

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

Arlington, Texas

Directions for
Master of Ceremonies

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.

30 December A. D. 2001

Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam

General instructions

Your general preparation

You have been called by Father Allan Hawkins to serve in a most special capacity. In point of fact, some of the things you will do as a Master of Ceremonies (hereinafter, “MC”) are the ordinary functions of an ordained deacon. It is a great privilege for anyone to serve at the altar. Your privilege is much beyond that, and so are your special responsibilities. You must not continue to serve as an MC unless you will regard your office as a true religious vocation. As is said in the general directions for all altar servers, your vocation is in a sense the central feature of your way of life. Other servers are exhorted to lead Catholic Christian lives that will not give scandal. Yours is an even more rigorous responsibility, for you must behave not only as a server, but as an MC. You stand in a special position between the priest and the other servers and, indeed, the congregation. You therefore have a special relationship to the celebrant of the liturgy. You should strive to bring your life into full harmony with your high office. You must engage in daily prayer, if possible reciting at least part of the Liturgy of the Hours (the Divine Office). It is assumed that you will frequent the sacraments and the liturgies of the Church.

The MC, besides assisting the celebrant in the liturgy, is also responsible for immediate supervision of the rest of the servers. You have only been called to your office after serving in all the other server positions, so you are familiar with all of what all other servers do. Nevertheless, you should study the directions for each and all of the other servers, and occasionally serve in each of those positions, so that you are able at any point whatsoever to bring to mind without effort precisely what is supposed to happen next in the liturgy. This requires, so to speak, fitting all those separate parts together in the right way. The ability to think ahead in the liturgy is vitally important and comes only after study and intense practice. This requires you also to look behind the actions to understand the reasons for them and fit those into a coherent whole.

You must become familiar with the books used at Mass, so that you can turn instantly to any needed page. This is the thing that needs practice more than anything else. If, during a liturgy, you can't get to the page immediately, don't fish around for it. Father Allan knows just where it is and he will turn to it. This is somewhat annoying for him, but he is very forgiving provided that you have been evidently making real efforts towards learning the books.

Dress

Other servers can be excused if their dress is a little out of order. You, however, set the tone for the all the servers. You should observe carefully the directions for proper dress of servers.

Vesture

Most MC's have found it best to buy their own cassocks and cottas and mark them or keep them in a garment bag, thus reserving them for their sole use. If you are going to buy, first try on different sizes from the rack and find the size that fits best. You can use this as guidance when you buy, but you should buy a cotta longer than the ones provided in the sacristy. Your cotta should hang well below the waist, although not so far as the knees. The longer cotta is the special mark of the MC.

Simply using a larger size cotta will not work, as it is unlikely there is available in the sacristy one sufficiently large to have the requisite length, and if there is it will be too large in the shoulders and chest.

The ritual of the solemn sung Mass

Before Mass

You should arrive at least twenty minutes before the scheduled time for Mass. You will need the extra time to make sure all is in readiness and to take any special instructions from the celebrant.

The Altar Guild should have set up everything needed for the Mass. You are responsible, however, for checking to make sure that all is ready, including all the following.

1. The veiled chalice is in the center of the altar. Lift the front of the veil and make sure the priest's host is on the paten.

2. The tabernacle key is on the altar to the right of the corporal.

3. The communion paten is on the altar, at the left.

3. You will carry the Evangeliary (Book of the Gospels or the large Lectionary) in the entrance procession. Have it ready on the counter in the sacristy and check to assure that the ribbon is at the current day's gospel.

4. The first and second readings for the day are read from the ambo. See to it that the book is opened to the correct readings. Further, read over both the readings if you have not done so earlier. The purpose is to have at least a little familiarity with the text and minimize the likelihood of stumbling over something, or mispronouncing, or giving the wrong emphasis.

5. The small missal and Father Allan's personal prayer book should be on the stand beside his chair. Check the small missal to assure that a copy of the current day's bulletin is inserted in it and that the green ribbon is at that page. The white ribbon should mark the page having the prayers proper for the current day.

6. If there is to be an asperges (a sprinkling of water on the congregation), see to it that all things are ready on the small table set in front of the celebrant's chair. These will be the water pail, the aspergillum, a small crystal tray with some salt in it, and a large card with the text for the blessing of the water.

7. Check to see that the sound amplifier system is turned on. The main switch is in the sacristy, on the side of the cabinet to the right of the door to the sanctuary. The microphone on the ambo is never supposed to be turned off. The microphone at the pulpit, however, is not turned on except when it is actually being used. Visiting sermoners, however, should not be expected to know this and remember to turn on the microphone when they come up into the pulpit. If there is a visitor, turn the microphone on and tell him you have done so.

8. The altar missal is on the step stool in front of the tabernacle. The white ribbon should be at the page having the prayers proper to the day.

9. The Altar Guild does not put bulletins out for the servers. You will need to take six of them from the narthex. One should go on each of the server's seats. Your own copy can be put on the low table to the right of your chair.

