

MASTER OF CEREMONIES DURING A *MISSA CANTATA* (HIGH MASS)

BEING THE MC

The Master of Ceremonies (MC) is exactly what his title states. Hence, as the MC, you must thoroughly know how to serve the other lower positions correctly so that you may direct and coordinate them well during Mass. Nothing is more conducive to the sacred ceremonies than the good coordination of the servers. You must also generally know the rubrics that concern your own position and the general ones for the Celebrant (C). The more you know about the ceremonies of a High Mass, the better you can fulfill your position.

The MC must also know how to correct a necessary ceremonial situation with tact and discretion. This is especially true when concerning C at Mass. For instance, if C were to forget to say the *Kyrie* and proceed straight to the *Gloria*, it would be best if the MC phrased the matter as a reminder or a question, "*The Kyrie?*" In dealing with the servers, any corrections made, especially from a distance, should be as unnoticeable as possible, and at times and depending on the gravity of the incident, it is even better to let it pass. The MC can then make the correction after Mass in the Sacristy.

CONCERNING THE ORGANIZATION OF THE PREPARATIONS BEFORE MASS

The MC must oversee all of the preparations that are necessary before the beginning of Mass. You must ensure they are done correctly and on time so that Mass may start as scheduled. As MC, you should remain the Sacristy as much as possible, directing the preparations from there (there should be a permanent duties checklist in the Sacristy assigning each server a specific duty to complete before Mass). In this way, you can ensure the servers are keeping silent in the Sacristy, are organized and that any last minute details can be taken care of easily (such as replacing late servers). Whenever possible, *delegate* any additional duties to the servers to handle, so your own hands are kept free. The MC must sometime before Mass begins, check the Sanctuary to ensure all tasks have been completed correctly.

GUILD PRAYERS AND THE LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES:

The Golden Rule Carved In Stone

10 minutes before Mass, the MC leads all of the servers into the Sanctuary for the *Before Mass Prayers*. All line up *recta linea* at the Foot, MC signals a genuflection and then a kneel. All servers respond together at a moderate pace according to the directions on the Card. After having said the prayers, MC signals all to rise, then signals a genuflection and all return to the Sacristy.

Upon returning to the Sacristy, Ac1 immediately lights the High Mass candles. In this way, if there are any problems in candle lighting, the saying of the Guild prayers will not be neglected, and Mass can also start on time.

GENERAL RULES FOR THE MC DURING HIGH MASS AND OTHER CEREMONIES

SIGNALING

-Signaling is done to coordinate C and the servers when to genuflect, kneel, stand and even sometimes to sit.

-Signaling is done in three types of volume (loudness):

1. For C (when MC is next to him); loud enough (very soft) so that only C may hear it.
 2. For servers: loud enough so that only those in the Sanctuary can hear it.
 3. For the congregation; loud enough so that all in the Nave of the church can hear it (if music like the *Te Deum* is being played at the same time, it will have to be especially loud so that it can be heard above the music).
- A one clap signal is used for: a single knee genuflection (occasionally as on Good Friday to perform a moderate bow in place of a genuflection), stand or sit.
 - A two clap signal is used for: to kneel or perform a double knee genuflection (two claps, then kneel, make a moderate bow and then rise without signaling again).

Clapping is done in two ways:

1. Clapping the tips of your folded hands together (this method allows you to control the volume of the clap).
2. Clapping the extended index and middle fingers against the open palm of the opposite hand.

Never snap your fingers (this is quite distasteful), and *do not* clap your hands as you would at a concert (you are in a Sanctuary).

SOLITA OSCULA

Solita oscula Latin means: *With the customary kisses*. These are given to certain objects and C's right hand as signs of reverence. At times the rubrics call for most of them to be omitted (the only truly necessary ones is

during a Solemn Mass when the Deacon present the prepared Chalice to C at the *Offertory* and when the Deacon presents the Paten to C after the *Pater Noster*): i.e. during a Requiem Mass, Mass with the Blessed Sacrament Exposed, and during Good Friday.

The mode of giving the *solita oscula* is as follows:

- WHEN GIVING: Object first, then C's hand (if C is a Bishop, you kiss his ring in all cases instead)
- WHEN RECEIVING: C's hand first, then object

The only objects and what parts you kiss during a High Mass are as follows:

- Biretta; kiss the side of the Biretta, not the pompom or fins.
- Aspergillum (sprinkler); kiss the back portion of the handle .
- Incense Spoon; kiss the back portion of the spoon's handle.
- Thurible; kiss the disk (where all of the chains join at the top).

THERE ARE TWO EXCEPTIONS TO THE RECEIVING RULE REGARDING SACRAMENTALS:

- Candle when receiving from C (on Candlemass Day): kiss the candle *first* and then C's hand
- Palm when receiving from C (on Palm Sunday) same as for candle

When presenting anything else, no *solita oscula* are given.

GIVING THE THURIBLE

Whenever the MC gives the Thurible to C, he does so not only with the *solita oscula* in their proper order, but also in this fashion: Holding the disk in the right hand, and the middle part of the chain in the left, give the Thurible to C with your *right hand over your left hand* (another words, give the disk first, then the chain). This motion will be assumed throughout these instructions.

