

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES AT SOLEMN HIGH MASS (SOLO)

PREPARATIONS

Sacristy

- Vestments for Sacred Ministers (Chasuble for Celebrant (C), Dalmatic for Deacon (D) and Tunicle for Subdeacon (Sd). Only C and D wear stoles, though all wear amice, alb, cincture and maniple, unless Sd be a "straw" Sd; then he does not wear a maniple)
- Birettas for all 3 SMs (if used)

Sanctuary

- A. Credence (use a secondary Credence if necessary)

Sufficient room must be allowed for the cruets (on a tray as usual) to be placed behind the chalice assembly and for the Acolytes' Processional Candles to be placed on the back corners of the main Credence.

The special preparations for a Solemn High Mass consist of:

- *Epistolary / Evangelarium* marked properly (otherwise use a lightweight missal) facing left and position on top of the left-side folds of the humeral veil
 - Chalice prepared as usual, except burse and chalice veil are not placed on it
 - Humeral veil centered over chalice assembly (*i.e.* pall) and excess on sides are folded over each other
 - Burse is placed on top of humeral veil / chalice assembly
 - Chalice veil is placed folded behind the chalice
 - Ciborium (a) and its veil is placed behind the chalice
 - Communion Plate is not kept on Credence as it will not be used
- B. Sedilla: 3 stools or a single bench long enough for all 3 SMs; both must be without a back (s); either may be covered with coverlets that match the color of the Mass

GENERAL RULES

In many ways, the position of the MC at a Solemn High Mass is similar to his position during a *Missa Cantata* (High Mass). Here are some basic amendments though:

- The Deacon (D) is usually to the right of the Celebrant (C), whereas the Subdeacon (Sd) is usually to C's left.
- D is always behind C and Sd is always behind D in descending order.
- MC is at the missal as at High Mass if D is not assisting C there.
- *Solita osculas* are only given to C; never to D or Sd, even if either is a priest.
- MC does not incense anyone during Solemn High Mass.

NOTE BENE

Be sure to instruct D and Sd in regards to the *Gospel* incensation action, as most SMs are accustomed to the French method and not the English¹.

PROCESSIONAL

-The MC processes in front of Sd, by himself. If C is wearing a cope, D and Sd will hold C's cope during the *Procession* and the MC will process in front of them. Otherwise, D and Sd will simply process in single file in front of C.

-Upon reaching the foot of the Altar steps, the MC genuflects and goes to his normal High Mass position, but allowing room for D on C's right. MC signals gf for C, D and Sd. If SMs are wearing biretta's, take Sd's biretta first, then take the other birettas from the D. Then put them on the Sedilla in correct position (middle: C's; right: D's; left: Sd).

ASPERGES

-after gng at the Foot, MC and Th line up behind the SMs (MC on right, Th on left). MC receives the Aspersory from Th and then presents it to D. MC signals a kneel as usual. D acts like MC at High Mass.

-After C sprinkles servers in Sanctuary, MC signals all to stand, then all to genuflect. MC and Th turn, and walking shoulder to shoulder, lead SMs down Nave of church. Upon reaching 3rd or 5th last pew, MC and Th split to either side and stand flush against the pew ends, and allow SMs to pass through. MC and Th come together (MC on right), MC signals a gf and then walking shoulder to shoulder with Th leads SMs back to Sanctuary.

-When *Gloria Patri* is sung, MC stops and bows (and turns if necessary) towards the Altar.

-Upon reaching the foot, MC and Th split up and allow SMs to pass through to Foot. MC retrieves the prayer card and trades it for the Aspersory with D. MC gives the Aspersory back to Th. During the oration, MC and Th remain behind the SMs.

-After the oration, MC receives card from D, signals a gf, and all return to Sedilla, except MC and Th. MC gives card to Ac2 (or Th) at Credence. Then MC takes position at Sedilla in front Sd facing Sanctuary wall.

PREPARATORY PRAYERS AT FOOT OF ALTAR

-Signal for all to kneel. Respond with D and Sd.

-When finished signal all to stand.

AT THE 1ST INCENSATION OF THE ALTAR

-Go to Epistle side of Altar and take the boat from the Th and immediately ascend Altar steps to the Predella.

-Present the boat to D. Supervise the imposition of incense.

-Receive boat back from D and give it to Th, go stand next to missal (*i.e.*, on the 2nd Altar step to the *side* of the Altar), but face the congregation.

-Allow AC1 to remove the missal, and if necessary signal for him to return it.

¹ In either case, the Sd should be aware that a genuflection is not made upon his return to the Altar carrying the Book of the Gospels open, nor after C has kissed the *praeconium* and Sd has descended from the Predella. Cf. J.B. O'Connell.

