



Archdiocese
of Vancouver

**DIRECTORY FOR THE
LITURGICAL MINISTRY
OF PERMANENT DEACONS**



“The service of the deacon is the Church’s service sacramentalized. Yours is not just one ministry among others, but it is truly meant to be, as Paul VI described it, a ‘driving force’ for the Church’s *diakonia*. By your ordination, you are configured to Christ in His servant role. You are also meant to be living signs of the servant-hood of His Church.”

St. John Paul II, Address to the Permanent Deacons of the USA,
Detroit, (19 September 1987)

When the deacon comes to serve, he must empty himself from all selfish concerns. He must see himself as servant of the liturgy and never its master. He must minister to the priest and to the altar with the humility of Him whose very Body and Blood were offered on the altar of the cross.

When he comes to proclaim the Gospel, the deacon must empty himself of all his worldly wisdom that he might be filled only with the wisdom of God. He must decrease so that the Word of God might take root in him and those who hear his voice may hear not him, but Christ Jesus who lives in him. His acclamation of “the Gospel of the Lord” must ring authentic and true.

When he proclaims intercessions or invites the people to prayer, the faithful must recognize in him the trustworthy and compassionate man to whom they may go with any of their needs. The poor must know him as their friend. Orphans must see him as their father, and all who are alone, afraid or confused must see in him a refuge in the model of Christ Jesus. All must have such trust in his prudence and charity that his wise guidance is spontaneously welcomed.

Finally, all who receive the Saviour’s Precious Blood from his hands must receive the chalice as from one who knows the meaning of sacrifice, of being poured out for God’s people, and of striving for holiness of life. The deacon too must take up the cup of salvation as one whose very life is a hymn of praise to the Lord. For the cup he bears is his salvation and a model of the life to which he is called as a deacon.

What *The Roman Missal* and the Church ask of the deacon is to become more like Christ. To participate in His paschal death and resurrection: by how he lives and how he prays, by what he does and who he has become.

This is the mystery of diaconal ministry at the altar. It is the mystery of the Church and the mystery of all who are called to the Supper of the Lamb!¹

¹ Monsignor James P. Moroney, “The Deacon and the Liturgy: a Search for Identity,” Address to the National Association of Directors of the Permanent Diaconate, Notre Dame, Indiana (April, 2003).

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I. Liturgical Principles for Diaconal Ministry

A. Liturgical Presence of a Deacon

1. The deacon has a particular role in the liturgical action of the Church. *Lumen Gentium* states that “strengthened by sacramental grace, in communion with the bishop and his group of priests, deacons serve the People of God in the ministry of the liturgy, of the word, and of charity.”² His threefold ministry flows from the grace and gift of Holy Mass. After the priest, by virtue of his ordination, the deacon holds first place among those who minister in the Eucharistic celebration.
2. A deacon does not concelebrate at Mass. A priest or bishop will always be the celebrant; the deacon’s role is to assist. Whenever a deacon is present at Mass, he should exercise his office, unless there are more deacons than the celebration requires. As the celebrant’s primary assistant at Mass, he should always ensure that everything is prepared for the celebration. The focus of the assisting deacon is always on the action of the liturgy: proclaiming the Gospel, preparing and serving at the altar, ministering to the principal celebrant, and distributing the Eucharist to the faithful. The deacon does not share any of the duties or prayers that belong to the celebrant, nor does he directly address God; he assists.
3. The deacon’s role is one of humble service and he is to follow the direction of the celebrant. All liturgical roles that are available for the deacon during the liturgy are exercised at the direction of the celebrant. For example, chanting the petitions of the second Penitential Act or reading the general intercessions should be discussed with the celebrant before the celebration and not done during Mass. A respectful, private conversation may take place after the celebration to discuss variations from the norms, if necessary.
4. A deacon’s place at Mass is in the sanctuary, expressing both the Church’s hierarchical structure and the diversity of functions. During Mass or other liturgical celebrations he leaves the sanctuary only as directed by the rubrics (e.g. to assist the priest as he receives the Offertory gifts), to transfer the Blessed Sacrament to or from a chapel outside the sanctuary, or to distribute Holy Communion, when this is done outside the sanctuary (the practice in many parishes without a Communion rail). He does not leave the sanctuary to exchange the kiss of peace or to join a *schola* or choir.
5. At those liturgical celebrations where no priest is present and the deacon is the celebrant, he takes on a different role. He is no longer one who assists, but the one who leads those assembled in prayer. See Section V below for more about such celebrations, and Section III. E for more about celebrating the Liturgy of the Hours.

² Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* (21 November 1964), n. 29.



6. Deacons should be very familiar with the contents of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, particularly nos. 171–186, 279-280 and 284-287 (reproduced in Appendix I), which pertain to the celebration of Mass with a deacon, the purification of sacred vessels and Holy Communion under both species.

B. Liturgical Vesture for a Deacon

7. The dalmatic is the normal vestment of the deacon for the celebration of the Mass. *Redemptionis Sacramentum* states that “The proper vestment of the Deacon is the dalmatic, to be worn over an alb and stole. In order that the beautiful tradition of the Church may be preserved, it is praiseworthy to refrain from exercising the option of omitting the dalmatic.”³ However, the GIRM states it may be omitted “either out of necessity or on account of a lesser degree of solemnity” such as a weekday Mass or celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours.⁴ It is proper to wear the dalmatic for a more solemn celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours such as Sunday Vespers.

In most cases, the deacon may use the dalmatic only when the priest uses the chasuble. Exceptions to this rule exist when a deacon accompanies the Archbishop or a priest who wears a cope in a solemn celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours or Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and when he presides at a Sunday celebration in the absence of a priest.

The deacon does not use the dalmatic in other celebrations of the sacraments outside of Mass, such as funeral services.

8. When fulfilling his ministry within the Eucharistic Liturgy, the deacon should be appropriately vested. It is desirable that the colour and design of the deacon's vestments match the vestments of the presiding celebrant.
9. As a norm, it is the responsibility of the parish to which the deacon is assigned to ensure that dalmatics are provided in each liturgical colour.
10. The colours chosen for the celebration of Ritual Masses, Masses for Various Needs and for Votive Masses have their own directives.⁵
11. Albs worn by deacons are to be white (or cream) in colour, not wheat-coloured or gray. The alb should be simple, not ornate, nor should it have excessively full sleeves or a cowl. The alb may be tied at the waist with a cincture. The alb should cover one's street clothes at the neck; if it does not, an amice should be worn. The alb should be long enough to reach to the bottom of the leg of the pants, but not be so long that it poses a tripping hazard.

³ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (25 March 2004), n. 125.

⁴ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (Third English Typical Edition for the Dioceses of Canada), n. 119.

⁵ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 347.



12. A diaconal stole is worn over the left shoulder, drawn across the chest, and fastened at the right side. The stole should be of the proper liturgical colour. The stole is never worn without the alb except, optionally, when distributing Holy Communion to the sick.
13. A dalmatic is worn over the stole (the stole is never omitted and is always underneath the dalmatic) and is never worn without an alb.
14. When the deacon presides at a funeral vigil or committal service, alb and stole (white, violet, or black) are proper.
15. Deacons invited to participate formally at ecumenical gatherings hosted by churches or ecclesial communities not in full communion with the Catholic Church shall wear attire appropriate to the occasion. At ecumenical prayer services or liturgical celebrations, they may wear clerical shirt and collar or stole and alb, depending on the nature of the service and with the agreement of their host.
16. The deacon vests in alb, cincture, and stole when presiding at the following celebrations:
 - the Sacrament of Baptism⁶
 - the Sacrament of Matrimony⁷
 - a vigil for the deceased⁸
 - a funeral liturgy outside of Mass⁹
 - Rite of Committal
 - Public recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours¹⁰
 - Eucharistic adoration¹¹
 - Blessings celebrated communally, especially in a church or with special solemnity.
17. The cope is optional for Matrimony, Baptism, a funeral liturgy outside of Mass, Eucharistic adoration, and special blessings.
18. For Benediction, the alb, cincture, white stole, cope, and humeral veil are proper vesture.
19. If the deacon receives the exchange of vows during a Nuptial Mass, the proper vestment is the dalmatic.

⁶ Cf. *Rite of Baptism for Children* (1970), n. 35.

⁷ Cf. Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, (2017), nos. 30 & 38.

⁸ Cf. Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Order of Christian Funerals*, (2016), n. 94.

⁹ Cf. Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Order of Christian Funerals*, (2016), n. 353.

¹⁰ Cf. *General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours*, n. 255.

¹¹ Cf. Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, Chapter 3: Forms of Worship of the Holy Eucharist, 1. Exposition of the Holy Eucharist, (1974), n. 88.

C. Signs of Reverence, Movement and Posture

20. The gestures and bodily posture of both the priest, the deacon, the ministers, and the people, must be conducive to making the entire celebration resplendent with beauty and noble simplicity, to fostering the true and full meaning of its different parts, and to encouraging the participation of all.¹²

a. Veneration of the Altar and the Book of Gospels

21. According to traditional practice, the veneration of the altar and of the *Book of Gospels* is done by means of a kiss.¹³

b. Genuflections and Bows

22. A genuflection, made by bending the right knee to the ground, signifies adoration and therefore is reserved for the Most Blessed Sacrament, as well as for the Holy Cross from the solemn adoration during the liturgical celebration on Good Friday until the beginning of the Easter Vigil.
23. A genuflection is also made on the Solemnities of Christmas and the Annunciation during the words of the Creed: “and by the power of the Holy Spirit ... and became man.”¹⁴
24. During Mass, three genuflections are made by the priest celebrant: namely, after the elevation of the Host, after the elevation of the chalice, and before Holy Communion. If, however, the tabernacle with the Most Blessed Sacrament is situated in the sanctuary, the priest, the deacon, and the other ministers genuflect when they approach the altar and when they depart from it, but not during the celebration of Mass itself. Ministers carrying the processional cross or candles bow their heads instead of genuflecting.
25. A bow signifies reverence and honour shown to the persons themselves or to the signs that represent them. There are two kinds of bow: a bow of the head and a bow of the body.
- A bow of the head is made when the three Divine Persons are named together and at the names of Jesus, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the Saint in whose honour Mass is being celebrated.
 - A bow of the body, that is to say, a profound bow, is made to the altar; and in the Creed at the words “and by the Holy Spirit...and became man”. The same kind of bow is made by the deacon when he asks for a blessing before the proclamation of the Gospel.

¹² Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 42.

¹³ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 173, 175; Cf. nos. 53-54, 57.

¹⁴ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 275b.



26. When the Archbishop is the principal celebrant, the following norms are observed:
- The Archbishop is greeted with a profound bow by all who approach to assist him, leave after assisting him or pass before him.
 - If the Archbishop is seated behind the altar, the ministers reverence either the altar or the Archbishop depending upon which they are about to approach.
 - When crossing between the altar and the Archbishop, the minister bows to the altar.
 - If there are several bishops and/or priests in the sanctuary, a bow is made only toward the one presiding.¹⁵

c. Placement of Hands

27. When walking from place to place or standing, it is customary for the deacon's hands to be joined unless they are holding something. Hands joined means holding the palms sideways and together before the breast and pointed upwards at a forty-five-degree angle.¹⁶
28. Whenever performing an action with one hand, the deacon should always place his unused hand on his breast so that it not be awkwardly suspended in the air.¹⁷
29. When seated, hands should be placed upon the knees.¹⁸
30. In order not to distract the congregation, deacons are not to wear wrist bands, earrings, etc.

d. Incensation

31. Thurification or incensation is an expression of reverence and of prayer, as is signified in Sacred Scripture (cf. Psalm 141.2; Revelation 8.3).

Incense may be used optionally at any Mass:

- during the entrance procession;
- at the beginning of Mass, to incense the cross and the altar;
- at the procession before the Gospel and the proclamation of the Gospel itself;
- after the bread and the chalice have been placed on the altar, to incense the offerings, the cross, and the altar, as well as the priest and the people;
- at the elevation of the Host and the chalice after the Consecration.

¹⁵ Cf. *Ceremonial of Bishops*, nos. 76-78.

¹⁶ Cf. *Ceremonial of Bishops*, n. 107.

¹⁷ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 167.

¹⁸ Cf. *Ceremonial of Bishops*, n. 109.

32. Incense is also used in other celebrations according to the norms of the liturgical books (i.e. at exposition of the Blessed Sacrament when the monstrance is used, at funerals, etc.).¹⁹
33. When incensing, the deacon holds the top of the censer chain in his left hand, the bottom near the censer in his right hand, so that the censer can be swung back and forth easily. The deacon incensing should take care to carry out this function with grace, not moving head or body while swinging the censer, holding the left hand with the top of the chain near the chest and moving the right arm back and forth with a measured beat.
- The deacon lifts the thurible to be about in line with his heart and with a slight push of the forearm (only to start the movement), and by pivoting his wrist he “throws” the thurible in controlled swings toward the person or object to be incensed. During each swing, the thurible may lightly touch the chain upon its downward fall. Moreover, between each swing there is a very brief pause as the censer is slightly lowered.²⁰
34. The thurible is usually swung straight whenever incensing but, in a case of incensation of the *Book of Gospels* and of groups of people, it is customary to incense them in a fanned pattern: to the center, to the left, and to the right.²¹
35. Before and after an incensation, a profound bow is made to the person or object that is incensed, except for the altar and the offerings for the Sacrifice of the Mass.
- Three double-swings of the thurible are used to incense: the Most Blessed Sacrament, a relic of the Holy Cross and images of the Lord exposed for public veneration, the offerings for the Sacrifice of the Mass, the altar cross, the *Book of Gospels*, the Paschal candle, the priest, and the people.²²
36. The deacon may accompany the celebrant as he incenses the altar by walking beside or immediately behind him. The deacon also bows whenever the celebrant does.²³ If there is a second deacon, he may accompany the celebrant and deacon if space permits.

e. Chanting

37. Deacons should be familiar with chants specific to the parts of the Mass, such as the acclamations at the Gospel, the invitation to the Sign of Peace and the formulas for dismissal found in *The Roman Missal*.
38. Prayers uniquely sung by the deacon, such as the *Exsultet*, the Solemn Intercessions of Good Friday, the Announcement of Easter and Moveable Feasts, the Proclamation of the

¹⁹ Cf. *Ceremonial of Bishops*, n. 87.