POINTING OUT TEXT

Many times during Mass, the MC will need to indicate the proper text that C will read; this is a part of the MC's duty, and he should always look at the texts slightly ahead of pointing them out so that he may do so correctly. When indicating a text, the MC does so by laying his right hand (palm upwards with fingers touching and extended) for a brief moment above the text that C is suppose to read.

BOWING

All three types of bows are employed during High Mass by the MC (and Th). Simple and moderate bows are performed as when you would during a Low Mass. The difference is, when standing, you pivot on your feet and face the Tabernacle to make the appropriate bow, and then turn back to face in your former position. The profound bow (made low enough so your fingers could touch your knees) is only made before and after incensing C.

-At the Sedilla: Whenever C sits at the Sedilla, the MC must signal C when he should doff his Biretta and bow. The MC does this by bowing to C slightly before the word arrives at which a reverence must be made, and then by making a right turn, facing the Tabernacle and making a simple bow. Then turning back in the opposite direction (i.e., left) to face the Nave again. These occasions occur namely:

- During the *Gloria* (for all of the words that require a bow as at Low Mass)
- During the *Gradual / Alleluia* (or if the *Alleluia* is substituted with a *Tract*, or added to with a *Greater Alleluia*, and/or *Sequence*) (cf. below)
- During the *Credo* (cf. below for the MC's position during the *Credo*)

-During the *Gradual*, etc.: If the choir sings the *Gradual* and etc. in the full Gregorian Chant, instead of Psalm toning it, the MC must confer the *Liber* before Mass to know the proper word to use as the cue for signaling C to return to the Altar. This word should be on the fourth line from the bottom of the last text to be sung. However, during a *Sequence*, the MC should use a word from about the tenth line, since a *Sequence* is generally sung at a quicker pace.

GENUFLECTING

Genuflections are made as usual, with exception to the rules of *cum ratione accomodationis* and *in coram Sanctissimum* which both occur during a High Mass for the MC.

Cum ratione accomodationis: This means in Latin: *To rationally accommodate* and this describes a condition, where an inferior minister breaks the normal rule that applies to him to be in unison with a Sacred

Minister's action. This rule has its effect on the MC during the *Canon* of the Mass in regards only to the genuflections (not the liturgical gestures). While inferior ministers are not allowed to genuflect on the Predella, the MC (and Th) does so at these times:

- During each incensation of the Altar in conjunction with C.
- During the *Canon*, after the *Consecration*, when C does so.

Also in both cases listed above, the MC puts his inside hand under C's elbow each time C genuflects.

In coram Sanctissimum: This means in Latin: *In the presence of the Blessed Sacrament* and this phrase describes those times when the Blessed Sacrament is considered exposed. During High Mass, this takes place for the MC only when he is on the Predella¹, from the *Consecration* until C's *Domine non sum dignus*. Thusly, when the MC leaves the Predella before C's *Communion*, he must make a genuflection *in plano* due to this condition. This condition also occurs for everyone else during the *Distribution of Holy Communion*.

RESPONDING

The MC is to make all of the responses as he would if he were serving a Low Mass, except that where required, the MC should sing them in a moderate voice.

ASSUMPTIONS

Within these instructions, it is assumed that the MC already perfectly knows from having served Low Mass when and for what he ought to bow and when he assists C with his Alb while ascending steps. Therefore, these items will *not* be mentioned generally in the instructions.

ARRIVAL IN THE SACRISTY

The MC must arrive in the Sacristy no later than 30 minutes before the start of Mass. The reason for this is, the MC must have his duties completed before the first server arrives (i.e., Th at 20 minutes before Mass), so that the MC may be able to supervise the servers. The MC must also be prepared to make any special preparations or arrangements that might be particular to a ceremony. It is ultimately up to the MC to ensure that everything that is needed for a smooth ceremony is properly prepared.

-After having vested, the MC must perform these four duties:

1. Confer the *Ordo* for the proper Mass and for any special rubrics.
2. Confer the Missal and ensure that it is set up properly; this is ultimately the MC's duty, not the Sacristan's.
3. Confer the *Liber* for the proper cue as mentioned above for the *Gradual*, etc. (this is only necessary if the choir sings both of these Propers; however this is almost always necessary if there is a *Sequence*).
4. Ensure that the Chalice², the Altar and the vestments (both in the Sacristy and in the Sanctuary) are properly prepared; again, again, this is ultimately the MC's duty.

ADDITIONAL PREPARATIONS IF THERE IS AN ASPERGES

Before every High Mass on Sunday, the *Asperges* ceremony is performed to remind us of our baptismal promises which we renew on the Easter Vigil and in commemoration of Our Lord's Resurrection and victory over death. During the Paschal time, the *Asperges* chant and text is replaced with the longer chant of *Vidi aquam* and *Alleluia* is added to the *Versicle* and *Responsory* that follows the sprinkling. This sprinkling with holy water is actually a completely separate rite from that of the Mass, and in its full form (which now is only performed on the Easter Vigil) the actual blessing of the water takes place. The *Asperges* is also suppose to take the place of taking holy water at the font.

