

## THURIFER AT THE 9.30 MASS

### GENERAL MATTERS

1. A punctual arrival in the sacristy is essential.
2. Although the Sacristan makes every effort to see that the sanctuary is in readiness, the thurifer, in co-operation with the server, should always check the following details -
  - a) that the furniture is properly placed and that hymn-books are provided for the Celebrant and other clergy who may be present (as well as for the thurifer and server);
  - b) that the ciborium and large wine cruet are at the back of the church for the children (or sidespeople) to bring forward. The two chalices are on the credence table – the larger one complete with patten and priest's wafer. Also on the credence table should be the lavabo bowl and towel, and the small cruets for wine and water;
  - c) that the amplifier (controlled from the back of the church) is on and that the microphones at the lectern and in the pulpit are functioning;
  - d) that the missal stand with book (including the day's propers) is on the altar;
  - e) that the alms dish is near the server's place;
  - f) that the correct numbers are displayed on the hymn-board.

The Thurifer is responsible for placing of the brazier of coals and incense on the altar (pulpit side). This brazier contains a copper bowl which needs to be lined with foil.

**Please note that the brazier should not be placed directly on the altar cloth. Another white cloth (such as a lavabo towel) should be placed under the brazier.**

He/she is also required to make a foil liner for the bowl of the small thurible – one liner is sufficient for the 9.30 Mass. An assessment should also be made of any used coals which are available. If there is no thurifer rostered, the server may need to attend to this.

3. It is the duty of the server (if there is one) to light the altar candles and the candles at the lectern and at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. During the Easter Season, the Paschal Candle in the sanctuary is lit. If there is a Baptism, the Paschal Candle is placed at the font and lit. If no server is rostered, or if he/she is hard-pressed, the thurifer may need to perform these tasks.

Candles on the far side of the sanctuary (the right side looking up from the church)

are always lit first and extinguished last. Children may be asked to help with the lighting of candles.

4. The server is responsible for seeing that the hymn board has the proper numbers displayed and is in position. The thurifer may need to do this if there is no server. Remember that there is no *Gradual* hymn at the 9.30 mass, so the second line is left blank.
5. In the sanctuary, the following general rules of conduct apply -
  - Back shoes are to be worn.
  - Unless some task is being performed, the hands are joined, with right thumb over left.
  - When performing a task with one hand the other hand should be placed on the breast.
  - Movements in the sanctuary should never be sloppy - nor should they be made with pseudo-military precision. Generally speaking, movements should be made squarely.
  - The head is **always** bowed slightly (not an exaggerated movement) when the name of Jesus is said. Bows are made at the traditional places during the recitation of the *Gloria* and *Creed*.
  - Servers must always allow the Priest to sit before they do so themselves.
  - When seated, the hands are placed flat on the knees.
  - Objects are always passed with the right hand.
  - Servers should keep their eyes to the front and not gaze at the congregation.
  - The **Sign of the Cross** is made at the traditional places, and in the proper way. This will be discussed at rehearsal.

### **BEFORE MASS**

As 9.30 approaches, all assemble in the sacristy. The server is responsible for seeing that the sanctuary lights have been switched on. The thurifer will do this if there is no server.

The Celebrant will offer some prayers, and may use the following versicles, to which the responses should be made aloud.

V. I shall go to the altar of God.

- R. To God, my joy and my delight.
- V. Our help is in the name of the Lord.  
R. Who has made heaven and earth.
- V. Let us proceed in peace.  
R. In the name + of Christ. Amen.

## **SERVING THE MASS AS THURIFER**

The thurifer leads in, followed by the server. All stand in their appointed positions (demonstrated at rehearsal) and genuflect together. The thurifer goes directly to his/her place beside the credence table.

The thurifer remains standing until the beginning of the *Gloria in Excelsis*, at which point he/she retires from the sanctuary (via the pulpit entrance) bowing to the altar as he/she goes. Coals are then made ready for use – three new coals or four used coals.

In Advent and Lent, when the *Gloria* is not said, the thurifer leaves the sanctuary earlier – straight after the *Absolution*.

The thurifer re-enters the sanctuary as soon as the second reading has been completed, **carrying the thurible in the right hand and the incense boat in the left**. If there is a boat-bearer, he/she performs this function.

Option 1: If the Celebrant is standing, the thurifer stands to his right, facing him. The incense boat is passed to the Celebrant, and the thurifer opens the thurible and elevates it for incense to be put on and blessed. The thurible must be held aloft until the words of blessing have been completed. The thurible is then closed and the boat retrieved.

Option 2: If the Celebrant is seated, the thurifer hands the boat to the Celebrant, opens the thurible and kneels (one knee) at the Celebrant's right for the blessing of incense. The thurible is closed before the thurifer stands and retrieves the boat.

The thurifer then moves to stand on the congregation side of the altar, together with the priest or deacon who has been assigned to read the Gospel (whether he/she stands on the right or the left will depend on which stall the priest or deacon is to come from). After the Priest/Deacon and thurifer have bowed to the altar, the thurifer leads to the lectern. The thurifer stands beside the lectern (i.e. in the side aisle).

As soon as the announcement of the Gospel has been made, the thurifer hands the thurible to the Priest/Deacon. The correct method of doing this will be demonstrated at rehearsal. The timing of this action may be such that the thurifer cannot join in the making of the Sign of the Cross. The thurible is handed back to the thurifer.