In the sacristy before Mass

Having checked that everything is ready in the sanctuary, you should be in the sacristy before the other servers are supposed to arrive. You should ask the celebrant if there are any special instructions. You will then pass on the special instructions to the other servers, as needed and with such particular directions as are appropriate to each person.

Do not put on your cotta until all the servers have arrived. If someone does not show up, you will very quickly have to go out and find a server who is in the congregation, as a replacement for the no-show.

You are responsible for seeing to it that the thurifer lights the coals early enough to get them going properly. Should the thurifer be late showing up, you must light the coals and fill the boat. The boat boy should see to it that the boat is filled, and the thurifer is responsible for making sure this is done, but you must be sure that one or the other has done it. You will cue the torch bearers, if necessary, to light the altar candles and to light their own torches.

You should look at everyone's vesture and see that it is all suitable. This includes the celebrant's vesture. The boat boys have particular difficulties with their vesture. Many of them have not yet developed the æsthetic sense of what looks right, and many cannot easily reach up to the rack.

If some server has not shown up on time, you must go out and find a replacement. The problem of getting a replacement must be considered when someone has not shown up ten minutes before the Mass time. Anyone who has not shown up at least five minutes before Mass must be presumed to be a no-show and must be replaced.

During all of this, you should enforce good order and decorum. The sacristy doors must be kept shut, as any sound from the sacristy easily distracts those of the congregation who are preparing for Mass in private prayer. At last, you must see to it that everyone is lined up in proper order for the entrance procession.

The procession to the altar

When the celebrant has led the preparatory prayer in the sacristy, he gives the signal to the MC to ring the entrance bell. The MC opens the sanctuary door a few inches only and rings the bell with two strokes. He shuts the door, takes up the evangeliary and takes his place in the entrance procession, last of all except the celebrant.¹ The evangeliary is carried in two hands, front cover forward, held just in front of the chest, or with the top actually leaning back against the chest. The top of the evangeliary must not be above the shoulders. The MC may take water from the font and offer it on his fingers to the celebrant before crossing himself. The MC does not hold the aisle door for the celebrant, but walks on ahead. The celebrant will shut the door in back of himself.

¹Liturgical processions are in rank order, from lower to higher, except for the thurifer, who always leads. Torches rank below the crucifix, so torch bearers go before the crucifer. The MC has higher rank than any other layman, so he goes last before the ordained ministers. They, in turn, proceed in the order of deacon(s), priestly concelebrant(s), bishop(s), archbishop(s), cardinal(s). The principal celebrant, however, whatever his rank of ordination, always is last.

On occasion, the entrance procession will begin from the foyer of the church. In this case, the bell there is rung, at the direction of the celebrant, to signal the beginning of the procession.

If there is a solemn procession, there is no difference for the MC, who walks in his usual place in the processional order, about two yards behind the crucifer.

At the foot of the altar

As soon as the MC is inside the altar rail, he *quickly* goes directly up the steps and puts the evangeliary on the right forward corner of the altar. He immediately turns around and walks directly down to stand just to the right of the celebrant. The celebrant will have come up to the center. The celebrant waits until the MC is next to him, then genuflects, at the same time removing his biretta. The MC should be quick enough about putting the evangeliary on the altar that he does not make the celebrant wait to genuflect. The MC genuflects with the celebrant and takes the biretta from him. The MC turns to the left and carries the biretta to the sacristy. He opens the door and puts the biretta on the counter immediately next to the door. Should the celebrant not have closed the aisle door in back of him, the MC closes it now. The MC returns to his place at the foot of the altar.

The preparatory incensings

The celebrant meanwhile has gone up to reverence the altar. He then proceeds to the incensing of the altar. Coming down from the altar, he hands the thurible to the thurifer and turns around at the foot of the altar. He and the MC bow to the altar, turn to the right, and go along the pavement, in back of the torchbearer, the MC preceding the celebrant. The MC goes all the way to the wall and turns right around, allowing the celebrant to pass in front of him and so to his chair. The MC follows to his own chair to the left of the celebrant's, and immediately takes up the small missal. He turns to the ribbon where the introit or entrance prayer for the day is found.

The introductory rites

The instant the celebrant has bowed to the thurifer after the incensing, the MC moves in front of and facing the celebrant, and holds the missal up, opened so that the celebrant can easily read the Introit ("opening prayer"). The celebrant then gives the greeting. This is located on a page pasted into the missal towards the front. If the MC is able to open to that page while keeping one finger at the introit so that he can, without moving the missal, flip the pages from the greeting to the introit, he may and perhaps should do so. However, Father Hawkins, like most priests, does not need to read the greeting. So if the MC cannot flip from the greeting to the introit with complete ease and assurance, he should just hold the missal open to the introit, and let the celebrant turn the pages back to the greeting first if that is necessary. The celebrant gives the greeting ("Blessed be God ...") while signing himself with the cross. The MC does not sign himself. The greeting having been said, the celebrant reads the Introit. The pages are then turned over to the inside front cover of the missal, where the Confiteor (penitential rite) is pasted. The celebrant begins the Confiteor with the invitation "Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor". As soon as this is said, the MC goes back to stand in front of his own chair. As the Confiteor is coming to an end, the MC again stands in front

of the celebrant, with the book open to the Confiteor. The celebrant reads the absolution, at the conclusion of which the MC returns to his own place.