-Because the *Asperges* is not part of the rite of Mass, the Maniple and Chasuble are not worn, but rather are set up in vesting order on the Sedilla³. However, all of the other vestments (i.e., Alb, Amice, Stole and Cincture) are worn as usual, with addition to the Cope, which is also the proper color of the Mass as the other vestments.

¹ For those *in plano* (on the floor), the Blessed Sacrament is not considered exposed when It is on the mensa. However, if they were to ascend to the Predella for some reason, the inferior minister would have to genuflect *in plano* first, then ascend and then upon descending, genuflect again *in plano*. Cf. L. O'Connell, pg. 38, ff. 18, d; and SRC 4135, ³.

² Which should be set up on the Altar as at Low Mass: The Corporal unfolded, the Burse against the gradine, and the Chalice on the Corporal.

- The Aspersory should be prepared in the Sacristy for Th.
- The *Asperges Prayer Card* should be on the 2nd Altar step⁴ where the MC will stand during the *Asperges*. Or the card can be placed on the Credence and Ac1 can bring it over when needed.

-After saying the *Before Mass Prayers*, the MC lines the servers up in the Sacristy in their proper order and gives any final instructions if necessary. The MC should also ensure that all of the servers have their medals and cords with tassels on correctly and evenly.

-When C arrives in the Sacristy, the MC assists him in vesting as Ac1 does at Low Mass.

THE PROCESSIONAL

-If customary, incense may then be imposed. MC receives the Boat, and presents the Spoon to C with *solita oscula* as described above, and then says, "*Benedicite, Pater reverende.*" MC then ensures that C says, "*Ab illo...etc.*" and that C blesses the incense in the Thurible⁵. MC then receives Spoon with *solita oscula* from C, and returns the Boat (from hereon, all *solita osculas* will be assumed in regards to the Spoon).

-MC then turns towards the Processional Cross⁶, signals a clap for all to turn and bow towards it⁷, and then says, "*Procedamus in pace*", to which all including C reply, "*In nomine, Christi, Amen.*" The *Processional* now begins.

-The MC should ensure that the various pairs of servers do not process out too closely together; each pair should be at least 4 pews away from another.

THE PROCESSIONAL FORMATION

The *Processional* formation should be as such:

- Thurifer (with or without the Thurible) leads (if there is a Boatbearer, he is to Th's *left*)
- Acolytes with their candles and the Crossbearer follow shoulder to shoulder; they act as one unit
- Torchbearers (with their hands folded) then follow in pairs
- Any extra servers in pairs are then next
- If there are any laymen in procession they then follow
- Clergy in pairs
- MC
- Celebrant

UPON REACHING THE FOOT (if there is an ASPERGES cf. page 9)

-Upon reaching the Foot the MC goes slightly to the right of the Foot, awaits the arrival of C, receives his Biretta with *solita oscula* and gives it to Ac1, signals a genuflection, genuflects with C⁸ and then signals all of the servers to kneel.

-The MC, kneeling slightly behind C, then leads the servers' responses for the *Preparatory Prayers* with the other servers following his pace and volume. The responses must be made at a moderate pace with the proper pauses, however, and during a High Mass they are made in a rather subdued voice, so that the choir is not drowned out.

-After C ascends to the Predella, the MC signals all to stand, and then he goes to the Epistle side of the Foot, meets Th there *on his left*⁹ and receives the Boat.

1ST INCENSATION OF THE ALTAR

-The MC and Th then immediately ascend to the Predella¹⁰, and the MC stands near the front edge of the Predella facing the Altar, while Th stands nearest the front edge of the Altar facing C. The MC presents the

³ Strictly speaking, both of these vestment pieces are *Mass vestments*, and so they should not be worn outside of Mass. However, it is customary, to only remove the Maniple for Sermon, though some liturgical authors recommend removing the Chasuble as well.

⁴ Practical tip: Putting the card on the 2nd step rather than on the 1st, will enable the MC to pick up the card easier.

⁵ Rubricians say that three spoonfuls of incense should be imposed though more may be used.

⁶ Or the Sacristy Cross if there is not a Crossbearer.

⁷ Except the Crossbearer and the Acolytes who are carrying and accompanying an image of Christ.

⁸ The MC does not genuflect *until* C arrives at the Foot.

⁹ While normally according to the rules of precedence, Th would be on the MC's right, this done out of practicality so that the MC and Th do not have to switch sides on the Predella before the imposition of incense.

Spoon, says, "*Benedicite, Pater reverende*", ensures that C blesses the incense, and then holds out the Boat for the appropriate server to retrieve¹¹.

-The MC presents the Thurible to C as described above in GIVING THE THURIBLE.

-The MC then goes to C's right, while Th goes to C's left. C, the MC and Th should turn, genuflect and walk as one unit. There should not be a gap between any of these ministers. The MC does not signal any of the genuflections during any of the *Incensations of the Altar*.

