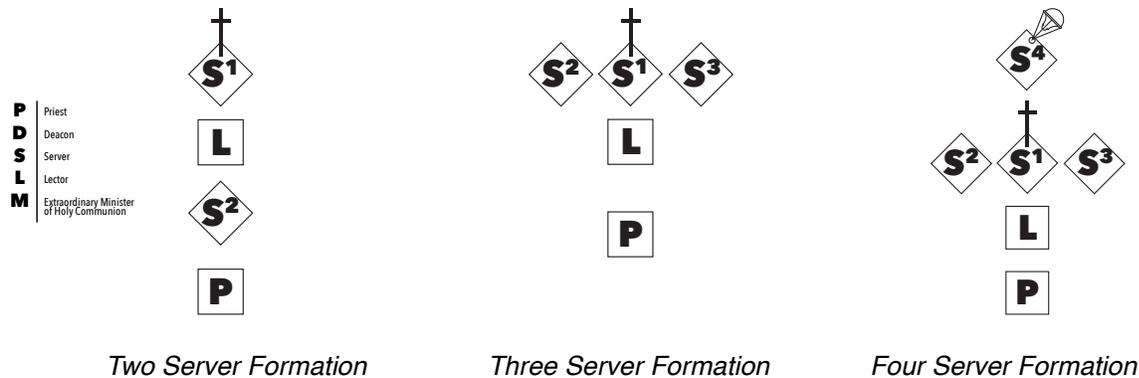


# The Mass in Slow Motion

## Step by Step Through The Liturgy

### The Entrance Procession

The **Altar Servers** and the Priest line up for the procession. The **servers** should wait for the priest celebrant to signal when the procession to begin. Ordinarily, the procession is as follows:



Upon arriving at the sanctuary, the **altar servers** enter the sanctuary, repose the cross and candles and go to their seats remaining standing. If the **altar servers** are not carrying anything, they make a profound bow to the altar and enter. If an **altar server** is carrying something (like the cross) they pause, make a slight bow of the head, and simply continue moving into the sanctuary.

The cross and candles are placed either in the sacristy or off to the side outside of the sanctuary. The **altar servers** go to their places and ready themselves to assist the priest for the Introductory Rites

The **lector** arrives at the altar, lowers the Gospel book, makes a slight bow of the head, enters the sanctuary and places the Gospel book on the missal stand in the center of the altar. The **lector** then exits the sanctuary and goes to stand at the base of the sanctuary to await the arrival of the priest.

The priest arrives at the altar, genuflects if the Blessed Sacrament is present. If the **lector** is holding the Gospel Book, also genuflects if they are able, or alternately makes a profound bow and goes to their seat. *Note: It is desirable that the **lector** should sit towards the front of the church near the altar so that they can get into the sanctuary in an appropriate amount of time.*

The **altar server** should be ready with The Roman Missal so that they can go to the celebrant's chair as the opening chant or hymn concludes.

## The Introductory Rites

Ordinarily, the **altar server** holds The Roman Missal for the priest through the greeting, penitential rite, and *Gloria*. If the *Gloria* is sung from a hymnal, the priest may allow the **server** to close the book and go to their seat while it is being sung. As the *Gloria* concludes, the **server** should move to the celebrant's chair so that the priest can prepare the Missal for the Opening Collect. (**Note:** This means the server should not have to wait for the priest to chant or say "Let us pray" but should already be in motion.)

After the Opening Collect, the **server** closes the book and brings it to their seat. It may be placed on the lap of the **server**, or preferably on a small credence table next to the **server**. (It will be needed again for the Creed.)

## The Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Word begins. After all are seated, the **lector** rises and goes to the center at the foot of the sanctuary, bows profoundly (from the waist), enters the sanctuary, and moves to the ambo. The **lector** begins by reading the salutation: "A reading from the book of ..."

**Note:** It is unnecessary to announce "First Reading" "Responsorial Psalm" or "The second reading is a reading from..." The context of the readings makes this clear.