²⁰ Cf. Louis Tofari, “Thurifer at High Mass,” *Ceremonial Notes*, (Kansas City: Romanitas Press, 2010).

²¹ Cf. *Ceremonial of Bishops*, n. 74.

²² Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 277.

²³ Cf. *Ceremonial of Bishops*, n. 131.

Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, etc. are found in Appendix 1 of *The Roman Missal* and should be reviewed by the deacon before each occasion.

39. The deacon does not chant at Mass unless the celebrant does so. An exception to this general rule may occur at the Gospel greeting with or without chanting the Gospel passage, by agreement with the celebrant.
40. The deacon should refrain from chanting any parts of the Mass if he cannot sing. Decisions to chant any parts of the Mass should always be discussed beforehand with the principal celebrant.

f. Addressing the People

41. In addition to the invitation to the Sign of Peace and dismissal, the deacon is entrusted with the duty to give directions to the people to stand, sit, kneel, etc.
42. The following are standard instructions a deacon may use in addressing the congregation:
 - Let us kneel.
 - Let us stand.
 - Let us offer each other the sign of peace.
 - Bow down for the blessing.
 - Dismissals:
 - Go forth, the Mass is ended.
 - Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.
 - Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.
 - Go in peace.

g. Proclaiming the Word

43. Liturgical proclamation of the Sacred Scriptures is regulated by the norms of the *Lectionary for Mass*.²⁴
44. Great care must be given that the living Word of God is communicated effectively to its hearers. Texts are to be pronounced in a loud and clear voice. The deacon's voice should correspond to the genre of the text itself, that is, depending upon whether it is a reading, a prayer, an explanatory comment, an acclamation, or a sung text.²⁵
45. Deacons should be aware that the *Workbook for Lectors, Gospel Readers, and Proclaimers of the Word – Canadian Edition*, published annually, is a suitable resource for assisting to proclaim the Word and practice the Gospel readings beforehand.

²⁴ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 356-362

²⁵ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 38.

II. The Deacon's Role in the Celebration of Holy Mass

A. *The Importance and Dignity of the Eucharist*

46. When he is present at the celebration of the Eucharist, a deacon should exercise his ministry, wearing the appropriate liturgical vesture.²⁶ Specifically, the deacon:
- Assists the priest and walks at his right side
 - Ministers at the altar, assisting with both the chalice and *The Roman Missal*
 - Proclaims the Gospel and may, at the direction of the priest celebrant, give the homily²⁷
 - Guides the faithful by giving appropriate instructions
 - Announces the intentions of the Prayer of the Faithful
 - Assists the priest celebrant in distributing Holy Communion, and purifies the sacred vessels
 - Carries out the duties of other ministers, if necessary, when none of them is present
47. Before the liturgy begins, the deacon should discuss with the celebrant the options chosen, including the penitential rite, the use of incense, instruction regarding the use of chanting, the placement of ribbons in *The Roman Missal*, dismissal, and any others. It is also courteous for the deacon to assist the priest, sacristan or other ministers with the necessary preparations for the Mass.
48. The deacon stands and sits to the immediate right of the celebrant. If a second deacon is present, he stands and sits to the immediate left of the celebrant. If there is a third deacon, he may sit next to one of the other two deacons, or wherever appropriate. This remains the same whether or not priest concelebrants are present.
49. The deacons must avoid causing confusion between his ministerial role and that of the celebrant at Mass. Some actions and gestures are presidential in nature and the deacon therefore must refrain from using them. For example, the raising of the hands in the *orans* position should not be done by deacons during the Our Father or at the invitations, "The Lord be with you," or "Let us offer each other the sign of peace." In addition, the deacon makes no gestures with his hands during the Eucharistic Prayer and makes no bows as the celebrant elevates the Host and chalice during the Consecration. If, however, the deacon is unable to kneel during the Eucharistic Prayer, he should make a profound bow as the celebrant genuflects. Kneeling deacons should not bow. Likewise, the deacon should never recite or even mouth the words to the Eucharistic Prayer, the final doxology, or any other spoken parts reserved to the celebrant.

²⁶ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 171.

²⁷ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 66.

B. Celebration of the Mass with One Deacon

50. The principal liturgical ministry of the deacon is to “proclaim the Gospel, prepare the sacrifice, and give the Lord’s Body and Blood to the community of believers.”²⁸ The following norms are guidelines drawn from the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, and the rite itself, on the deacon’s liturgical function at Mass. Some of the functions of the deacon in the celebration of the Mass (e.g., purification of the vessels) may also be done by an instituted acolyte, but should not be done by an altar server. Therefore, when an instituted acolyte is present, his function should be distinguished from that of the deacon.
51. The deacon should see to it that the necessary liturgical books, vessels, and vestments are properly arranged for the celebration. He should also assist the instituted acolytes and other servers in their preparation of their liturgical roles, as appropriate. Special attention should be given when incense is to be used.

a. Introductory Rites**i. Entrance Procession and Reverence to the Altar**

52. The typical order of the entrance procession to the altar is:
- Thurifer, carrying a thurible with burning incense
 - Cross bearer, with corpus facing to the front
 - Candle bearers, carrying lighted candles
 - Acolytes and other ministers (e.g. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, if customary)
 - Lectors/Readers
 - Deacon, carrying the *Book of Gospels*
 - Concelebrating priests
 - Celebrant
53. The deacon walks immediately before the celebrant in the procession carrying the *Book of Gospels* slightly elevated.²⁹ However, depending on the liturgical celebration, the following is observed:
- If there are concelebrants, the deacon carrying the *Book of Gospels* precedes them.
 - If there are concelebrants, and the *Book of Gospels* is not carried, the deacon walks to the right of the principal celebrant.
 - If the *Book of Gospels* is not carried – for instance, on a weekday – the deacon walks to the right of the priest.

²⁸ International Commission on English in the Liturgy, *Ordination of a Deacon*, “Homily”, *The Roman Pontifical* (1978), p. 177.

²⁹ Cf. *General Instruction of The Roman Missal*, n. 172.

The *Lectionary* should at all times remain on the ambo; it is never carried in the Entrance Procession.

54. When he reaches the sanctuary, the deacon does not bow or genuflect, but proceeds directly to the altar and places the *Book of Gospels* flat upon the centre of the altar, leaving room for the celebrant to kiss the altar. He awaits the arrival of the celebrant and then venerates the altar with a kiss, without placing his hands on the altar.
55. When the *Book of Gospels* is not carried, the deacon makes a profound bow to the altar with the celebrant in the customary way and, with him, venerates the altar with a kiss, without placing his hands on the altar.

ii. Incensation of the Altar

56. If incense is used, the thurifer will bring the thurible and boat to the celebrant. The altar server, or boat bearer, if applicable, will hand the boat to the deacon. The deacon will open the boat and hold it close to the thurible, while the celebrant places incense in the thurible. When the celebrant has finished filling the thurible, the deacon closes the boat and hands it to the thurifer, who then passes the thurible to the deacon. The deacon then offers the thurible to the celebrant.
57. The celebrant and the deacon move to the centre of the altar, with the deacon to the right of the celebrant, and face the altar. There is no bow before or after incensing the altar.³⁰ If desired by the celebrant, the deacon can hold back the celebrant's chasuble while the celebrant incenses the altar. The deacon begins a slow procession to the right, around the altar, and leads the celebrant to the middle of the altar in front. Upon arriving at the middle of the front of the altar, both the deacon and celebrant bow to the cross. The celebrant incenses the crucifix (during the Octave of Easter, the Paschal Candle is also incensed, after the crucifix, and only at the beginning of Mass). The deacon and celebrant bow again to the cross (and in the Octave of Easter, the Paschal candle) and the deacon starts the procession again to the back of the altar. The celebrant returns the thurible to the deacon, who hands it to the thurifer.³¹

iii. Greeting the Assembly

58. After the incensation of the altar, the deacon and celebrant go to their respective places, with the deacon always to the immediate right of the celebrant. The deacon stands beside him while the celebrant greets the assembly. The celebrant may very briefly introduce the Mass of the day. This introduction may also be delegated to the deacon.

³⁰ Cf. *General Instruction of The Roman Missal*, n. 277.

³¹ For rubrics on incensation when more than one deacon is present at Mass, see n. 129.



iv. Penitential Rite

59. The deacon stands at the right side of the celebrant during the Penitential Rite. If the first or second form is used, the priest leads. The deacon or choir may lead the Kyrie which follows. The celebrant always says the absolution.
60. If the third form is used, the deacon may recite or intone the tropes. A choir may also do this, instead of the celebrant or deacon. The Penitential Rite should give the faithful sufficient time to reflect; therefore, the deacon should pause for a moment before beginning the tropes. Additional invocations for the third Penitential Rite are found in *The Roman Missal* on pages 488-494.
61. If the rite of sprinkling is used, particularly in the Easter season, the deacon assists the celebrant; however, he may receive the permission of the celebrant to sprinkle the people himself. The sprinkling rite may be found in *The Roman Missal*, Appendix II.

v. Collect

62. If an altar server is not present, the deacon may assist the celebrant with *The Roman Missal* for the Collect. Otherwise, he continues to stand at the celebrant's right.

b. Liturgy of the Word

63. During the readings, until the Gospel, the deacon remains seated at his place.
64. The Lectionary should be used by the readers (which should be placed reverently on the ambo before the Mass begins). It is removed after the period of silence following the Second Reading, if the *Book of Gospels* is used.

i. Gospel

65. The deacon is the ordinary minister of the Gospel. Only in the absence of a deacon is the celebrant or a concelebrant to proclaim the Gospel.
66. If incense is to be used at the Gospel, the thurifer brings the thurible and boat to the deacon at the beginning of the Gospel Acclamation. The deacon accepts the boat from the thurifer or boat bearer, opens the boat, and holds it close to the thurible. The celebrant places incense on the charcoal. When the celebrant is finished, the deacon closes the boat and hands it to the thurifer.
67. The deacon makes a profound bow before the celebrant and asks for his blessing, saying in a low voice, "Your blessing, Father." The celebrant says in a low voice: "May the Lord be in your heart and on your lips that you may proclaim his Gospel worthily and well, in the name of the Father and of the Son ✠ and of the Holy Spirit." The deacon signs himself with the Sign of the Cross and replies: "Amen."
68. After receiving the blessing, the deacon proceeds to the altar, bows, and lifts the *Book of Gospels*. He then goes in procession to the place where the Gospel is proclaimed.



69. The order of the Gospel Procession is:
- One thurifer carrying the thurible
 - Two servers carrying candles
 - Deacon carrying the *Book of Gospels*
- Or, depending on the space in the sanctuary:
- One thurifer carrying the thurible
 - One server carrying a candle
 - Deacon carrying the *Book of Gospels*
 - One server carrying a candle
70. The Gospel Procession should be of sufficient length and dignity to highlight the reverence that the Church extends to the proclamation of the Gospel as the Word of God. The procession should also be visible to the assembly.
71. When the procession arrives at the ambo, the two candle bearers stand on either side and face each other, and the thurifer faces the assembly, standing near the deacon. The deacon places the *Book of Gospels* on the ambo and, with hands joined, chants or says to the faithful: “The Lord be with you.” The assembly responds: “And with your spirit.” “A reading from the Holy Gospel according to N.” These are the only words to be used. The deacon makes the Sign of the Cross on the *Book of Gospels* with his thumb, and then on his forehead, lips, and heart.
- When chanting, the deacon follows the tones found in *The Roman Missal*.³² These are the only tones to be used and may not be replaced with others. The tone used by the priest in the Preface Dialogue is not appropriately used in this context.
72. Incense is then used to venerate the *Book of Gospels*.³³ The deacon takes the thurible. He bows to the *Book of Gospels* and incenses it three times: two swings to the centre, two swings to the left, and two swings to the right. He bows again and returns the thurible to the thurifer.
73. The deacon then proclaims the Gospel, either by reading or by chanting. At the conclusion of the Gospel reading, after a brief pause, he chants or says: “The Gospel of the Lord.”
74. While the people respond “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ,” the deacon venerates the Book with a kiss, saying quietly, “Through the words of the Gospel may our sins be wiped away.” When the Archbishop is the main celebrant, after proclaiming the Gospel, the deacon brings the *Book of Gospels* to the Archbishop for veneration. The deacon does

³² Cf. *The Roman Missal*, pgs. 498 – 499.

³³ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 277.

not venerate the *Book of Gospels* or recite the prayer, “Through the words of the Gospel...”.

75. No bow is made to the *Book of Gospels* before or after its proclamation. The only time the deacon bows to the *Book of Gospels* is when it is incensed.
76. After its veneration, the deacon may carry the *Book of Gospels* to the credence table or another appropriate and dignified location. It should not usually be placed under the ambo. The carrying should be done briefly and without ceremony.
77. If the celebrant is delivering the homily, the deacon returns to his seat; if the deacon is preaching, he returns to the ambo and begins.

ii. Creed

78. The deacon remains at the right side of the celebrant and visibly joins in prayer with the assembly. At the words, “and by the Holy Spirit...and became man,” all make a profound bow. When the Apostles’ Creed is used, the bow takes place at the words, “who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary.”

iii. Prayer of the Faithful

79. After the introduction by the celebrant, it is the deacon who announces the intentions of the Prayer of the Faithful from the ambo.
80. The deacon is the primary minister of the Prayer of the Faithful. Others, such as lectors or lay readers, should not read the intentions unless a deacon is not present or if it is a liturgy with special considerations. The deacon may prepare the intercessions. This should be done according to the norms of the general intercessions and local custom. The number of intercessions should not be excessive.
81. The series of intentions is usually to be:³⁴
 - For the needs of the Church
 - For public authorities and the salvation of the whole world
 - For those burdened by any kind of difficulty
 - For the local community
 - For the faithful departed
82. Examples of formularies for the Prayer of the Faithful are found in *The Roman Missal*, Appendix V.

³⁴ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 70.