-All genuflect towards the Tabernacle, and then C incenses the Altar (and reliquaries if any) as prescribed by the Missal and rubricians¹². Every time C genuflects, the MC puts his left hand under C's elbows. If C is wearing a "gothic" style Chasuble, both MC and Th should hold back the edges so that C is not impeded while incensing¹³. When C turns to face the reliquaries so he may incense them, the MC and Th turn with him. It may be necessary to point out the reliquaries to a priest unfamiliar with your Altar.

-Upon reaching the Epistle side of the Altar¹⁴, the MC must step back to the corner of the Predella, so as not to impede C when he incenses the side of the Altar¹⁵.

-Upon reaching the Gospel side of the Altar, the MC remains to C's right until he begins to return to the center of the Predella.

-When C incenses the front of the Epistle side of the Altar again, the MC descends to the 2nd Altar step, turns to the right and receives the Thurible from C with *solita oscula*.

-MC then descends to the right side of Th (Th now stands to the left of MC as usual), remaining outside the edge of the Altar, and then incenses C with three doubles, making a profound bow with Th before and after.

INTROIT

-The MC then returns the Thurible to Th, ascends to the 2nd Altar step¹⁶, standing inside the edge of the Altar, and directly next to and facing the Missal; this is the MC's *normal Missal position on the Epistle side*.

-The MC then points out the *Introit* and turns and bows towards the Tabernacle in unison with C for the *Gloria Patri*.

KYRIE

-When C begins the *Kyrie*, the MC turns towards the Acolytes, to signal them to make the responses with the MC. When the *Kyrie* is completed, and if there is a *Gloria*, the MC then turns left (towards C), and goes to the Foot, standing in line with the Epistle edge of the Altar; this is the *MC's normal Epistle position in plano*.

GLORIA

-When C intones "*Gloria in excelsis Deo*," the MC bows towards the Tabernacle. After the intonation however, the MC should simply bow straight ahead while C recites the remainder of the *Gloria*.¹⁷

-When C makes the sign of the Cross, MC does so likewise, however, he does not genuflect when C does to leave the Predella, but simply goes immediately to the Sedilla,¹⁸.

¹⁰ A bow should *not* be made *in plano* before ascending to the Predella to impose incense. This is not prescribed in *any* of the rubric books, whether in English or in Latin, and therefore this bow, which is practiced in some chapels should be omitted. As L. O'Connell says on page 43, in *Special Notes On Reverences*, #9, "*Bows should not be made unless they are required by the rubrics.*"

¹¹ This should be Ac2 who in conjunction with Ac1 retrieving the Missal, ascends to the Predella (not to the 2nd Altar step only), turns inwards with Ac1 and then returns the Boat to the Credence. Otherwise, the Boatbearer does this.

¹² It is assumed that the MC learned these rubrics when he was a Thurifer, so they are not mentioned in these instructions. However, these can be found in the front of every 1962 edition of the *Missale Romanum*.

¹³ These edges are released every time C genuflects, so that the MC and Th may support his elbows, and then are held again.

¹⁴ This is assuming that the Altar being incensed is fixed against the wall instead of being a free-standing Altar, which is the more correct form. If the Altar is free-standing, then the MC simply remains to the right of C while walking around the entire Altar. N.B. A genuflection is *not* made while crossing *behind* the Tabernacle; this is only done when crossing the *front* of the Tabernacle, just as one does not genuflect when crossing past the side of the Tabernacle.

¹⁵ Or if room on the Predella does not allow, he may descend one stepwise.

¹⁶ Or the Predella, if it is wide enough on the sides.

¹⁷ This is a practical measure, since it is often difficult to hear C above the choir, and therefore it is difficult to coordinate the turns and bows towards the Tabernacle while C is reciting the *Gloria* or the *Credo*.

¹⁸ Since the MC is not next to C when he genuflects, this would not follow the rule of *cum ratione accomodations*, and thereby there is no reason for the MC to make a genuflection.

-Upon arrival at the Sedilla, the MC immediately picks up the Biretta by the right fin, and steps back to allow C to sit. If necessary, MC assists C with the back of his Chasuble so that he does not sit on it. The MC then presents the Biretta to C with *solita oscula* and faces the Nave with eyes slightly downcast.

-Slightly before each word or phrase that requires a bow, the MC turns to C, bows to him to doff his Biretta, and then turns towards the Tabernacle and bows for the duration of when the word or phrase is sung¹⁹. The MC then turns back to face the Nave.

-During the phrase, "*Cum Sancto Spiritu...etc.*", the MC makes the sign of the Cross, receives the Biretta with *solita oscula*, places it back on the Sedilla, and then leads C to the Foot, stepping back for him when he arrives.

-MC signals a genuflection and then returns to his Epistle Missal position.

ORATIO (OR COLLECT)

-When C returns to the Missal after saying, "*Dominus vobiscum*", the MC indicates the *Oratio*, turns towards the Tabernacle and bows for "*Oremus*", and then remains facing the Missal. The MC turns and bows for the Holy Name if mentioned during the *Oratio* or during the conclusion. If the name of Our Lady or of a Saint (s) is sung, a simple bow is made facing the Missal.