At the conclusion of the first and second readings, it is not necessary to motion with the hands, lift the lectionary, or adopt any other movement. The **lector** simply says clearly, "The Word of The Lord." After this, the **lector** pauses (for about the length of one *Glory Be*) and then returns to the center at the foot of the altar, bows profoundly, and returns to his or her seat.

After the lector has been seated, the psalmist rises and goes to the ambo in the same manner as the lector. He or she may remain at the cantor's stand or go to the ambo. Both are permitted. Following the psalm, the **psalmist**, if at the ambo, returns to his or her place in the same manner as the lector, bowing profoundly at the center of the foot of the sanctuary.

After a brief pause, the **lector** comes forward to proclaim the second reading the same manner as before. At the conclusion, the **lector** simply says clearly, "The Word of The Lord." After this, the **lector** pauses (for about the length of one *Glory Be*) and then returns to the center at the foot of the altar, bows profoundly, and returns to his or her seat.

**Note:** The *Alleluia* should not begin until after the lector has returned to his or her seat.

Throughout the Liturgy of the Word, The **altar servers** should be attentive to the readings being proclaimed, but should also be aware of what is taking place in the sanctuary. The priest may need something, so they should also be attentive to him at all times in such a way as not to draw the attention of and/or distract the congregation.

Following the homily, the congregation, **altar servers**, and the priest rise to recite the Nicene Creed. Since this is a proper text of the Mass, the priest will read it from the Missal at the chair. The **altar server** should anticipate this and not wait for the creed to begin before going to the celebrant's chair. This means that they should be in motion as the priest is standing up.

# The Liturgy of the Eucharist

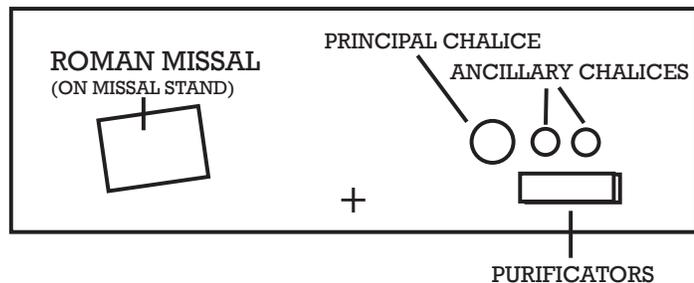
At the words “I believe in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church...” the **lector** who will read the General Intercessions comes forward and prepares to read the intentions. The priest celebrant introduces the intercessions and the **lector** then reads them. The **lector** should wait until after the priest has concluded the petitions with prayer. Following this, the **lector** returns to his or her place.

Following the General Intercessions, the assembly is seated. As the offertory chant or hymn begins (and the **ushers** come forward and begin to take up the offertory collection) the **altar servers** begin to prepare the altar for The Liturgy of the Eucharist.

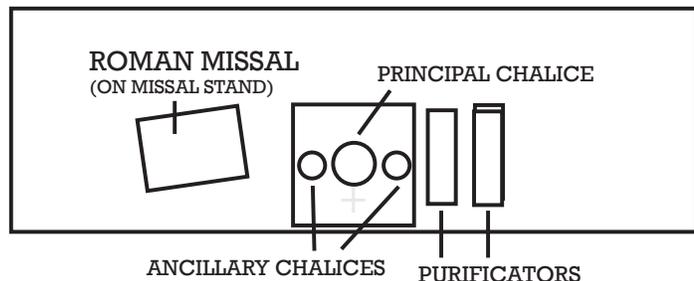
An **altar server** first brings the Roman Missal over to the altar, places it upon the missal stand, opens it to the offertory prayers (green tab) and moves the missal stand to the left side of the altar.

Then an **altar server** brings over the built chalice (holding it with two hands supporting the node or neck of the chalice with one hand and the other hand placed flat on top of the *chalice pall* and *corporal*. It is placed to the center right of the altar.

Next, an **altar server** brings the *ancillary chalices*, if there are any, and places them to the right side of the *principal chalice*. The **server** then gets the other *purificators* and places them one on top of the other near the ancillary chalices. (See image. )



The priest then comes forward to the altar and completes the preparation of the altar. He takes the corporal and carefully unfolds it, places the principal chalice in the center of the corporal, places the ancillary chalices on either side of the principal chalice, places the ancillary purificators vertically to the right side of the corporal leaving room for the purificator of the principal chalice which will be placed there. (See image.)