The choir then chants the Kyrie and sings the Gloria. As the Gloria ends (or as the Kyrie ends, if, as in Lent, there is no Gloria), the MC moves back in front of the celebrant with the missal opened to the green ribbon where there is inserted a copy of that day's service bulletin. From that, the celebrant chants the Collect. When the celebrant has finished the Collect, the MC goes back to his chair and replaces the missal on the stand. All then sit for the readings. The celebrant sits when he will, and no one may sit until he is seated.

The readings and the gospel procession²

Someone from the congregation is appointed to read the first reading each Sunday. Rarely, that person may fail to step forward for one reason or another. If it becomes evident that there is no reader coming forward, the MC goes to the ambo and reads the first reading. He then sits while the choir chants the responsorial psalm. In either case, therefore, he will sit during the chanting of the psalm. He follows along from his copy of the bulletin. When the cantor finishes the last verse and the last repetition of the congregation's response begins, the MC goes to the ambo. He then reads the second reading.

The MC stands at the ambo with his hands folded in the usual way. He first reads the announcement of the reading (*i.e.*, "A reading from &c."). He then places both hands flat on the edges of the book, with the fingers tips at the tops of the pages. He reads the second reading exactly as it is printed. It is absolutely forbidden deliberately to change, omit, or add any words. At the end of the text, the MC again folds his hands, pauses a second or two, then announces "The Word of the Lord".

Having concluded the reading, the MC turns right around, walks directly towards the back of the church, and turns around when he is two steps beyond the celebrant (who is still seated). He waits there to assist, if necessary, with preparation of the thurible. As soon as it is clear that the preparation is proceeding in good order, and at the latest when the boat is being closed and the blessing given, the MC goes up to the altar to take up the Evangeliary. The MC carries the Evangeliary in front of him, front cover forward, and goes to his place on the pavement at the foot of the altar, just to the right of center. He goes down to his place directly, passing to the right of the ambo.

The celebrant comes to the center and bows in prayer while standing on the first step of the altar. He then turns to face the congregation. At the same time, all the servers likewise turn around, each one turning towards the center. The order of the procession is the usual one. The MC follows the cross, bearing the Evangeliary in front of him, cover forward, his hands under the book and the top of the book resting against his chest.³ The MC should follow about two yards behind the crucifer.

²The following rubrics are somewhat different if someone other than the celebrant delivers the sermon. The differences are specified below, under the heading "When the sermon is given by other than the celebrant".

³Under no circumstances is he to hold the book up higher, so as to display it prominently to the congregation. Widespread as this practice is, holding the book up high is not proper in the

The crucifer may have to slow down or even pause to allow the thurifer and the boat boy to move out of his way. The MC should match the crucifer's pace or his pause. The crucifer will proceed along until he is about a yard and a half beyond the torch bearers. He should then stop fully. The MC should then be in his own position, just slightly beyond the torches, so that when he turns around the Evangeliary ends up exactly between the torches. The crucifer will begin to turn around and the MC will match his turn, turning at exactly the same instant and in the same direction. The turn should be to the right, but the MC in any event matches the direction the crucifer turns. If the MC is not in position before the crucifer turns, he does not stop where he is, but continues to his position and then turns, still in the same direction the crucifer turned. The result is that the MC is exactly in the center of the aisle, facing the altar, the torches on either side of the Evangeliary. The MC opens the Evangeliary and holds it with the top against his upper chest and one hand under each side, at a convenient angle for the celebrant to read the Gospel.⁴ The celebrant will turn the pages to the proper place, as it is clumsy for the MC to try to do this for him.

The Gospel and the return to the sanctuary

The celebrant then greets the congregation ("The Lord be with you ...") and announces the Gospel while signing the first letter of the Gospel with his right thumb. He then incenses the Evangeliary. The smoke can be dense, and the MC may wish to minimize any irritation it may cause, by taking a breath as the celebrant takes hold of the thurible, and holding that breath until the incensing is ended. This taking and holding of breath must not be obvious to the congregation, however, nor even to the celebrant.

Having chanted the Gospel, the celebrant concludes by announcing "The Gospel of the Lord." As the congregation makes its response, he takes hold of the Evangeliary and kisses the first word of the Gospel he has just proclaimed. The MC should assist by bringing the book off his chest and towards the celebrant. He then receives it back from the celebrant, immediately closes it and once again holds it with both hands under the book, the top resting against his upper chest. The celebrant then steps back and to his right, so as to line up to the side of the thurifer. The party then returns to the sanctuary as promptly as possible. The MC goes first, turning right at the foot of the altar, passing beyond the ambo, and going back to put the book on the low table on the far side of the celebrant's chair. He then goes to stand at his own chair.

