to the left of the book, and three times to the right of the book. The thurible is returned to the server.

The Deacon then proclaims the Gospel reading. At the conclusion of the reading he says: “The Gospel of the Lord.” He says this without hand gestures and without raising the book off the stand.

While the people respond with “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ”, the Deacon raises the Book of Gospels, kisses the reading, and prays silently: “May the words of the Gospel wipe away our sins.”

When the Bishop is celebrant, the Deacon brings the Book of Gospels to the Bishop to be revered.

The Deacon then closes the Book of Gospels, raises it again to chest level, and the procession returns to the altar. The Deacon places the Book of Gospels in the center of the altar, while the altar servers return to their places. The Gospel Book may also be placed on the credence table or other appropriate place.

If the Celebrant is delivering the homily, the Deacon returns to his seat; or if the Deacon is preaching, he returns to the ambo and begins.

**3. Creed**

The Deacons remain at the sides of the Celebrant and visibly join in the prayer with the assembly.

#### 4. *Prayers of the Faithful*

After the introduction by the priest it is the Deacon of the Word himself who normally proclaims the intention of the Prayers of the Faithful, from the ambo. The Deacon is the primary minister of the Prayers of the Faithful and other options (lector, other lay people) are not to be considered unless it is a special liturgy with special considerations or a Deacon is not present.

#### 5. *Preparation of the Gifts*

After the Prayer of the Faithful, while the Celebrant remains at the chair, the Deacons prepare the altar, assisted by the acolyte, but it is the Deacon of the Mass who places the sacred vessels himself.

If the Book of Gospels is on the altar, it must be removed with dignity and without ceremony, and placed in a worthy place. Then the Deacons place the corporal, the necessary sacred vessels, and the Roman Missal on the altar. The Roman Missal should be placed according to the choice of the Celebrant and open to the appropriate page.

The creases in the corporal are there for a practical reason: to catch host fragments. Therefore, place the corporal on the altar with the “points” of the creases down and the “fold” facing you, in the center of the altar with the bottom of the corporal at the edge of the altar nearest to the Deacon. The paten should be placed off the corporal and just to the right. The chalice should be placed on the lower corner where the Deacon will pour the water and wine after the reception of the gifts. Any ciboria containing unconsecrated hosts should be placed appropriately on the corporal so as to allow future placement of paten, chalice, and wine vessel.

*Note:* Corporal or Corporals of sufficient size must be used so as to accommodate the number of sacred vessels used.

Deacons assist the Celebrant in accepting the gifts brought in procession.

The Deacons return to the altar and place the gifts. The Deacon of the Mass offers the paten to the Celebrant.

The Deacon of the Word stands to the left of the Celebrant and makes sure that the Roman Missal is at the correct page.

The Deacon of the Mass pours sufficient wine into the chalice. The Deacon of the Mass then pours a very small amount of water into the chalice. While pouring the water, the Deacon of the Mass prays quietly:

“By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Jesus Christ, who humbled Himself to share in our humanity.”

If one chalice is not sufficient for Holy Communion to be distributed under both kinds to the Priest concelebrants or Christ’s faithful, several chalices are placed on a corporal on the altar in an appropriate place, filled with wine. It is praiseworthy that the main chalice be larger than the other chalices prepared for distribution.

The Deacon of the Mass offers the chalice to the Celebrant.

If incense is used, the acolyte will bring the thurible and boat to the Celebrant. The server will hand the boat to the nearest Deacon who will open it and hold it close to the thurible while the Celebrant places incense in the thurible. When the Celebrant is finished, the Deacon closes the boat and hands it to the server. The altar server then hands the thurible to the Deacon of the Mass, who offers it to the Celebrant. The Celebrant and Deacons move to the center of the altar (with the Deacons on both sides of the Celebrant), and face it. The Celebrant incenses the gifts. The Deacon of the Mass

begins a slow procession to the right around the altar and leads the Celebrant to the middle of the altar in front, with the assisting Deacon following. The Deacons and Celebrant bow to the altar, the Celebrant incenses the crucifix, and they bow again. The Deacon of the Mass starts the procession again to the back of the altar. The Celebrant and Deacon of the Mass face each other and the Celebrant hands the thurible to the Deacon. They bow to each other and the Deacon incenses the Celebrant three times (three each time). They bow to each other again.