EPISTLE

-The MC then turns slightly towards the Acolytes and signals them with a slight bow to sit during the reading of the *Epistle*.

-When C has finished reading the *Epistle*, the MC answers "*Deo gratias*".

IF THE GRADUAL AND ETC. ARE SUNG IN THE FULL GREGORIAN CHANT

-After C has read the text of the *Gradual* and whatever else follows, and if the choir is rendering the texts in Gregorian Chant, the MC turns in unison with C, bows to the Tabernacle²⁰ and then leads C to the Sedilla *per brevior*²¹ and performs the same functions as at the *Gloria*.

-If during the any of these texts a word or phrase is sung that requires a bow, the MC acts as for such texts found in the *Gloria*.

-When the proper word for the cue is sung, the MC then steps slightly in front of C, signal him to stand with a bow, and performs the return to the Foot as for the *Gloria*.

IF THE GRADUAL AND ETC. ARE NOT SUNG IN THE FULL GREGORIAN CHANT

-After saying, "*Deo gratias*" and having indicate the *Gradual* or needing to turn the page and/or switch the ribbon, the MC descends immediately *in plano*, and meets Th for the *Gospel Imposition of Incense*.

GOSPEL IMPOSITION OF INCENSE

-Then as exactly at the 1st *Incensation*, the actions are repeated. The MC meets Th and ascends to the Predella, incense is imposed and blessed, and then the MC gives the Boat to Th.²²

-The MC then picks up the Missal, turns towards the Tabernacle (left) and descends *per brevior* to the center of the Foot, meeting Th shoulder to shoulder on his right.²³

-The MC genuflects in unison with Gospel formation on Th's signal (because MC cannot) and then ascends *per brevior* to the Gospel edge of the Altar and puts the Missal in the Low Mass *Gospel* reading position.

-The MC then descends *in plano*, receives the Thurible from Th²⁴, and then re-ascends to the Predella, going to C's right side.

-When C signs himself for the *Praeconium*, the MC does not, because he is holding the Thurible.

-The MC then presents the Thurible to C as usual, and bows moderately in unison with C before and after he incenses the *Gospel*.

-The MC then receives the Thurible with *solita oscula* from C, and if the Holy Name is mentioned within the first five seconds, the MC remains on the Predella²⁵, bows towards the *Gospel* and then returns to Th's right side *in plano*, returning the Thurible to him.²⁶

¹⁹ If it is polyphonic Mass, and a certain word or phrase is telescoped (that is repeated by the various groups of singers one after another), one is only required to make a bow for the *first* word or phrase mentioned.

²⁰ Here the MC performs a bow that he would not normally perform because of the rule *cum ratione accomodationis*.

²¹ That is, in a direct or the shortest path from the Missal to the Sedilla.

²² Or to the Boatbearer if there is one.

²³ If necessary the MC should wait until Th is already there before descending, so that the Gospel procession movement of Th and the Acolytes is not impeded.

²⁴ This action should not be performed by the MC reaching down from the Predella or an Altar step to Th *in plano*; this looks very sloppy and undignified.

- When C reaches the conclusion of the *Gospel* (he drops the pitch), the MC receives the Thurible from Th, and responds with the servers, "*Laus tibi, Christe*" before C has kissed the *Praeconium*.
- When C turns towards the MC, the MC and Th make a profound bow and incense C as usual.
- The MC then returns the Thurible to Th, ascends to the Predella, and moves the Missal to the Canon position (near the Tabernacle and at about a 45° angle, but not touching the Corporal).

IF THERE IS A SERMON

- The MC then assists C with removing his Maniple (if assistance is necessary).
- The MC then bows in unison with C towards the Tabernacle²⁷, and cutting in front of C, descends *per brevior* to the right side of the Foot, leaving room in the center for C.
- When C is ready, the MC signals a genuflection, turns inwards and leads C to the Pulpit, and remains there standing to the left side of it for the duration of the *Sermon*²⁸.
- When the *Sermon* is concluded, the MC leads C back to the Foot, signals a genuflection and then goes to his Epistle position *in plano*.

IF THERE IS NOT A SERMON

- The Celebrant remains in the center of the Predella, and immediately begins the *Credo* (if there is one). Meanwhile, the MC after having moved the Missal to the *Canon* position, descends *per brevior* to the right side of the center of the Foot, signals a genuflection for the Gospel formation, and then returns to his Epistle *in plano* position.

CREDO

- If there is a *Credo*, the MC goes to his Epistle *in plano* position, turns and bows for "*Credo in unum Deum*", and then bows straight ahead for the other bows. The MC and other servers genuflect when C does so while saying the *Credo*; the MC may signal for this if necessary.
- When C is finished reciting the *Credo* the MC and servers make the sign of the Cross in unison with him, and then the MC goes to his right side of the center of the Foot, standing about a foot away. C then descends to the Foot.
- When "*Descendit de caelis*" is sung by the choir, the MC signals loudly for all in the church to kneel, and then bows at "*Et homo factus est.*"
- When "*Crucifixus etiam pro nobis*" is sung by the choir, the MC signals loudly for all in the church to stand, then softly signals a genuflection for himself and C, turns inwards and leads C to the Sedilla, where the normal actions are performed.
- The MC signals C to bow for "*simul adoratur*".
- During the phrase "*Et vitam venturi saeculi*", the MC makes the sign of the Cross, receives the Biretta as usual, leads C to the Foot, signals C to genuflect, and then the MC returns to his Epistle position *in plano*.