The celebrant goes up to the pulpit and turns to his left to be incensed by the thurifer. By the time this is ended, everyone in the sanctuary will be at their own seats, except torch bearer one and the crucifer, who stand beside their seats to allow the thurifer and the boat boy to pass freely along to the thurible stand. The torch bearer and the crucifer will move in front of their seats as soon as the thurifer and the boat boy have passed them. The celebrant will most probably have invited the

Latin rite of the Catholic Church. It is only appropriate in certain of the Eastern rites.

⁴He may hold the book without resting it against his chest, but should only do this if his arms will not be tired by holding it up in that way. Once in position for the celebrant to read, the book should not have to be moved, as might be the case if the MC cannot continue to hold out without support a large book.

congregation to sit before the thurifer and the boat boy have passed the sacristy door. By the time the thurifer and the boat boy have reached their seats, then, the sermon will already be well started. The general rule is that all servers should sit at the same time, on the MC's cue. However, as this might be distracting if it was delayed until everyone was in place, the MC may sit as soon as the torch bearers and the crucifer are at their seats. Whether to do this or wait for the thurifer and the boat boy is a matter for the good judgement of the MC.

The Creed, blessings, and announcements

When the celebrant has finished his sermon, he turns and comes down from the pulpit. As the celebrant is coming to the center of the sanctuary, the MC stands, takes up the celebrant's prayer book, and hands it to the celebrant as he passes to his chair. The celebrant then intones the Nicene Creed. The prayers of the faithful follow. Usually at a Sunday Mass there are some anniversary blessings. If there are, all servers kneel for them. The MC kneels on the second step of the altar, as far to the front as possible. When those who have received blessings get up from the altar rail, the MC rises and goes back to his seat. The celebrant will ordinarily invite the congregation to sit before he begins the announcements, and the MC should wait for this invitation. However, if the congregation has seated itself without such invitation, the MC then sits. All the other servers will follow his cue.

The offertory: the gifts are taken to the altar

When the announcements are concluded, all the servers stand. The celebrant turns and hands his prayer book to the MC, who puts it on the stand next to the small missal. The celebrant then goes up to the altar to prepare for the offertory. The MC goes to the credence table on his side of the altar and takes up the chalice that is there and carries it up the steps of the altar. He waits at the side of the altar until the celebrant has folded the veil and put it to the side. He then steps right up to the celebrant's side. The celebrant may point to the spot where he wants the chalice placed. It is to the right of the corporal.⁵ Having put the chalice on the altar, the MC steps in back of the celebrant, bows in reverence towards the tabernacle, then turns to his left and stands on the top step of the altar facing the servers' bench.

The torch bearer who has accepted the ciborium from the oblationers will come up the first two steps of the altar so as to be directly facing the MC. The MC takes the ciborium and the attendance slip from the torch bearer and they bow to each other. The MC takes the ciborium and attendance slip to the celebrant, placing the ciborium on the altar to the left of the corporal and discreetly showing the attendance slip to the celebrant. Occasionally, not often, the celebrant will judge that

⁵Only the celebrant may put anything on the corporal. The symbolism involved is based in the understanding that a sacrifice is about to take place, and the appointed locus of that sacrifice is on the corporal. By taking something and putting it on the corporal, the celebrant is accepting that oblation or sacrificial gift from the people. The acceptance would not be symbolized if the people, or the MC as their representative, were to put the oblation directly at the place of sacrifice.

the number of hosts in the ciborium may not be sufficient for the number of communicants expected. At this point, then, the MC will be alert to his word or sign signifying that he wants the box of hosts, which is on the credence table. If the thurifer is alert to the situation, he will take up the box and go up to the second step to give it to the MC. If the thurifer does not do this at once, the MC promptly goes to the table and takes up the box himself, in order that the celebrant not be kept waiting.⁶ The MC goes up to the celebrant, opens the box, and holds it conveniently for the celebrant. When the celebrant is finished with the box, the MC bows to the celebrant and closes the box. He must be careful in replacing the lid to lean the hosts in the end compartments towards the middle of the box, so the cover does not crush them. If the thurifer has not yet taken up the thurible, he should step up to the second step and take the box from the MC when he comes to the side with it. They then bow to each other and the thurifer replaces the box on the credence table. If the thurifer has already taken up the thurible, the MC either gives the box to the crucifer, if he is right there, or replaces it on the credence table himself.

The torch bearer with the cruets will be on the pavement, facing directly to the celebrant and the MC. As soon as he has put the ciborium down (or after he has replaced the box of hosts), the MC goes towards the torch bearer, who comes up two steps to meet the MC. The MC takes the wine cruet first, putting it in the palm of his right hand. He then uses his left hand to take the water cruet by its neck.

