

## **Diocese of Cheyenne**

### **Liturgical Guidelines for Deacons Assisting at The Eucharist**

These guidelines apply when a Deacon is assisting a Bishop or a Priest. The guidelines are based upon two Deacons being present. If only one Deacon is present, then he will normally perform all the duties outlined in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* as described in these guidelines. In applying them to a Mass with a Priest presiding, the liturgical actions of the Deacon would be the same except when those ritual actions are particular to the Bishop. As needed, reasonable adaptations can be made. Deacons should be familiar with the *Roman Missal* and the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*.

#### **Ministering with a Prayerful Interior Disposition**

The most important aspect for any liturgical minister is a prayerful interior disposition. It reflects the Deacon's relationship with God and is manifested in every action. His demeanor will affect the Bishop, Priest, servers, and entire assembly. If they see the Deacon as prayerful, then they will be drawn into prayer, but if he is nervous or anxious, that will distract or hinder their prayer.

Knowing the rubrics is important because they help us to pray in an orderly fashion. Deacons should study the rubrics, memorize their lines, and practice them until they can do them naturally. This helps the Deacon to be confident and prayerful, but only if he is focused on praying first. Carefully adhering to rubrics alone does not equate to prayer. It might even lead to being un-prayerful, anxious, or rigid. Prayerful presence is more important than precise performance.

Deacons should know their parts well enough so that their actions may be completed with confidence and without hesitation. They should not have to wait for others to give them directions, yet they should feel comfortable asking questions within the liturgy as needed.

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* states: "The entire celebration is arranged in such a way that it leads to a conscious, active, and full participation of the faithful, namely in body and in mind, a participation fervent with faith, hope, and charity" (GIRM, 18). In this paragraph, "conscious, active, and full participation" is not defined by perfectly performing the rites. Rather, it is when the person has the proper interior disposition, "a participation fervent with faith, hope, and charity."

Prayerful and vibrant singing is one of the best ways to express fervent faith, hope, and charity. The clergy should model lively participation in singing. If a Deacon is not carrying the Book of the Gospels in the opening procession, then he should carry a hymnal and sing the Gathering Song (Entrance Chant). The expectation to singing applies to all times the assembly is invited to sing. As a minister, the Deacon is first a member of the assembly.

#### **1. PREPARATION**

- a. The vestments of the Deacon at the Eucharistic celebration are the alb with cincture (unless it is made so as to fit without one), the stole, and the dalmatic, if one in the appropriate liturgical color is available. The stole is worn under the dalmatic. The dalmatic may be omitted, either out of necessity or for less solemnity (for example at daily Mass).
- b. The Book of the Gospels is used when the Bishop presides (except at daily Mass).
- c. The Deacon of the Word should confirm with the celebrant:
  - i. The Penitential Act being used and whether the Deacon of the Word will lead it.

- ii. The Gospel reading and if the Book of the Gospels is to be enthroned.
- d. The Deacon of the Altar should confirm with the presider how he would like the altar set for the Liturgy of the Eucharist (instructions for the Bishop are given below); and consult the master of ceremonies if extra chalices and ciboria need to be prepared prior to Mass, and their placement on the altar. In addition, he should know if a Prayer over the People or a Solemn Blessing will be given at the end of Mass.
- e. The Deacons should consult the master of ceremonies or celebrant to know where they will be stationed to distribute the Blood of Christ or if they will be assisting with distribution of the Body of the Christ.
- f. For special liturgies (e.g., Chrism Mass, ordinations), both Deacons should consult with the master of ceremonies concerning their roles.

## 2. INTRODUCTORY RITES

### a. The order of the procession:

- o Thurifer (censer bearer)
- o Acolyte carrying the cross, walking between two candle bearers
- o Deacon carrying the Book of the Gospels slightly elevated
- o Master of Ceremonies
- o *Candidates for Confirmation*
- o Deacons, two-by-two
- o Concelebrating presbyters, two-by-two
- o Bishop walking alone
- o The Deacon of the Altar walking slightly behind the Bishop on his right side.  
With a Priest presider, the Deacon and Priest walk together.
- o The server(s) who assist with the miter and crosier.

### b. Reverencing the altar:

- o The Deacon of the Word does not bow before the altar. After placing the Book of the Gospels on the altar, he waits behind the altar on the left side (presider's right), then he kisses the altar with the Bishop and the Deacon of the Altar when they arrive at the altar.
- o Unless otherwise directed, when there are several concelebrating Priests and Deacons present, they will bow to the altar two-by-two, enter the sanctuary, proceed to the altar, reverence it by kissing it, and go to their appointed places. The Bishop, Priests and Deacon of the Altar bow to the altar at the same time then move into the sanctuary to reverence the altar by kissing it.