**N.B.** The thurible should be carried from place to place as follows: held at full length in the right hand with the elbow bent; the left hand should be placed on the chest.

The Deacon of the Mass then incenses as follows (see page 31 and 32):

- Cardinal (if present)
- Archbishop, Bishop (if present)
- Priests
- Other Deacons, (if present)
- Congregation

The thurible is then returned to the server and the Deacon of the Mass returns to the right side of the Celebrant.

If incense is used, the washing of the Celebrant's hands by the altar server while the Deacon is incensing.

## 6. *Eucharistic Prayer*

The Deacon of the Word may assist by turning pages in the Roman Missal if appropriate.

When Concelebrants are present, they join the Celebrant around the altar just prior to the preface. The Deacons move

out of the way to allow the principal Concelebrants to move closer; the Deacons stand to the right and left of the Celebrant but one step back.

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* indicates that the Deacons are to kneel from the Epiclesis (Celebrant extends his hands over the chalice) until the Celebrant shows the cup at the end of the Consecration. The Deacons must be standing when the Celebrant (Concelebrants) is (are) reciting the Doxology.

If there is a pall on the chalice, the Deacon of the Mass removes the chalice pall before he kneels; when the Celebrant is genuflecting after the Consecration of the Blood, the Deacon of the Mass covers the chalice.

If a Deacon is not able to kneel easily due to age or physical capabilities, he should stand. If one Deacon is able to kneel but the other is not able, neither should kneel, for consistency.

If the Deacon is standing from the Epiclesis to the Doxology, the following applies:

- After the Consecration of the Body, the Celebrant genuflects. The Deacons should bow toward the altar while the Celebrant is genuflecting.
- If there is a pall on the chalice the Deacon of the Mass should remove the pall immediately following the reverence after the Consecration of the Body.
- After the consecration of the Blood, the Celebrant genuflects. The Deacons should bow toward the altar while the Celebrant is genuflecting.
- The chalice pall is replaced on the chalice by the Deacon of the Mass as the Celebrant invites the congregation to recite or sing the Memorial Acclamation.

At the Doxology, the Deacon of the Mass raises the chalice while the Celebrant raises the paten with the host until the people respond "Amen." The Deacons do not recite the

Doxology with the Celebrant.

The Deacon of the Mass should be turned slightly toward the Celebrant and the chalice should be elevated to a position where the middle of the stem of the chalice is on the same level as the paten. The vessels should be close.

After the assembly has responded, “Amen,” the Deacon should place the chalice back down on the corporal carefully and gently.

### **7. *The Celebrant leads the Lord’s Prayer***

During this time, the Deacons are at his side, slightly behind him and visibly joining in prayer. The Deacons do not raise their hands and arms in a ministerial gesture (ie the priest raises and extends his arms inviting all to prayer). The deacon may either raise his hands close to his body or hold his hands together in a prayerful stance.

After the prayer for peace has been said, the Deacon of the Word invites the assembly to extend the sign of peace using only the words in the Liturgical Book and with hands joined. The Deacons receive the sign of peace from the Celebrant and then extend it to others near them.

In ordinary circumstances the Celebrant alone performs the fraction.

If there is a large number of hosts to be broken, the Deacon of the Mass may assist the Celebrant in breaking during the “Lamb of God.”

If Concelebrants are present, the Deacon of the Mass carries the paten to each Concelebrant and lets him take a portion of a host while saying nothing.

Just prior to the priests’ Communion, the Celebrant will genuflect. The Deacons should bow toward the altar at

this time.

After the priests’ Communion, the Deacons receive Communion from the Celebrant under both species. At Diocesan Masses where Cardinals are present, the Bishop will offer the Eucharist to the Cardinals with the Deacon offering Precious Blood. The Deacon of the Mass then assists the Celebrant in giving Communion to other ministers (server, lector, choir, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist), with the Deacon administering the chalice.

The Deacons then assist in distributing the Eucharist to the assembly, preferably the Precious Blood. Since priests and deacons are ordinary ministers, they must not sit to allow an extraordinary minister distribute communion.

After Communion has been distributed, the Deacons return to the altar and collect any remaining consecrated hosts and particles. All consecrated hosts are placed in a ciborium and returned to the tabernacle. The Deacon carries the chalice and vessels to a side table where he may purify them in the usual way.

