

**THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION
CEREMONY NOTES FOR ALTAR SERVERS FOR MASS**

INTRODUCTION

These notes are supplied with the purpose of aiding the individual responsible for training the altar servers for the administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is important that the servers understand the significance of their role in the liturgy and be prepared to carry it out in a reverent and respectful manner. During the actual ceremony, the servers will be supervised by the Master of Ceremonies. The servers should be informed that they are to follow the directives of the Master of Ceremonies.

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR SERVERS

It is advisable, if possible, to have eight altar servers. The individuals will be assigned the following responsibilities: 1) Thurifer, 2) Christ Bearer, 3) Cross Bearer, 4) Acolyte, 5) Acolyte, 6) Book Bearer, 7) Mitre Bearer, 8) Crosier Bearer.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THURIFER

Thurifer will come to Cardinal prior to start of procession and the Cardinal will impose incense. The Thurifer will lead the procession into the church. He will carry the thurible and boat with incense. Upon arriving at the altar, the Thurifer will make a reverence to the altar and then move to the left side of the sanctuary to the left of the altar. He will be prepared to approach the Cardinal after the Cardinal reverences the altar. After the Cardinal makes reverence, the Thurifer will move to the Cardinal. His Eminence will impose incense. The thurifer should give thurible to the Deacon/Chaplain, who in turn will hand the thurible to the Cardinal. The Deacon/Chaplain will then move to the left of the altar. He should not stand behind the altar or accompany His Eminence around the altar. The Cardinal will then incense the altar. The Thurifer should return to his place at the left of the altar as the Cardinal circles the altar, incensing it. Immediately after the Cardinal has incensed the altar, the Thurifer moves to receive the thurible from the Deacon/Chaplain and goes immediately to the sacristy.

After the period of silence following the second reading, the thruifer comes before the altar, bows, and approaches the Cardinal. He hands the Master of Ceremonies the boat, kneels, and opens the thurible for the imposition of incense. After, the thurifer stands and goes to the center of the sanctuary, waiting for the deacon with the Book of the Gospels. The thurifer leads the deacon to the ambo and stands behind it.

After the salutation and announcement, the thruifer hands the thurible to the deacon. When the proclamation of the Gospel is complete, the thurifer returns to the sacristy.

The Thurifer will again be needed during the preparation of the gifts. Immediately after the Acolytes give the celebrant the water and wine for the preparation of the chalice,

and before the Cardinal washes his hands, the Thurifer moves to the side of the altar and is ready to move up to the Cardinal. The Thurifer goes to the Cardinal as the Acolyte returns to the credence table with the cruets. He hands the boat to the Deacon/Chaplain. The Cardinal will impose incense and then the Deacon/Chaplain will take the thurible and give it to the Cardinal. The Thurifer should return to his place to the left of the altar as the Cardinal incenses gifts and the altar. The Deacon does not accompany His Eminence around the altar. When the Cardinal has completed the incensation, the Deacon/Chaplain will incense the Cardinal and then the congregation. Afterwards, he returns the thurible to the Thurifer. The Thurifer will then return to the sacristy.

The Thurifer will not be needed again until the recessional. He will move to the altar rail or front of the sanctuary immediately following the final blessing. The Cross Bearer and Acolytes line up behind him. When the Master of Ceremonies gives the signal, all will make a reverence to the Blessed Sacrament and the Thurifer will then lead the recessional down the center aisle. If carrying an instrument of the liturgy, servers bow, otherwise they genuflect.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CROSS BEARER

The Cross Bearer will lead the procession in to the church following the Thurifer and with the Acolytes with lighted candles walking one on each side of him. On his arrival at the sanctuary, the Cross Bearer with the Acolytes will reverence the altar and then to the sacristy and put the cross and candles in a convenient place so that they can get them again for the recessional at the end of Mass. The Cross Bearer will bring the zuchetto tray to the Master of Ceremonies at the altar after the Prayer over the Gifts. Once the Master of Ceremonies has placed the zuchetto on the tray, the Cross Bearer places the tray and zuchetto on the credence table. The Master of Ceremonies will bring the zuchetto tray with him to the parish.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACOLYTES

The Acolytes are the main altar servers for the Mass. They will carry the candles in the entrance procession and the recessional. During the Mass, they will be responsible for washing the Cardinal's hands, bringing the water and wine to the altar at the preparation and assisting at the altar in responding to the prayers.

