

Boatbearer during High Mass (*Missa Cantata*)

While the position of Boatbearer (Bb) is not mentioned in the Church's liturgical books, it is allowed by such rubrical authors as Fortescue and Merati¹. A postulant server is often scheduled for this position, not only to acquaint him with serving High Mass, but also to add solemnity to the sacred ceremonies. The object that Bb holds, the Boat, is so called, because the older forms were often shaped in the image of a Boat, and in the Latin rubrics it is called a *navicula*.

Bb should be in the Sacristy at least 15 minutes before Mass

Bb must complete these tasks within the first 5 minutes:

- should be vested having said the Vesting Prayers.
- should have a stool on the Epistle side of the Sanctuary, to the left of Th's², for the *Sermon*, if used.
- looks on the liturgical calendar and determines what class of incense should be used, fills the Boat $\frac{3}{4}$'s full (not all the way to the top; room must be provided for the Spoon and for C to scoop out incense) and puts the Spoon into the Boat *on top of the incense* (not buried in it) with the handle partially sticking out under the lid (or in the notch) at about at a 20° angle.
- if necessary, Bb assists with any of Th's duties. Bb should not stand near the charcoal preparation area while he has his Surplice on.

General Rules:

- Bb holds the Boat all during Mass, with exception to *Communion*.
- Bb always carries the Boat in his right hand and holds it at sternum level, slightly in front of him³ in this manner: the stem is held between the index and middle fingers, which enables one to hold the bowl partially in the palm, and the thumb is placed on the lid. Bb's left hand is held flat, with fingers extended and held together against his breast.
- when Bb does not carry the Boat, he folds his hands as usual.
- when Bb is carrying the Boat, he does not make the sign of the cross, nor strike his breast, but he does bow.
- Bb is usually to the left of Th.
- when Bb is with Th, he genuflects, kneels, sits, turns and bows in unison with Th.
- when walking with Th, Bb does so shoulder to shoulder.

In the Sacristy to the Procession:

When Bb has completed his duties, and after saying the *Before Mass Prayers*, he proceeds with the Boat to the Sacristy and takes position to the left of Th.

If incense is imposed for the Procession:

- if incense is imposed for the *Procession*, once C has finished vesting, Bb steps up to C with Th, Bb presents the Boat (with lid closed) to the MC⁴ and then steps back slightly while incense is imposed.
- when the MC closes the lid, and holds out the Boat, Bb steps forward, receives the Boat and then goes with Th to their position in the Sacristy for the *Procession*.

- when the MC signals, Bb turns towards the Processional Cross⁵ and bows while the MC says, "*Procedamus in pace*," then with C and all of the servers, he replies: "*In nomine Christi, Amen.*"
- Bb turns inwards with Th, switches *behind* Th to Th's left side and processes out of the Sacristy, walking shoulder to shoulder with Th.
- upon arrival in the Sanctuary, Bb genuflects in unison with Th:

- if Th is carrying the Aspersory, Bb goes around Th and proceeds to his normal position on the Epistle side of the Sanctuary, usually in front of, or inside the Sacristy doorway.
- if Th is carrying the Thurible, Bb turns inwards with Th and then proceeds shoulder to shoulder with Th to his normal position, switching back to the left side of Th upon arriving there.

¹ Fortescue, 1962; pg. 101 and ff. 3 (Gavanti-Merati, Pars II, tit. ii, § 21 (*ed. cit.*, vol. I, p. 107).

² If due to space limitations, Th does not place a stool out for himself, then neither does Bb. Often during the *Sermon*, Th and Bb place their stools inside the Epistle side Sacristy doorway, or even just inside the Sacristy itself and sit there. After the *Sermon* they remove their stools.

³ It should not be held against one's Surplice as unlacquered brass can blacken it.

⁴ The rubrical authors usually assume that Bb will give the Boat to Th, who will then give the Boat to the MC, but this is not really necessary.

⁵ Or the Sacristy Cross if there is not a Crossbearer.

If there is an Asperges:

- on the MC's signal (when C kneels), Bb kneels.
- on the MC's signal (when MC and Th stand), Bb stands. When C sprinkles Bb, he makes a simple bow towards C and then signs himself with the cross.
- Bb turns towards the Altar and makes a simple bow for the *Gloria Patri*, and for *Oremus*.

During Mass:

- during the *Preparatory Prayers*, Bb remains standing with Th; he does not sign nor strike himself during this time.