N.B. Another option is to cover the vessels with a purificator and leave them on a corporal on a side table, to be purified after Mass.

The corporal should be folded carefully so that any possible particles will not be shaken onto the altar or floor.

The Deacon, acolyte, or altar server returns the Book of Gospels to its proper place lying flat on the altar.

### **8. *Concluding Rite and Recessional***

If there are any brief announcements, they should be made after the final prayer and before the final blessing. These can be made from a chair or the lectern by a lector, cantor, Deacon, or Priest.

If a solemn blessing is used, after the Celebrant says, “The Lord be with you,” and the assembly responds with, “And also with you,” the Deacon of the Word says, “Bow your

heads and pray for God's blessing.”

After the blessing, The Deacon of the Mass dismisses the people, see Roman Missal.

The Deacons reverence (kiss) the altar with the Celebrant on either side of the Celebrant, and process out at the sides of the Celebrant and about a half step to the rear. If the aisle is not wide enough, the two deacons should walk in front of the Celebrant.

*Notes:*

1. If a Book of Gospels is not used:

- eliminate all references to the Book of Gospels, and the Lectionary is used for the reading of the Gospel
- proper place in entrance procession:  
Deacon of the Mass: to the left of the Celebrant, slightly behind
- Deacon of the Word: to the right of the Celebrant, slightly behind.
- proper place in recessional:  
Deacon of the Mass: to the right side of the Celebrant, slightly behind.  
Deacon of the Word: to the left of the Celebrant, slightly behind.

2. If three Deacons are present, they are

- Deacon of the Gospel
- Deacon of the Mass
- Deacon of the Word
- Deacon of the Gospel carries the Book of Gospels in procession and the other two Deacons enter and

leave with the Celebrant.

- In the entrance procession, the Deacon of the Gospel moves directly to the altar, places the Book of Gospels in the middle of the altar, reverences the altar, and then proceeds to his chair.
- Deacon of the Gospel sits either to the immediate right of the Deacon of the Mass or to the immediate left of the Deacon of the Word. If this is not possible due to space limitations, he should sit in some other appropriate place in the sanctuary.
- The Deacon of the Gospel reads the Gospel and the Deacon of the Word would read the Prayers of the Faithful.
- The Deacon of the Gospel does nothing else during the liturgy until the Recessional.
- Deacon of the Gospel stands behind the Celebrant during the Eucharist Prayer.
- Deacon of the Gospel receives Communion with the other two Deacons.
- After the people are dismissed, the Deacon of the Gospel stands in the appropriate place to begin the recessional.

**9. *Some General Norms for All Forms of Mass***

*Veneration of the Altar and the Book of Gospels*

- According to traditional practice, the altar and the Book of Gospels are venerated by means of a kiss.
- A genuflection, made by bending the right knee to the ground, signifies adoration, and therefore it is reserved for the Most Blessed Sacrament, as well as for the Holy Cross from the Solemn adoration during the liturgical

celebration on Good Friday until the beginning of the Easter Vigil.

During Mass, three genuflections are made by the priest celebrant; namely, after the showing of the host, after the show of the chalice, and before Communion. Certain specific features to be observed in a concelebrated Mass are noted in their proper place.

If, however, the tabernacle with the Most Blessed Sacrament is present in the sanctuary, the Celebrant, the deacon, and the other ministers genuflect when they approach the altar and when they depart from it, but not during the celebration of Mass itself.

Otherwise all who pass before the Most Blessed Sacrament genuflect, unless they are moving in procession.

Ministers carrying the professional cross or candles bow their heads instead of genuflecting.

A bow signifies reverence and honor shown to the persons themselves or to the signs that represent them. There are two kinds of bows: the bow of the head and a bow of the body.

- a. A bow of the head is made when the three Divine Persons are named: Together and at the name of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the Saint in whose honor Mass is being celebrated.
- b. A bow of the body, that is to say a profound bow, is made to the altar; during the prayers *Munda cor meum* (Almighty God, cleanse my heart) and *In spiritu humilitatis* (Lord God, we ask you to receive); in the Creed at the words *Et incarnates est* (by the power of the Holy Spirit...made man); in the Roman Canon at the words *Supplices te rogamus* (Almighty God, we pray that your angel). In addition, the

Celebrant bows slightly as he speaks the words of the Lord at the consecration.