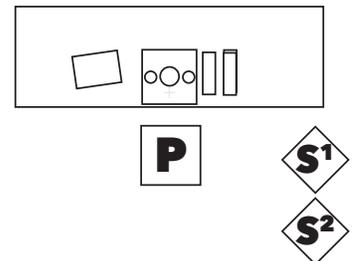
The **altar servers** then go to their places to prepare to assist the priest in receiving the bread, wine, and offertory basket. As the priest begins to move toward the base of the sanctuary, the altar servers travel and flank him on either side.

The **server** to the left of the priest will receive the offertory basket. The **server** to the right of the priest will receive the *cruet* or *flagon* of wine. (The water is never brought in procession.)

The **server** with the offertory basket brings it and sets it near the credence table and not at the altar.<sup>1</sup> The **server** who has custody of the offertory basket then gets the cruet of water from the credence table and joins the **server** who has custody of the cruet of wine. It is appropriate that the servers move together. If there is a stopper on the cruet, it should be removed and placed on the credence table or at least removed when handed to the priest.

The **altar servers** should stand side by side with the cruets so that the priest can easily get to them.

**Note:** If there are handles on the cruets, it is helpful to place them facing toward the priest so he can handle them with ease and care.



After the priest prepares the chalice he hands the wine and then the water back to the servers. He will bow to the servers who leave in unison. They go to the credence table and prepare for the priest's *lavabo*. Ordinarily one **server** takes the *ewer* (cruet or pitcher of water) and the other takes the basin and finger towel. Generally speaking, water is poured over the fingers of the priest rather than a formal "hand washing." At the conclusion of this rite, the priest will bow to the **servers** who return the bow with their heads and return the ewer, basin, and towel to the credence table. They then go to their places for the Eucharistic Prayer.

## The Eucharistic Prayer

**Altar servers** should pay attention during the Eucharistic Prayer and listen for the words (and not just the movements) that signal the actions they are to perform.

At the epiclesis, the priest calls down the Holy Spirit upon the gifts of bread and wine. The action the priest performs is the joining of his hands and extending them over the gifts. The bell is rung at this point in a brief manner. The words to listen for are as follows:

**Eucharistic Prayer I:** "Be pleased, O God, we pray, to bless, acknowledge, and approve this offering..."

**Eucharistic Prayer II:** "Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray, by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall..."

**Eucharistic Prayer III:** "Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you: by the same Spirit graciously make holy these gifts..."

**Eucharistic Prayer IV:** "Therefore, O Lord, we pray: may this same Holy Spirit graciously sanctify these offerings..."

**Note:** The **altar server** might ask the priest before Mass which Eucharistic Prayer he is going to use, so that the **server** can be ready.

Then the priest will begin the Institution Narrative whereby the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ during the words of consecration. At the conclusion of each

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<sup>1</sup> Even money or other gifts for the poor or for the Church, brought by the faithful or collected in the church, are acceptable; given their purpose, they are to be put in a suitable place away from the Eucharistic table. (GIRM, 73.)

of the parts of the consecration, the bell is rung from the moment the consecrated bread is elevated to be shown to the people until the priest's hands are nearly back at altar level. Likewise the same takes place for elevation of the chalice. The bell may be rung continuously or continuously with three distinct breaks during the course of elevation.

The **servers** then pray attentively through the rest of the Eucharistic Prayer. After the great *Amen* is chanted or sung, the **servers** rise at their place and with hands joined in the prayer position recite the Our Father along with the priest and congregation. They may exchange the sign of peace with one another and with the priest.

The priest then goes to the tabernacle to retrieve the *ciborium* with the reserved Blessed Sacrament. As he does this, the **servers** should go to their places and prepare to kneel along with the congregation for the "Behold the Lamb of God..."

The *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God) chant is not begun until the priest begins the Fraction Rite, or the act of breaking the consecrated bread. The priest should have returned to the altar and begin the fraction rite as the *Agnus Dei* begins unless there is a musical introduction to it that would be best begun as the priest goes to the tabernacle.