At the First Incensation of the Altar:

- after the *Preparatory Prayers* are completed, Bb accompanies Th to the Epistle side of the Foot. Just before arriving there, Bb steps slightly behind Th (who meets the MC shoulder to shoulder at the Foot), and then presents the Boat to the MC with the lid closed.
- when the MC and Th have ascended to the Predella, Bb moves to the MC's former position, while Ac1 goes to the right of Bb, Th's former position: Bb and Ac1 are standing shoulder to shoulder, just in front of the Foot.
- when C has finished imposing incense, the MC closes the lid and holds the Boat out towards Bb. Bb and Ac1 then ascend to the Predella *together*⁶, Bb takes the Boat from the MC, turns right, meets Ac1 with the Missal, both descend *together* to the floor and then Bb returns to his normal position.

- during the *Gloria*, the *Epistle*, *Gradual*, *Alleluia*, etc., Bb remains standing with Th.

At the Gospel:

- when C is almost ready to impose incense, Bb accompanies Th to the Foot again as above, gives the Boat to the MC, and moves to the MC's former position (Ac1 is at the Credence this time, retrieving his Candle).
- when the MC holds out the Boat, Bb ascends to the Predella, takes the Boat, turns right and returns to his normal position.
- when C moves to the Missal, Bb turns towards the Missal for the reading of the *Gospel*. After the *Gospel* is finished being read, Bb faces across the Sanctuary as usual.

At the Offertory Incensation of the Altar:

- Bb repeats the same steps as at the *First Incensation*, but this time Ac1 will go to Gospel side of the Foot to remove the Missal. Bb and Ac1 will be facing each other across the Sanctuary.
- when the MC holds out the Boat, Bb and Ac1 ascend *at the same* to the Predella from opposite sides, Bb will take the Boat from the MC, waits until Ac1 is ready with the Missal, then Bb and Ac1 will turn outwards (Bb turns right), descend *at the same time* and then Bb will return to his position.
- after C is incensed, Th will incense Bb, who makes a simple bow to Th before and after being incensed.

At the Hanc Igitur:

- when the bell has been rung for the *Hanc Igitur*, Bb opens the Boat and imposes one spoonful of incense into the Thurible, which Th holds open [the incense should be spread among the charcoals, and not just dumped on one charcoal; this enables the incense to burn better].
- then still holding the Boat, Bb kneels at the MC's signal for the *Consecration*. Bb makes a moderate bow for each genuflection C makes during the *Consecration*; Bb must make sure that his thumb is holding down the lid; also Bb should not tilt the Boat while bowing!

For Communion:

- after C says the triple *Domine non sub dignus*, Bb places the Boat on the Credence, in a place where it will not be tipped over accidentally.
- when Th has picked up the Communion Plate, Bb accompanies Th on his left side to the front of the Foot for *Communion*. There he genuflects, kneels, stands, genuflects, ascends with, kneels, strikes and signs himself in unison with the other servers and on the MC's signal.
- after receiving Holy Communion, on Th's signal, Bb rises, turns *left*, descends to the Foot, genuflects on Th's signal, returns single file with Th to his position and then kneels on Th's signal.
- when the Tabernacle door is closed, and *after* the Acolytes have *left* the Credence with their cruets, Bb retrieves the Boat from the Credence.

The Last Gospel to the Recessional:

- Bb does not sign himself with the triple cross for the *Last Gospel*. Once the *Last Gospel* has been started, Bb accompanies Th to their staging position for the *Recessional*.

⁶ They should ascend to stand actually on the Predella, and not just on the 2nd Altar step.

- if incense was imposed for the *Processional*, Th and Bb remain at their position until the Acolytes have left the Credence with their Candles, then Th and Bb go to the Epistle side of the Sanctuary, near the Foot. When C descends from the Predella, Bb gives the Boat to MC and receives it back as usual [go to step below].
- Th and Bb immediately go to the center of the Foot, shoulder to shoulder, genuflect, turn inwards, Bb switches behind Th to his left, and then both proceed to the head of the servers' formation for the *Recessional*; usually directly in front of the Communion Rail Gate [inside the Sanctuary].

-Th and Bb genuflect for "*Et Verbum caro factum est.*"

-On MC's signal, Th and Bb genuflect, turn inwards, Bb switches sides behind Th and then both recess out shoulder to shoulder.

Servers' Blessing in the Sacristy:

-upon arrival in the Sacristy, Th and Bb take the same position as they had before the *Processional*. Both bow to the Processional Cross and then kneel for the blessing, but do not sign themselves.

-Bb says the Guild prayers with the servers, and then follows the *After Mass Duties Sheet* as prescribed.