

LOW MASS FOR A BISHOP Simple Form¹

Preparations

The preparations are as usual for a Low Mass with these exceptions:

On the vesting table

- To the right of the vestments, place on 2 silver salvers² the bishop's skullcap and pectoral cross.
- If the bishop wears a biretta, it will be purple³, but will be set up as usual.

On the credence

- A medium-size ewer filled halfway with warm water and a basin (instead of the usual *Lavabo* bowl, the water cruet is still necessary though), and a large, finger towel (this should be rather absorbent)

On the altar

- Place a salver on the Epistle-side near the tabernacle⁴ for the bishop's skullcap⁵.
- 4 candles, instead of the usual 2 may be lighted.

In the center of the Foot

- Place the maniple on the 2nd Altar step in front of Ac2's *Confiteor* position.

Serving

Serving a Low Mass for a bishop is performed in the same manner as for a priest with these differences:

Preparatory Prayers at the Foot

-upon reaching the Foot, Ac1 takes the bishop's biretta, giving the *solita oscula* to the bishop's ring instead of his hand. Then both Acolytes genuflect while the bishop bows.

-after the Acolytes have said the *Confiteor*, the bishop will say the *Misereatur* and *Indulgentiam* prayers, which the servers both respond to with "*Amen*," then Ac2 gives the maniple to the bishop, kissing first the bottom cross on the maniple and holding it so that the bishop may kiss the center cross easily[if necessary; Ac2 may stand to perform this action]⁶.

-if the *Gloria* is said, the bishop will turn for the *Collect* and say, "*Pax vobis*," to which the Acolytes respond, "*Et cum spiritu tuo*." If the *Gloria* is not said, the bishop says, "*Dominus vobiscum*" instead.

During the *Lavabo*

-upon returning to credence after the *Offertory*, Ac1 picks up the towel as usual, and Ac2 picks up the ewer and basin as he would with cruet and bowl, both then proceed to the Epistle side steps.

-when the bishop makes joins his hands in an arc-like motion for the *Veni sanctificator*, both ascend to the 2nd Altar step and kneel, but do not bow (the reverence of kneeling replaces the bows).

¹ The full version of the Pontifical Low Mass is executed with 4 chaplains, bugia and *Pontifical Canon*. The version given here is the simplified form performed with just 2 Acolytes and is the more common form that is used.

² A salver is a small round or oval tray.

³ It should be noted here that purple is strictly a *prelatial* color, *i.e.*, the color worn by prelates (in this case a bishop), while violet is strictly a *liturgical* color (*i.e.*, for vestments of the sacred ministers and of decorating the altar and sanctuary). Both colors are made from a combination of red and blue, violet having more blue, and purple having more red. However, these colors symbolize completely opposite things: violet is a sign of penance and mourning (*i.e.*, to be blue), while purple is a sign of joy and royalty (*i.e.*, the royal purple). The *Missale Romanum* and *Ceremoniale Episcoporum* are very clear in the distinctions of these 2 types of colors and of their use as just described.

⁴ If the altar mensa is not deep enough, this can be placed on the gradine.

⁵ When he removes it after saying the *Secret*. He puts the skullcap back on after performing the first part of the *Ablutions*.

⁶ Ac2 does not kiss the bishop's ring in this instance; L. O'Connell, pg. 469

-when the bishop has finished drying his hands and has returned the towel to Ac1, the bishop will present his ring to each Acolyte to kiss (Ac1 first, then Ac2), then he will bless them silently with the sign of cross.

-both Acolytes then rise and return to credence.

The 2nd Lavabo

-after the Acolytes have switched the missal and veil, they proceed to the center of the Foot *per longiorem* and then immediately to credence. There they retrieve the *Lavabo* items, and proceed to the Foot of the Epistle side steps. When the bishop has placed the burse on the assembled chalice, both Acolytes ascend to the predella, and perform the *Lavabo* in the same manner as described for the first *Lavabo*.

-afterwards, they replace the *Lavabo* items and then turn over the Communion Rail cloth (having genuflected first at the center of the Foot before going to the rail). They then return to their normal positions.

The Last Blessing

-after the bishop has said "*Ite, missa est,*" and then silently the *Placeat tibi* (for which he bows low), he will then stand erect and facing the altar will say these responses with the Acolytes:

Bishop: "*Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini*" (the Acolytes do not sign themselves with cross for this response⁷)

Acolytes: "*Qui fecit caelum et terram.*"

Bishop: "*Sit nomen Domini benedictum in saecula*"

Acolytes: "*Ex hoc nunc et usque in saeculum.*"

-the bishop begins to pronounce the blessing (the Acolytes bowing at the word "*Deus*" as usual), then he will turn towards nave and give the triple blessing⁸ reserved for a bishop. The Acolytes sign themselves only once, and this should be done in conjunction with the cross the bishop makes in the center.

-after the *Leonine Prayers*, Ac1 will retrieve the biretta, and after the Acolytes have genuflected while the bishop bows, Ac1 presents the biretta giving the *solita oscula* to the bishop's ring instead of his hand.

⁷ This follows the same principle that is used during the Divine Office for the little chapter at the hour of Prime: since it is immediately proceeding a blessing, the cross is not made for this response.

⁸ *I.e.*, from the bishop's left, to his center, to his right.