AT THE INTROIT

-Point out *Introit* in missal for C. Make sure that for the *Introit*, D and Sd are on the corners of the Epistle Altar steps. The descending order should be: C on Predella, D on second Altar step, Sd on Sanctuary floor. They should be diagonally apart from each other, shoulder point to shoulder point.

AT THE KYRIE

-At the *Kyrie*, signal D and Sd to line up behind C.

AT THE GLORIA

-At the *Gloria*, signal D and Sd to follow behind C to center of Altar. After C intones "*Gloria in excelsis Deo*," signal D and Sd to ascend the Altar steps to the Predella. D will go to the C's right and Sd will go to the C's left; there they will assist saying the *Gloria*. Remain *in plano* (or you may ascend with them and remain at D's left).

-When they finish saying the *Gloria*, signal a gf (but do not genuflect yourself *unless you are on the Predella with the SMS*) and meet them at the Sedilla. Bow to SMS and then towards Tabernacle at proper words during *Gloria*.

-At end of *Gloria*, signal for them to rise, lead them to foot of Altar steps, signal gf, go to the Epistle side of Altar and indicate the *Collect* to C.

AT THE MIDDLE OF COLLECT TO EPISTLE

-Towards the middle of the *Collect*, meet Ac1 *in plano* on the Epistle side (near the Credence). Make a bow to Ac1 before and after receiving the book (hold the book with opening facing *right*, so Sd does not have to turn it to face left when he receives it). Go straight to Sd, bow to him, then give him the book. Go to his left and lead him to center of Altar, genuflect after C says, "*Per Dominum Nostrum...*" Lead Sd to the Epistle side of the Chancel (*i.e.* at some distance from the Altar), facing the Altar. Stand to his left.

-At the end of the Epistle *do not* respond with, "*Deo Gratias.*"

-Lead Sd to center of Altar steps, signal gf and then lead Sd to the Epistle side of the Altar, remain *in plano* while Sd receives blessing from C.

-When Sd is finished receiving blessing from C, receive the book back from him with bows and return the book to Ac1 with bows near the Credence.

AT THE GRADUAL AND ALLELUIA

-Go back to Missal, and point out the *Gradual*. When C has finished saying the *Alleluia*, lead the SMS to the Sedilla.

-While the *Gradual / Alleluia* (or whatever else) is being chanted, go to Ac1 and receive the book for the *Gospel* in the same manner as before. Go stand at Sedilla facing congregation.

-At the proper word cue, signal ministers to rise, and lead them to foot of Altar steps, signal gf.

AT THE GOSPEL

-Turn and present the Book of Gospels to D with appropriate bows.

-Repeat steps as at imposition of incense before *Introit*. Except give book back to Th, then descend steps and lead servers with Th to the center of Foot. Allow room for D and Sd to stand in front and ensure that the Acolytes have left enough space between them for the MC and Th to pass through. The formation should ultimately look like this:

Sd	D
Th	MC
Ac2	Ac1

For those churches that do not have sufficient room to accommodate this formation, the formation may be as follows:

Ac2 Th Sd D MC Ac1

-When D descends with Gospels, signal a gf, turn inwards with Th and walk shoulder to shoulder *through* the Acolytes and lead all to Gospel side of Chancel in front of the wall.

ORDER OF PROCESSION AND GOSPEL FORMATION

MC and Th, AC1 and AC2, followed by Sd and D (in single file). D stands in middle front, Sd in middle rear holding Gospels facing D, AC1 right rear and AC2 left rear both facing Th and MC, MC to right of D, Th to left of D.

Ac2 Sd Ac1
Th D MC

- Take thurible from Th, and give to D.
- While you sign yourself at the *Gospel*, turn towards C and sign towards him.
- Give thurible back to Th. If the Holy Name is sung, bow to the book first *just before it is read* and then turn and bow to C (who bows to the Altar Cross {precedence of proximity}).
- When *Gospel* is finished *do not* respond with, "*Laus Tibi Christe.*"
- D points out beginning (*praeconium*) of *Gospel* to Sd who goes *per breviorum* to C on Predella.

UNITED STATES CUSTOM OF GOSPEL INCENSATION OF C²

- MC takes thurible from Th and gives it to D.
- D then incenses C from where the *Gospel* was sung. MC bows with D before and after incensing C. MC then takes thurible back from D and returns it to Th.
- MC then turns inwards with Th, leads Acolytes and D back to the Foot there resuming their former positions.
- If there is a *Sermon*, then MC waits until C descends from Predella to foot of Altar, to signal the gf.