83. In the Archdiocese of Vancouver, the Prayer for Vocations or Prayer of Reverence for Life – or another suitable prayer – may follow the intercessions, before the celebrant's concluding prayer.

c. Liturgy of the Eucharist

i. Preparation of the Gifts

84. After the Prayer of the Faithful, the celebrant remains at the chair while the deacon prepares the altar. Although he is assisted by the altar servers and/or acolytes, it is the deacon's role to take care of the sacred vessels. The deacon should be the only person placing the vessels on the altar, unless there are an unusually large number of them.
85. The altar servers may place the corporal(s) and *The Roman Missal* on the altar. Then the deacon places the chalice, ciboria (if needed), and purificators on the altar. He should place *The Roman Missal* to the left of the corporal and open it to the appropriate page.
86. The creases in the corporal are there for a practical reason: to catch any Host fragments. The corporal should be placed on the altar with the creases pointing down and the "fold" facing up, with the cross at the bottom, in the centre of the altar, and with the bottom of the corporal at the edge of the altar nearest to the deacon. The paten should be placed off the corporal and just to the right. The chalice (and any vessel not in the offertory procession) should be placed on the right side of the altar where the deacon will pour the water and wine after the reception of the gifts. Any ciboria containing unconsecrated hosts (and not in the offertory procession) should be placed appropriately on the altar so as to allow the celebrant to place the ciboria, paten, and chalice on the corporal.
87. As a rule, the deacon should not place the paten on the corporal. He should hand it to the celebrant to symbolize that the gifts come from the community.³⁵
88. The deacon removes the pall(s) from the chalice(s) and sets it near the chalice and to its right in a way that it might be easily picked up again.
89. If one chalice is not sufficient for Holy Communion to be distributed under both species to the concelebrants or to the faithful, several chalices filled with wine may be brought to the altar at this time and placed at the side of the altar. A drop of water may be placed either only in the principal chalice or in all of the chalices present.³⁶
90. The deacon assists the celebrant in accepting the gifts brought in the Offertory Procession. It is permissible for the deacon to receive the gifts by himself, if directed by the celebrant. The deacon returns to the altar and offers the paten to the celebrant. The deacon pours sufficient wine into the chalice. He then pours a very small amount of water into the chalice. While pouring the water, the deacon prays quietly, "By the

³⁵ Msgr. Peter J. Elliot, *Ceremonies of the Modern Roman Rite: The Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 102.

³⁶ Cf. Elliott, *Ceremonies of the Modern Roman Rite, The Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours*, 103.



mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled Himself to share in our humanity.” The deacon then offers the chalice to the celebrant. If incense is used, the deacon assists the celebrant as at the beginning of the Mass.

91. After the gifts, the cross and the altar have been incensed, the celebrant and deacon face each other and the celebrant hands the thurible to the deacon. They bow to each other and the deacon, stepping back slightly, incenses the celebrant with three double-swings (two swings each time). They bow to each other again before the deacon hands the thurible back to the thurifer.
92. The deacon then incenses with three double-swings as follows:
 - Archbishop, if present
 - Other concelebrants, if present in the sanctuary
 - Concelebrants seated with the congregation
 - Deacons, if there is more than one
 - Congregation

The deacon may also give the thurible to the thurifer to incense some or all of these people. The deacon then returns to the right side of the celebrant. If incense is used, the washing of the celebrant’s hands occurs while the deacon is incensing.

ii. Eucharistic Prayer

93. During the Eucharistic Prayer, and leaving sufficient space for the celebrant to extend his hands, the deacon stands to the right, slightly behind the celebrant, usually one step back,
94. The deacon exercises his ministry near the altar, assisting whenever necessary with the chalice and the Missal.

When concelebrants are present, in so far as possible, the deacon stands back slightly, behind the concelebrating priests, who stand around the principal celebrant in such a way that they do not obstruct the deacon whenever he needs to approach the altar.³⁷
95. As the celebrant begins the Eucharistic Prayer and invites the faithful to “Lift up your hearts,” the deacon should not lift his hands in a ministerial gesture but keep them folded close to his chest in a prayerful position.
96. The deacon is to kneel from the beginning of the Epiclesis, when the celebrant extends his hands over the paten, until the celebrant elevates the chalice after consecrating the

³⁷ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 215.



Precious Blood.³⁸ However, when Eucharistic Prayer II is used, he kneels with the congregation at the beginning of the prayer until the end (“Humbly we pray...”).

97. As the celebrant rises from his genuflection and intones, “The mystery of faith,” the deacon also rises. The deacon remains standing through the rest of the Eucharistic Prayer.
98. If there is a pall on the chalice, the deacon may assist the celebrant by removing the pall before he kneels at the Consecration. If the celebrant so desires, the deacon may cover the chalice again after they have both risen to their feet.
99. If there is a medical issue and a deacon cannot kneel, he should assume a posture of reverence. In that case, the following applies: after the Consecrations of the Body of Christ and of the Precious Blood, the deacon should make a profound bow toward the altar.³⁹
100. At the Doxology, the deacon stands to the right of the celebrant and, while the celebrant raises the paten with the Host, he raises the chalice to the same level, until the people have responded, “Amen.” The deacon does not recite the Doxology with the celebrant but joins the congregation in the Great Amen.
101. After the assembly has responded “Amen,” the deacon hands the chalice back to the celebrant. He may place the pall back on the chalice if the celebrant so desires.

iii. The Lord’s Prayer

102. The invitation to the Lord’s Prayer belongs to the celebrant, not the deacon. During the prayer, the deacon stands at the celebrant’s side, slightly behind him and visibly joining in the prayer. The deacon does not raise his hands and arms in a ministerial gesture (the celebrant raises and extends his arms, inviting all to pray). The deacon should hold his hands together in a prayerful stance.

iv. The Sign of Peace

103. After the celebrant has greeted the faithful with “The peace of the Lord be with you always” and they have responded, the deacon faces the people and, with hands joined, chants or says, “Let us offer each other the sign of peace.” These are the only words to be used.

The deacon does not chant the invitation unless the priest has chanted the greeting.

Then he himself receives the Sign of Peace from the celebrant and may offer it to those other ministers who are close to him. It is not necessary to greet every minister present.

³⁸ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 179.

³⁹ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 43.



If there are concelebrants, those who are nearer to the principal celebrant receive the Sign of Peace from him before the deacon does.⁴⁰

v. *Fraction and Distribution of Holy Communion*

104. In ordinary circumstances, the celebrant alone performs the fraction of the Host. At the beginning of the rite of fraction of the Host, and before the singing of the Lamb of God, the deacon should remove the pall from the chalice. During the Lamb of God, the deacon should go to the tabernacle for the ciboria, if needed. He genuflects after opening the tabernacle and when he returns the ciboria, after the Communion Rite, he genuflects before closing it.
105. If there are a large number of Hosts, the deacon may assist the celebrant in placing them into additional ciboria during the Lamb of God. When a very large number of Hosts are needed, they should be placed in the additional ciboria before the Mass begins, if possible.
106. Just prior to the celebrant's Communion, he genuflects. The deacon remains standing and does not bow. After the celebrant's Communion, the deacon receives Holy Communion while standing from the celebrant: first the Host and then the chalice. He does not kneel. The deacon is strictly forbidden from self-communicating and never holds the Host during the "Behold the Lamb of God" as concelebrants do.
107. When circumstances require a deacon to minister at a third Mass on a Sunday or Solemnity he is dispensed from the requirement of Canon 917 that prohibits the reception of Holy Communion a third time in a single day.⁴¹
108. Depending upon numbers, circumstances, and logistics, the deacon will step away for a moment to allow the concelebrants to approach the altar for the Precious Blood. The deacon does not administer Holy Communion to the concelebrants, although he may be asked to bring the Body of Christ or the Precious Blood to the priests at a large concelebration.
109. The deacon assists the celebrant in administering Holy Communion to the altar servers and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, and then to the faithful. If Holy Communion is to be given under both species, the deacon is the proper minister of the chalice. The deacon should distribute Hosts only if:
 1. Holy Communion is given under one species; or,
 2. an Extraordinary Minister would be required to stand beside the celebrant for the distribution of the Hosts; or,

⁴⁰ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 239.

⁴¹ See Response of the Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the Code of Canon Law (7 August 1984).



3. there are more deacons present than chalices to be administered.

110. If Holy Communion is given under both kinds, when the distribution is completed, the deacon immediately and reverently consumes at the altar all of the Blood of Christ that remains, assisted, if necessary, by other deacons and priests, prior to the consolidation of remaining consecrated Hosts.⁴²
111. Since priests and deacons are ordinary ministers of Holy Communion, they must not sit and allow an extraordinary minister to distribute Holy Communion in their place, unless they are infirm and unable to do so.
112. After Holy Communion has been distributed, the deacon returns to the altar and collects any remaining consecrated Hosts. This consolidation should be done over a corporal, if possible. All consecrated Hosts are placed in a ciborium and returned to the tabernacle before the deacon continues with the purification of the sacred vessels. The deacon genuflects before closing the tabernacle door.
113. The deacon carries the chalice and other sacred vessels to the credence table where he purifies them in the usual way.⁴³ Wherever possible, purification by the deacon takes place at the credence table, not at the altar. The deacon does not pray the celebrant's prayer ("What has passed our lips, as food, O Lord.").
114. The corporal should be folded carefully so that any possible particles will not be shaken onto the altar or floor. It should not be left on the altar from one Mass to another.
115. Once the altar has been cleared and the sacred vessels arranged on the credence table, the deacon returns to his chair.

vi. Concluding Rites and Recessional

116. Once the Prayer after Communion has been said, the deacon may make brief announcements to the people, unless the celebrant prefers to do this himself.⁴⁴
117. If a solemn blessing is used, then after the celebrant chants or says, "The Lord be with you," and the assembly responds, the deacon chants or says, "Bow down for the blessing." If the celebrant sings, the deacon may chant; otherwise, he says the invitation.
118. After the blessing, the deacon dismisses the people. The only formulas to be used are those found in *The Roman Missal*: "Go forth, the Mass is ended," or "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life," or "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord," or "Go in peace." The deacon does not chant the dismissal unless the priest has chanted the

⁴² Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 182.

⁴³ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 279.

⁴⁴ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 184.



blessing. The deacon reverences the altar with the celebrant, makes a profound bow, and departs in a manner similar to the procession beforehand.

119. At Masses during the Octave of Easter, and again on Pentecost, the double alleluia is added to the end of certain dismissals, as found in *The Roman Missal*: “Go forth, the Mass is ended, alleluia, alleluia,” or “Go in peace, alleluia, alleluia.”⁴⁵
120. The *Book of Gospels* is not carried out in the procession at the end of Mass.
121. As servants of charity, deacons continue to help after Mass concludes, usually assisting the celebrant with the removal of vestments and the sacristan or other ministers in carrying the *Books of Gospels* and sacred vessels from the sanctuary to the sacristy.

C. Celebration of the Mass with Two or More Deacons

122. If several deacons are present at Mass, they distribute ministerial duties among themselves and perform different parts of the same ministry or duty.⁴⁶
123. When there are two deacons, one serves as the Deacon of the Word, proclaiming the Gospel and also praying the petitions of the Prayer of the Faithful, while the other deacon be the Deacon of the Altar, assisting the celebrant at the chair and altar.
124. In the entrance procession, the deacon carrying the *Book of Gospels* should precede the other vested deacon(s) and concelebrants. The Entrance Procession to the altar is:
 - Thurifer, carrying a thurible with burning incense
 - Cross Bearer, with corpus facing to the front
 - Candle Bearers, carrying lighted candles
 - Acolytes and other ministers (e.g. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, if customary)
 - Lectors/Readers
 - Deacon of the Word, carrying the *Book of Gospels* (if there is no *Book of Gospels*, he enters with the Deacon of the Altar, as below)
 - Deacons who are assisting, two-by-two
 - Priests who are concelebrating, two-by-two
 - Celebrant, flanked by the Deacon of the Altar on his right.⁴⁷
125. Deacons should be seated at the immediate right and left of the celebrant – the Deacon of the Word on the right and the Deacon of the Altar on the left.

⁴⁵ *Roman Missal*, Sunday of the Resurrection, The Easter Vigil, n. 69.

⁴⁶ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 109

⁴⁷ Cf. Elliot, *Ceremonies of the Modern Roman Rite: The Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours*, 337.



126. Other than for the Passion read on Palm Sunday and Good Friday, the proclamation of the Gospel is the ministry of only one deacon; it is not to be split between multiple readers.
127. At major Archdiocesan celebrations presided by the Archbishop, such as ordinations, where deacons are vested and sitting in the nave, the deacon observes the following norms:
- wears the sacred vestments customarily worn when assisting at Mass;
 - walks in procession, before concelebrating priests, venerating the altar before proceeding to their pew;
 - sits and stands, as normal, during the Liturgy of the Word
 - partakes in Holy Communion, after the concelebrants, and to the concelebrant's words, The Body (Blood) of Christ, replies Amen;
 - processes out, before concelebrating priests, making a profound bow to the altar (deacons do not kiss the altar at the end of Mass).
128. The variations from the Celebration of the Mass with One Deacon are as follows:
- a. Introductory Rites**
129. The Deacon of the Altar enters in procession at the right side of the celebrant. The Deacon of the Word carries the *Book of Gospels* and enters in front of other vested deacons, concelebrants, and the principal celebrant.⁴⁸
130. If incense is used, the Deacon of the Altar assists the celebrant. The Deacon of the Word may accompany the celebrant and Deacon of the Altar if space permits.
131. If an altar server is not present, the Deacon of the Word may assist the celebrant with *The Roman Missal* for the collect. Otherwise, he continues to stand at the right side of the celebrant.
- b. Liturgy of the Word**
132. The proclamation of the Gospel is done by the Deacon of the Word.
133. It is the Deacon of the Word who normally announces the intentions of the Prayer of the Faithful.
- c. Liturgy of the Eucharist**
134. The Deacon of the Altar prepares the altar. He may be assisted by an altar server or by other deacon(s).
135. The Deacon of the Altar stands to the right and slightly behind the celebrant.

⁴⁸ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 51.

136. The Deacon of the Word may assist by turning pages in *The Roman Missal* if appropriate.
137. At the Consecration, the Deacon of the Word may place incense in the thurible and incense the Host and the chalice at the elevations.

