

The Catholic Church of St Mary the Virgin
(Anglican Use)

Arlington, Texas

Directions for
Crucifer

These directions are supplemental to the “Directions for all altar servers”. Neither takes the place of the other. They must be read together and all directions in both are to be followed.

29 December A. D. 2001

Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam

General instructions

The processional cross is carried with the corpus forward.¹ The standard is grasped securely with both hands and is held as nearly vertical as possible. One of the purposes of the processional cross is to let the congregation know where the procession is in the church. Accordingly, the cross is carried as high as is consistent with holding the standard securely in both hands. In any case, the corpus must be definitely above the highest head in the procession.

The crucifer has also the responsibility of ringing the bells as appointed during the liturgy. The points at which the bells are to be rung are marked down in one of the red Parish Mass books which is marked “crucifer’s copy” and is kept at all times at the crucifer’s seat. You should examine this book before Mass and make sure it is where you can find it when you need it during Mass.

Further, a laminated sheet has been placed near the crucifer’s seat which has on it the four Eucharistic prayers in outline, that is, showing the beginning and end of each paragraph of each prayer, and marked to show where the bells are to be rung. This sheet, however, does not include the prayer for Rite One of the Anglican Use, which is used at St Mary’s at the 8:00 a.m. Mass each Sunday.

The crucifer never genuflects, kneels, or bows from the waist while the cross is in his hands. He should, at appropriate times, bow his head.

The ritual of the solemn sung Mass

Before the entrance procession

The crucifer, as all the servers, should be in the sacristy fifteen minutes before the scheduled time for Mass. He vests immediately in cassock and cotta.

From the entrance procession to the Gospel

The crucifer walks in procession immediately after the torch bearers. All others in the altar party will stand at the foot of the altar when they arrive inside the altar rail. The crucifer does not do this, but turns and walks to the left as soon as he is inside the altar rail.² He goes all the way to the front servers’ bench and turns right and walks towards the back of the church. He is still on the pavement, not on the steps of the predilla. Reaching the credence table, he turns right and goes up the steps of the predilla, to the back of the altar. He inserts the standard of the cross into the holder which is directly in back of the center of the altar, the corpus facing forward. The standard will slide in easily if it is straight in the holder; it must not be forced. The arms of the cross should be precisely parallel

¹There is one exception, rarely used: If the procession includes an archbishop, the cross is carried with the corpus backwards, facing to that person.

²The procedure is different if there is a solemn procession before the Mass. For this, see the special directions for solemn processions, below.

to the edge of the altar. Particular care should be taken about this. Should the small cross still be on the altar, the crucifer takes it from the altar and puts it on the floor in back of the altar.

Having inserted the cross in its holder, the crucifer folds his hands, turns to his left to face the tabernacle, and genuflects to the Sacrament there. He rises, turns to his left, and walks down the altar steps. He turns left on the pavement and stands just beside his seat, in front of the sacristy door, his back to the door. The crucifer's seat is the forward seat of the bench to the rear of the Church; as you go from the sacristy directly to the sanctuary, it is to the left of the door.

After the thurifer has incensed the celebrant, the torch bearers and the thurifer and the boat boy all go to their seats. Torch bearer one has his seat on the other side of the sacristy door from the crucifer. He comes there and puts his torch in its holder, and stands beside the crucifer, both of them with their backs to the door. When the thurifer and the boat boy have passed them, both move to stand in front of their respective seats. After the celebrant sings the Collect for the day, the MC will sit for the first reading. All other servers watch the MC and sit exactly when he does.

The Gospel

After the MC has read the second reading, he turns around to go up to the altar and take up the book of the gospels. As he turns, all other servers rise. The crucifer and torch bearer one each step beside their seats, in the sacristy doorway, and wait there until the thurifer and the boat boy have passed them. As soon as they have passed, the crucifer goes up the predilla steps to the processional cross. He bows to the Sacrament in the tabernacle, then takes up the cross and retraces his way down the altar steps and along the pavement to stand to the left of torch bearer one, facing the altar.

The celebrant comes to the center of the first step to pray briefly. He then turns around. At the same time, all servers turn around. For each server, the turn is made towards the center, so the crucifer will turn right. The procession begins in the usual order, the crucifer following the torch bearers.

