

Minister of Ceremonies — Revised (February 2025)

MINISTER OF CEREMONIES

More revision needed in 2025.

Role of the MC: To partner primarily with the Celebrant and secondarily with the Deacon to support and where necessary guide the servers so that our liturgy is centered, prayerful, graceful, beautiful and maintains its sense of flow.

Specific ways of functioning and being present include:

- Being a centered presence and engaging in the behaviors we're focusing on related to presence in the liturgy
- Staying connected to the Celebrant and Deacon in the preparation for liturgy
- Coaching the servers before the liturgy and debriefing and coaching the servers after the liturgy
- Watching and anticipating emerging needs in the liturgy
- Moving the liturgy along and filling in when certain activities (sometimes unanticipated) need to occur; as a part of this, making decisions about when to ask others to do things.

Detailed Functions within a Normal Sunday Liturgy

Well in Advance of the Liturgy

- Review the servers who are serving when you are the MC and think through what special liturgies if any are occurring during that time period.
- Be in touch with Melissa about the upcoming season or sequence of weeks you are serving as MC. Are there special concerns? What Eucharistic Prayer are we using? Which Prayers of the People are we using? Are special liturgies

occurring in this time period? Are there servers who will need special attention in this time period?

On Sunday, Prior to the 10:30 Mass

- Arrive by 9:45 a.m. and review the bulletin
- Make note of anything out of the ordinary that we will be doing.
- Check to see if the Sacristans have laid everything out either in the sacristy or on the credence table that will be needed (bread, hosts, wine, altar book, gospel, celebrants book, silver, linens etc)
- Put bulletins at servers' places
- Prepare your own Prayer Book and Hymnal, marking where things are in this Sunday liturgy.
- Make sure Prayer Book is out telling when to ring the bell and make sure a prayer book is marked to page 408 (prayer used to consecrate more bread and wine if needed)
- Meet with Celebrant and deacon at 10:00 a.m. to go over the liturgy together
- Encourage servers to find a quiet place to center themselves prior to meeting at 10:20 in the sacristy
- Coach specific servers if need be, to include walking them through what they are to do.
- Check to see if all servers have arrived by 10:15 a.m.. If a server is not there, replace the person (If person shows up late, let them know they have been replaced)
- Meet with Celebrant, Deacon and other servers in the sacristy at 10:20 to brief them on the liturgy
- On the way downstairs, make sure the doors (to office and both doors to the parking lot) are locked.

In the Entryway Before the Liturgy

- Check to make sure all are in their place and that the Celebrant has laid on incense.
- Check with the Celebrant about whether ready, and push the button signalling Gary.

Reminders about Presence Throughout the Liturgy

- Remember hands are one hand over a fist
- Eyes not wandering--focussed on liturgical action or straight ahead--not looking out at congregation
- Avoid scratching, fussing with book or paper, chatting or joking. During the silences and stillness, don't look ahead at the prayer book or hymnal.
- Pace is natural (not too fast or too slow), stance is relaxed formality
- Be present and attentive
- If you need to communicate with someone, go to that person and talk to them quietly (no gesturing across the space)

In the Procession

- No books in hands (we're trying this for now)
- Watch the spacing of the servers in the procession
- Torches move immediately to the altar, ascending the stairs at the curve of the steps. Crucifier pauses if necessary to let torches go forward. Each torch goes back down the steps on the side of the altar.
- Thurifer goes and hangs up thurible and takes his/her place at the steps closest to the wall
- MC goes place at the side steps, looking to the Celebrant for the cue to genuflect and reverence the people.

At the Sequence Hymn and the Gospel

- Stand and sing the sequence hymn

- At beginning of next to the last verse, Thurifer will go to Celebrant. MC communicates with Thurifer if different timing is indicated. Celebrant will hand incense boat to MC after changing thurible and MC places it back on credence table (freeing the thurifer up to proceed out and join the torches for gospel).
- At the laying on of incense, servers go up to get their torches and thurifer and torches get in position
- EM 1 and Deacon move during after the last verse of the sequence hymn, when choir member rings the hand bell.
- All turn at the Alleluia verse when the Deacon turns.
- In returning Gospel book to altar, sequence is deacon, thurifer, torches, EM1, and gospeller.
- Torches go straight up to put torches on altar. EM1 pauses if necessary to let torches get by, then goes to his/her seat.
- Thurifer takes thurible out to the right.

The Confession and the Peace

- EM1 leads out; deacon bids confession; all kneel; Celebrant pronounces absolution.
- The Peace is exchanged.
- During the Peace, MC removes the gospel book from the altar and places it on the left side of the credence.

The Offertory

- After Offertory Sentence, the Deacon takes the chalice and paten to the table.
- When the money offering comes up, the MC takes the money offering from the Deacon and takes it to the right side of the credence.
- Server 1 MC takes the wine and water to the Deacon.
- MC stays attentive to whether the Deacon places excess bread to the side of the altar--if so, the MC removes and brings it to the credence table.

- After the table is set, the Celebrant and EM1(carrying the pillow and the altar book) go to the altar.
- Immediately the Thurifer brings the thurible to the Celebrant for the laying on of incense and the censuring of the altar.
- After the censuring of the altar, the Deacon Thurifer takes the thurible censes the altar party and while they are censuring the people, Server 2 MC first brings altar book and stand to altar and then comes to the Celebrant for the washing of the hands.
- The Thurifer takes the thurible from the Deacon, and the Deacon returns to his seat.
- Just prior to the Celebrant beginning the Sursam Corda, MC, Thurifer, Crucifer (all standing on the side) go the side steps for the Sursam Corda.

During Eucharistic Prayer

- Mark and Kim--could you fill this in?

During the Administration of Communion

- MC stays attentive to whether more wine or bread may be needed. If either is needed, MC checks with the Celebrant or Deacon and goes to get additional bread or wine from the sacristy. MC also gets out the marked Prayer Book so that the Celebrant may easily consecrate the bread or wine.

Revesting of Celebrant and Ablutions

- As soon as Celebrant comes over (he/she will come over immediately after placing the paten on the credence table), MC works with two servers a) to take the chasuble off (the two servers do this) and b) to put the cope back on (MC does this).
- After being revested, the Celebrant goes back to altar. MC moves to the credence to coordinate the ablutions. This means a) handling the vessels and linens, b) distributing the bread and wine to the EM1, EM2 and Thurifer (all facing with their backs to the congregation) until the elements are all consumed, and c) cleaning and returning the vessels and linens to the right side of the credence table.

- All sit for any remaining time of silence after the communion hymn.

Recessional

- MC cues servers about when to extinguish the candles
- MC cues the Thurifer about when to go to Celebrant for the laying on of incense
- When incense laid on, the servers come forth and get the torches and begin to form up.
- Kim and Mark--fill this in more for me about sequence with Crucifer, Thurifer and the EM2
- No books in hands when moving in procession (we're trying this for now)
- During the musical interlude all take cues from the Celebrant about genuflecting and reverencing the people.

After the Liturgy

Go to sacristy and meet with servers, thanking them, debriefing them and giving some coaching as appropriate.

Debriefing Questions:

- Where did it go smoothly?
- Where not so smoothly?
- How did the elements we're working on related to presence go (hands, eyes, stillness, pace etc)?
- Questions?