III. Deacons and Other Liturgies and Rites

A. *The Sacrament of Matrimony*

138. The deacon may assist at marriages when at least one of the parties is a Latin-rite Catholic. **Deacons may not witness validly a marriage in which one or both parties is an Eastern-rite Christian; only a priest validly assists at such marriages.**⁴⁹
139. Specific or general delegation from the proper pastor or local Ordinary is necessary for the validity of a marriage at which a deacon assists. Faculties from the Archbishop, as well as the authorization of the civil authorities to assist at marriages are also required.
140. A deacon is granted general delegation to witness marriages within the parish to which he is assigned. However, he must have written delegation from the pastor of any other parish in which he is to witness a marriage, even if the parties reside in the parish to which the deacon has been assigned.
141. As the Church's witness of the sacrament, the deacon follows all the norms and liturgical requirements set down in the Ritual as found in the *Order of Celebration Matrimony*.⁵⁰
142. For the Rite of Celebrating Marriage Outside Mass, the deacon shall be vested in alb, cincture, white stole and, if desired, a cope. The liturgical colour is white. A dalmatic is not appropriate.
143. When a marriage takes place outside Mass, the deacon may act as celebrant of the ceremony. He should then fulfill all the offices appropriate to the celebrant. Most appropriately, the ministries of lector and cantor should be performed by someone else. The distribution of Holy Communion is not permitted at such a ceremony. The Rite of Celebrating Marriage Outside Mass is to be used.
144. At a Nuptial Mass, the deacon fulfills his proper role for Eucharistic celebrations, and should be vested in a white dalmatic. The priest-celebrant must be the one to receive the vows. It is not appropriate for a deacon to receive the vows of a couple during a Nuptial Mass, regardless of the personal relationship he may have with the couple, although he may preach the homily in such circumstances.

⁴⁹ Cf. Canon 1108 §3; Francis, Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio De concordia inter Codice* (15 September 2016); Miller, *Inter-Rite Marriages* (17 October 2018).

⁵⁰ Cf. Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, (2017), 23-38.



145. Besides the other responsibilities entrusted to him in the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony (see nn. 138-142), the deacon may assist the pastor in the completion of required Archdiocesan marriage papers⁵¹ and assist in preparing the couple through instruction.⁵² He should also advise the couple in the choice of readings, prayers, and music for the celebration.
146. When preparing couples for the Sacrament of Matrimony, the deacon must follow the policies and procedures of the Archdiocese of Vancouver, especially policies on Canonical Form and Inter-Rite Marriages. Guidelines for Marriage have also been created to assist couples in their decision to marry in the Catholic Church, which can be discussed at the beginning of their preparations.
147. Deacons are not to exempt a couple from the requirement of attending the Marriage Preparation course. Only the pastor may grant this exemption under appropriate circumstances, such as an older couple seeking convalidation of marriage in the Catholic Church.
148. While completing marriage papers, the deacon should refer to the manual *Marriage Papers: Instructions and Notes for the Parish*,⁵³ developed by the Archdiocese, consulting the pastor if questions arise. If he is entrusted with this duty, the deacon should pay particular attention to the documentation needed and suggested timelines to ensure all canonical requirements are fulfilled and papers are submitted in a timely manner to the Chancery for processing.
149. In the case of two parties who are civilly married and seeking convalidation of marriage in the Catholic Church, completion of the necessary marriage papers is required, and the appropriate process followed pursuant to the Archdiocesan marriage papers manual. For a convalidation of a marriage between two Catholics who are civilly married, have never been previously married and have no other impediments to marriage, the necessary marriage forms are to be completed but are not required to be sent to the Archdiocese for processing.
150. Prior to submitting marriage papers to the Chancery office for processing, the deacon should ensure the parish retains copies of all documentation for their files to comply with appropriate record-keeping and avoid delay in processing in the event papers are misplaced in transition.

B. The Sacrament of Baptism

151. The deacon may solemnly baptize infants with all the rites and ceremonies of the Rite of Baptism for Children. The deacon does not baptize adults (or minors over seven years of

⁵¹ cf. *Code of Canon Law*, cc. 1067.

⁵² cf. *Code of Canon Law*, cc. 1063.

⁵³ A copy of the manual can be accessed through the Clergy section of the RCV website.

age) or receive them into full communion with the Church.⁵⁴ However, in danger of death, the deacon may baptize adults.

152. For Baptism outside Mass, the deacon should be vested in alb and stole and, if desired, a cope. The vestments are white. A dalmatic is not appropriate.
153. If the Baptism takes place during Mass, the deacon may act as the minister of Baptism, at the discretion of the presiding priest. A dalmatic may be worn.
154. Together with the pastor, it is also the duty of the deacon, especially when he is the presiding minister of the Sacrament, to assist families in the preparation for the Baptism of their children and to help them in the task of Christian formation that they have undertaken.
155. The deacon, through visitation and catechetical preparation of the parents, may assist the pastor in determining the readiness of parents to accept the responsibilities of raising their children as Christians.
156. Before beginning the rite, the following should be in place: the Paschal Candle (lit), water in the font, Oil of the Catechumens and Sacred Chrism, a baptismal candle, a vessel for pouring water, and a towel. The deacon should verify that the parents or godparents have brought a baptismal garment.
157. For a deacon to perform a Baptism outside of the parish to which he is assigned and within the Archdiocese, he must have the written or oral permission of the pastor of the parish in which the Baptism is to take place.

C. The Sacrament of Confirmation

158. It is common for deacons to be asked to assist at Confirmations with the Archbishop or his delegate.
159. The Mass for Confirmation found in *The Roman Missal*, with the Preface of the Holy Spirit, is the proper Mass text. Red vestments should be worn, except on Sundays or other solemnities.
160. If a deacon assisting at Mass is also a sponsor of a confirmand, he should not assist the Archbishop during the Rite of Confirmation with the oil of Chrism, instead, allowing the pastor to assist (cf. n. 163). The Archbishop and the pastor should be advised of this arrangement prior to the start of Mass.

When the time comes for the deacon to take his place as sponsor, he reverently steps down from the sanctuary and takes his place behind the confirmand until the anointing

⁵⁴ cf. *Code of Canon Law*, cc. 97 §2 and 852 §1 & 2; cc. 866 requires that Confirmation follow adult Baptism unless for a grave reason.



is complete and the newly confirmed have returned to their seats. At this time, the deacon rejoins the Archbishop for the remainder of the Rite.

a. Preparations

161. The deacon should help to ensure that the following are prepared before the Confirmation liturgy:
- A lemon sliced in half, plus a large bowl with a pitcher of clean water, and a large towel. This must be separate from the bowl and pitcher used for the washing of the celebrant's hands during the Preparation of the Gifts.
 - Sacred Chrism (from the parish), an appropriate vessel to contain the Chrism during the anointing, and a hand towel.
 - Servers in place to assist with the mitre, crosier, and Missal.

b. The Liturgy

162. Immediately after the Gospel, the pastor presents the candidates to the Archbishop. The Archbishop addresses the candidates and the assembly in the homily. Following the homily and any questions asked of the *confirmandi*, the Archbishop leads the candidates in the renewal of the Baptismal Promises and Profession of Faith from the Rite of Confirmation.
163. Then the Archbishop, without mitre, moves to the centre of the sanctuary and, reading from the Rite, held by a server or a deacon, calls down the power of the Holy Spirit. Those to be confirmed kneel at this time while everyone else stands.
164. Following the Prayer, the Archbishop, with mitre and crosier, begins the anointing with Chrism. The deacon should stand at his side with the chrism, unless the pastor chooses to do so.
165. After the anointing, the Archbishop, without crosier, will wash his hands with the lemon and water. Two servers should bring this to him at the celebrant's chair. The Creed is not said, because the Renewal of Baptismal Promises takes its place. The Liturgy of the Eucharist proceeds as normal with the deacons performing their usual roles.

D. Ministry of Preaching

166. A deacon may preach the homily at any Mass, as requested by the celebrant. However, the homily should ordinarily be given by the celebrant himself and only given by the deacon occasionally according to special circumstances.⁵⁵ The deacon may also preach on the following occasions when he is the minister of a liturgical rite or prayer service:
- Baptism of infants
 - Sacrament of Matrimony

⁵⁵ Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 66.



- Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament
 - Vigil services, cemetery services, or church services of Christian burial
 - Morning or Evening Prayer, or other rites of the Liturgy of the Hours
 - Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest, following Archdiocesan guidelines
 - Communion Services in nursing homes, hospitals, prisons and other approved locations
 - During visitation of the sick and while giving Viaticum
 - Ecumenical gatherings and services, as requested
 - Retreats, days of recollection, missions, novenas, etc.
167. Preaching is a very significant opportunity for the deacon to influence the hearts of parishioners. This requires him to consider with sensitivity their spiritual and human situation and to adapt his preaching accordingly.
168. Although a pastor may occasionally need to take a different approach, the tone of the deacon's preaching is to be both gentle and positive.
169. The content of the homily should be simple, practical, and personal. The key message should be capable of summary in one sentence – the one point that the listeners should take away with them. Unfamiliar religious terminology should be avoided, favouring the language of daily life instead. The message should be connected to the congregation's daily lives, including illustrations from one's own life, or the life of a friend or a saint.
170. The purpose of a parish homily is to change hearts. It is helpful to repeat certain key spiritual insights over and over again. It is beneficial if all parishioners hear a similar message; that is, the same key insight, on a given Sunday. Pastors and parish deacons would do well to develop a comprehensive plan of key messages for the liturgical year. The plan may include a number of Sundays devoted to more detailed teaching of doctrine and moral principles (e.g. once a month) or to the promotion of particular spiritual activities.
171. "The preacher needs to speak in such a way that his hearers can sense his belief in the power of God. He must not lower the standards of his message to the level of his own personal witness, fearing that he will be accused of not practicing what he preaches. Since he is preaching not himself, but Christ, he can, without hypocrisy, point out the heights of sanctity, to which, like every other individual, in his pilgrim faith he is aspiring."⁵⁶
172. When formally invited by a church or ecclesial community not in full communion with the Catholic Church, deacons may preach at a prayer service or liturgical celebration. When asked to preach at a Eucharistic celebration in such a church or ecclesial

⁵⁶ Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, *Homiletic Directory* (29 June 2014), n. 7.

community, a deacon requires the permission of the Archbishop. Deacons will dress in accordance with n. 15 of this directory.

E. The Liturgy of the Hours

173. In collaboration with his pastor, the deacons may preside at the Liturgy of the Hours and lead the people in daily prayer according to the *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*. Mandated to pray Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer, the deacon is called in a particular way to preside at public celebrations of the Liturgy of the Hours.
174. When vestments are worn, the deacon vests in a stole, worn over the alb; he does not wear a dalmatic (unless assisting a priest-celebrant who is wearing a cope in a solemn celebration) and does not wear a cope.⁵⁷ He should lead the prayer from a central place, but not behind the altar or seated in the presidential chair. As the celebrant, he should greet the people, recite the introductory verse, recite the antiphon before each psalm, begin the Lord's Prayer, say the concluding prayer, bless, and dismiss the people.
175. Prior to beginning the celebration, the deacon should divide the assembly into two halves (A and B) so the psalms can be prayed antiphonally; alternatively, the people may chant the psalm responsorially, or chant the entire psalm directly, according to the custom in the parish. He may also select a lector for the reading and someone to lead the intercessions.
176. With the assembly standing, the deacon either begins at the chair; or processes into the sanctuary, reverences the altar, and proceeds to the chair. He opens the liturgy by making the Sign of the Cross and intoning the introductory verse: "God, come to my assistance." After the people's response, the deacon leads the doxology, "Glory to the Father." It is a good practice to sing the hymn, although it can be chanted or read. After the hymn, all are seated.
177. The psalmody follows along with the associated antiphons. The deacon says (or chants) the first antiphon and then leads side A in the first strophe. Side B follows with the second strophe, and so forth. The doxology is recited and all repeat the antiphon. A short period of silence should follow, and then the deacon may recite the optional psalm prayer.
178. The reading follows the psalmody, and all continue to remain seated. The lector should move to the ambo and proclaim the appropriate scripture reading. The reading is not introduced as it is at Mass ("A reading from...") nor is it concluded with the phrase "The Word of the Lord." It is simply proclaimed and followed by a period of silence. The deacon may offer a short homily.

⁵⁷ Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship, *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours* (2 Feb 1971), n. 255.



179. After the homily, the deacon (or the reader) leads the responsory by reciting the first line. The assembly responds with the appropriate response.
180. After the responsory, all stand and the deacon says (or chants) the antiphon. All recite the appropriate Gospel Canticle, the doxology, and repeat the canticle antiphon. As they begin the Canticle, all make the Sign of the Cross.
181. All remain standing for the intercessions. These may be prayed antiphonally with the deacon leading the first part of each intercession and the assembly reciting the second part. Or the intercessions may be prayed as at Mass, with the deacon stating the entire intention and the assembly responding with the appropriate response. The deacon may invite the assembly to offer their own intercessions. At Evening Prayer, the final intention is always for the dead.
182. The intercessions lead into the Lord's Prayer. The deacon may make a brief introduction to the prayer, such as, "Now let us pray as Christ the Lord has taught us."
183. The deacon says the concluding prayer immediately after the Our Father. Finally, he gives the blessing and dismissal, as is done at Mass: "The Lord be with you....May Almighty God bless you... Go in peace."
184. When the Liturgy of the Hours is combined with Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, there is only one Eucharistic Blessing imparted. This occurs when the Sign of the Cross is made once over the people with the monstrance, in silence. No other blessing is to be given.

F. The Ministry to the Sick

185. The rites for visitation and Communion to the sick and dying are found in the *Pastoral Care of the Sick*.⁵⁸ The deacon has the right to confer blessings and sprinkle holy water under the circumstances described therein.
186. The deacon has always been closely associated with the pastoral care of the sick, the aged, and the dying. While he may not administer the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, the deacon is a minister of Holy Communion to the sick and of Viaticum. Thus, the deacon should be particularly sensitive to the needs and wishes of the sick in the parish: in private homes, in nursing homes, and in hospitals. He should work closely with pastors, chaplains, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion so that Holy Communion may be brought frequently to the sick – weekly, even daily.

