



The
ArchConfraternity
of
Saint Stephen



Introduction
to the Guild

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ArchConfraternity of Saint Stephen

(also referred to as *the Guild*)



Introduction to the Guild Version 1.0
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Why choose to have the Guild?

Firstly, the object of the Guild makes it a most worthy organization;

The threefold object of the Guild which is Sanctification of the Altar Server through: 1.) Giving the server to understand the great privilege the Church allows by letting him serve in the Church ceremonies, 2.) Instructing him on how to observe the rites and ceremonies of the Catholic Church, 3.) Encouraging the server to understand the significance and purpose of the ceremonies in which he serves.

Secondly, its rich history of papal benedictions;

The Indulgences attached by Saint Pius X. (HB p. 4)

☞ 3 Plenary:

- 1st on the day of admission
- 2nd on the annual patronal feast of the Guild, Dec. 26th
- 3rd on the hour of death

☞ 7 years and even quarantines given on certain feasts:

- Feast of St. John on Dec 27
- Feast of St. Joseph on March 19
- Saints Peter and Paul on June 29
- Saint Michael on Sept 29

☞ 300 day indulgence every time a member recites

before serving Mass, the prayer: Direct, we beseech thee, O Lord.

In England and Wales there is a 200 day indulgence whenever the Guild Prayer is recited.

Thirdly, its public apostolate;

Publicly shows the importance the Church places on serving well and the interest it takes in the individual server's formation. It is an honor and privilege for the server to wear the Guild Medal.

Fourthly, the reverence shown it by notable prelates;

Pope Saint Pius X, who gave it his Apostolic Blessing, indulgenced it and raised it to the status of archconfraternity; **Pope Pius XI**, who extended the privileges throughout the entire British Empire; **Archbishop Bourne** (later Cardinal) loved the Guild so much that he petitioned Rome for the initial Apostolic Blessing from Pius X and then initiated a Chapter at Westminster Cathedral which then became the "motherhouse" of all the chapters of the Guild; **Cardinal Griffin**, whose praises can be read in the preface of the Guild Handbook and finally **Archbishop Lefebvre** after having come in contact with the Guild in 1985 was so impressed by its work that he made special mention of it during the General Chapter where he encouraged its implementation in all of the Society's Missions.

I already have a well-oiled reliable serving machine in place-why would I want to replace it?

You are not replacing you are supercharging your machine. The Guild will help increase the servers' piety by the set prayers, the yearly publications of The Acolyte Magazine and the example the Guild gives by its supernatural aims, its solemn approach towards the ceremonies, and by the example of its history. The medals the servers wear while serving are no small aid in helping bring across to them a greater understanding of the sublime honor being allotted them - that of serving at the altar. Externals influence nature and grace builds on nature. The medals and the ceremony of enrollment also serve to display publicly the dedication and accomplishments of its members thus giving the other servers someone to look up to and a goal to strive for. In short, it helps to give more emphasis to the center of our Faith, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

In the event you were to have some already well trained servers that you wish to enroll and elevate to a certain rank without having to put them through the

placement tests; that is entirely up to you, but they must possess the aptitude and knowledge of the positions associated with each rank.

As to the rubrics put forward in the handbook; they are simply for your convenience, and though they are recommended you are not required to adopt them.

Do all Servers have to be Guild members?

Anyone (men and boys) can conceivably be members, but many in fact, cannot live up to the standards. The Guild, if run properly, is in a certain sense an auto pilot which ensures among your servers, with little flying on your part, an elite group of dependable and knowledgeable men you can always rely on for quality and discipline. Here are a few examples of when it is recommended that you not admit certain aspirants: 1.) If they do not have the initiative to truly strive for excellence in the Sanctuary nor a sincere love for Serving, 2.) If they do not want to commit, 3.) If they are unable to fulfill the obligations of the Guild (practices, daily prayers), or for one reason or another are unable to serve according to Guild standards.

What person(s) are needed to start the Guild, and what is required of me as pastor?

You will need a **Director** (which can be fulfilled by the pastor or his assistant), and a **President**.

Explain the job of the Director.

The Director appoints the position of president, oversees and guides the president's administration of the Guild and performs the enrollment ceremony into the Guild. Any active interest he takes in the guild will no doubt aid in its success. It is good to note here that the qualities of the President assigned can greatly affect your work load. The stress and workload of a priest who has a good president can quite easily be significantly less than that of a priest who does not have the Guild.

What is the President?

He is the director's right-hand man when it comes to ceremonies. He directs the practices, and should you have the commendable custom of regular Guild meetings, he directs those as well in the absence of the Director.

He knows the rubrics or at least possesses the ability and desire to learn them, including the more elaborate ceremonies like Confirmation etc..., and has the ability to coordinate the other servers. The President is also responsible for preparing a regular servers schedule.

What is required by its Members?

What is required by the members of the Guild can be summed up in their four Rules:

- ① To serve at the Altar reverently, intelligently and punctually.
- ② To make the short acts of preparation before, and of thanksgiving after, serving Mass.
- ③ To observe silence in the sacristy, and great reverence in the Sanctuary.
- ④ To recite daily the Guild Prayer. (HB p.2)

What is the Guild's System of Promotion?

To be promoted to a position an oral Latin test (for the postulants and junior acolytes) and a written test (for all ranks) must be passed. The members must pass the tests with excellence before being promoted. It is also

recommended that if you have members who already have reached the appropriate knowledge that they not be held back too long from being promoted to rank; it is not necessary to promote in succession of age.

There are five official ranks:

Postulant: He aspires to join the Guild and tries to follow all the rules. They have no insignia. They are enrolled when the Director and President judge them fit.

Junior Acolyte: He knows the positions of Second Acolyte at Low Mass and TorchBearer at High Mass. He is fluent in his responses without any visual aid. They wear a plain cord with a silver & gray enameled medal.

Senior Acolyte: He knows both positions in Low Mass, can serve Low Mass by himself as well as 1st, 2nd Acolyte and Thurifer at a High Mass. He receives the beaded cord with tassel, but retains the silver and gray medal.

Master of Ceremonies: He knows all positions for Low Mass and High Mass. He retains the beaded cord with tassel, but receives a gold medal.

President: He wears the gold & black medal on the beaded and tassels cord.

Materials needed to start the Guild

- Handbook (contains the enrollment ceremony and recommended method of serving)
- Certificate of Enrollment
- Before & After Mass prayer card & Seasonal prayer card
- Daily Guild Prayer card
- Test & Answer keys for each rank (this is free)
- Explanation of the Guild pamphlet (a detailed history of its origins)
- One President medal with cord

Any other items may be purchased from our *St. Stephen's Storehouse* catalogue as your Chapter progresses.