FRENCH CUSTOM OF GOSPEL INCENSATION OF C

- MC and Th turn inwards, and followed by the Acolytes, follow directly behind Sd, returning to their former positions at Foot. MC and Th follows behind Acolytes, with D in tow; all line up in box formation as before.
- MC goes to Epistle corner of Foot, meets Sd descending from Predella, takes book from Sd with bows, and after D has finished incensing C, MC leads Sd back to position in box formation. MC then signals a gf.
- During MC and Sd motion, Th gives thurible to D, and D incenses C. Th makes bows with D to C.
- When all are lined up in the box formation, MC signals a gf for all, and they depart the foot of the Altar.

A. IF THERE IS A SERMON

- Accompany C to the pulpit, and stand to its left side if possible and face the Nave with eyes downcast.

B. IF THERE IS NOT A SERMON

- If there is not to be a sermon, signal D and Sd to line up behind the C for the *Credo*.

² This method should be used in all chapels in the United States for two reasons: 1. It is the English custom (*cf.* L. O'Connell) and 2. Since many sanctuaries have little or no room in front of the Foot, this form is much easier to enact than the French custom.

C. IF THERE IS A CREDO

-Stand at High Mass position for *Credo*. If the SMs descend *in plano* after saying the *Credo*, signal a kneel at the words, "*Descendit de caelis*" and signal a rise at, "*crucifixus et pro nobis...*" Otherwise, gf only when the SMs do at the Altar.

-Lead the SMs to the Sedilla, after C has been seated, then immediately lead D to Credence. Give Burse to the D, lead him back in front of the Sedilla, bow with him to the C³, then lead him to the Foot, signal gf, help him with alb. When D descends from Predella, MC signals a gf and leads D back to the Sedilla (though D may return *per breviorum* to Sedilla; in this case, MC simply returns to Sedilla without a gf). Signal a bow at the words, "*simul adoratur,*" at words, "*venturi saeculi,*" signal ministers to rise, lead them to Foot, signal gf.

D. IF THERE IS NOT A CREDO

-Take your normal position at Foot. After C says, "*Oremus*", lead Sd to Credence and perform actions described below.

AT THE OFFERTORY

-After C says, "*Oremus*," lead the Sd to the Credence, there Sd will put on the humeral veil, MC or AC1 should assist. Make sure the veil is clasped. Sd will bring chalice to Altar alone. If there is a ciborium, then the MC (wearing gloves) should take it up to the Altar, *per breviorum*. Then stand in normal position for *Offertory*.

AT THE OFFERTORY INCENSATION OF THE ALTAR

-Meet the Th as normal, present the boat to D, and supervise the imposing of incense. Receive boat back from D and give it back to Th. Go to left of C (like Th at High Mass) and assist for the incensing of the Altar.

{Sd is holding the paten in the humeral veil at the foot of the Altar at this time. From here till the *Pater noster*, he will not be able to assist C}.

-When the incensing of the Altar is finished, stay next to the missal, and do not descend from the Predella! Turn towards C, while D incenses him. {D will then go with Th to incense Sd, and then D will ascend behind C on the 2nd step, where he will be incensed, and then Th will incense MC, and so on}

AT THE ORATE FRATRES

-If D is not preoccupied when C turns around and says, "*Orate Fratres*," then D should say the *Suscipiat*, otherwise Sd will say it or even the MC if Sd cannot for some reason. MC should indicate to D to make the response. Turn the missal page to the *Preface* after C says the *Secret*.

AT THE PREFACE

-When C sings, "*Angeli atque Archangeli*," signal D and Sd to ascend to the Predella, D to right of C, Sd to left of C and the MC standing next to the Sd.

AT THE SANCTUS

-After the *Sanctus* has been said by SMs, set the pages to the *Canon*, bow with Sd to the Tabernacle, then descend the steps and stand at the Gospel corner of the Foot. D will assist C with missal.

³ Unfortunately, this bowing action, which is required by the rule of reverencing is often omitted by the Deacon. It is also wise to inform the Deacon of this action before Mass begins in conjunction with the instruction on the *Incensation at Gospel of C* action.

QUAM OBLATIONEM

-When C reaches the *Quam Oblationem*, D genuflects on 2nd step and switches sides, then D will kneel on Epistle side at *Qui Pridie*, assisting C with pall during *Consecration of Chalice*.

-After *Consecration* is completed, D switches back to Gospel side to assist with missal.

THE CONSECRATION AND ELEVATIONS

-MC remains on Gospel corner *in plano*. MC signals for all to kneel as normal, and signals for all to rise when the *Consecration* is completed.