Having bowed to the torch bearer, the MC turns and carries the cruets towards the celebrant. He stands one step away until the celebrant takes hold of the first chalice and starts to turn towards him. The MC immediately steps forward and offers the wine cruet to the celebrant by holding it toward him. As soon as the celebrant takes the wine cruet, the MC passes the water cruet to his right palm and places the palm of his left hand on his breast. Having dispensed sufficient wine,⁷ the celebrant holds the wine cruet out to the MC, who takes it by the neck with his left hand and immediately offers the water cruet to the celebrant with his other hand. As soon as the celebrant takes the water cruet, the MC switches the wine cruet to the palm of his right hand and places his left palm on his breast. When the celebrant has put the requisite drop or two of water in the chalice, he hands the cruet back to the MC, who takes it by the neck in his left hand. The celebrant places the first chalice on the corporal and takes up the second chalice. This is filled in the same way. When the water cruet is returned to the MC the second time, he and the celebrant bow to each other. The MC turns around and goes to the edge of the top step. The crucifer steps up to the second step and takes the cruets from the MC. They bow to each other and the crucifer sets the cruets on the credence table.

⁶If possible, from the time he first mounts to the level of the altar, the MC ought not to have to go down to get anything that can be taken to him by another server.

⁷If the celebrant is a visitor, or if a visiting deacon is assisting at the Mass and prepares the chalices at the altar, he may not be aware of how much or how little wine is needed, and the cruet usually has at least twice what is used. The MC should watch when Father Hawkins prepares the chalices and learn how much he uses according to the size of the congregation. He can then alert a visitor if he is pouring out far too much or, more rarely, far too little.

The offertory continues: the incensings and the collection

The MC, as soon as he has handed the cruets to the crucifer, goes to stand on the top step, on the pulpit side, facing forward. He watches to see when the ushers have finished handing the collection plates around and are ready to bring them forward. He then goes down the steps to the pavement, turns left, goes to the center, then turns around and advances right to the altar rail. The ushers come up to him with the plates. He bows to them, they to him, and he takes the plates from them. As he does so, he places one on top of the other and holds them together with both hands. He and the ushers bow again to each other. He turns around and waits until the celebrant turns to him.. If the celebrant has not taken the thurible to incense the altar, he will turn to the MC before doing so. If he has already taken the thurible, the MC waits where he is until the celebrant has given the thurible back to the thurifer and turns to the MC. Whichever the case, when the celebrant turns to him, the MC holds up the plates at breast level while the celebrant blesses them. The MC then lowers them, turns to his left and walks along the pavement to the crucifer. The crucifer takes the plates from the MC and they bow to each other.

The MC steps up to the second step of the altar, as far forward as possible, and faces the other side of the church while the celebrant finishes incensing the altar. After incensing the celebrant, the thurifer goes down to the second step and turns to face the MC. They bow to each other and the thurifer incenses the MC. They bow to each other again. The incensing of the MC takes place at this time and in this way, or it is not done at all. If the MC for some reason is not in place, ready to be incensed, the thurifer will go directly down to incense the congregation. If this happens, the MC should go on to his next duty, getting the altar Missal, and not attempt in any way to get the thurifer to incense him. If the thurifer should stop and wait for the MC to finish doing something, the MC should signal him to move on..

The Lavabo; the preface

As soon as he has been incensed, the MC goes in back of the altar, bows towards the tabernacle, then picks up the altar missal together with its stand. He carries it around to the front of the altar, and puts it to the left of the corporal, turned at a convenient angle to the celebrant. The MC opens the Lectionary to the white ribbon, which marks the prayers proper to the day. The celebrant turns to the congregation and exhorts them to prayer with the words “Pray, brethren, ...” When he turns back, the MC points⁸ the prayer over the gifts (it is proper to the day). As soon as the celebrant finishes that

⁸To “point” the prayer means to put one’s finger next to the text the celebrant reads. This is best done with the left hand. The back of the hand is laid flat against the page, the forefinger drawn back and touching the thumb. Point the third finger to the first line of the text. As the celebrant reads or chants, move the finger (and hand) down. You should move your hand to point to a line just before the celebrant will start that line. Thus, you keep your finger on a line of text until he is far enough along on it that he will surely finish it, but so your finger will still be there if he pauses for some reason before the last few words on that line and might lose his place. But the celebrant should always be able, as he finishes a line, to find the next line by looking where your finger is pointing.

prayer, the MC turns to the preface for the day and points it for the celebrant. Most often, the preface will be printed on a separate piece of paper. Father Allen finds it easiest to read the preface if it lays flat on the altar, in front of the lectionary.

Nearly every preface ends with a section that begins with the word “Therefore”. The servers should all be on the alert for this word as it is the signal for them to start towards the stations they will occupy during the Eucharistic prayer. It does no harm, however, for the MC to turn his head slightly towards them and nod slightly to confirm that it is time to move. Occasionally, the last part of the preface will not have this word. In such case, the MC must give the head signal when he sees that the celebrant is coming to the end of the preface, that is, within about five lines.