OFFERTORY

- After turning and bowing for "*Oremus*", the MC then ascends to the Predella, receives the Chalice Veil, tri-folds it lengthwise²⁹, places it *to the left* of the Epistle Altar Card, turns towards the Tabernacle (left), descends to his Epistle position *in plano* and then turns right.
- The MC remains at this position until the Acolytes have ascended to the Altar to present the cruets. Then the MC meets Th on his *left* side, and receives the Boat.

OFFERTORY INCENSATION OF OBLATIONS

- When the Acolytes have returned to the Credence, both the MC and Th go to the Epistle side of the Foot and await C to make the arc motion for the *Veni sanctificator* prayer. When he does, both immediately ascend to the Predella as usual.

²⁵ If the Holy Name is *not* mentioned within the first five seconds, the MC does not bow at all, but simply descends to his position.

²⁶ All of the rubricians agree that Th should be holding the Thurible for the duration of the *Gospel*, as this is his duty, to bear the Thurible and not the MC's.

²⁷ This follows the rule of *cum ratione accomodationis* again.

²⁸ In some places, it is the custom to have the MC sit during the *Sermon*. If this is the case, he should sit at a stool near the Sedilla, but not at the Sedilla, as this is reserved for the Sacred Ministers. This stool can be removed by an Acolyte after the *Sermon*.

²⁹ In some cases, due to a lack of space on the mensa, it may be necessary to tri-fold the Veil again widthwise. In either case, the emblem should be facing upwards.

-When C blesses the incense, the MC should ensure that C uses the *Offertory* formula for blessing the incense: "*Per intercessionem Michaellem...etc.*" which is often found on the center Altar card.³⁰ Then without genuflecting, C incenses the Oblations first, then the Altar and reliquaries (if there are any), followed by the MC incensing C as usual.

-The MC then returns the Thurible to Th, turns inwards with him (if room provides), and then walks shoulder to shoulder to the center of the Foot.

-The MC signals a genuflection, ascends *per brevior* to the *Canon Missal* position, turns right towards Th, bows to him in return and receives one double from Th. The MC then returns the bow to Th and turns back to face the Missal at about a 45° angle. This is the MC's normal *Canon Missal* position.

SECRET

-The MC then finds the *Secret* in the Propers.

-When C returns from the *Lavabo*, he will first say the *Suscipe, sancta Trinitas* prayer, and then turn around to say, "*Orate, fratres*" to which the MC and servers respond with the *Suscipiat*. Then the MC indicates the *Secret* to C. The MC does not bow when C bows for the conclusion, if the Holy Name is mentioned, as he is not reading the text aloud.

PREFACE

-After C has read the conclusion to the *Secret*, the MC switches the pages to the *Preface*. The MC sings the responses and bows in unison with C when he says, "*Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro*".

-The MC may recite the *Sanctus* with C, slightly bowing his head, and making the sign of the Cross with C.

CANON

- **From this point forward, the MC does not perform any of the gestures or bows with C, as he is not reciting the text aloud.**
- **During the *Canon*, the MC switches the pages with the tabs as required.**

-During the *Memento pro vivis*, the MC turns to his right, takes a step or two back (do not walk backwards) and then turns to face the Tabernacle again. The MC bows when the Celebrant does during the *Memento*.³¹

-When C reaches the *Qui pridie*, the MC goes to the edge of the Predella, slightly to the left and behind of C. When all of the servers are in their proper positions, and C has wiped his forefingers and thumbs on the Corporal, the MC signals all to kneel, and then kneels in this position, but at a 45° angle facing C.

-During the *Consecration*, the MC acts as Ac2 at Low Mass, making a moderate bow when C genuflects and raising the Chasuble with *both* hands during each *Elevation*. When C has made the last genuflection, the MC signals all to stand, and then he returns to his normal *Canon* position, turning the page immediately if the layout of the Missal demands this.

-The MC steps back and performs the various actions for the *Memento pro defunctis* as for the first *Memento*.

-The MC does not strike his breast at "*Nobis quoque peccatoribus*"³².

From this point forward, whenever C genuflects, the MC does so too, while supporting C's elbow with his right hand. C will genuflect every time he removes the Pall and after placing it on the Chalice.

-The MC bows at "*Oremus*" for the introduction of the *Pater Noster* and sings the response.

-The MC may recite the *Agnus Dei* with C. The MC also bows and strikes his breast in unison with C.

