

# **SERVING MASS**

**(St Vincent's Sheffield)**

## **DRESS**

Servers should be neat, clean and simply dressed. Hair should be combed. Robes are worn over clothes. Neat clean shoes should be worn. You are special people.

## **POSTURE**

Always sit with your feet flat on the floor, your hands clasped in your lap or placed on your knees. You should be still and sit up straight. Please don't fidget or slouch. This could distract the people at Mass. When in the sanctuary or near the altar always move slowly and reverently with your hands joined. Don't rush.

## **BEFORE MASS**

Try and arrive about 15 minutes before Mass and put on your robe and cross. Check that the length is right (about ankle length). Each server will have their own tasks to do at Sunday Mass. Make sure you know what you are doing. Try and keep quiet in the sacristy before mass. If you need to speak, please speak in a low voice, not loudly.

Turn on the microphone and one or two lights. Familiarise yourself with where things are kept in the sacristy (tabernacle key, altar linen, incense, charcoal, altar vessels etc). Familiarise yourself with the books we use for Mass such as the Missal (red book) and Lectionary (three volumes). Please check to see that everything is set up for Mass e.g. processional

Cross in the sacristy, processional candles lit, bread, water and wine at the back of the church. Altar candles should be lighting at least 15 minutes before Mass. Together, the servers say a set prayer in the sacristy together before we begin Mass.

## INTRODUCTORY RITES

The entrance procession consists of: The Cross bearer, the candle bearers, other servers, the Readers and priest. One of the adult readers will carry the big green book of the Gospels. Process slowly up through the church. If incense is used the person carrying the censor leads the procession.

On reaching the sanctuary area, the Reader carrying the book of the Gospels goes to the left with one or two servers, the cross and candle bearers go to the right making sure to leave enough room in the centre for the priest. The priest and other ministers (excluding the cross and candle bearers) bow before the altar. The Cross and candle bearers put the Cross and candles in the holders provided and then go to their places.

### **The Opening Prayer**

When the priest says 'let us pray' after the Gloria or Kyrie, the server comes up with the book (*sacramentary*) and holds it open for the priest to pray the prayer out loud. Then they go back to their place. While holding the book, please stand steady and to attention. Allow the top of the book to rest high up on your chest just beneath your chin. Don't rush.

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

When it comes to the acclamation before the gospel, when the singing starts, the two candle bearers collect their candles from their holders and stand together in front of the altar. When the priest joins you, process in front of him to the lectern as he carries aloft the big green Book of the Gospels. You then stand with your candles at each side of the lectern as the gospel is being read. Please don't look anywhere except right in front of you as the gospel is being read. After the gospel is read the candle bearers walk together and replace the candles in their holders. As they pass the centre of the altar they do not need to bow on this occasion since they are carrying candles. They then go back to their places.

After the Bidding Prayers one of the servers goes to the children's Liturgy room (off the narthex) and asks them to come back into the Church.

## LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

### Setting the Altar

The altar is set during the collection. Two servers leave their seats, bow together reverently before the altar and then proceed to the credence table. The following items are brought from the credence table and placed on the right hand side of the altar:

**The purificators** – those are the white linen cloths over the chalices (please place them on the right hand side of the altar).

**The corporal** i.e the big white square linen cloth (please place it unopened on the centre of the altar).

**The chalices.** (The chalices are sacred vessels – please treat them with great respect. Please place them on the right hand side of the altar)

**The Big Red Missal** is brought from the chair beside the priest and placed reverently on the left hand side of the altar.

All the servers then stand in front of the altar with the priest to receive the gifts of bread, water, wine and collection. The priest receives the gifts from those who present them and then hands them to the servers. The money baskets are placed at the foot of the altar by one of the servers.

The server with the bread then hands it to the priest when he is positioned at the other side of the altar. The other two servers hold the two cruets containing the water and wine and present them to the priest when he needs them. Please stand with the water and wine as near as possible to the priest. They then bow together reverently and take the water and wine back to the credence table. One server then picks up the bowl in one hand and jug of water in the other and the other server the small white towel and come back to the altar. One pours the water over the priest's hands after which the other server gives him the towel to dry his hands. After having received the towel back from the priest they both bow together reverently, take the bowl and towel back to the credence table and then go to their places not forgetting to reverently bow together to the altar as they pass in front of it. Anytime servers pass in front of the altar they should bow before it **together** before they return to their seats. Don't rush.