After all are kneeling, the priest says "Behold the Lamb of God..." and the people make the proper response. He then receives the Host in silence, followed by the chalice.

After the priest (and any concelebrants) receive from the chalice, the **Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion** approach the sanctuary.<sup>2</sup> Ordinarily they stand on the side of the altar next to the servers or at the foot of the sanctuary, depending upon the design of the church and any other circumstances. They ought not to stand behind the priest, as a concelebrant or deacon would do. The priest will communicate each **altar server** and **extraordinary minister**, then proceed to give the proper vessel to be distributed to the faithful.

**Note:** If a **server** or **extraordinary minister** does not wish to receive from the chalice, he or she can simply place their arms crossed over their chest so that the priest will know that this is their desire. Alternately, the **server(s)** may return to their place and kneel.

As the priest and **extraordinary ministers** go to the edge or base of the sanctuary to distribute Holy Communion, any pyxes that will need to be filled for distribution to the sick or homebound should be placed upon the altar and opened so that the priest can have easy access to them.

When the priest returns to the altar following the distribution of holy Communion, the extraordinary ministers may return their vessels either to the altar or to the hands of the priest and go back to their seats. They may wait at the base of the sanctuary and bow in unison.

The priest then consumes any remaining consecrated wine that happens to remain, and returns the *ciborium* with any remaining consecrated hosts to the tabernacle.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> These ministers should not approach the altar before the Priest has received Communion, and they are always to receive from the hands of the Priest Celebrant the vessel containing the species of the Most Holy Eucharist for distribution to the faithful. (GIRM, 162.)

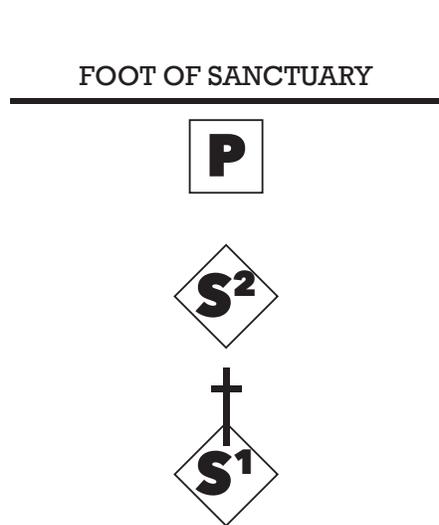
<sup>3</sup> When the distribution of Communion is over, the Priest himself immediately and completely consumes at the altar any consecrated wine that happens to remain; as for any consecrated hosts that are left, he either consumes them at the altar or carries them to the place designated for the reservation of the Eucharist. (GIRM, 163)

As the priest returns from the tabernacle, the altar **servers** should be ready to assist him with the purification of the sacred vessels. One **server** should have the cruet with water unstopped and ready at the side of the altar. The priest will present his fingers over the ciborium or chalice to be purified. The **server** pours the water over the priest's fingers into the vessel until the priest either bows or raises his thumbs. The server returns the bow and replaces the water on the credence table. Another server should then be ready as the priest places the purified vessels at the edge of the altar. They then take them and place them on the credence table, returning in turns until all the vessels are removed from the altar. Finally, one of the **altar servers** removes the Roman Missal from the altar and takes it back to their seat to wait for the Prayer After Communion.

The priest signals the Prayer After Communion with the customary "Let us Pray..." The server ought to anticipate the priest and be in motion before or during this invitation to prayer.

After the final blessing, there is often a closing hymn, in which case the altar server(s) may go into the sacristy or suitable place where the processional cross is kept and wait for the priest to begin moving to the base of the sanctuary.

The **servers** ought to line up in the following manner for the closing procession and then turn together (clockwise) in unison after all (who are not holding anything) have made a profound bow or genuflection:



The procession then proceeds down the aisle and out of the church at a reasonable pace.

It is laudable for the servers to pause outside the church or in the vestibule and turn so that they can receive the blessing of the priest before returning to the sacristy to remove their vestments.