#### Preaching

- As a “rule of thumb” the Deacon should preach at a minimum of two Masses one Sunday a month, and for all Baptisms, Weddings, and Wakes when he is the presider, or requested by the family.

#### Incensation

- Incensation is an expression of reverence and of prayer, as is signified in Sacred Scripture (cf. Ps 141 [140]:2, Rev 8:3).

Incense may be used if desired in any form of Mass:

- a. During the Entrance procession;
- b. At the beginning of Mass, to incense the cross and the altar;
- c. At the Gospel procession and the proclamation of the Gospel itself;
- d. After the bread and the chalice have been placed upon the altar, to incense the offerings, the cross, and the altar, as well as the priest and the people;
- e. At the showing of the host and the chalice after the consecration.

The Celebrant, having put incense into thurible, blesses it with the sign of the Cross, without saying anything

Before and after an incensation, a profound bow is made to the person or object that is incensed, except for the incensation of the altar and the offerings for the Sacrifice of the Mass.

The following are incensed with three swings (3 x 3) of the thurible: the Most Blessed Sacrament,

a relic of the Holy Cross and images of the Lord exposed for public veneration, the offerings for the sacrifice of the Mass, the altar cross, the Paschal Candle, the Celebrant, Concelebrants, Deacons, People of God, Book of Gospels at proclamation.

The following are incensed with two swings (2 x 2) of the thurible: relics and images of Saints exposed for public veneration.

The altar is incensed with single swings of the thurible in this way:

- a. If the altar is freestanding with respect to the wall, the priest incenses walking around it;
- b. If the altar is not freestanding, the priest incenses it while walking first to the righthand side, and then to the left.

The cross, if situated on or near the altar, is incensed by the priest before he incenses the altar; otherwise, he incenses it when he passes in front of it.

The priest incenses the offerings with three swings of the thurible or by making the sign of the cross over the offerings with the thurible, then going on to incense the cross and the altar.

#### Purification<sup>2</sup>

- Whenever a fragment of the host adheres to his fingers, especially after the Fraction or the Communion of the faithful, the priest is to wipe his fingers over the paten or, if necessary, wash them. Likewise, he should also gather any fragments that may have fallen outside the paten.
- The sacred vessels are purified by the Celebrant, the Deacon, or an instituted acolyte after Communion

or after Mass, insofar as possible at the credence table. 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.

- Care must be taken that whatever may remain of the Blood of Christ after the distribution of Communion is consumed immediately and completely at the altar. Precious Blood is never to be reserved.
- If a host or any particle should fall, it is to be picked up reverently. If any of the Precious Blood is spilled, the area where the spill occurred should be washed with water, and this water should then be poured into the sacrarium in the sacristy.

#### Communion under Both Species

- Holy Communion has a fuller form as a sign when it is distributed under both kinds. For in this form the sign of the Eucharistic Banquet is more clearly evident and clear expression is given to the Divine Will by which the new and eternal Covenant is ratified in the Blood of the Lord, as also the relationship between the Eucharistic Banquet and the eschatological banquet in the Father's Kingdom.
- Pastors should take care to ensure that the faithful who participate in the rite or are present at it are as fully aware as possible of the Catholic teaching on the form of Holy Communion as set forth by the Ecumenical Council of Trent. Above all, they should instruct the Christian faithful that the Catholic faith teaches that Christ, whole and entire, and the true Sacrament, is received even under only one species, and consequently that as far as the effects are concerned, those who receive under only one species are not deprived of any of the grace that is necessary for salvation.
- They are to teach, furthermore, that the Church, in her

stewardship of the Sacraments, has the power to set forth or alter whatever provisions, apart from the substance of the Sacraments, that she judges to be most conducive to the veneration of the Sacraments and the well-being of the recipients, in view of changing conditions, times, and places. At the same time, the faithful should be encouraged to seek to participate more early in this sacred rite, by which the sign of the Eucharistic banquet is made more fully evident.

- In addition to those cases given in the ritual books, Communion under both kinds is permitted for
  - a. Priests who are not able to celebrate or concelebrate Mass;
  - b. The Deacon and others who perform some duty at Mass;
  - c. Members of communities at the conventual Mass of “community” Mass, along with seminarians, and all who are engaged in a retreat or are taking part in a spiritual or pastoral gathering.