-There are three prayers that follow the *Agnus Dei*; depending on the layout of your Missal, the actions of the MC will be slightly different:

- A. THE PAGE DOES NOT HAVE TO BE TURNED AFTER PANEM CAELESTEM ACCIPIAM IS SAID:
-In this case, the MC may descend from the Predella sometime immediately after the *Agnus Dei*. Upon descending *via* the Gospel side of the Altar steps (not the front), the MC turns right to face the Altar, and then genuflects as he left the Predella under the conditions of *in coram Sanctissimum*.

³⁰ While it is assumed that C has this blessing memorized, it may happen that he does not. If this formula is not on the center Altar Card, the Missal should not be removed by Ac1 until C has said the blessing and the prayers while incensing the Oblations and Altar in their entirety. However, a better solution to this problem, would be to make a small laminated card with these formulas printed on them, so in this way the Missal can be removed as usual.

³¹ This follows the concession made for the Deacon at a Solemn High Mass, who normally would not bow at all when C does during the *Canon*.

³² L. O'Connell, pg. 212 in directions for the Deacon at Solemn High Mass.

B. THE PAGE *DOES HAVE TO BE TURNED AFTER PANEM CAELESTEM ACCIPIAM* IS SAID:

-In this case, the MC must remain on the Predella, until C has said this prayer, then the MC genuflects with him, turns the page, descends *via* the Gospel side of the Altar steps (not the front), turns right to face the Altar and then genuflects.³³

-In either case A or B, the MC then goes to the Foot, standing in line with the Gospel edge of the Altar.

-When C bends over to consume the Sacred Host, the MC turns towards the Tabernacle and makes a moderate bow. Afterwards, the MC should ensure that the servers line up properly at the Foot (while the Acolytes turn over the Communion Rail Cloth) in this order:

MC Ac2 CB Ac1 TH³⁴

THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

-Once all are lined up, the MC signals a genuflection, and then a kneel. When C consumes the Precious Blood, all make a simple bow.

-When C has placed the Chalice back on the Altar, the MC makes a moderate bow with the servers and then all recited the 2nd *Confiteor* following the MC's pace.

-After C gives the *Indulgentiam*, the MC signals all to stand, then to genuflect³⁵, then all ascend to the Predella, where the MC signals all to kneel again.

-After the MC has received Communion and holding the Communion Plate, he rises by himself (the others remain kneeling), and leads C with the Blessed Sacrament to the Epistle side of the Communion Rail. The MC assists with the Plate as usual.

-When the *Distribution* is completed, the MC gives the Plate to C, and then accompanies C to the Foot. The MC remains at the center of the Foot, genuflects in unison with C³⁶, and then goes to kneel on the Epistle side of the Sanctuary (somewhere out of the way of the other servers).

ABLUTIONS

-When the Tabernacle door has been closed, the MC signals all to stand. The MC should ensure that the various servers are performing their duties correctly and on time, while yet remaining on the Epistle side of the Sanctuary and out of their way.

THE SWITCHING OF THE MISSAL AND THE CHALICE VEIL

-When the Acolytes have changed the Missal and the Veil, the MC ascends *via* the steps on the Epistle side (not the front) to the Predella and switches the pages back to the Propers and then resumes his position at the Missal on Epistle side.

THE COMMUNION AND POSTCOMMUNION

-When C returns to the Missal (after having reassembled the Chalice), the MC indicates the *Communion*, which C reads.

-After C has said, "*Dominus vobiscum*" and has returned to the Missal, the MC indicates the *Postcommunion*, and bows where required as for the *Oratio*.

-When C has finished the *Postcommunion* and stepped away from the Missal, the MC ascends to the Predella, closes the Missal, turns right and then descends *via* the Epistle side (not the front) *in plano* and then goes immediately to his Epistle *in plano* position.

ITE, MISSA EST TO THE LAST GOSPEL

-The MC remains there until C has chanted, "*Ite, missa est*". Then in unison with C turning back to face the Altar, the MC turns, proceeds to the center of the Foot, genuflects and goes immediately to the Gospel side of the Altar *in plano*, standing inside the edge of the Altar.

³³ The first genuflection performed by the MC in conjunction with C *cannot* be used for the genuflection for leaving the Predella *in coram Sanctissimum*. This first genuflection is only being made to meet the rule of *cum ratione accomodationis*, whereas the genuflection *in plano* fulfills the rule for inferior ministers under the conditions of *in coram Sanctissimum*.

³⁴ If there is a Boatbearer, he kneels to Th's left. It is assumed that the Torchbearers are kneeling in the Chancel. Otherwise they would kneel behind this formation of servers, or on each side of the Altar.

³⁵ This is because of the rule *in coram Sanctissimum*.

³⁶ Though the MC is accompanying Our Lord, he still must cross the center of the Altar, *after* he leaves the Ciborium.

-As soon as the choir finishes singing "*Deo gratias*", the MC loudly signals a kneel for the entire church, kneels on the 1st Altar step, bows at "*Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus...etc.*", signs himself, and then signals loudly for all to stand.

-The MC then immediately ascends to the 2nd Altar step and picks up the *Last Gospel Altar Card*, and holds it during the reading of the *Last Gospel*. During this time, the MC does not sign himself with the Cross (because he is holding something), nor does he make any type of reverence at all at the words, "*Et Verbum caro factum est*", as he is holding an image of Christ in the form of the text of the *Last Gospel*.