**The bell** should be rung on three occasions:

*When the priest extends his hands over the bread and wine.*

*When the priest holds up the consecrated host (bread) for the people to venerate*

*When the priest holds up the chalice for the people to venerate.*

The servers are normally first to receive Holy Communion.

When the distribution of Holy Communion is over two servers go to the credence table. One server brings over the large jug of water and pours some over the priest's hands. Then both servers take the chalices, purificators and corporal back to the credence table and the missal back to the chair. They then both bow reverently before the centre of the altar and return to their places.

## **CONCLUSION OF THE MASS**

When the priest says 'let us pray' please bring the book to him in the sanctuary as you did for the Opening Prayer.

At the beginning of the final hymn please take up your positions in the sanctuary and stand there. The cross bearer is flanked by the two candle bearers. They process out of the church when the priest begins to move. When you reach the narthex please stand, turn round and face the priest as he reverently bows to the cross. Let there be no talking at any time during Mass even in the Narthex. Then proceed to the

sacristy. Please hand your robes up neatly. Don't just throw them into the wardrobe.

### **Additional duties after Mass**

Please make sure that the altar candles are snuffed out. Turn off the spot lights over the altar and the microphone. Fill up the deep paten with hosts for the evening Mass and bring them to the back of the church with the filled jugs of water and wine. The hosts and wine are in the sacristy.

Please don't forget to pray to Jesus at Mass. It is a great honour to be a server – you are serving our Lord and he will bless you. Do not worry if you make any mistakes – we all do. Just do your best. We thank you for serving at Mass.

## **PART 11**

The area in the front of the church called **the Sanctuary** is a very holy and special area because this is where the sacrifice of the Mass is offered and where the word of God is read. It should be approached with great respect.

**The Tabernacle** - The Tabernacle is like a safe, made of metal and sometimes covered inside and out with wood, the doors to the tabernacle lock with a key. The tabernacle is used to keep consecrated hosts (the body of Jesus) that were not distributed during communion.

**The Sanctuary Lamp - A single candle in its own stand or it may be mounted on a wall. It is always located next to the tabernacle. When the candle is**

burning it signifies that Jesus is present in the tabernacle in the form of consecrated hosts.

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**Credence Table** - located to the side of the Altar, used to hold the linens, chalice, cups, lavabo bowl, cruet etc.

**The Lectern** - A stand that holds the book that contains the first and second readings. The Reader stands at the Lectern. The Priest also uses the Lectern to read the Gospel.

**The Lectionary** - There are three books used over the year (Book 1, Book 2, Book 3)

**The Paschal Candle** - A very large candle that represents the light of Christ. Used during special celebration.

**The Sacristy** - The room off to the side where the priest and Altar server dress. It is also where all the items needed for Mass are kept when not in use, and where all other church supplies are kept.

**The Baptismal Font** - A very large looking bowl on a stand used during baptism.

**Narthex** - The church entrance. Toilets and meeting rooms lead away from the narthex.

**The Book of the Gospels** - The large green book carried in the opening procession or entrance of the priest, Altar server and the Readers at the beginning of Mass. The book contains the Gospels.

**The Missal** - It contains all the prayers for Mass the priest uses for saying the Mass.

**Presidential Seat** - The large Priest seat with arms on it.

**Pew** - Another name for the church seat or bench

**The Chalice** - The Chalice reminds us of the cup Jesus used at the Last Supper. Wine will be poured into the Chalice by the priest and it will be consecrated into the precious blood of Jesus.

**The Ciborium** - The Ciborium looks like a large chalice that has a lid with a cross on the top. The ciborium is kept in the tabernacle and contains the consecrated hosts. One of the Eucharistic Ministers will take the Ciborium from the Tabernacle and place it on the Altar before communion.

**The Paten** - The Paten is the plate used to hold the hosts which will become the consecrated body of Jesus. We use deep Patens at St Vincent's to contain many hosts.

**The Purificator** - The Purificator is a long narrow piece of linen cloth with a small cross sewed on it, which is folded three times. The word purificator is from the word purify meaning to make clean. The Purificator is used by the priest to wipe the chalice after he takes a drink and before he offers the chalice to the Eucharistic Ministers.