⁵⁸ Cf. Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, *Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum*, 11 December 1982



187. In his ministry of Communion to the sick, the deacon may remove the Eucharist from the tabernacle and place it in the pyx during Mass, after Communion, or he may remove the Eucharist later, after the Mass.
188. When visiting the sick, the deacon wears the vesture appropriate to the time and place. For communal services such as at nursing homes, an alb, and white stole are proper. In visits to hospitals and private homes, the deacon may wear a clerical collar.
189. The deacon uses a pyx when taking Holy Communion to the sick unless a ciborium is required for communal services. He may make use of a crucifix or candles if the circumstances suggest.
190. The pyx must be purified using clean water. The Water and Host particles must be consumed immediately and the pyx wiped clean with a purificator. The purificator must be returned to the church for proper laundering.
191. Whenever possible, Hosts that remained unconsumed should be returned to the tabernacle. As an ordinary minister of Holy Communion, the deacon may consume those left over if necessary.
192. The ordinary ministers of Viaticum are the pastor and assistant pastor, the hospital chaplain, and the superior of clerical religious houses. Viaticum is brought to the sick by a deacon only if no priest is available. In this case, a deacon follows the rite prescribed in the *Pastoral Care of the Sick*. Only the priest is the celebrant of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

G. Funeral Rites

193. The ministry of charity during funeral celebrations is paramount for the deacon, called to a ministry of consolation to those who have suffered the loss of a loved one.
194. The deacon may be asked to preside at vigil services, funerals and burial services. Since funerals usually takes place in three stages (funeral vigil, Mass at the church, and interment at the cemetery), it is proper that the deacon rightly fulfills his office at each stage. The deacon may assist the family in making the proper preparations for the funeral (selection of readings, music, etc.)
195. The deacon may conduct a vigil ceremony using the Vigil Service in the *Order of Christian Funerals*. Appropriate vesture is alb and stole in either white, violet, or black. A stole worn over a business suit is not appropriate in church, but may be suitable when the service is held at a funeral home or other approved location. At the request of the family, other traditional prayers such as the Rosary may be incorporated into this service.
196. If a deacon is asked by a family or funeral home to conduct a vigil or funeral service, he should inform the proper pastor of the death of his parishioner.

197. Eulogies, if requested by the family, may be permitted in accordance with the burial guidelines which state, "If there is to be a eulogy, the following order of preference regarding its placement is to be observed: at the conclusion of the vigil service; before the beginning of the Funeral Mass; following the Prayers of Committal at the cemetery."⁵⁹ Eulogies must never take place during Mass.
198. The deacon may be asked to conduct a Funeral Liturgy outside of Mass using the rite found in the *Order of Christian Funerals*. In such cases, the deacon will preside. Holy Communion is not to be distributed at such services. However, most funerals are conducted within the Mass. At the Mass, the deacon fulfills his proper role in the Eucharistic Liturgy.
199. Typically, the deacon accompanies the priest to the casket for the Introductory Rites and assists him with the holy water and the pall. Following the Prayer after Communion, the deacon stands next to the priest for the final commendation. If the brief litany or invocations are used, the deacon may offer the petitions. The deacon may also receive the body at the door of the church and conduct the final commendation if the celebrant so desires.
200. Incense may be used at the beginning of Mass, the proclamation of the Gospel, and the preparation of the gifts, in the usual manner.
It is also customarily used in the Rite of Final Commendation. When it is used in this Rite, it is the priest who incenses the casket, accompanied by the deacon if space allows.
201. The music at a funeral liturgy must be liturgically appropriate, relating to themes of the Lord's suffering, death, and resurrection.
202. The deacon may conduct committal services at the cemetery, using the *Order of Christian Funerals*. He may wear alb and stole, or a business suit and stole, as he judges most appropriate.
203. While the Church counsels the faithful to follow the practice of traditional burial, cremation is permitted for Catholics insofar as the family's motivations are not contrary to church teaching. Deacons are permitted to preside at funeral services in which cremated remains are present. They will be guided by the *Order of Christian Funerals: Supplement for Celebrations with Cremated Remains* and the CCCB instruction *Cremations and Funeral Liturgies* (see Appendix IV) for these celebrations.

⁵⁹ Bishops of BC and Yukon, *Guidelines for Funerals & Burials in the Catholic Church in the Dioceses of BC and the Yukon*, 15 December 2016



H. Eucharistic Exposition and Benediction

204. The ordinary minister for exposition of the Eucharist for adoration is a priest or deacon. The deacon should vest in an alb and a white stole. For Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament, he also wears a cope. The rites of exposition and benediction can be found in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*. For exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance, four to six candles are lit, as at Mass, and incense is used. For exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in a ciborium, at least two candles should be lit and incense may be used.⁶⁰
205. The humeral veil should be worn during the act of Benediction and while the Blessed Sacrament is taken to and from the tabernacle.
206. When the deacon is the celebrant of Eucharistic Adoration, the following is observed:
- The deacon puts on the humeral veil and brings the Sacrament from the place of reservation. A Eucharistic hymn is sung for the entrance.
 - When the Eucharist is to be exposed, the custodia (also known as the 'pyx') is to be taken from the tabernacle to the altar. The luna (also called the 'lunette') is then removed and inserted into the monstrance, which is turned to its side before the luna is inserted. The monstrance is then turned to face the people.
 - The deacon then kneels before the monstrance and incenses the Blessed Sacrament.
 - Adoration follows.
 - The deacon rises and says, or sings, one of the prayers taken from *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, n. 98.
 - The deacon, after the prayer, puts on the humeral veil, genuflects, and takes the monstrance. In silence, Benediction is given by making the sign of the cross over the congregation with the monstrance.
207. When the Liturgy of the Hours is combined with Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament:
- The deacon leads the assembly in reciting the Divine Praises.
 - The deacon then replaces the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle and genuflects.
 - When the Eucharist is reposed, the monstrance is first turned to its side, then the luna removed, returned to the custodia and taken from the altar to the tabernacle.

This is the only Eucharistic Blessing imparted.

⁶⁰ Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *Eucharistiae Sacramentum*, Promulgating the editio typica of rites for *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, 21 June 1973



208. When carrying the Blessed Sacrament between the tabernacle and the altar, and vice versa, the deacon should hold the custodia close to his chest and not elevated in a processional manner.

I. Sacramentals

209. It belongs to the ministry of a deacon to administer sacramentals and preside at those blessings that are so indicated in the *Book of Blessings* and other liturgical books.⁶¹ However, whenever a priest is present, it is more fitting that the office of presiding be assigned to him and that the deacon assist by carrying out those functions proper to the diaconate.⁶²

J. Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

210. Besides assisting in and leading sessions of catechesis, the deacon, when requested by the pastor, may also exercise liturgical functions in the Rite of Acceptance, Rite of Election, the minor exorcisms, and blessings of the catechumens. The deacon assists the Archbishop or priest in the Rites of Initiation during the Easter Vigil.

K. Penance Celebrations

211. A deacon functions in the communal forms of Reconciliation as one who invites the people to penance, by leading the people in the intercessions, and in the proclamation of the Gospel.

IV. Mass with the Archbishop as Celebrant

A. General

212. At the most important liturgical celebrations at which the Archbishop presides, there should be, if possible, at least three deacons: one to proclaim the Gospel, one to assist at the altar, and one to assist the Archbishop as directed.⁶³ If there are two deacons, the roles may be divided into the customary Deacon of the Word and Deacon of the Altar. If more than three deacons are present, either the Master of Ceremonies (M.C.) or the deacons themselves should divide the ministries accordingly. At a parish that has a deacon, he should minister at the Mass with the Archbishop.
213. In addition to assisting the Archbishop before, during, and after the celebration, a deacon usually serves as the M.C. during the celebration, unless another cleric or seminarian is available. The parish deacon and/or the M.C. should be certain of the readiness of the thurible, boat, and lighter, and that the aspergillum and bowl are in

⁶¹ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, cc. 1168, 1169 §3.

⁶² Cf. International Commission on English in the Liturgy, *Book of Blessings* (Catholic Book Publishing: New York, 1990), n. 18.

⁶³ Cf. *Ceremonial of Bishops*, n. 26.



place if holy water is to be used in the rite. It is a courtesy for the parish deacon to ensure that all items are in place for the celebration of the Mass even if there is a sacristan.

214. Unless done by the M.C. or acolyte, the Deacon of the Altar should turn the pages in *The Roman Missal* for the Archbishop, as well as open it to the proper pages for the presidential prayers.
215. Deacons of the parish will ordinarily serve as Deacon of the Word and Deacon of the Altar just as they would for any Sunday celebration of Mass. One of them, or a deacon serving as M.C., will also prepare the vestments and *The Roman Missal* before Mass, presenting the Missal to the Archbishop for review, placing the homily in the ambo, and putting the Missal on the credence table.
216. The actual role of the deacon will vary with the circumstances of each celebration.

B. Assistance with the Vesting of the Archbishop

217. The Archbishop will bring his own alb and accessories; the parish will provide a chasuble and stole. These are to be laid out in advance. The M.C. will ordinarily assemble the crosier before Mass and disassemble it after Mass, returning it to its case.
218. The Archbishop vests in this order: amice, alb, cincture, pectoral cross, stole, chasuble, zucchetto, and mitre. A deacon may help to clip on a wireless microphone.

C. An Overview of the Celebration Including the Distribution of Holy Communion

219. After vesting, elements of the celebration should be discussed with the Archbishop. The Archbishop should be informed of the number and names of the concelebrants that are expected and how they will be seated.
220. If the Kyrie is to be sung, the Archbishop will lead the congregation in the “I confess to almighty God...” If the Kyrie is not to be sung, the Deacon of the Word may announce the petitions of the Penitential Rite (third option).

D. Order of the Mass

221. The order of the entrance procession is as follows:
 - Knights of Columbus or others (Knights of Malta, etc.)
 - Thurifer carrying a thurible with burning incense; he may be followed by a server carrying the incense boat
 - Cross-bearer with corpus to the front
 - Candle-bearers carrying candlesticks with lighted candles



- Acolytes and other ministers (e.g. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, if customary)
- Deacon of the Word, carrying the *Book of Gospels*; if there is no *Book of Gospels*, he enters with the Deacon of the Altar, as below
- Deacons who are assisting, two-by-two
- Priests who are concelebrating, two-by-two
- Deacon of the Altar
- Archbishop wearing the mitre and carrying the crosier in his left hand
- Mitre and Crosier Bearers

222. The Mass proceeds as usual. The functions of the deacon(s) depend on how many deacons are present. In general, the instructions for Mass as outlined in Section II will be followed, with the changes identified below.

E. Introductory Rites

223. After the Archbishop genuflects (or bows) at the entrance to the sanctuary, the M.C. receives the mitre and crosier from the Archbishop and hands them off to assigned altar servers. He leads the servers to their place by the credence table.
224. The Deacon of the Altar should assist the Archbishop and lead him in incensing the altar.
225. After incensing, the Archbishop and deacons go to their chairs, with the Deacon of the Word to his immediate right, and the Deacon of the Altar to his immediate left. The M.C. takes his place at another location.
226. If the Archbishop does not use the Missal for the Introductory Rite and Penitential Act, the Missal should be opened to the Collect and brought to the Archbishop as the Gloria is finishing (or the Kyrie, if there is no Gloria).

F. Liturgy of the Word

227. After the Collect, the M.C. brings the mitre to the Archbishop to be worn during the first and second readings.
228. After the second reading, the preparation of incense occurs as usual and the Deacon of the Word asks for the blessing using the ordinary formula. The Archbishop blesses him and the M.C. receives the mitre from the Archbishop, passing it to the mitre bearer. After the signing on the forehead, lips, and heart (as the people say “Glory to you, O Lord”), the M.C. presents the crosier to the Archbishop from the crosier carrier. The Archbishop stands holding the crosier during the proclamation of the Gospel.
229. After proclaiming the Gospel, the deacon brings the *Book of Gospels* to the Archbishop for veneration. The deacon then closes the *Book of Gospels*. The Archbishop may also

bless the assembly with it. The deacon then proceeds to place the *Book of Gospels* on the credence table or other appropriate place. The M.C. receives the crosier from the Archbishop and presents the mitre to him.

230. The Archbishop delivers the homily wearing the mitre. At the conclusion, the M.C. may offer the Archbishop a glass of water.
231. The M.C. opens the Missal to the Creed and the server presents it to the Archbishop. The Archbishop hands off the mitre to the M.C. and leads the Profession of Faith.
232. The M.C. will present the mitre to the Archbishop after the Prayer of the Faithful. It is a proper role for the Deacon of the Word to lead the Prayer of the Faithful.

G. *Liturgy of the Eucharist*

233. After the gifts, the cross and the altar have been incensed, the celebrant and deacon face each other and the Archbishop hands the thurible to the deacon. They bow to each other and, stepping back slightly, the deacon incenses him with three double-swings (two swings each time). They bow to each other again.
234. The deacon then incenses, with three double-swings as indicated in nos. 33 - 36 above, at the elevation of the Host and the chalice during the Consecration.
235. The liturgy proceeds as usual with the following exceptions:

At the presentation of the gifts, the Archbishop, wearing the mitre, will receive the gifts assisted by the deacons. Servers may assist if necessary. The gifts are brought to the altar. The Archbishop will hand off the mitre to the M.C. as he approaches the altar. The Deacon of the Altar hands the paten to the Archbishop and prepares the chalice as usual. The main chalice is handed to the Archbishop. If possible, all ciboria and chalices are placed on the corporal(s).
236. After the Prayer Over the Gifts and before the Archbishop says, "The Lord be with you," he will take off his zucchetto, which he prefers to remove himself. The M.C. receives the zucchetto and places it on the arm of the Archbishop's chair.
237. At the Sign of Peace, the Archbishop will give it to any concelebrating priests before he approaches the deacons.
238. During the Lamb of God, the deacon goes to the tabernacle for the ciboria.
239. Priests will receive the Body of Christ from the Archbishop. He may ask a priest-concelebrant or the Deacon of the Altar to assist him. The Archbishop will give Communion under both species to the deacons after he has fully communicated. The M.C. should guide the Archbishop to where he is to distribute Communion, and direct

other ministers to their places as need be. If a deacon, the M.C. will normally assist with Communion at an assigned station.

240. Following the Prayer after Communion, the M.C. will present the mitre to the Archbishop. This is the appropriate time for words from the pastor and any announcements. Following this, the Archbishop will begin the final blessing and reach for the crosier from the M.C.
241. If a solemn blessing is being given, the crosier should be given to the Archbishop at the “Amen” of the third blessing.
242. For the recessional, the Archbishop and the deacons will reverence the altar and move to the front of the altar for the bow or genuflection, in the same order as the procession.
243. The deacons may assist the Archbishop with unvesting in the sacristy.