-When the *Last Gospel* is completed, the MC and the servers reply as usual, then the MC replaces the Card on the mensa, and *per longiorem*³⁷ returns to the center of the Foot.

RECESSIONAL

-Unless one of the servers has brought over the Biretta from the Sedilla, the MC genuflects in the center, goes to the Sedilla and returns to the Foot with the Biretta.

-The MC ensures that all are lined up correctly and are ready, signals a genuflection (loud enough so that the servers may hear the signal clearly over the music), gives the Biretta with the *solita oscula*, turns towards C and then recesses out four pews behind the last group.

ARRIVAL IN THE SACRISTY AND THE SERVERS' BLESSING

-Upon the servers' arrival in the Sacristy, all return to their positions prior to the *Processional*, and remain at attention, as the *Recessional* does not end until all have bowed to the Cross and C.

-Upon the arrival of C and the MC, the MC signals a bow towards the Cross³⁸, and then similarly to C. Then except for the Acolytes and Crossbearer, all kneel and receive C's blessing. During the blessing, all servers who are carrying items do not make the sign of the Cross.

AFTER MASS PRAYERS AND AFTER MASS DUTIES

-The MC then immediately leads all of the servers back into the Sanctuary *recta linea* to say their *After Mass Prayers*. After having done so, according to the rules on the card, all of the servers go to the Sacristy, where if necessary, corrections are made, and then the servers perform their various assigned duties. The MC supervises the entire time, and if necessary delegates extra tasks to other servers.

-Once the Sacristy is in good order the MC may then dismiss the servers.

IF THERE IS AN ASPERGES BEFORE THE MASS

The MC should then ensure that all of the necessary preparations have been done as described above.

-All line up for the *Processional* as described above, except that Th carries both the Aspersory and Aspergilium in his right hand rather than the Thurible and Boat.

-Upon reaching the Foot, the MC goes to the right of the center of the Foot, waits for C to arrive, receives the Biretta from C with *solita oscula* and gives it to Ac1, and then signals a genuflection for himself, C and Th.

-Then the MC receives the Aspersory from Th, and signals all to kneel (he may do this by slightly tapping the side of the Aspersory).

-The MC then presents the Aspergilium to C with *solita oscula*. C then intones the *Asperges* (or the *Vidi aquam* if in Paschal time), sprinkles the front of the Altar center, right and left, then signs his forehead with the Aspergilium with the Cross and stands. C then sprinkles the MC, Th and other servers on the Epistle side. The MC does not sign himself with the Cross when is sprinkled as he is holding the Aspersory.

-The MC then signals all to stand, then a genuflection for himself, C and Th. Then the MC, C and Th turn inwards, and the MC and Th switch sides in front of C. The MC passes on the inside (closest to C), and Th passes on the outside (furthest from C). The MC then holds the ophrey of the Cope in his left hand, while with his right he holds the Aspersory, making it available to C when required.

-While proceeding down the center aisle of the Nave, C should sprinkle those on the Gospel side first.

-Just moments before the *Gloria Patri* is sung, the MC should indicate to C that it is time to face the Altar. The MC should release the ophrey just before turning to face the Altar. All bow during the first half of the *Gloria Patri*, and then the MC and Th resume holding the ophreys and turn back to finish sprinkling the faithful.

-Upon reaching the rear of the Nave (i.e., where the Narthax is), all turn and face the Altar, the MC releases the ophrey, signals all to genuflect, and switches sides with Th as mentioned before.

-Then the MC holds the ophrey again, and C sprinkles those on the Epistle side of the Nave.

³⁷ I.e.: *By the long way*. In this case, by going around the Gospel side of the Foot.

³⁸ Except for the Crossbearer and the Acolytes.

- When C has finished sprinkling everyone, he will return the Aspergillum to the MC, who receives it with *solita oscula*. The MC then gives the Aspersion and Aspergillum to Th behind C's back while walking and holding the ophrey.
- Upon reaching the Foot, the MC signals a genuflection and picks up the *Asperges* Card as he genuflects. The MC and Th both hold the card in front of C while he chants the *Versicles* and *Oratio*. The MC bows for "*Oremus*".
- When the *Oratio* is completed, the MC allows Th to take the Card, then the MC signals a genuflection, all turn inwards, and then the MC leads C to the Sedilla.
- At the Sedilla, the MC steps back for C to stand directly in front of it. Then the MC stands behind C, and assists in removing the Cope. The MC then gives the Cope to Ac1 to return to the Sacristy, by draping it lengthwise over Ac1's outstretched arms.
- The MC then assists C in vesting with the Maniple and Chasuble as usual. Before leaving the Sedilla, the MC should ensure that the Biretta is suitably arranged on C's stool (i.e., the right fin should be facing the front of the stool, so that the MC may be able to take hold of it quickly).
- When C is ready, the MC turns inwards and leads C to the Foot for the *Preparatory Prayers*.