The Eucharistic prayer

While the Sanctus and Benedictus are sung, the MC puts the separate piece of paper that has the preface printed on it under the missal stand. He then turns the pages of the Missal to the beginning of the Eucharistic prayer. At the Sunday Mass, unless the celebrant has decided otherwise, the first Eucharistic prayer, the Roman Canon, will be used. This begins on the page that is tabbed with the tab bearing a single gold line. The MC points this prayer for the celebrant. The first page is verso, that is, it is on the left of the two open pages. The prayer usually skips the next two pages. So when the celebrant reaches the bottom of the first page, the MC must immediately turn the page and start pointing the text at the top of the next recto page, that is, the one on the right.

On certain solemnities and other special days, the Communicantes is proper.⁹ The propers are found on the two pages that are ordinarily skipped. The Communicantes is the first sentence of the paragraph that begins “In union with ...”. At this point, if the Communicantes is proper, the MC must move his finger to it, and so soon as the celebrant has finished reading it, move immediately back to take up with the words “We honor Joseph ...”.

The Hanc igitur is also proper at the Easter vigil Mass and at all masses through the entire next week, including Whitsunday, the Sunday after Easter. The Hanc igitur is the entire paragraph, of two sentences, beginning with the words “Father, accept this offering ...”. Again, the MC must move his finger immediately to the proper part and then back again when it is finished.

Although there is a card on the altar with the institution narrative on it, and the celebrant will ordinarily use it, the MC continues to point the text and turn the pages until the actual consecration of the host, which ends with the words “... which will be given up for you.” The instant those words are said, the MC withdraws his hand, and turns with hands folded towards the Sacred Body of Christ as the celebrant elevates it for adoration. The MC signs himself with the cross. He does not genuflect during the elevation, but genuflects with the celebrant after the elevation. The MC then immediately points the words of consecration for the cup. As soon as the words “Do this in memory of me” are spoken, the MC again withdraws his hand and adores the Precious Blood as it is elevated. Once more, he genuflects with the celebrant.

The MC rises and immediately turns the page and points the *chanted* line of invitation, “Let us proclaim the mystery of faith”. The MC then takes up pointing the spoken text again. The Canon

⁹These days are Christmas, the Epiphany, the Easter vigil Mass and the entire following week through Sunday (Whitsunday), the Ascension, and Pentecost.

ends with chanted sentence “Through him, with him ...”. While the congregation is responding with the sung Great Amen, the MC turns the Missal pages to the Communion rite, at the plain red tab.

Preparations for communion

Having turned the pages to the communion rite, the MC points the text that is pasted in the book on the recto page *before* the plain red tab. The MC then turns the page and points the chant lines for the Lord’s Prayer. After the Lord’s prayer, the MC points the chanted text for the celebrant, the words beginning with “Deliver us, Lord ...”. The response, “For this is the kingdom ...” is chanted, but no chant line is available in the Missal. The MC may point the corresponding text, which is pasted into the Missal. The MC then points the Prayer for peace, which starts “Lord Jesus Christ ...”. The congregation responds with “Amen” to this prayer. The celebrant turns to invite the congregation to share some sign of peace. He then turns to the MC and they exchange the “kiss of peace”. The celebrant extends his hands forward to grasp the MC’s arms lightly. The MC correspondingly extends his hands to grasp the arms of the celebrant. At the same time, they incline their heads slightly towards each other, left to left, and say some appropriate words of greeting (“Peace to you”, for example). If there is a concelebrant, or an ordained deacon assisting, the celebrant greets him before greeting the MC. The MC does not attempt to greet anyone else.

The MC then points the chanted line beginning “Alleluia. Christ our Passover ...” (the Alleluia is omitted during Lent). After the response, all the other servers should kneel. If they do not kneel at this point, the MC signals to them to do so.

The choir now sings the Agnus Dei. The celebrant meanwhile drops a bit of the consecrated Host into his chalice. He genuflects or bows to the Sacrament on the altar, and the MC genuflects with him. The celebrant may then go to the tabernacle to withdraw the ciborium that is there.

After the celebrant returns to the altar, the MC points the text “The Gifts of God for the People of God.” The celebrant will say this turned to the congregation. As he says these words, all, including the MC, sign themselves with the cross. The MC then retreats a little from the celebrant, while the celebrant prepares privately for his own communion, and in order to allow the crucifer to have a clear view of the celebrant. The MC should stand off the rug that the celebrant is standing on. The celebrant consumes the Sacred Body and then the Precious Blood. As he starts to lower the chalice, the MC steps forward and turns the Missal pages to the proper prayers, marked with the white ribbon.

The communion service

Ordinarily, the MC will have communicated at the earlier Mass. If this is so, he will stand in back of the celebrant and then, when the celebrant goes to communicate the other servers in the Body of Christ, the MC will step up to the altar and take up the Precious Blood.