The Diocesan Bishop may establish norms for Communion under both species for his own Diocese, which are also to be observed in churches of religious and at celebrations with small groups. The Diocesan Bishop is also given the faculty to permit Communion under both kinds whenever it may seem appropriate to the pastor to whom, as its own shepherd, a community has been entrusted, provided that the faithful have been well instructed and there is no danger of profanation of the Sacrament or confusion because of the large number of participants or some other reason.

In all that pertains to Communion under both kinds, the *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds in the Diocese of the United States of America* are to be followed.

- When Communion is distributed under both species,

- a. The chalice is usually administered by a deacon or, when no deacon is present, by a priest, or even by a duly instituted acolyte or another extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, or by a member of the faithful who in case of necessity has been entrusted with the duty for a single occasion; Whatever may remain of the Blood of Christ is consumed at the altar by the Celebrant or the Deacon, or the duly instituted acolyte who ministered the chalice. The same then purifies, wipes, and arranges the sacred vessels in the usual way.
- b. Any of the faithful who wish to receive Holy Communion under the species of bread alone should be granted their wish.
- c. There should be two cups for each ciborium.
- d. If Communion from the chalice is carried out by communicants’ drinking directly from the chalice, a chalice of a sufficiently large size or several chalices are prepared. Care should, however, be taken in planning lest beyond what is needed of the Blood of Christ remains to be consumed at the end of the celebration.
- e. If Communion is carried out by intinction, the hosts should be neither too thin nor too small, but rather a little thicker than usual, so that after being dipped partly into the Blood of Christ they can still be distributed to each communicant.
- f. If Communion of the Blood of Christ is carried out by the communicants’ drinking from the chalice, each communicant, after receiving the Body of Christ, moves and stands facing the minister of the chalice. The minister says, *Sanguis Christi* (Blood of Christ), the communicant responds, *Amen*, and the minister hands over the chalice, which the communicant raises to his or her mouth. Each communicant drinks a little from the chalice, hands it back to the

minister, and then withdraws; the minister wipes the rim of the chalice with the purificator.

- g. If Communion from the chalice is carried out by intinction, each communicant approaches the priest or deacon, who holds a vessel with the sacred particles, a minister standing at his side and holding the chalice. The priest takes a host, dips it partly into the chalice and, showing it, says, *Corpus et Sanguis Christi* (The Body and Blood of Christ). The communicant responds, Amen, receives the Sacrament in the mouth from the priest, and then withdraws.

#### **D. DEACONS AND THE RITE OF MARRIAGE**

The Deacon may be the Church's official witness for a Catholic marriage. As in all cases, Deacons must have proper delegation to assist validly and licitly at marriages.

1. For the Rite of Marriage outside Mass, the Deacon should be vested in alb and stole and, if desired, cope. Dalmatic is not appropriate.
2. When the marriage ceremony is witnessed outside the context of Mass, the Deacon may act as Celebrant of the ceremony. He should then fulfill all the offices appropriate to the Celebrant. Most appropriately, the ministries of lector and cantor should be taken by someone else.
3. At a Nuptial Mass, the Deacon fulfills his proper role for Eucharist celebrations. Although it should be the exception rather than the rule during Mass, the Deacon may also serve as Celebrant of the Marriage Ceremony if he is to receive the consent of the couple. Please refer to the "[Rite of Marriage](#)."
4. The Deacon may assist a couple in preparation for marriage, conduct the Premarital Investigation, and apply for dispensations.

#### **E. DEACONS AND MINISTRY TO THE SICK**

1. Since the Deacon is an ordinary minister of the

Eucharist, it is appropriate for him to bring Communion to the sick and dying. When involved in this apostolate, the Deacon wears the vesture appropriate to the time and place. A stole worn over a suit is inappropriate. Appropriate attire is a suit, tie, and cross.

2. The ritual to be used by the Deacon when fulfilling this responsibility is the same as that used by the Priest.
3. The Bishop or Priest is the Celebrant of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.
4. The ordinary ministers of viaticum are the pastor and his assistants, the priest who cares for the sick in hospitals, and the superior of the clerical religious houses.
5. If no priest is available, viaticum may be brought to the sick by a Deacon. In this case, a Deacon follows the rite prescribed in the "Pastoral Care of the Sick".