V. Celebrations of the Word and Holy Communion

244. Liturgical assemblies celebrated in the absence of a priest must be carefully distinguished from the Mass itself, and the deacon must explain to the faithful that these assemblies are in no way equal or equivalent to the Mass. These communities should understand that their gathering is not “an assembly without a priest” but “an assembly in expectation of a priest.”
245. These celebrations do not necessarily include the distribution of Holy Communion and, if confusion is created among the laity over the nature of the rite they are attending, then Holy Communion should not be distributed.
246. A deacon who is to preside at any such celebration should contact the Permanent Diaconate Office to obtain the appropriate Rite for the celebration.

A. *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*

247. “All deacons or lay members of Christ’s faithful who are assigned a part in such celebrations by the diocesan Bishop should strive to keep alive in the community a genuine hunger for the Eucharist, so that no opportunity for the celebration of the Mass will ever be missed, also taking advantage of the occasional presence of a priest who is not impeded by Church law from celebrating Mass.”⁶⁴
248. These celebrations may never be held without the explicit permission of the Archbishop, or the Vicar General, and must never be celebrated regularly at any parish in Metro Vancouver. Where permission has been granted, every effort should be made by the

⁶⁴ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, (23 April 2004), n. 164.



canonical pastor or priest responsible to schedule Mass for the faithful at some regular interval (monthly or quarterly).

249. The deacon is called in a special way to lead these Sunday assemblies, which are either celebrations of the Liturgy of the Hours or services of the Word. The deacon presiding should act in the usual manner and according to the usual rubrics in regard to the introductory rites (including the Penitential Rite), the Liturgy of the Word, and the distribution of Holy Communion. The prayers and readings should be taken from the Mass for the Sunday, found in *The Roman Missal* and the *Lectionary for Mass*. Nothing proper to the Eucharist, especially the Presentation of the Gifts or the Eucharistic Prayer, is to be a part of the celebration.
250. The deacon should be vested in alb and stole and may wear the dalmatic as circumstances suggest. He may not be seated in the presidential chair.⁶⁵

B. *Weekday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*

251. Guidelines for the Rite of Distributing Holy Communion Outside of Mass have been established for use in the Archdiocese of Vancouver and should be followed when such an occasion arises. These Guidelines form Appendix III of this directory.
252. The deacon should instruct the faithful so that, even if they receive Holy Communion outside of Mass, they are closely united with the Sacrifice which perpetuates the Sacrifice of the cross.⁶⁶
253. The Liturgy of the Word is an integral part of these celebrations and Holy Communion may not be distributed without it.
254. Where the parish community has the service of a deacon, he will preside at these liturgies.⁶⁷ The deacon proclaims the Gospel, preaches the homily, and ministers Holy Communion. Lay members of the community proclaim the Scripture readings before the Gospel. They may also, as necessary, assist in distributing Holy Communion.
255. The deacon should be vested in alb and stole and may wear the dalmatic as circumstances suggest.⁶⁸ He may not be seated in the presidential chair.

⁶⁵ Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship, *Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*, (2 June 1988), n. 38.

⁶⁶ Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship, *Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, (21 June 1973), n. 15.

⁶⁷ Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship, *Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, (21 June 1973), n. 17.

⁶⁸ Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship, *Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, (21 June 1973), n. 20.



256. Careful preparations should be made by the deacon before leading the celebration:
- A check of the *Ordo* to see if the day is a memorial, feast, or solemnity.
 - Setting of the Lectionary for the readings of the day. On weekdays, the cycle of readings is usually followed unless the day is a feast or solemnity.
 - A check of *The Roman Missal* to see if a Collect is assigned to the particular day.

VI. The Celebration of Holy Week

257. During the ceremonies of Holy Week, the deacon is called upon to exercise his ministry in special ways. The following is a list of appropriate functions of the deacon on each of the major days of Holy Week. The actual role of the deacon will depend upon parish practice and the pastor's preference.

258. Since the distribution of the Eucharist is permitted outside of Mass only to the sick on Holy Thursday and Good Friday and only to the dying on Holy Saturday, there can be no other public celebrations at which Holy Communion is distributed to the faithful.

However, where the people are completely unable to participate in the Sacred Triduum due to the absence of a priest, some forms of pious exercise may be organized by the deacon to remember these days, such as the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, but without distribution of Holy Communion.

The Easter Vigil is a celebration of the Eucharist and thus cannot be presided over by a deacon.

In communities where Mass cannot be celebrated on Easter Sunday, the deacon may distribute Holy Communion outside of Mass according to nos. 247 – 250 and Appendix III of this Directory.

A. *Passion (Palm) Sunday*

259. During the Blessing of the Palms, the deacon:
- Proclaims the Gospel of the entry into Jerusalem.
 - Initiates the procession, saying, "Dear brethren (brothers and sisters)... let us go forth in peace."
 - Assists in incensing the altar at the end of the procession
 - Helps the celebrant change from the cope if used, to the chasuble
260. During Mass, the deacon proclaims the Passion. The Passion may be divided into various parts. It is appropriate for the celebrant to be involved in the reading of the Passion; he should take the part of Christ. If there are no priests or deacons available for these parts, the lay faithful may proclaim them, but only the deacon asks for the blessing before the Passion. There is no greeting before the Passion, and no candles or incense are used.

B. *Chrism Mass*

261. Deacons should make every effort to attend the Chrism Mass celebrated at Holy Rosary Cathedral. They will be vested in alb and stole and will process two by two in front of the concelebrants.

C. *Holy Thursday*

262. During the Washing of the Feet, if it takes place, the deacon assists the celebrant in removing the chasuble (if necessary) and may help the celebrant to wash and dry the feet.
263. During the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the deacon may receive the Eucharist from the priest for the homebound and the sick, if it is to be brought to them that same day.
264. When the Eucharist is to be transferred to the Altar of Repose, the deacon:
- Prepares the ciborium on the altar, after Communion, to be transferred to the Altar of Repose
 - Assists with incensation of the Eucharist before the procession, helps the celebrant with the humeral veil, and gives him the ciborium
 - Walks next to the celebrant during the procession, and at the place of reposition, he assists with the incensing of the Eucharist
 - Places the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle at the end of the transfer to the Altar of Repose
 - Helps with the stripping of the altar after the procession, at an appropriate time

D. *Good Friday*

265. A deacon is not permitted to preside at the Good Friday solemn liturgy. Even though there is no consecration of the Eucharist, the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord requires a priest celebrant.⁶⁹
266. The deacon, vested in red dalmatic and stole, prostrates (or kneels) along with the celebrant. The Passion as on Palm Sunday and may give a brief homily after the Passion.
267. The deacon chants or says the invitatory of each of the intercessions. He may also invite the people to kneel and to stand.
268. If the Adoration of the Holy Cross takes the First Form, the deacon:
- Brings the cross to the celebrant before the altar
 - Assists him in unveiling the cross as the celebrant sings, "Behold the wood of the Cross". If invited by the celebrant, the deacon may assist in the singing

⁶⁹ cf. n. 258.



- May hold the cross for adoration

If it takes the Second Form, the deacon:

- May carry the uncovered cross in procession from the rear of the Church and makes three stops and chants: “Behold the wood of the Cross...”
- Places the cross at the entrance to the sanctuary and adores it after the celebrant

269. When it is time for Holy Communion, the deacon, wearing the humeral veil, brings the ciborium from the place of reposition to the altar and uncovers it. After Communion, he returns the ciborium to the place of private reposition.

E. Easter Vigil

270. During the Service of Light:

- The deacon may assist in the preparation of the new fire and the lighting of the candle.
- Carrying the candle, he leads the procession and sings three times: “The Light of Christ” or “Lumen Christi”.
- He assists the celebrant with incense and incenses the Paschal Candle and *Book of Gospels*.
- He asks for and receives the blessing before the Exsultet, which he chants. This is the proper function of the deacon. If the deacon’s voice is not adequate, a priest or cantor may sing the Exsultet. It is not a choir hymn.

271. During the Liturgy of Baptism and Confirmation, the deacon:

- May sing the Litany of the Saints if there are no cantors
- May help lower the candle into the water (if this is done)
- Assists the celebrant in all aspects related to Baptism
- Assists the celebrant during the anointing of those to be confirmed
- Assists in sprinkling the people with the baptismal water

During the Concluding Rites, the deacon chants the dismissal, with its double “Alleluia”.

**Approved: Solemnity of Christ the King
22 November 2020**

+ J. Michael Miller CSB

**† J. Michael Miller, CSB
Archbishop of Vancouver**

The following policy is hereby superseded:
Directory for the Liturgical Ministry of Permanent Deacons, issued October 24, 2019

Appendix I: Some General Norms for All Masses

As set out in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal: Section I-B¹

171. When he is present at the celebration of the Eucharist, a Deacon should exercise his ministry, wearing sacred vestments. In fact, the Deacon:
- i. Assists the Priest and walks at his side;
 - ii. Ministers at the altar, both as regards the chalice and the book;
 - iii. Proclaims the Gospel and may, at the direction of the Priest Celebrant, give the Homily (cf. n. 66);
 - iv. Guides the faithful people by giving appropriate instructions, and announces the intentions of the Universal Prayer;
 - v. Assists the Priest Celebrant in distributing Communion, and purifies and arranges the sacred vessels;
 - vi. Carries out the duties of other ministers himself, if necessary, when none of them is present.

The Introductory Rites

172. Carrying the *Book of Gospels* slightly elevated, the Deacon precedes the Priest as he approaches the altar or else walks at the Priest's side.
173. When he reaches the altar, if he is carrying the *Book of Gospels*, he omits the sign of reverence and goes up to the altar. It is a praiseworthy practice for him to place the *Book of Gospels* on the altar, after which, together with the Priest, he venerates the altar with a kiss.
- If, however, he is not carrying the *Book of Gospels*, he makes a profound bow to the altar with the Priest in the customary way and with him venerates the altar with a kiss.
- Lastly, if incense is being used, he assists the Priest in putting some into the thurible and in incensing the cross and the altar.
174. Once the altar has been incensed, the Deacon goes to the chair together with the Priest and there stands at the Priest's side and assists him as necessary.

The Liturgy of the Word

175. During the singing of the *Alleluia* or other chant, if incense is being used, the Deacon ministers to the Priest as he puts incense into the thurible. Then, bowing profoundly before the Priest, he asks for the blessing, saying in a low voice, *Your blessing, Father*.

¹ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Ch. IV: The Different Forms of Celebrating Mass; Sect. I-B: Mass with the People: Mass with a Deacon, nos. 171-186.



The Priest blesses him, saying, *May the Lord be in your heart*. The Deacon signs himself with the Sign of the Cross and replies, *Amen*. Having bowed to the altar, he then takes up the *Book of Gospels* which was placed on it and proceeds to the ambo, carrying the book slightly elevated. He is preceded by a thurifer, carrying a smoking thurible and by ministers with lighted candles. At the ambo the Deacon greets the people, with hands joined, saying, *The Lord be with you*. After this, at the words *A reading from the holy Gospel*, he signs with his thumb the book and then himself on his forehead, mouth, and breast. He incenses the book and proclaims the Gospel reading. When this is done, he acclaims, *The Gospel of the Lord*, and all reply, *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*. He then venerates the book with a kiss, saying quietly the formula *Per evangelica dicta (Through the words of the Gospel)*, and returns to the Priest's side.

When the Deacon is assisting the Bishop, he carries the book to him to be kissed, or else kisses it himself, saying quietly the formula *Per evangelica dicta (Through the words of the Gospel)*. In more solemn celebrations, if appropriate, the Bishop may impart a blessing to the people with the *Book of Gospels*.

Lastly, the Deacon may carry the *Book of Gospels* to the credence table or to another suitable and dignified place.

176. Moreover, if there is no other suitable reader present, the Deacon should proclaim the other readings as well.
177. After the introduction by the Priest, it is the Deacon himself who announces the intentions of the Universal Prayer, usually from the ambo.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

178. After the Universal Prayer, while the Priest remains at the chair, the Deacon prepares the altar, assisted by the acolyte, but it is the Deacon's place to take care of the sacred vessels himself. He also assists the Priest in receiving the people's gifts. After this, he hands the Priest the paten with the bread to be consecrated, pours wine and a little water into the chalice, saying quietly, *By the mystery of this water...* and after this presents the chalice to the Priest. He may also carry out the preparation of the chalice at the credence table. If incense is being used, the Deacon assists the Priest during the incensation of the offerings, the cross, and the altar, and after this the Deacon himself or the acolyte incenses the Priest and the people.
179. During the Eucharistic Prayer, the Deacon stands near the Priest, but slightly behind him, so that when necessary he may assist the Priest with the chalice or the Missal.

From the epiclesis until the Priest shows the chalice, the Deacon usually remains kneeling. If several Deacons are present, one of them may place incense in the thurible for the Consecration and incense the Host and the chalice at the elevation.



180. At the concluding doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer, the Deacon stands next to the Priest, and holds the chalice elevated while the Priest elevates the paten with the, until the people have acclaimed, *Amen*.
181. After the Priest has said the prayer for the Rite of Peace and the greeting *The peace of the Lord be with you always* and the people have replied, *And with your spirit*, the Deacon, if appropriate, says the invitation to the Sign of Peace. With hands joined, he faces the people and says, *Let us offer each other the sign of peace*. Then he himself receives the Sign of Peace from the Priest and may offer it to those other ministers who are nearest to him.
182. After the Priest's Communion, the Deacon receives Communion under both kinds from the Priest himself and then assists the Priest in distributing Communion to the people. If Communion is given under both kinds, the Deacon himself administers the chalice to the communicants; and, when the distribution is over, standing at the altar, he immediately and reverently consumes all of the Blood of Christ that remains, assisted, if the case requires, by other Deacons and Priests.
183. When the distribution of Communion is over, the Deacon returns to the altar with the Priest, collects the fragments, should any remain, and then carries the chalice and other sacred vessels to the credence table, where he purifies them and arranges them as usual, while the Priest returns to the chair. Nevertheless, it is also permitted to leave vessels needing to be purified on a corporal, suitably covered, on the credence table, and to purify them immediately after Mass, following the Dismissal of the people.