The thurifer stops short of the first pew. The torch bearers pass on each side of the thurifer and stop and turn to stand at the head of the first pew. The instant they have passed him, the thurifer (and the boat boy) will turn and step back and to the right, to line up with the torch bearer on that side. The crucifer then passes in front of all of them. To make this whole maneuver smooth and graceful, the crucifer must allow enough distance between him and the torch bearers, and walk at such a pace, that he can continue smoothly and not pause, yet give the thurifer and boat boy enough time to move out of his way.

The crucifer stops in the middle of the aisle, about one yard, not more than two paces, beyond the torch bearers. He then turns all the way around to face the altar, turning to his right to do so. He should not turn as he takes the last step, but stop with both feet and then turn. The point of this is that the MC is following him with the book of the gospels and will also turn around. Both should turn at the same instant and in the same direction. The movements of these two servers are more likely to be simultaneous if the crucifer stops dead before turning, allowing the MC full opportunity to come into position and move on cue from the crucifer.

When the proclamation of the Gospel has ended, the MC will walk back to the sanctuary. The torch bearers follow him, and the crucifer follows the torch bearers, in the same order as in the entrance procession. At the foot of the altar, the crucifer turns left and takes the cross to its holder

in back of the altar, exactly as he did in the entrance procession. The one difference this time is that he does not genuflect towards the tabernacle after replacing the cross, but only bows.

Torch bearer one replaces his torch in its holder and then stands beside his seat with his back to the sacristy door. The thurifer is delayed while incensing the sermoner. The crucifer will also stand beside his own seat, back to the sacristy door, until the thurifer and the boat boy have passed back to put up the thurible and the boat. The crucifer then stands in front of his seat. All watch the MC and sit when he sits down. The MC may not wait for the thurifer and the boat boy to get back to their seats. Nevertheless, all who are at their seats follow the lead of the MC.

After the sermon, to the Eucharistic prayer

When the sermoner has come down from the pulpit, all watch the MC and stand when he does. The Creed, the prayers of the faithful, and any anniversary blessings follow. At some point, usually at the beginning of the Creed, but possibly before it, the thurifer and the boat boy will take up their instruments and go to the sacristy. The crucifer steps back and opens the sacristy door for them and makes way for them to pass in front of him. He returns to his place in front of his own seat. When the thurifer and the boat boy emerge from the sacristy, he again makes way for them.

If there are anniversary blessings, all servers kneel for them, on the first step, again taking their cue from the MC. Then all sit during the announcements. Again, all servers should follow the MC, rising from the kneeling position and sitting just when he does.

All rise when the MC rises after the announcements. The crucifer steps to the side of his seat, and stands with his back to the sacristy door. The torch bearers pass in front of the crucifer, bearing the cruets and ciborium. As soon as they have passed, the crucifer may resume his place in front of his own seat. Having taken out the cruet stoppers and put them on the credence table, the thurifer will go to take up the thurible. The crucifer now goes to stand on the first step, near the credence table. When the celebrant has finished with the water and wine, the MC turns to bring them to the side. The crucifer immediately goes up to the second step to meet the MC and takes the cruets from him. They bow to each other and the crucifer replaces the cruets on the credence table. He stoppers the cruet of wine, but not the water. The crucifer then returns to stand beside his seat. He is thus out of the way when the torch bearers go to the credence table to prepare for the lavabo.

After the MC has received the offerings from the ushers, he will bring them along the pavement to the crucifer. The crucifer takes the plates from the MC. They bow to each other, then the crucifer takes the plates back and places them on the second step of the predilla, against the reredos. He then goes back to stand beside his own seat.

After the thurifer incenses the congregation from the center of the pavement, he walks to his right and stops in front of the forward servers' bench and faces to the back of the church. The crucifer turns to him. As soon as the torch bearers (who have just replaced the water cruet and lavabo bowl on the credence table) also turn to him, the thurifer bows to all three, and they to him. He incenses the group. All again bow to each other. The thurifer and the boat boy then go to the thurible stand. As soon as they pass, the crucifer resumes his place in front of his own seat.

After exhorting the people "Let us give thanks ...", the celebrant chants the preface to the Canon of the Mass. Most usually, this preface concludes with a section that begins with the word "Therefore". This word is the cue for the servers to start moving to the front of the altar. The servers should nonetheless watch the MC, particularly at solemnities such as Christmas, which has a special

preface that does not contain this word. The MC should give a glance to the servers when the celebrant has nearly finished the preface and it is time to move into position.