#### **F. DEACONS AND THE FUNERAL RITE**

1. The Deacon may be asked to officiate at funerals and burial services. Since, in the American custom, the funeral rite usually takes place in three stages (at the funeral home, at the church, and at the cemetery), it is proper that the Deacon rightly fulfills his office at each stage.
2. The Deacon may conduct the wake ceremony that is held at the funeral home. He wears the vesture appropriate for the occasion. A stole worn over a suit is inappropriate. Appropriate vesture is alb and stole.
3. At the funeral Mass, the Deacon fulfills his proper role for the Eucharistic Liturgy. He may also receive the body and conduct final commendation.
4. If he is not to preside at these parts of the funeral liturgy, the Deacon accompanies the priest to the casket for the introductory rite and assists him with the holy water and the pall. After the Prayer After Communion, the Deacon stands next to the Priest for the final commendation. If the brief litany or invocations are used, the Deacon may offer the petitions.
5. Proper procedures for incensing the casket are as follows: The altar is completely incensed first, and then

the Pascal Candle.

6. Then, the Deacon (or Deacons) and Priest process from behind the altar to the casket in proper procession (Deacon-Priest-Deacon). Facing the casket, they should process down the right side to the back; stop and face the altar and bow; incense, and then bow again; resume the procession up the other side; and return to the altar.
7. The Deacon may sprinkle the casket with Holy Water at the door of the church after the recessional.
8. The Deacon may conduct services at the cemetery, using the same ritual as the priest.
9. Please consult the “Rites” book for all rituals and prayers.

## **G. DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION OUTSIDE THE MASS**

Since the Deacon is an ordinary minister of the Eucharist, he may distribute Communion outside the Mass when necessary. When this is done, the Deacon should vest as appropriate to his office. He may wear either the amice (optional), alb (that covers street clothes at neck), cincture (optional), and stole (worn over his left shoulder and crossed and fastened at the right side), and a dalmatic (optional) or a cassock and surplice and the stole (worn appropriately). When the Deacon distributes Communion outside of Mass, he shall observe exactly the rite prescribed for Priests and described in the appropriate ritual, and give the blessing at the end.

## **H. DEACON AND EUCHARISTIC EXPOSITION**

The ordinary minister for exposition of the Eucharist is a Priest or Deacon. At the end of the period of adoration before the reposition, he blesses the people with the sacrament.

The minister, if he is a Priest or Deacon, should vest in an alb or in a surplice over a cassock and should wear a white stole (cf. “Holy Communion and worship of the Eucharist outside Mass”, No. 92).

When the exposition takes place with the monstrance, the Priest or Deacon should wear a white cope and humeral veil to give the blessing at the end of adoration. In the case of exposition with the ciborium, the cope may be omitted, but the humeral veil should be worn.

When the Deacon is the Celebrant of Eucharistic Exposition, the following ritual is observed:

1. A Eucharistic Hymn is sung for the entrance.
2. The Deacon exposes the Blessed Sacrament; he places the luna containing the Blessed Sacrament into the monstrance, which is then placed in a position to be seen by the faithful.
3. The Deacon incenses the Blessed Sacrament.
4. A period of Adoration follows with readings, hymns, psalms, etc.
5. A Eucharistic Hymn is sung.
6. The Deacon incenses the Blessed Sacrament.
7. The Deacon says or sings the prayer.
8. The Deacon, after the prayer, puts on the humeral veil, genuflects, and takes the monstrance or ciborium. In silence, he makes the sign of the cross over the people with the monstrance or ciborium, and replaces it upon the altar.
9. The Deacon leads the assembly in reciting the Divine Praises.
10. The Deacon then replaces the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle and genuflects.
11. The assembly may sing or say an acclamation or Eucharist hymn.
12. The Deacon leaves the sanctuary.

*Note:* Genuflection in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed for veneration is to be on both knees.