- c. **If incense is used**, the Deacon of the Altar takes the boat of incense and holds it for the Bishop while he puts incense into the thurible. The server hands the thurible directly to the Bishop, and the Deacon gives the boat back to the server. Unless otherwise instructed, the Deacon does not follow the presider as he completes the incensation.

When finished, the Bishop will give the thurible back to the Deacon who hands it to the server. The Bishop then goes to his chair, with the Deacon of the Word standing at his right and the Deacon of the Altar at his left.

- d. **The Penitential Rite** is introduced by the Bishop, then a brief pause for silence follows so that people have time to recollect themselves.

- First form: The Bishop begins the Confiteor. The Deacon may lead the *Lord Have Mercy* in English or Greek.
- Second form: The Bishop leads the invocations. The Deacon may lead the *Lord Have Mercy* in English or Greek.
- Third Form: The Bishop or Deacon may lead the invocations. Deacons should learn and use all seven (7) options in the missal. Invocations may be chosen from those in Appendix VI of the *Roman Missal* or composed following the examples provided, ensuring that they are appropriate for the Mass of the day or the liturgical season (*USCCB Newsletter*, Vol. XLVII, May-June 2012).
- If the sprinkling rite is used, the Deacon of the Word will assist the Bishop or presiding Priest, if they so desire. This assistance should be planned prior to the liturgy.

### 3. LITURGY OF THE WORD

- a. As the Gospel Acclamation begins, the Deacons stand. When incense is used, the Bishop remains seated to prepare the thurible. The Deacon of the Altar holds the incense boat for the Bishop. After the thurible is filled, the Deacon of the Word makes a deep bow (the Deacon does not kneel) before the Bishop and asks for his blessing, using the words, "*Your blessing, Father.*" Note: these words are the same for a Bishop or Priest presider.

After the blessing, he goes to the altar, bows, picks up the Book of the Gospels, turns to face the assembly, and then raises the Book of the Gospels to a level appropriate for the size of the church. He then carries it slightly elevated to the ambo. He may be preceded by acolytes with candles and a thurifer. The timing of the entirety of these actions should place the Deacon at the ambo with the Book of the Gospels set and opened just prior to the conclusion of the Gospel Acclamation.

- b. He says, "*The Lord be with you.*" Following the response of the assembly, he says, "*A reading from the Holy Gospel according to N.*" He then makes the Sign of the Cross on the book, and on his forehead, lips, and breast.

When incense is used, he then incenses the Book with three swings of the thurible (GIRM, 277). The thurible is returned to the altar server, who stands a few feet behind the Deacon, and the proclamation begins.

- c. While he is reading, the Deacon may hold the Book of the Gospels in his hands, but it is not elevated when the Deacon says, "*The Gospel of the Lord.*" After the people respond, the Deacon kisses the Book of the Gospel and says quietly, "*Through the words of the Gospel, may our sins be wiped away.*"

If there is a solemn liturgy, the Bishop may wish to kiss the Book of the Gospels and bless the people with it. If this is the case, then he will inform the Deacon.

If the Book of the Gospels is to be enthroned, it is done following these words and actions.

- d. Universal Prayer: The Deacon may read the intercessions from the chair if he has a microphone. If he reads them from the ambo, he waits until the Creed is finished before moving to the ambo. After the Bishop's introduction, the Deacon of the Word reads the intercessions. The petitions should be written out and placed in a binder to avoid the Deacon reading from a piece of paper.

The petitions should be read at a prayerful pace with a slight pause before “*We pray to the Lord,*” and another slight pause before continuing to the next petition. If the Deacon is at the ambo, then he should remain there until the Bishop has concluded the Universal Prayer.

#### 4. LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

- a. The Deacon of the Word remains seated with the Bishop, while the Deacon of the Altar prepares the altar. He is assisted by the altar servers, who bring him the corporal, purificators, chalices, and *Roman Missal*. The Bishop prefers that a chalice veil and corporal burse not be used. If they are used, then they are given to the servers and placed on the credence table. For the Bishop, the *Roman Missal* should be placed in the center of the altar with the corporal above it.
- b. The gifts are received by the Bishop, the Deacon of the Altar, and two altar servers, or, if there are not enough altar servers, the Deacon of the Word may assist. The Bishop gives the servers the collection and the wine, and he gives the large paten with the bread to the Deacon. The servers and Deacon precede the Bishop into the sanctuary.

As the Bishop nears the altar, he removes his miter and gives it to a server. The Deacon of the Word goes from his chair and stands on the Bishop’s left, some distance from the altar and facing the people.

- c. The Deacon of the Altar hands the large paten to the Bishop. Then he takes the wine from the altar server, pours wine and a little water into the chalice saying quietly “*By the mystery of this water and wine ...in our humanity,*” then hands the chalice to the Bishop. It is not necessary to add water to the other chalices. If several chalices are being used, they may be prepared prior to the liturgy.