If the MC has not communicated at the earlier Mass and wishes to receive Communion, he will go to kneel on the top step, facing the altar and allowing enough room for the crucifer and thurifer to kneel to his left, on that same step. In this case, the celebrant communicates all in the Body of Christ and administers the Precious Blood to the MC only. When the celebrant has given the Elements to the altar party, he says the communion prayer (which is never pointed by the MC) and then goes down to begin distributing the Sacred Body to the congregation.

If he communicates at this Mass, the MC rises and goes up as soon as the celebrant has communicated him in the Precious Blood. Should the celebrant go on to communicate any other of the servers in the Precious Blood, the MC rises only after the person next to him has been communicated.

The MC, having come to the center of the altar, genuflects in adoration of the Precious Blood, even if he has just received the Communion himself. He then takes up the principal chalice, the one that the celebrant elevated at the consecration, and the purificator that the celebrant has laid in front of it. He administers the cup only to the other cup bearer (ordinarily the thurifer) and the paten bearer (ordinarily the crucifer). The other cup bearer then has the responsibility of administering the Precious Blood to the remaining servers.¹⁰

After the communion; the ablutions

When all have communicated, the MC and the cup bearer go up to the altar. Should one finish before the other, he should remain standing on the pavement, facing the altar, until the other is ready. They go up to the altar, the MC to the right of the other cup bearer. The other cup bearer first puts his chalice on the corporal and lays the purificator in front of it, folded back once, just as it was when he took it up. Usually, the celebrant points to where he wants the chalice placed. The MC then puts his chalice and purificator on the corporal. The MC and the other cup bearer genuflect together.

While this is going on, or soon before or after, the celebrant may return some of the Sacred Body to the tabernacle. Because the MC and the other cup bearer are bearing the Precious Blood, they do not pause while the celebrant is doing this. If they have already deposited the chalices on the altar, they should keep their eyes on the Sacrament as the celebrant returns it to the tabernacle.

The other cup bearer, as soon as he has replaced the chalice on the altar and genuflected, goes to the credence table and takes up the water cruet. The MC follows after him, and takes the water cruet from him. They bow to each other.

The MC takes the cruet to the celebrant, stopping one pace short of being right at his side and standing a step away from the altar. The celebrant first cleans the ciborium and the communion paten. As he finishes with each, he puts it to his left. The cup bearer steps forward and takes these vessels away to the sacristy. If the MC thinks it well, he may, holding the cruet in his right hand, use his left hand to move the vessel to the left of the missal so that it can be taken away by someone else without everyone crowding to the center of the altar. He should in any case make room for the other cup bearer, by standing a little to the right.

The celebrant will then drain off whatever of the Precious Blood remains in the two chalices. He then turns and holds his chalice towards the MC. The MC steps forward and pours about a tablespoon of water into the chalice. The MC then retreats one pace. The celebrant swirls the water in the chalice and drinks it off. He then holds out the secondary chalice and the process is repeated. The celebrant wipes the secondary chalice dry with the purificator, deposits the purificator in the chalice, covers it with a pall, and sets it to the left. The other cup bearer takes up this chalice and bears it to the sacristy. The celebrant finally wraps a purificator around the principal chalice and holds his fingers over the chalice bowl. The MC pours about a tablespoon of water over the

¹⁰At this point, the reader should consult the separate “Directions for cup bearers”.

celebrant's fingers. He and the MC bow to each other. The MC turns and hands the water cruet to the cup bearer to be replaced on the credence table and stoppered. Should the cup bearer not be immediately there, the paten bearer steps up and takes the cruet from the MC.

The end of the Mass; the procession to the sacristy

The MC goes to the celebrant's chair to retrieve the celebrant's prayer book. If there is to be a solemn blessing, he brings also the small missal. These he lays to the left of the altar Missal. Each time he passes in back of the celebrant, he pauses and bows towards the tabernacle.

When the celebrant has finished assembling the chalice, paten, pall, veil, and burse, he reads the post-communion prayer proper to the day. The MC points this for him. The celebrant then turns to the people, gives them his blessing, and dismisses them. The MC genuflects for this. If there is to be a solemn blessing, the MC takes up the small missal the instant the post-communion prayer has been read and goes to kneel on the second step of the altar, directly in front of the celebrant. The MC holds up the small missal, at a convenient position for the celebrant to read, opened to the proper blessing for the day, marked by the ribbon. The MC remains kneeling until the celebrant has dismissed the congregation. He rises while the congregation is responding "Thanks be to God". If the celebrant has not done so, the MC closes the altar Missal and takes up the celebrant's prayer book and hands it to him. The MC takes up the small Missal (if it has been used for a solemn blessing) and takes the celebrant's biretta from the crucifer, who should come up to give it to him. The MC goes down to the pavement, hands the biretta to the celebrant, and goes in back of him to stand at his right at the foot of the altar.

The crucifer will be the last to come to the foot of the altar. As he comes along, the celebrant genuflects and the thurifer, the boat boy, and the MC genuflect at the same time. All turn around, and the thurifer leads the procession out of the sanctuary, retracing the route of the entrance procession, and proceeding in the same order. At the sacristy door, the thurifer opens the door and holds it for the rest of the altar party. After all others are in, the thurifer enters and closes the door behind him. If the thurifer does not wait, but goes on in, then the MC should hold the door for the celebrant and follow him into the sacristy, closing the door behind himself.