AT THE NOBIS QUOQUE PECCATORIBUS

-When C has said, "*Nobis quoque peccatoribus*," very soon after this D will genuflect (he should do so by *Per quem haec*) and switch sides. Genuflect where you are at in unison with D, then ascend steps to missal. Assist at missal as at High Mass.

-D will descend Predella to 2nd step behind C, stay at missal.

AT THE PATER NOSTER

-At the words, "***Panem nostrum quotidianum***" or "***et dimitte nobis***" signal D, Sd and Ac1 to gf and ascend to the Epistle side of the Predella. There Sd will give the paten to D. Ac1 remove the humeral veil from Sd and return it to the Sacristy (gging *in plano* after descending from the Predella⁴).

AT "PAX DOMINI SIT SEMPER VOBISCUM"

-When C breaks the Sacred Host, and says, "***Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum***," signal Sd to ascend Predella between C and you (*i.e.* in front of the missal).

AT THE AGNUS DEI

-After the *Agnus Dei*, the MC turns the missal page and genuflects in unison [principle of *cum ratione accomodationis*] with Sd (who returns to normal position at foot of Altar) and MC takes position again at Gospel corner.

-While C says the *Domine Jesu Christe*, D will kneel next to Priest.

-When C is finished reciting the *Domine Jesu Christe*, D stands, both C and D kiss Altar, and then D receives the Pax from C.

-Then D genuflects and descends from Predella to right side of Sd, Sd receives Pax from D and then D ascends to 2nd step. If there are clerics in choir, MC should be on left side of Sd while he receives Pax, and then MC immediately signals gf for Sd and leads Sd to Gospel side of choir first, where Sd gives Pax to cleric of highest rank only (other clerics pass it down), then MC leads Sd to Epistle side genuflecting in center, and repeats Pax procedure there.

-Then MC leads Sd to foot Altar, signals gf, and then directs Sd to Gospel side of Predella.

-MC resumes position at Gospel corner of Sanctuary floor.

AT THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

-After C receives Holy Communion, MC leads servers to foot of Altar as usual⁵. D sings the *Confiteor* alone, though servers do make a moderate bow and strike their breasts.

-Servers, stand, genuflect and ascend to the Predella SMs have switched sides (D to C's right and Sd C's left).

-After all have received Communion, MC signals a rise, then descends, signals a gf, then MC kneels in front of Sedilla {D is holding Paten for C}.

⁴ Rule of genuflecting for inferior ministers. Cf. L. O'Connell.

⁵ The Communion Plate is not used, as the paten held by the Deacon is employed instead.

AT THE ABLUTIONS OF CHALICE

- When C has closed Tabernacle door, signal a rise.
- Ac1 brings cruets on tray to Sd. Sd and D switch missal and pall

N.B.: If "straw" Subdeacon; pall will not be switch, but Sd will switch missal immediately after door is closed, then return to the Gospel side of Predella to assemble chalice.

- Ac2 goes to the Credence immediately after Tabernacle door closes, puts on the gloves and brings the chalice veil to the Gospel side of Altar. AC2 must go past the center of the Altar, and ascend the steps *per longiorem*. AC2 leaves the Veil there and goes back to his position.

AFTER D AND SD SWITCH MISSAL AND PALL, WHILE AC2 BRINGS CHALICE VEIL

- MC turns pages on missal back to *Propers*.
- Sd carries chalice back to Credence, *per breviorum*. If there is a ciborium, the Ac1 should take it down to Credence wearing gloves.

AT THE COMMUNION AND POST COMMUNION

- Point out *Communion* and *Post Communion* to C. Make sure that D and Sd are lined up straight behind C in descending order.
- After *Post Communion*, close the missal, descend steps to normal *Ite, missa est* position.

AT THE ITE, MISSA EST

- D and Sd should be in center of steps in descending order with C at *Ite, missa est*.
- D intones, "*Ite, missa est*," facing the congregation. Then D and Sd ascend to the center of the 2nd Altar step for the *Last Blessing*.

AT THE LAST BLESSING

- Signal a kneel for the *Last Blessing*.

AT THE LAST GOSPEL

- At the *Last Gospel*, Sd assists C at *Last Gospel* Altar card, while D stands on 2nd Altar step on the Epistle side. Signal servers to line up for *Recessional*.

AT THE RECESSIONAL

- Take boat from Th, give to D, assist for imposing of incense, receive boat back from D.
- If there are birettas, give C's and D's birettas to D (keep them separate) and give Sd his biretta.
- Signal gf and process in front of Sd.