At the word “Therefore”, the torch bearers, the thurifer, and the boat boy will take their places in front of the altar. As they begin to do so, the crucifer steps back beside his seat, his back to the sacristy door. As soon as the thurifer and the boat boy pass him, he goes back to stand immediately beside the credence table. He takes up the bells in his left hand, being careful not to allow any sound from them.

During the Eucharistic prayer

As the choir and congregation begin the Sanctus (“Holy, holy, holy ...”), the crucifer rings the bells three times. He should ring for a second, stop for a second, ring again, stop for a second, and ring a third time. No attempt should be made to coordinate the ringing of the bells with the singing. The ostensible purpose of the bells is to alert anyone who may be unclear about what’s going on that the Canon of the Mass is about to begin. The bells are not meant to be a supplement or support for the music and should not be rung as if they were. Having rung the bells, the crucifer replaces them quietly on the step. When the Benedictus ends, the crucifer kneels on the first step of the altar, beside the credence table, the bells within easy reach. Unless he has so much experience that he absolutely knows exactly when to ring the bells without following along in his marked copy of the Parish Mass book, or the laminated sheet provided for the same purpose, he should have that sheet or the book open and laying on the step in front of him.

At the point noted in the book or on the sheet, the crucifer rings the bells once. At a solemn sung Mass, the first Eucharistic prayer will ordinarily be used. The point occurs in this prayer immediately after the words “... among those you have chosen.”

After the words of institution (“... which will be given up for you.”) the celebrant will elevate the consecrated host. As he begins to raise the host, the crucifer rings the bells three times. Once again, he should ring for one second, stop for a second, and so on. He does not coordinate the ringing with the movements of the celebrant, except as to when to start, but the ringing should end before the celebrant begins to lower the host. The organist will also ring a bell in the tower. No attempt should be made to coordinate with that bell.

Similarly, the crucifer rings the bells three times after the consecration of the wine (“Do this in memory of me.”). He then replaces the bells on the second step, against the reredos, as they are not needed again until the celebrant’s communion.

After the Eucharistic prayer has been finished and the great Amen sung by the congregation in response, all servers rise. The crucifer steps back and to his left and faces forward. He is at this point actually almost at the back wall of the church. In this way, he allows the thurifer or boat boy ample space to replace the thurible on its stand. He may, indeed, take the thurible from the thurifer to do him the service of putting it back, but he should not take it from the boat boy if the thurifer has given it to the boat boy to put up.

The thurifer then goes to stand in front of the crucifer’s seat, and the boat boy, to his left, will stand in front of the thurifer’s seat. The crucifer now stands left of the boat boy, facing the altar. He will have to be in this position when the time comes to ring the bells at the celebrant’s communion.

During the communion service

At the celebrant's invitation to the congregation to give each other a sign of peace, each server greets at least one other server. The greetings exchanged should not be overly demonstrative, and should be concluded before most of the congregation have concluded theirs. After the chant "Therefore let us keep the feast, [alleluia]" the servers all kneel on the first step, the same time at which the congregation kneels.

About the time that the "Lamb of God" verses are chanted, the celebrant may go to the tabernacle to take out the ciborium with the reserved Sacrament. All should keep their eyes on the tabernacle as this is done.

The celebrant, after the *Agnus Dei*, and after reverencing the Sacrament with a genuflection or deep bow, will turn around with the host above the chalice and say to the congregation "The Gifts of God for the people of God," or "This is the Lamb of God." The crucifer then should take up the bells without any sound and watch for when the celebrant strikes his breast. At that exact instant, the crucifer rings the bells once. He replaces the bells on the step, against the reredos. They are not used after this.

All the servers then rise. The thurifer and crucifer ordinarily are the cup bearer and paten bearer, respectively, and they kneel on the top step facing the front of the altar. The paten bearer kneels at the left corner of the top step, and the cup bearer kneels to his right. The MC will kneel rightmost of all, if he is communicating at this Mass. The other servers kneel on the top step, on the side. The celebrant communicates all the servers in the Body of Christ. He communicates the MC in the Precious Blood if the MC receives at this Mass. Usually, however, the MC will minister the cup to all the servers, or at least to the cup bearer and to the paten bearer. When the cup bearer and the paten bearer have both received the Blood of Christ, they rise. The paten bearer immediately takes up the communion paten from the left side of the altar (he does not genuflect) and goes to hold the communion paten for the communicants as the celebrant distributes communion to the congregation. The cup bearer takes up the second chalice and communicates first the rest of the altar servers, then goes to communicate the congregation.³