The Concluding Rites

184. Once the Prayer after Communion has been said, the Deacon makes brief announcements to the people, if indeed any need to be made, unless the Priest prefers to do this himself.
185. If a Prayer over the People or a formula of Solemn Blessing is used, the Deacon says, *Bow down for the blessing*. After the Priest's blessing, the Deacon, with hands joined and facing the people, dismisses the people, saying, *Ite, missa est (Go forth, the Mass is ended)*.
186. Then, together with the Priest, the Deacon venerates the altar with a kiss, makes a profound bow, and withdraws in a manner similar to the Entrance Procession.

As set out in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal: Section IV-B²**The Purification**

279. The sacred vessels are purified by the Priest, the Deacon, or an instituted acolyte after Communion or after Mass, insofar as possible at the credence table. The purification of the chalice is done with water alone or with wine and water, which is then consumed by whoever does the purification. The paten is wiped clean as usual with the purificator.
- Care is to be taken that whatever may remain of the Blood of Christ after the distribution of Communion is consumed immediately and completely at the altar.
280. If a host or any particle should fall, it is to be picked up reverently, and if any of the Precious Blood is spilled, the area where the spill occurred should be washed with water, and this water should then be poured into the *sacrarium* in the sacristy.

Communion under Both Kinds

284. When Communion is distributed under both kinds:
- i. The chalice is usually administered by a Deacon or, in the absence of a Deacon, by a Priest, or even by a duly instituted acolyte or another extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, or by one of the faithful who, in a case of necessity, has been entrusted with this duty for a single occasion;
 - ii. Whatever may remain of the Blood of Christ is consumed at the altar by the Priest or the Deacon or the duly instituted acolyte who ministered the chalice. The same then purifies, wipes, and arranges the sacred vessels in the usual way.

Any of the faithful who wish to receive Holy Communion under the species of bread alone should be given Communion in this form.

285. For Communion under both kinds the following should be prepared:
- i. If Communion from the chalice is done by drinking directly from the chalice, a chalice of a sufficiently large size or several chalices are prepared. However, care should be taken lest beyond what is needed of the Blood of Christ remains to be consumed at the end of the celebration.
 - ii. If Communion from the chalice is done by intinction, the hosts should be neither too thin nor too small, but rather a little thicker than usual, so that after being intincted partly into the Blood of Christ they can still be easily distributed.
286. If Communion of the Blood of Christ is carried out by communicants' drinking from the chalice, each communicant, after receiving the Body of Christ, moves to the minister of the chalice and stands facing him. The minister says, "The Blood of Christ," the communicant replies, "Amen," and the minister hands over the chalice, which the

² *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Ch. IV: The Different Forms of Celebrating Mass; Sect. IV-B: "Some General Norms for All Forms of Mass," nos. 273-80; 284-287.



communicant raises to his or her mouth. Each communicant drinks a little from the chalice, hands it back to the minister, and then withdraws; the minister wipes the rim of the chalice with the purificator.

287. If Communion from the chalice is carried out by intinction, each communicant, holding a Communion-plate under the mouth, approaches the Priest who holds a vessel with the sacred particles, with a minister standing at his side and holding the chalice. The Priest takes a host, intincts it partly in the chalice and, showing it, says, The Body and Blood of Christ. The communicant replies, Amen, receives the Sacrament in the mouth from the Priest, and then withdraws.

Appendix II: On the Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Species

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Priests of the Archdiocese of Vancouver
FROM: Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB
DATE: January 20, 2016
RE: ***Holy Communion Under Both Species in the Archdiocese of Vancouver***

Following the consensus expressed by the Presbyteral Council at its meeting on January 19, 2015, I wish to provide you with this reminder on the reception of Holy Communion under both species.

General Permission

In light of *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) n. 283, "The diocesan Bishop is also given the faculty to permit Communion under both kinds whenever it may seem appropriate to the priest to whom, as its own shepherd, a community has been entrusted, provided that the faithful have been well instructed and there is no danger of profanation of the Sacrament or of the rite's becoming difficult because of the large number of participants or some other reason," I hereby grant general permission to every pastor in the Archdiocese of Vancouver to offer Holy Communion under both kinds at his parish if he so wishes.

Administering the Chalice

When Holy Communion is given to the faithful under both species, the priest, deacon, or extraordinary minister may administer the chalice. When presenting the chalice, this person says, "The Blood of Christ," to which the communicant responds, "Amen." After the communicant has received the Blood of the Lord, the inner and outer lip of the chalice is wiped with the purificator by the minister. This is done at the distribution of the Precious Blood to each person.

When Holy Communion is given under both species by intinction, the priest, deacon or extraordinary minister dips the Host into the Precious Blood and places it on the tongue of the recipient. The communicant is not to dip the Host into the Precious Blood.

Manner of Receiving Holy Communion

Also, I draw your attention to the GIRM n. 160: "In the dioceses of Canada, Holy Communion is to be received standing, though individual members of the faithful may choose



to receive Communion while kneeling. When standing before the minister to receive Holy Communion, the communicant should make a simple bow of the head. When receiving Holy Communion on the tongue, they reverently join their hands; when receiving the Host in the hand, they reverently open their hands placing one beneath another, and they consume the Host immediately upon receiving it.” Please ensure that communicants are not denied Holy Communion because they kneel or receive the Host on their tongue.

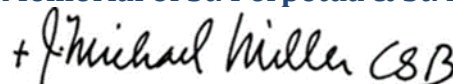
Appendix III: Guidelines for the Rite of Distributing Holy Communion Outside of Mass

Guidelines for the Rite of Distributing Holy Communion Outside of Mass

The following six principles are to guide the Rite of Distributing Holy Communion Outside of Mass:

1. Whenever possible, Holy Mass is to be celebrated daily in every parish.
2. Whenever the Rite of Distributing Holy Communion Outside of Mass is scheduled on a weekday, every effort must be made to avoid any confusion between the Mass and this celebration. Indeed, while such celebrations may be necessary, they should never detract from the Eucharist as the center of the entire Christian life.
3. Whenever possible, the Mass schedule of nearby parishes should be made available to parishioners. If a nearby parish is celebrating Mass on a given weekday, people should be encouraged to participate in that Mass rather than attending a Rite of Distributing Holy Communion Outside of Mass.
4. On a day when Mass is celebrated in a parish, it is not appropriate to schedule a Rite of Distributing Holy Communion Outside of Mass. Such celebrations should never be seen as equivalent to participation at Mass.
5. The proper ritual for the Rite of Distributing Holy Communion Outside of Mass is found in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*.¹ The specialized provisions of *Sunday Celebrations of the Word and Hours*² are not appropriate to weekday celebrations.
6. A Rite of Distributing Holy Communion Outside of Mass should never be scheduled for the purpose of “providing a role” for deacons or lay ministers.

Approved: 2018-March-7
Memorial of St. Perpetua & St. Felicity



✠ **J. Michael Miller, CSB**
Archbishop of Vancouver

¹ International Commission on English in the Liturgy, *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, 1976.

² Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Sunday Celebrations of the Word and Hours*, 1995.

Appendix IV: Some General Norms for Cremation and Funeral Liturgies

As set out by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops¹

When Cremation Takes Place After the Funeral Liturgy

The vigil for the deceased and the funeral liturgy are celebrated as usual, with a slight change in the final commendation after the funeral liturgy to indicate that the procession with the body will proceed to the crematorium and not to the cemetery.

If the family and friends accompany the body to the crematorium, prayers “At the Crematorium: Gathering in the Presence of the Body” may be prayed there. The Rite of Committal is celebrated when the cremated remains are buried or entombed.

When Cremation Takes Place Before the Funeral Liturgy

For a variety of reasons the decision is sometimes made to have cremation take place before the funeral rites are celebrated. If family members and friends gather at the crematorium, the prayers “At the Crematorium: Gathering in the Presence of the Body” may be prayed there.

The cremated remains of the deceased are to be treated with the same reverence that is given to the body of the deceased. The cremated remains are placed in their entirety in a secure vessel.

Funeral Liturgy with Cremated Remains Present

The cremated remains may be present during the Vigil and the Funeral Liturgy as per the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (Prot. No. 327/84). For the Funeral Liturgy a small table covered with a white cloth is prepared for the cremated remains near the altar. The cremated remains are never placed on or immediately in front of the altar.

The vessel containing the cremated remains may be either put on the table before the liturgy begins, or carried with dignity and reverence in the Entrance Procession. [The person carrying the cremated remains follows the presider. The mourners may follow.]

If the cremated remains are placed on the table beforehand: After the people have assembled, the Funeral Liturgy begins. The presiding minister greets the mourners informally, or with the words provided in the ritual book.

In Canada it is often the custom to place a picture of the deceased near the vessel of the cremated remains during visitation at the funeral home. During the Funeral Liturgy, which is an act of worship and thanksgiving to God, it is preferable that pictures not be displayed. Pictures can be displayed at a reception following the funeral.

¹ Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Cremation and Funeral Liturgies*, (2019).

The Use of Christian Symbols

When the cremated remains of the deceased person are present for any of the Funeral Rites, the Christian symbols used in a Funeral Liturgy where a body is present are appropriately used here as well.

- The Paschal (Easter) candle is placed near the table as a reminder of Christ's undying presence among the faithful.
- Holy water, a reminder to the assembly of the saving waters of Baptism,
- Incense, a sign of the community's prayer for the deceased rising to God, may be used during the Final Commendation.
- If it is the custom of the parish to place a white pall over a casket, then a small white pall (veil) may be placed over the vessel containing the cremated remains. This is especially appropriate if the form/nature of the container might be a distraction or draw undue attention.



Appendix V: The Duties of an Acolyte

With the increase in the number of lay ministers serving in liturgical roles such as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, altar servers and sacristans, the role of the instituted acolyte is a bit obscured. It is important to remember that the acolyte is a member of the lay faithful whose ministry flows from baptism and not ordination. However, since he is instituted to the public ministry of the Church, his service should take precedence over the service of other lay ministers. Other lay ministers are commissioned to serve at their parish for a set period of time while an acolyte is permanently instituted to serve the Church.

In addition to their roles and responsibilities in the Eucharistic liturgy as outlined below, instituted acolytes serve as lay ministers at funeral vigils and committals, communal celebrations of the Liturgy of the Hours, and devotional/prayer services. They may also perform the various lay blessings from the Book of Blessings using the prescribed forms. They serve as sacristans and as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion for the sick and homebound. They can assist priests and deacons during the Rites of Baptism and Matrimony in whatever ways deemed necessary by the celebrant.

An instituted acolyte may expose the Blessed Sacrament for public veneration. He may open the tabernacle and also, as required, place the ciborium on the altar or place the Host in the monstrance. At the end of the period of adoration, he may replace the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. It is not lawful, however, for him to give the blessing with the sacrament. For this exposition, the acolyte should be vested in alb and cincture; the cope and humeral veil are not appropriate.²

Because they have undergone the necessary training in order to fulfill this ministry, and in order to continue their preparation for ordination, it is appropriate for instituted acolytes to assist in the instruction of other lay ministers such as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, altar servers, lectors, and sacristans. Instituted acolytes should also become familiar with the sacramental records of the parish and participate in liturgical planning and preparation.

The normal vesture for an acolyte is an alb with cincture (amice if necessary). A cassock with surplice is also appropriate at Mass.

“The acolyte is appointed in order to aid the deacon and to minister to the priest. It is his duty therefore to attend to the service of the altar and to assist the deacon and the priest in liturgical celebrations, especially in the celebration of Mass; he is also to distribute Communion as a special minister when the ministers spoken of in the *Codex Iuris Canonici* c. 845³ are not available or are prevented by ill health, age, or another pastoral ministry from performing this function, or when the number of communicants is so great that the celebration of Mass would be unduly prolonged. In the same extraordinary circumstances an acolyte may be entrusted with publicly exposing the Blessed Sacrament for adoration by the faithful and afterward replacing it, but not with blessing the people.

² Cf. Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *Eucharistiae Sacramentum* (21 June 1973), nn. 91-92.

³ Cf. This refers to the 1917 Code. See canon 910 of the 1983 Code.



“He may also, to the extent needed, take care of instructing other faithful who on a temporary basis are appointed to assist the priest or deacon in liturgical celebrations by carrying the Roman Missal, cross, candles, etc., or by performing other such duties.

“He will perform these functions more worthily if he participates in the Holy Eucharist with increasingly fervent devotion, receives nourishment from it, and deepens his knowledge about it...

“As one set aside in a special way for the service of the altar, the acolyte should learn all matters concerning public divine worship and strive to grasp their inner spiritual meaning: in that way he will be able each day to offer himself entirely to God, be an example to all by his gravity and reverence in church, and have a sincere love for the Mystical Body of Christ, the people of God, especially for the weak and the sick. In accordance with the ancient tradition of the Church, institution to the ministries of reader and acolyte is reserved to men.”⁴

Duties of Instituted Acolytes Within the Eucharistic Liturgy⁵

187. The duties that the acolyte may carry out are of various kinds and several may coincide. Hence, it is desirable that these duties be suitably distributed among several acolytes. If, however, only one acolyte is present, he should perform the more important duties while the rest are to be distributed among several ministers.

Note: It is never allowed for an acolyte to give the homily or even a “reflection” during the Mass.⁶

188. In the procession to the altar, the acolyte may carry the cross, walking between two ministers with lighted candles. Upon reaching the altar, the acolyte places the cross upright near the altar so that it may serve as the altar cross; otherwise, he puts it in a worthy place. Then he takes his place in the sanctuary.

Note: This, of course, does not mean that the acolyte must carry the cross but is an indication that the acolyte may be accorded a place of privilege in the entrance procession.

189. Through the entire celebration, the acolyte is to approach the priest or the deacon, whenever necessary, in order to present the book to them and to assist them in any other way required. Thus it is appropriate, insofar as possible, that the acolyte occupy a place from which he can conveniently carry out his ministry either at the chair or at the altar.

Note: The acolyte's posture is to correspond with that of the lay faithful. In other words, when they stand, he should stand; when they sit, he should be seated (unless he has a function to fulfill); when they kneel after the Sanctus, he should kneel. He

⁴ Saint Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio, Ministeria Quaedam* (15 August, 1972), nn. 6-7.