At the end of the Gospel, the thurifer leads in the return to the sanctuary. He takes up the left-most position to bow before the altar so that he can lead the preacher (the Celebrant, the person who read the Gospel or another person) to the pulpit.

This procedure may be varied slightly if there is to be a talk to children before the sermon proper. Whatever happens, the Thurifer must bow to the altar and leave the sanctuary to dispose of the hot coals.

N.B.: Hot coals are always put in the billy-can and the lid secured to prevent the ingress of oxygen. Hot coals are never placed in the dustbin.

If the thurifer has a role in Children's Church, he/she may return to the sanctuary after seeing that the coals have been made safe.

If a sermon is preached from the pulpit, the thurifer obtains a glass of water and hands it to the preacher when he/she descends the pulpit steps.

During the *Creed* and the *Intercessions* the thurifer prepares coals for his/her next entrance. This is made while the Priest/Deacon is "setting the table" and preparing the vessels. The thurifer will need to stand back from the altar until the Celebrant has returned and the elements have been covered. The thurifer then approaches the Celebrant, hands him the boat and has incense put on and blessed (as at the Gospel – *option 1*). The thurifer then retrieves the boat and hands the thurible to the Celebrant to enable him to cense the altar.

While the Celebrant is censuring the altar, the thurifer places the boat on the credence table (or on the Crucifer's chair, if it is unoccupied).

When the Celebrant has finished censuring the altar, he will return the thurible to the thurifer. Celebrant and thurifer bow to each other and the Celebrant is censed with three double swings (to be demonstrated at rehearsal). Bows are exchanged again after this censuring.

The thurifer then moves to the congregation side of the altar (standing on the second step, facing the altar). He/she bows to all within the sanctuary and censes them with single swings – centre, left, right. Bows are again exchanged.

The above would be the normal procedure if there is a server present and the clergy stalls are occupied. This procedure would be omitted completely if there are no servers other than the thurifer and if the clergy stalls are unoccupied. If there is only a single individual to be censed (other than the Celebrant, who has already been censed), double swings are used – one double swing for a lay person and two for a Deacon or Priest.

The thurifer then turns and bows to the congregation. They are censed with single swings – centre, left, right. Bows are again exchanged.

The thurifer then turns to the altar, bows and leaves the sanctuary, retrieving the boat on the way. Coals are safely disposed of and the thurifer promptly re-enters the sanctuary, bowing to the altar and moving to his/her place beside the credence table.

**The specific duties of the thurifer are now completed. The same**

**cues for standing and kneeling which are observed by the server now apply to the thurifer. If there is no server, it is appropriate that the thurifer now assumes the duties of the server – ringing the bell at the appropriate times and, after the Communion, assisting at the ablutions.**

The thurifer does not assist in the administration of Communion unless he/she has been authorised by the Bishop to administer the chalice.

The thurifer kneels in his/her place to receive communion. It is customary to make the Sign of the Cross before receiving each element.

The thurifer stands in his/her place during the communion of the people (unless he/she has been licensed to administer the chalice and has been asked to assist). He/she remains standing. The thurifer continues to stand when the priests and other ministers genuflect after returning the vessels to the altar.

If the Celebrant chooses to sit in reflection for a few moments at this time, the thurifer may sit also.

As noted above, the thurifer may assist with the *Ablutions* if there is no server. **(See guidance notes for the server).**

The thurifer does not assist with the return of the chalices to the credence table (unless he/she is licensed to administer the chalice), though he/she may, if convenient, take the ciborium (after it has been cleansed) back to the table.

The thurifer stands in his/her place for the final prayers, notices, recognition of the children's work and the Blessing (which is received with a Sign of the Cross). After the dismissal, he/she leads the server to the appointed place for a genuflection. The thurifer should lead the recessional (i.e., thurifer and server should not walk as a pair).

At the west door, the Celebrant will dismiss the sanctuary party with prayer, usually ending with "*May the souls of the faithful, through the mercy of God, rest in peace*". It is our practice for the servers to complete the prayer by saying "*and rise in glory*."

The thurifer and/or server may assist the priest to remove his vestments and take them back to the sacristy.

The thurifer's first priority after Mass is ensuring that all is safe within the "cookhouse". The coals in the brazier on the altar must not be forgotten. They are placed in the billy and extinguished.

The thurifer must, however, assist with the clearing of the sanctuary in readiness for the next Mass. This includes extinguishing candles, clearing the credence table, moving furniture, moving the altar to the chapel and putting various items away. Water from the lavabo is poured down the *piscina*, rather than down the sink.

## Reminders

**When entering, leaving or crossing the sanctuary (other than during the 9.30 Mass itself) the proper reverence to the High Altar Crucifix is a genuflection, not a bow. Some of us are getting a bit creaky around the knees, but some semblance, at least, of a genuflection should be made.**

**In Advent and Lent, the *Gloria in Excelsis* is omitted and black cassocks are worn.**

### Censing

Individuals are always censed with double swings – one for a lay person, two for a Deacon (or a priest who is not the Celebrant) and three for the Celebrant.

When a group is censed collectively, single swings are used – centre, left, right.

Bows are always exchanged before and after censings.

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