## **I. DEACONS AND HOLY WEEK**

During the ceremonies of Holy Week, the Deacon is called upon to exercise his ministry in various ways. The following is a list

of the functions of the Deacon on each of the major days of Holy Week:

a. Passion (Palm) Sunday

i Procession

1. The Deacon reads the Gospel of the entry into Jerusalem.
2. He initiates the procession, saying, "Let us go....Jerusalem."
3. He assists in the incensation of the altar at the end of the procession.
4. He helps the Celebrant change from the cope (if used) to the chasuble.

ii Mass

1. The Deacon reads the Passion. Whenever a Priest is involved in the reading of the Passion, the Priest should take the part of Christ. If there are three Deacons, each takes a part; if two Deacons, they may be assisted by a lay person (a Deacon takes the part of Christ); if only one Deacon, he may be assisted by two lay persons or by Priests or by a Priest and a lay person.
2. There is no greeting or sign of the cross before the Passion; no candles or incense are used.
3. The Deacon alone asks for the blessing before the Passion.
4. The Celebrant or Deacon may give a brief homily after the Passion.
5. The Deacon reads the intentions of the general intercessions.
6. The remainder of the Mass is as usual.

b. Holy Thursday

i Liturgy of the Word

1. The Deacon reads the Gospel as usual.

ii Washing of the Feet

1. The Deacon assists the celebrant is

removing the chasuble (if necessary) and helps the Celebrant wash and dry the feet.

iii Liturgy of the Eucharist

1. As usual through Communion

iv Transfer of the Eucharist

1. The Deacon prepares the ciborium on the altar after Communion
2. He assists in the incensation of the Eucharist before the procession.
3. He assists the Celebrant with the humeral veil and gives him the ciborium.
4. He walks next to the Celebrant during the procession.
5. He assists with the incensation of the Eucharist at the place of reposition.
6. He helps with the stripping of the altar after the procession from the repository to the sacristy has ended.

c. Good Friday

i The Deacon, vested in red stole (and dalmatic) prostrates (or kneels) along with the Celebrant.

He reads the Passion as on Palm Sunday and may give a brief homily after the Passion.

ii Intercessions

1. The Deacon signs or says the invitatory (first part) of each of the intercessions.
2. He may invite the people to kneel for silent prayer and stand by the Celebrant for collection.
3. The invitatory portion of each intercession may be followed by an acclamation such as, "Lord, hear our prayer."

iii Veneration of the Cross

First Form:

1. The Deacon may bring the cross to the Celebrant.

2. He assists him in unveiling the cross as the Celebrant sings: “This is the wood of the cross....”
3. If invited by the Celebrant, the Deacon may join in the singing or sing, “This is the wood.....” alone.
4. He may hold the cross for veneration.

Second Form:

5. The Deacon carries the cross in procession from the rear of the Church and makes three stops and sings: “This is the wood of the cross...”
6. He places the cross at the entrance to the sanctuary and venerates it after the Celebrant.

iv Holy Communion

1. The Deacon brings the ciborium from the place of reposition to the altar and uncovers it.
2. He receives Communion from the Celebrant.
3. He helps in the distribution of Communion.
4. After Communion, he returns the ciborium to the place of private reservation.

*Note:* If a priest is not available, a Deacon may celebrate the entire Good Friday Service alone.

d. Holy Saturday

i Light Service

1. The Deacon assists in the preparation of the new fire and the Candle.
2. He helps light the candle.
3. Carrying the candle, he leads the procession and sings three times: “Christ, our Light.”
4. He assists the Celebrant with incense.
5. He asks for and receives the blessing before the Exultet.
6. He incenses the Book and Paschal Candle.
7. He sings the Exultet. This is the proper function of the Deacon. If the Deacon’s

voice is not adequate, a Priest or cantor may sing the Exultet. It is not a choir hymn.

ii Liturgy of the Word

1. The Deacon assists with the incense before the Gospel.
2. He reads the Gospel.
3. He may give the Homily.

iii Liturgy of Baptism

1. The Deacon may sing the litany if there are no cantors.
2. He helps lower the candle into the water (if this is done).
3. He assists the Celebrant in all aspects related to the newly baptized.
4. He assists in sprinkling the people with the baptismal water.
5. He reads the intentions of the general intercessions.

iv Liturgy of the Eucharist

1. The Deacon’s role is as usual.
2. He sings the dismissal with its double “Alleluia.”

## J. BLESSINGS

The following blessings contained in the Book of Blessings published by the Congregation for Divine Worship may be given by a Deacon when the blessing takes place apart from