**The Corporal** - A square piece of linen folded four times. It looks like a napkin with a small red cross sewed on it. The word corporal comes from the Latin word

"corpus" meaning body. It is called a corporal because the Body of Jesus rests on it.

**The Bowl and Cruet** - The Cruet or two glass containers are used for the water and wine. A small bowl is used to wash the fingers of the priest during Mass. It is called the Lavabo Bowl.

**The Small Towel** - The small towel is used by the priest to dry his fingers.

**The Pyx** - A small round metal container used for taking Holy Communion to the sick and house-bound.

The chalice, paten, cups etc are sacred containers which hold the consecrated body and blood of Jesus. These are holy vessels and should be handled with great care and respect.

## ITEMS USED DURING MASS

**Vestments** - Vestments are what the priest and altar servers wear during Mass.

**The Alb** - A long white linen robe worn by the priest. There are different styles of albs but they all cover the body from neck to feet. The alb symbolizes the garment that Jesus wore, and is a symbol of purity of the body and soul of those worthy of assisting at Mass.

**The Stole** - A long strip of cloth worn by the priest around his neck and shoulders. It symbolises the priest's authority who acts in the name of the church.

**The Chasuble** - A very large piece of cloth worn over the alb and stole by the priest. It symbolises the seamless garment worn by Jesus and it reminds us of God's encircling love for us.

The colour of the chasuble and stole are the same.

## **COLOUR OF VESTMENTS AND ALTAR CLOTH**

**White** - Masses of Easter, Christmas season, Feasts and Memorials of Jesus, Mary, the Angels, Saints who were not martyrs, Weddings

**Red** - Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday), Good Friday, Pentecost, birthday feasts of the Apostles, evangelists and martyrs.

**Green** - Ordinary Time

**Violet** - May be used for Lent and Advent and Funerals

**Gold** - May be used on more solemn days such as Easter and Christmas

**Rose** - Used on third Sunday of Advent and fourth Sunday of Lent

## ITEMS USED FOR SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS

**The Monstrance** - The Monstrance looks like a sunburst with a glass centre. The back of the Monstrance has a small door. The inside holds a glass container called the Luna.

The priest puts a consecrated host in the Luna and places the Luna in the Monstrance. The Monstrance is then placed on the Altar for Benediction or the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

**Incense, Incense Boat, Censer** - Incense is perfumed grains that are burned during special occasions. An Incense Boat is the container that holds the unburned incense. The Censer is a metal container that holds hot coals. It has a top with air vents and a long chain so that it can be carried. Incense is scooped out of the incense boat and sprinkled on the hot coals in the censer. When the incense is burned it makes smoke. Incense symbolises our prayers ascending to God, it is used as a blessing and it reminds us of the gifts frankincense and myrrh given to baby Jesus.

**The Processional Cross** - A Cross on a long handle or stick. It is carried at the front of a procession during special celebrations.

**Holy Water Bucket** - It is used to sprinkle water on the coffin at funerals and on other occasions such as weddings to bless the rings

### WHO ARE THEY?

**Priest** - Specially ordained men who consecrate and offer the Body and Blood of Jesus at Mass. They forgive sins, perform baptisms, marriages, funerals, run the

parish and lead the people closer to God. Their ordination to the priesthood can be traced to the Apostles who were the first priests after Jesus.

**Altar Servers** - A young boy or girl, or an adult, who is specially trained to assist the priest at Mass.

**Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion** - A person who is specially commissioned by the Bishop to assist the priest in giving communion. There are usually three extraordinary Ministers assisting at Mass, two Ministers of the Blood of Christ and one Minister of the Body of Christ - the other one being the priest. They can also bring communion to people who are sick at home or in the hospital.

**Reader** - The person who reads the Epistles (first and second readings) and the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass. He or she walks at the head of the procession into and out of church carrying the Book of the Gospels.

**Cardinal** - A Cardinal is a high church official ranking next in line to the Pope. He assists and advises the Pope, consecrates Bishops and elects the Pope.

**The Bishop** is appointed to look after a Diocese e.g. Bishop John or whoever is his successor, looks after our Diocese which is the Diocese of Hallam

**Pope** - The Pope, as Successor of St Peter, whom our Lord made head of the Church, is the supreme authority of the Catholic Church. He is sometimes called The Pontiff and he lives in the Vatican which is in the City of Rome in Italy. The present Pope is Called Francis and he is from Argentina. ([Back](#))