If incensed is being used, the Deacon of the Altar takes the boat of incense and holds it for the Bishop while he puts incense into the thurible. He gives the boat back to the server and then takes the thurible and hands it to the Bishop for the incensation of the gifts and altar. When finished, the Bishop hands the thurible back to the Deacon.

The Deacon then incenses the Bishop, the concelebrants, and the people – each in their own turn with three swings of the thurible. If there are concelebrating Bishops, they are incensed prior to the concelebrating Priests. Incensation of persons is preceded and followed by a slight bow.

- d. Then the Deacon of the Altar stands to the right and slightly behind the celebrant facing the people, even if concelebrants are present. The Deacons should position themselves so the concelebrating Priest(s) can access the altar to assist in praying the Eucharistic Prayer.
- e. After the Bishop has prayed the Prayer over the Offerings, he removes his zucchetto and hands it to the Deacon of the Altar, who hands it to an altar server, or the other Deacon if he is on the side of the sanctuary with the Bishop’s chair, to be put on the Bishop’s chair.
- f. At the beginning of the Epiclesis, both Deacons kneel and remain kneeling; they rise when the Bishop rises after his genuflection following the elevation of the chalice. However, if one Deacon is not able to kneel, then neither of the Deacons should kneel, but they should make a profound bow as the Bishop genuflects following each elevation. However, anytime a Deacon is kneeling he should not bow his head as an addition to his reverence of kneeling.

- g. At the doxology, the Bishop hands the chalice to the Deacon of the Altar who elevates the chalice at the same height as the large paten until the end of the Great Amen. Then the Bishop places the large paten on the altar, and the Deacon places the chalice on the altar.

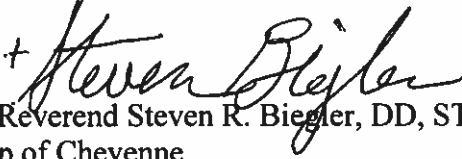
## 5. THE COMMUNION RITE

- a. The invitation, "*Let us offer each other the sign of peace,*" is given by the Deacon of the Altar.
- b. If the Body of Christ is to be divided into other ciboria, the Deacon of the Altar will do so. If there are many concelebrants, the Deacon will pass one or more ciboria to one of the Priests to be passed around to the other concelebrants. If concelebrating Priests are present, they and the presider are the only ones to self-communicate.
- c. Both Deacons stand to the right side of the Bishop to receive the Body and Blood of Christ from him. If there are main concelebrants, the chalice would then be placed back on the corporal for them to receive the Blood of Christ.
- d. Other Deacons who are serving as Ministers of Holy Communion receive the Body and Blood of Christ from the Bishop, one of the concelebrants or one of the Deacons. Deacons should receive the Body of Christ in their hand as is normative. Then a Deacon may give the Blood of Christ to a concelebrant, but does not say, "*The Blood of Christ*" as he presents the Blood of Christ to him.
- e. Because the Deacon is the ordinary minister of the Precious Blood, he will distribute the Blood of Christ to the people. However, it is permissible for a Deacon to distribute the Body of Christ.
- f. At the end of Communion, the ministers of the Body of Christ return to the altar where the extra hosts are put into a common ciborium and placed in the tabernacle. The Deacon of the Altar may place the ciborium in the tabernacle. Any remaining Blood of Christ is to be consumed near the altar and the vessels taken to the sacristy or a credence table. If there are many chalices and ciboria, they will be purified after the Mass. The Priest(s) or Deacon(s) who purify the vessels should do this immediately after Mass. If the purification is done by a Deacon during Mass, it is to be done at the credence table (GIRM, 183). While he carries out the purification, he should say quietly, "*What has passed our lips... for eternity.*" The Deacons should ensure that the altar is cleared before taking their seats.

## 6. CONCLUDING RITES

- a. If a Prayer over the People or a formula of Solemn Blessing is used:
  - i. The Bishop says, "*The Lord be with you.*"
  - ii. The assembly responds, "*And with your spirit.*"
  - iii. The Deacon of the Altar says, "*Bow down for the blessing.*"
  - iv. After the blessing, the Deacon gives one of the four (4) optional dismissals.
- b. The Bishop (and main concelebrants) and the assisting Deacons reverence the altar by kissing it. As they do this, the remaining concelebrating Priests venerate the altar with a profound bow. The Bishop and assisting Deacons move to the front of the altar and venerate it with a profound bow, or they genuflect if the tabernacle is directly behind the altar.
- c. For the concluding procession, the Bishop and Deacons follow any concelebrating Priests or Deacons, with the Deacon of the Word and the Deacon of the Altar walking next to each other, behind the Bishop.

Given in Cheyenne, Wyoming on December 23, 2020

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steven Biegler".

Most Reverend Steven R. Biegler, DD, STL  
Bishop of Cheyenne

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jean M Chrostoski".

Jean M. Chrostoski  
Chancellor