If candles are used for the Gospel Procession, the acolytes get their candles following the period of silence after the second reading. They come and stand in front of the altar, leaving room in between for the deacon with the Book of the Gospels. When the deacon arrives the acolytes bow to the altar, then lead the deacon to the ambo. They stand on each side of the ambo, facing the deacon. While the deacon returns the Gospel Book to the Cardinal, the acolytes go immediately to the sacristy.

The Acolytes will be prepared with ewer and basin, lemon and towels (*bread is not*

needed) to wash the Cardinal's hands immediately following the administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. They should stand at the credence table. The Cardinal will walk to them and wash his hands. After the Cardinal has washed his hands, the Acolytes return to the sacristy and clean the ewer and basin in order to be prepared for washing of hands at the preparation. *Please note: The Cardinal does not bring an ewer and basin with him. He will simply use what the parish has for the washing of his hands.*

During the preparation of the gifts, the Acolytes take the cruets to the altar for preparation of the chalice. After the chalice is prepared, the Acolytes will return to the credence table to get the ewer and basin for washing the Cardinal's hands. They will approach the Cardinal after the Cardinal has incensed the gifts and the altar, and wash his hands.

After the Cardinal returns to the altar with the ciborium following the distribution of holy Communion, the Acolytes should be prepared with ewer and basin and towel to wash the Cardinal's hands. They will move in front of the Cardinal after the distribution of holy Communion has ended and the Eucharist has been reserved in the tabernacle. They should then return ewer and basin to the credence table and move to the sacristy to prepare for the recessional.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOOK BEARER

The Book Bearer walks at the end of the procession behind the Mitre Bearer and Crosier Bearer. However, the Book Bearer never carries the Book while in procession. This change in practice requires that the Book be prepared and placed upon the seat of the Master of Ceremonies in the sanctuary prior to Mass. Upon arriving in the sanctuary, the Book Bearer makes reverence to the altar with the Mitre Bearer and Crosier Bearer and then moves to his chair close to the presidential Chair, and waits for the Master of Ceremonies to direct him to come forward. The Book Bearer should stay close to the Mitre Bearer and Crosier Bearer and pay careful attention to the Master of Ceremonies. When the Cardinal is not using the book, the Book Bearer returns to his place in the sanctuary. The Confirmation Ritual is needed for the opening prayer of the Mass, the Confirmation ceremony, the prayer of the faithful, and the closing prayers, and the Sacramentary is needed for the prayers at the altar.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CROSIER BEARER AND MITRE BEARER

The Crosier Bearer and Mitre Bearer are used to carry the mitre and crosier when they are not being worn by the Cardinal. In procession, they always walk behind the Cardinal. On their arrival in the sanctuary, the Master of Ceremonies will take the crosier from the Cardinal and hand it to the Crosier Bearer. He will then remove the mitre and hand it to the Mitre Bearer. They will then make a reverence to the altar and move to their chairs positioned near the presidential Chair. *Remaining in place*, the Master of Ceremonies will direct them as needed. The Mitre Bearer and Crosier Bearer are to pay careful attention to the Master of Ceremonies since they will receive and take their

respective insignia from him during the ceremony. As a general rule, the Cardinal will remove the mitre whenever he prays and during the Gospel. He will wear the mitre whenever he is seated. The Cardinal will carry the crosier in procession, he will hold it during the Gospel and during the Confirmation ceremony.

CHRISM BEARER

The Chrism Bearer will carry the sacred chrism in the procession immediately behind the Cross Bearer and Acolytes. On his arrival at the sanctuary, he will make a reverence to the Blessed Sacrament and then move to his place. He will bring the chrism to the deacon (or to the pastor if there is no deacon.) They will then present the chrism to the Cardinal. During the Confirmation ceremony, when the Cardinal moves to anoint at the front of the sanctuary to confirm, the Chrism Bearer will stand to the right of the Cardinal and hold the chrism vessel. After the administration of the sacrament, the Chrism Bearer returns to his place in the sanctuary. He will carry chrism in the recessional.