⁵ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, nn. 187-193.

⁶ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacrament, *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (25 March 2004), nn. 64-74.



may remain standing in the sanctuary after the Agnus Dei in order to receive and help distribute Communion.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

190. If no deacon is present, after the Universal Prayer is concluded and while the priest remains at the chair, the acolyte places the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, the pall, and the Missal on the altar. Then, if necessary, the acolyte assists the priest in receiving the gifts of the people and, if appropriate, brings the bread and wine to the altar and hands them to the priest. If incense is used, the acolyte presents the thurible to the priest and assists him while he incenses the gifts, the cross, and the altar. Then the acolyte incenses the priest and the people.

Note: The instituted acolyte hands the gifts to the celebrant rather than placing them on the altar or the corporal himself. The acolyte is not allowed to pour the water into the wine to be consecrated or to raise the chalice at the doxology. These actions are reserved to clergy.

If a deacon is present, the instituted acolyte assists him by bringing him the linens and sacred vessels from the credence table. The acolyte should hand them to the deacon and not place them on the altar or the corporal. He may bring the cruet of water for the mingling in the chalice to the deacon at the appropriate time and he may assist the priest with the washing of his hands.

191. A duly instituted acolyte, as an extraordinary minister, may, if necessary, assist the priest in giving Communion to the people.⁷ If Communion is given under both kinds, when no deacon is present, the acolyte administers the chalice to the communicants or holds the chalice if Communion is given by intinction.

Note: Although the acolyte remains an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, by virtue of being an instituted minister, he takes precedence over other members of the lay faithful who may be serving as extraordinary ministers. When Communion is given under only one kind, the acolyte should receive as any other lay person under just the one kind.

The extraordinary ministers are to receive the vessels containing the Body and Blood from the hands of the priest celebrant.⁸ Therefore, the acolyte should not be taking vessels from the altar to hand to the other ministers.

192. Likewise, when the distribution of Communion is completed, a duly instituted acolyte helps the priest or deacon to purify and arrange the sacred vessels. When no deacon is present, a duly instituted acolyte carries the sacred vessels to the credence table and there purifies, wipes, and arranges them in the usual way.

⁷ Cf. Saint Pope Paul VI, *Ministeria Quaedam*, n. 6.

⁸ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 162.



Note: The purifying of the sacred vessels may be done by more than one person if the number of vessels is large. It is appropriate for the celebrant, should he so desire, to purify the principle chalice at the altar himself while the acolyte purifies the remaining vessels at the credence table. The vessels may also be placed on the credence table and covered for purifying immediately after the Mass. In this case, the acolyte should return to the sanctuary quickly to perform this duty. The instituted acolyte is not to say the prayer *"Lord, may I receive these gifts..."* while cleansing the vessels. This prayer is reserved to the priest.

193. After the celebration of Mass, the acolyte and other ministers return in procession to the sacristy, together with the deacon and the priest in the same way and order in which they entered.



Appendix VI: Quick References to the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*

SUBJECT	GIRM #
Ministry of the Deacon	94, 116
Role at Mass	
Readings and Gospel	59-60
Homily	66
Prayers of the Faithful	71
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Gospel	212
Place at Altar	215
Sign of Peace	239
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Vesture	
Proper Vestments	119
Alb	336
Dalmatic	338
Stole	340



Appendix VII: Liturgical Terminology

A. *Parts of the Church*

Altar Rail (Communion Rail): Fence-like structure often made of the same material as the main altar; it serves as an extension of the altar and separates the nave from the sanctuary.

Altar: Large, durable, solid and immovable table in the sanctuary upon which the bread and wine are become Jesus' Sacred Body and Blood. It reminds us of how Jesus is the "cornerstone" of the Church.

Ambo: Large pulpit or lectern in the sanctuary or between the sanctuary and the nave from which the readings, homily and universal prayer are proclaimed.

Ambry: A niche in the sanctuary wall where the Holy Oils are stored: Oil of Catechumens, Sacred Chrism, and Oil of the Sick.

Apse: The extremity of the nave; often a curved, semi-circular area.

Baldachin (Baldacchino): Usually refers to the canvas or cloth canopy used to cover the Blessed Sacrament in solemn processions. It is also the name given to any type of canopy over the altar, commonly made of marble, metal or wood. It may hang from the ceiling, be supported by pillars or protrude from a wall.

Baptismal Font: The font in which children and adults are baptized. Often large and made of marble or stone, the font is frequently situated in a baptistery, or near the entrance of the church or in a transept.

Baptistery: A separate building, room or space reserved for Baptisms.

Credence Table: A movable table at the side of the altar upon which are placed the items needed for sacred functions, particularly the Mass; that is the chalice, cruets, basin.

Gifts Table (Offertory Table): A table usually in the middle or back of a church that holds the vessels of bread and wine and water that will be carried up to the altar during the Offertory Procession.

Holy Water Stoups or Fonts: These are various-sized receptacles located at the entrances of the church. We dip our hands into them and sign ourselves to remind us that, as we enter the church, Baptism was our sacramental entrance into the Church.

Lectern: Sometimes a word used to describe the ambo, although it is usually distinct from the ambo. It is a small stand that is movable and does not compete with the ambo; it is used by commentators, readers of the announcements, chanters or the choirmaster. In many parishes the ambo serves also as the lectern.

Mensa: The top slab of a fixed altar.

Narthex: Larger than normal vestibule; a meeting area or lobby between the outside entrance and the inside entrance into the church.

Nave: The main body of the church where the congregation sits. In a cruciform church this would be the “body” or “torso” of Christ.

Sacrarium: A basin or sink, with a separate drainpipe leading directly into the earth for the disposal of water used for any sacred purpose, such as draining away the water used to wash the sacred vessels after they have already been purified, on the disposal of the first rinse water from altar linens, the water used to rinse holy oils and blessed ashes from the hand.

Sacristy: The place that houses sacred objects used for the liturgy and devotions and in which clergy and liturgical ministers vest themselves.

Sanctuary Lamp: Large white (or red) candle above or near the tabernacle. If lit, the candle indicates that the Eucharist is present in the tabernacle.

Sanctuary: The area of the church that is usually elevated and set apart from the rest of the church and in which the bishop, priests, deacons and ministers exercise their ministries. It usually includes the ambo, altar and the clergy’s chairs.

Sedilia: A bench in the sanctuary for the presiding ministers at a liturgical rite.

Tabernacle: The large, singular, ornate dwelling place in the church that houses the Eucharist outside of Mass. It occupies a central position in a church.

Transept: The transverse part of a cruciform church lying at right angles to the nave, commonly between it and the sanctuary, and often including the high structural part, either a dome or a tower, in front of the apse.

Vestibule: The small area in-between the outermost doors of the church and the inside doors.

B. Sacred Items

Ablution Cup (Bowl): A small bowl-like container, located near the tabernacle and/or the credence table used to purify the fingers of those who assisted with the distribution of Holy Communion.

Alb: A long white, robe-like vestment common to clerics, instituted ministers, and, frequently, lay faithful who are exercising some ministry at the altar (such as servers and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion).

Altar Breads: Altar breads are made of wheat alone, should be fresh, and are used for Mass.

Altar Cloth: Linen used to cover the mensa.



Altar Wine (Sacramental Wine): Wine appropriate for use during Communion.

Amice: A rectangular piece of white linen with two strings at the upper corners which a cleric uses underneath his alb to cover the neck so that the collar might be hidden.

Aspergillum: A liturgical implement used to sprinkle holy water. It comes in two common forms: a brush that is dipped in the water and shaken or a perforated ball at the end of a short handle. Some have sponges or internal reservoirs that dispense holy water when shaken, while others must periodically be dipped in an aspersorium.

Aspersorium (Situla): The holy water bucket used to hold water for the aspergillum.

Bells: Rung during the epiclesis and elevation of the Host and chalice.

Boat: A common term for the small vessel that holds the incense granules.

Book of Gospels: A large, ornate book carried in the entrance procession by the Deacon and is used for the proclamation of the Gospel.

Book Stand: A holder for books placed on the altar, such as the *Book of Gospels* or *The Roman Missal* during the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Burse: A large, square pocket or container that holds the folded corporal used at Mass. If used, its colour matches the liturgical colour or vestments of the celebration.

Candelabra: A candelabra is a branched candlestick or lamp with several candles, most commonly used at Eucharistic Exposition and Benediction.

Candle, Paschal (Easter Candle): A large white candle kept near the Baptismal Font that reminds us that Christ continues to be the light of the world. It is also used during the entire Easter Season and is located near the ambo or center of the sanctuary. It is also used at funerals and is situated near the body of the deceased.

Candles, Processional: Candles used at the celebration of Mass during the entrance procession, Gospel procession and incensation at the Consecration. They are also used to accompany the cross in the liturgy of the Veneration of the Cross on Good Friday. They are not used during the Gospel procession at the Easter Vigil or in the Easter Season because the Easter candle is located in the sanctuary. Outside of Mass they are also used in other or similar processions.

Chalice: A tall goblet that the celebrant uses to consecrate the Precious Blood. The cross typically found on the base of the chalice indicates its front.

Chasuble: A long, often ornate, sleeveless poncho-like garment worn by priests and bishops over their alb and stole during Mass, matching the liturgical colour of the celebration. It symbolizes charity and often comes in two styles: Gothic (a round shape with material that



covers the arms) and Roman (straighter edges and without cloth over the arms; sometimes nicknamed a “fiddleback” because it suggests the shape of a violin).

Ciborium (Plural: Ciboria): A gold or silver vessel that is tall like a chalice but holds the Body of Christ for distribution in Holy Communion and has a lid.

Cincture: A rope that serves as a belt around the waist of anyone wearing an alb; it symbolizes chastity. Its colour can match the colour of the season, though white is the universal colour.

Cope: A large mantle worn by clerics (including deacons) in some solemn liturgical services outside of Mass, such as the solemn celebration of the Sacraments outside of Mass, the solemn celebration of Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer, during the rite of Eucharistic Exposition and Benediction, in certain processions and always in accord with the rubrics proper to each rite.

Corporal: A large, white napkin that unfolds and is placed beneath the sacred vessels on the altar. Its purpose is to catch any particles of the body of Christ that might fall on the altar.

Cross, Pectoral: A cross, usually about 6 inches in height, worn around the neck of a bishop. The pectoral cross is worn on the chest of prelates so as to keep Christ close to their hearts.

Cross, Processional: A portable crucifix, mounted on a staff, which is used in liturgical procession at the head of the vested members of the clergy.

Crosier (Pastoral Staff): The crosier is the shepherd’s staff used by bishops. The crosier is a symbol of the bishop’s pastoral role. It may be of wood or a precious metal.

Cruet: Vessels that hold the water and wine used at Mass.

Custodia (or Pyx): A special standing container in the tabernacle where the luna is placed when not in the monstrance. It is also the container for Hosts which are brought to the sick for Holy Communion.

Dalmatic: Instead of the chasuble worn by priests, the deacon wears the sleeved dalmatic over his alb and stole. It should ideally match the fabric of the priest celebrant’s chasuble and must be of the same liturgical colour. It often has banding across it in the form of a ladder, reminding the deacon that he is like Christ, the mediator between the Heavenly Father and the people

Holy Water Tank: A large reservoir used to hold holy water.

Host: A term for the consecrated bread(s); it derives from the Latin word *hostia*, which means “victim.”

Humeral Veil: A cloth of rectangular shape, worn so as to cover the back and shoulders and its two ends hang down in front so that it covers the hands when touching the monstrance. It is used when carrying the Eucharist in procession and when giving Eucharistic Benediction.



Key, Tabernacle: The key that unlocks the tabernacle.

Lavabo Bowl (Basin) and Towel: The *Lavabo* bowl is the nickname for the bowl that catches water poured over the celebrant's hands during Mass. The towel is used to dry his hands.

Lectionary: The *Lectionary* is the book from which all the readings are proclaimed, unless a *Book of Gospels* is used.

Luna (or Lunette): The round container made of glass and gilded metal that holds the Host securely in place in the monstrance.

Mitre: The headdress of bishops worn at liturgical functions.

Monstrance: A glass-framed shrine in which the Blessed Sacrament is publicly exposed.

Pall, Funeral: An ample cloth covering, plain or ornamented, draped over the coffin at a funeral Mass. It is ordinarily white, but may be purple or black.

Pall: A firm square of cloth used to cover the chalice and protect its contents from foreign matter and bugs.

Paten: A saucer or plate usually made of or plated with gold or silver that holds the large Host(s) at Mass.

Purificator: A piece of pure white linen or hemp used for cleansing the chalice. It is usually folded into three layers so that when placed on the chalice beneath the paten its width is about three inches. A small cross may be sewn in it at its center to distinguish it from the little finger-towels.

Relic: A relic can be 1st class: the body or fragment of a Saint or Blessed; 2nd class: objects used by a Saint; or 3rd class: other objects that have touched a first-class relic.

Reliquary: A dignified container that houses or exposes a relic.

Roman Missal: The official book that contains all of the prayers of the Mass.

Stole: A long, scarf-like vestment worn over the alb and under the dalmatic or chasuble, matching the liturgical colour of the celebration. It symbolizes authority and the yoke of Christ.

Surplice: A large-sleeved, loose-fitting garment reaching almost to the knees and worn without a cincture and over the cassock or habit in processions, while administering the Sacraments, in choir or at any function when the alb is not called for; it is worn by servers at Mass.

Thurible (Censer): Gold or silver ball on a chain that holds burning charcoals and incense.



Veil, Chalice: The protective covering for the chalice that shrouds it in mystery. It is of the same liturgical colour of the celebration, though it may always be white. It covers the chalice and paten when not actually in use on the altar. It is not removed until the preparation of the altar and is used to recover the chalice and paten after the distribution of Holy Communion.

Veil, Tabernacle: The cover placed on a tabernacle when the Eucharist is present within. It may be of any liturgical colour, especially the colour of the celebration, but is most often white (always appropriate for the Eucharist), gold or silver.

Vimpa: A silk veil falling over the shoulders and extending down the arms and over the hands, worn by servers who carry a bishop's mitre and crosier.

Zucchetto (Skullcap): A silk skullcap worn by bishops. Its colour is violet for bishops, red for cardinals, and white for the Pope.