After communion

When the celebrant has finished the communion distribution and returns to the altar, the paten bearer goes with him, now on his left, and places the communion paten on the corporal or beside it to the left. The celebrant will probably point to where he wants the communion paten placed, or he may take it directly from the hand of the bearer. The paten bearer then genuflects to the Sacrament on the altar, turns and goes down to kneel on the first step. When the celebrant has finished with the water and the MC turns to bring it to the side, the paten bearer should be alert and ready to go up and take the cruet from the MC, should the cup bearer still be in the sacristy. If the crucifer takes the

³At this point, the more detailed instructions for bearing the communion paten or for bearing the cup during communion should be consulted. The rest of these directions assume that the crucifer is the paten bearer, which is the ordinary case. If the crucifer is the cup bearer, he should consult the instructions at this point in the "Directions for the thurifer".

cruet from the MC, they bow to each other and the paten bearer returns the cruet to the credence table and stoppers it. He again kneels on the first step.

After the celebrant's blessing, and when the congregation has finished its response to the dismissal ("Thanks be to God."), the crucifer rises and takes the celebrant's biretta to the MC. The biretta will have been placed on the crucifer's bench seat by the cup bearer. If for any reason the MC is not immediately there to take the biretta, the crucifer gives it to the celebrant directly, going directly to the celebrant by the shortest route possible and handing the biretta to him, holding it in such a way that the celebrant can easily take it by the middle of the three wings on top. The crucifer then goes up to the processional cross, again by the shortest possible route. He takes up the cross and goes down in the usual way. The celebrant will turn as the crucifer is coming along, timing himself so that the thurifer will turn and go out and the torch bearers will follow him and the crucifer will then be just in time to follow the torch bearers. The procession leaves in the same order in which it came in.

After Mass

In the sacristy after the Mass, the crucifer remains standing with the cross until the celebrant has led the group in a short prayer. He then replaces the cross in its sacristy holder.

At the Sunday solemn Mass, the Angelus immediately follows. The servers take off their cottas as quickly as they can and go out with the celebrant. All stand in front of the pulpit until the closing hymn has been concluded. The celebrant goes forward to the center of the pavement and the servers move forward until just past the pulpit, forming up in two ranks, in any order.

At the verse "And the Word was made flesh," all genuflect. When the Angelus is concluded, all turn and genuflect toward the Sacrament in the tabernacle, then go to the sacristy. The crucifer may then put off his cassock and cotta. Every server is responsible for hanging up his cassock and cotta, and any other vestment he has taken off the rack.

In solemn procession

On some occasions, the entrance procession will start not in the sacristy but in the church foyer. There is otherwise nothing different about this procession.

Solemn processions are those which, after the entrance procession, begin from the altar and make the circuit of the church. If there is to be a solemn procession, the crucifer, when the entrance procession reaches the sanctuary, does not put the cross into its holder in back of the altar. He instead stops at the foot of the altar, lining up with the other servers, to the left of the torch bearer on the left side, the sacristy side. After all have lined up, the celebrant will put incense on the coals in the usual way. He then chants an antiphon to the processional hymn. As he turns around, all turn with him, turning towards the center. The procession then proceeds in the usual order, the thurifer leading, the torch bearers following him, and the crucifer following the torch bearers. The crucifer keeps the same pace as the rest of the procession, and maintains about a two yard distance between himself and the torch bearers.

The procession goes up the main aisle, then down the south aisle. The Sacrament in the tabernacle is *not* reverenced as the procession passes in front of it to the north aisle. The procession ends by passing down the main aisle. Again, all go into the sanctuary and take the places they held before the solemn procession began, including the crucifer. There then occurs what is called a “station” at the foot of the altar. Theoretically, it is a pause in the procession to chant a prayer. In this case, the station ends the solemn procession. When the prayer ends, the crucifer immediately goes directly up the altar steps and puts the cross into its holder in back of the altar. The crucifer should not turn left and go along the pavement, but go directly up, as the celebrant will start up to incense the altar, and the crucifer should not still be putting the cross up at that time. The crucifer then goes to stand in front of his seat and from this point the Mass proceeds in the usual way.