After the Mass; the Angelus

All stand facing the crucifix on the cabinet door at the back of the sacristy while the celebrant leads the party in a short prayer. All take off their cottas while the celebrant takes off his chasuble.

On Sundays, all then go out the aisle door, in any order, to stand in front of the pulpit facing the statue of the Virgin while the concluding hymn is sung. The celebrant stands in front with the MC to his right. As the last verse of the hymn is being sung, the celebrant closes his prayer book and hands it to the MC. The celebrant then steps forward to the center. The servers step forward until they are just past the pulpit, forming in two ranks, in any order. The Angelus concluded, the celebrant and all the servers turn towards the tabernacle and genuflect in reverence to the Sacrament. The servers return to the sacristy.

If there have been notable errors made by any of the servers during the Mass, the MC should take this time to point them out, while the matter is still fresh in his mind and everyone else's. The MC, as necessary, reminds the other servers to hang up their vestments. He himself remains in his cassock

until he has made sure that the sanctuary is clear. Clearing the sanctuary means bringing items into the sacristy. Much of this is the responsibility of a sacristan assigned from the Altar Guild, but the MC should start on it if a sacristan is not immediately at hand.

The following are brought into the sacristy:

1. The offering plates (they are put on the counter between the doors)
2. The Evangeliary
3. The celebrant's chalice (with its veil and burse) and the tabernacle key
4. The cruets, the lavabo bowl, and the finger towel
5. The box of hosts, if any were taken out in preparing the gifts

One bulletin should be left beside the MC's chair, and another at the crucifer's bench, for the convenience of the servers at the evening Mass, but the others which were put out for the other servers are taken up and returned to the narthex. Anything else which needs to be straightened up should be seen to by the MC.

Of course, the MC must himself hang up his own vestments, but he is also responsible for hanging up any left behind by other servers.

When other sacraments are administered within the Mass

Baptism

Preparations for a solemn baptism require that the Paschal candle be lit and that the following articles be put in the baptistery prior to Mass.

1. The tray, holding the oil stock (the oil of catechumens) and a cotton ball, placed on the ledge around the font.
2. The baptismal candle and a single taper, placed on the shelf.
3. The light blue binder with the order of Baptism, leaning against the back of the base of the font.
4. The water bucket, with some holy water and the aspergillum in it, placed in the back of the baptistery, in the corner opposite from the oil aubrey.

The baptism is always administered immediately following on the sermon. As the celebrant comes down from the pulpit, the MC rises and he, the torchbearers, and the crucifer line up in the usual order at the foot of the predilla. The thurifer and the boat boy do not participate in the baptism. The celebrant will as usual bow towards the altar and turn around. All the participating servers turn with him and the procession goes out of the sanctuary and to the baptistery directly, by way of the main aisle. The procession is in the usual order, absent the thurifer and the boat boy.

In the baptistery, the torchbearers stand to each side, and the crucifer stands to north, that is, to the right. The MC also goes to the right and stands at the font, to the left of the celebrant, who takes his place directly in back of the font. The MC picks up the blue binder and either holds it for the celebrant or hands it to him, whichever the celebrant prefers. If he does not hold the binder at once, the MC should take the top off the oil stock. In any event, the MC should hold the binder when it comes time for the celebrant to draw his hand through the water in blessing. The MC continues to

hold the binder as the celebrant baptizes the baptizand. After the anointing, the MC uses the taper to take a light from the Paschal candle, and with it he lights the baptismal candle held by the celebrant. The MC blows out the taper and puts it down again on the shelf.

The MC takes up the water bucket with the aspergillum. The celebrant takes the aspergillum and first sprinkles those standing immediately around the font, then begins the procession back to the sanctuary. The MC walks to the right of the celebrant, holding the bucket by the bale, in his left hand. The MC sprinkles the congregation as he goes along the aisle. The torch bearers follow, and then the crucifer.

Upon reaching the sanctuary, the MC and the celebrant reverence the altar with a bow. The MC turns to the right and goes by the usual way to take the bucket and aspergillum to the table behind the reredos. They are left there until after Mass.

The torch bearers and the crucifer, upon reaching the sanctuary, immediately turn at the foot of the predilla and in the usual way put up the torches and the processional cross.

Reception and confirmation

In preparation, the small silver plate is put on the altar rail, to the right of the gap, having on it the stock bearing the chrism, and a few balls of cotton. After the sermon, the celebrant will invite the person to be received to kneel in front of him. The celebrant will receive the profession of faith and then will anoint the person. The MC opens the stock, holds the book as necessary, and hands some cotton to the celebrant when the anointing is finished. He takes the stock and closes it up. When the ceremony is concluded, the MC directs the torch bearers to take the plate and other things into the sacristy. The prayers of the faithful follow.