Mass:

I

- Blessing of a Family
- Annual Blessing of Homes
- Blessing of Spouses (outside Mass) – for Anniversaries
- Blessing of Baptized Children
- Blessing of Unbaptized Children
- Blessing of Sons and Daughters
- Blessing of an Engaged Couple

Blessing of a Woman before or after Childbirth  
Blessing of Aged (outside Mass)  
Blessing of Sick Children  
Blessing of Catechists  
Blessing of a Catechetical Meeting  
Blessing of Organizations concerned with Public Safety  
Blessing of Pilgrims  
Blessing of Travelers

## II

Blessing of a New Building  
Blessing of a New Home  
Blessing of a New School or University  
Blessing of a New Library  
Blessing of a Nursing Home or Hospital  
Blessing of an Office, Shop, or Factory  
Blessing of a Gymnasium or Athletic Field  
Blessing of Communications Media  
Blessing of Various Means of Transportation  
Blessing of Mechanical Equipment  
Blessing of Tools  
Blessing of Animals  
Blessing of Fields and Flocks  
Blessing of the Harvest  
Blessing Before and After Meals

## III

Blessing of a Cross  
Blessing of Images for Public Veneration  
Blessing of Bells  
Blessing of Organs  
Blessing of New Church Doors  
Blessing of Stations of the Cross

## IV

Blessing of Water, Wine, Bread and Oil for Devotional Purposes  
Blessing of Religious Articles  
Blessing of a Rosary  
Blessing of Scapulars

## V

Blessing in Thanksgiving for Favors Received  
Blessing of Various Situations, which can be referred in the “Book of Blessings”.

## VI

Deacons are not permitted to bless Church furnishings or sacred vessels.

In addition, the Deacons may bless throats on the Feast of St. Blase; bless rings during the marriage ceremony; distribute but not bless ashes on Ash Wednesday; bless baptismal water during the Rite of Baptism.

## K. THE DUTIES OF THE ACOLYTE

Since a Deacon is a duly instituted acolyte for a time before ordination, it is appropriate to include the duties of an acolyte in these instructions.

The duties that the acolyte may carry out are of various kinds and several may coincide. Hence, it is desirable that these duties be suitably distributed among several acolytes. If, however, only one acolyte is present, he should perform the more important duties while the rest are to be distributed among several ministers.

### • Introductory Rites

1. In a procession to the altar, the acolyte may carry the cross, walking between two altar servers with lighted candles. Upon reaching the altar, the acolyte places the cross upright near the altar so that it may serve as the altar cross; otherwise, he puts it in a worthy place. Then he takes his place in the sanctuary.

Through the entire celebration, the acolyte is to approach the Celebrant or the Deacon, whenever necessary, in order to present the book to them and to assist them in any other way required. Thus it is appropriate, insofar as possible, that the acolyte occupy a place from which he can conveniently carry out his ministry either at the chair or at the altar.

- The Liturgy of the Eucharist

1. If no Deacon is present, after the Prayer of the Faithful is concluded and while the Celebrant remains at the chair, the acolyte places the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, the pall, and the Missal on the altar. Then, if necessary, the acolyte assists the priest in receiving the gifts of the people and, if appropriate, brings the bread and wine to the altar and hands them to the Celebrant. If incense is used, the acolyte presents the thurible to the Celebrant and assists him while he incenses the gifts, the cross, and the altar. Then the acolyte incenses the Celebrant and the people.
2. A duly instituted acolyte, as an extraordinary minister, may, if necessary, assist the priest in giving Communion to the people. If Communion is given under both kinds, when no Deacon is present, the acolyte administers the chalice to the communicants or holds the chalice if Communion is given by intinction.
3. Likewise, when the distribution of Communion is completed, a duly instituted acolyte helps the Celebrant or deacon to purify and arranged the sacred vessels. When no Deacon is present, a duly instituted acolyte carries the sacred vessels to the credence table and there purifies, wipes, and arranges them in the usual way.
4. After the celebration of the Mass, the acolyte and other ministers return in procession to the sacristy, together with the Deacon and Celebrant in the same way and order in which they entered.

All these instructions are either a direct quote from the *General Instructions of the Roman Missal* of 2003, or are in agreement with the guidelines provided in that instruction. It was reviewed and edited by the following:

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