



***AVE MARIA CATHOLIC CHURCH
ALTAR SERVER***

PROCEDURES FOR INCENSING



(Revised: February 12, 2009)

Thurifer Procedures:

In procession, the thurifer swings the thurible at full-length with/in the right hand. In the left hand, they carry the boat against their chest or their left hand rests flat across the chest (palm open), if there is a server functioning as a boat bearer.

Additionally, once the thurible is removed from its stand, it should remain *gently* swaying in the thurifer's right hand. It should not be allowed to remain in a constant (still) position alongside the thurifer (e.g., it is to be swung when held).

In placing incense in the thurible, the amount added or to be used by the presider ought to be governed by such factors as the size of the church; known assembly sensitivities to incense; etc. Note: The sign of incense rising is achieved only if the grain or powder is evenly arranged on burning coals. Striking or breaking the coals with the spoon does nothing but dislodge the grains and cause the swinging of the thurible to not produce smoke."

PREPARATIONS BEFORE THE MASS / SERVICE / EVENT / ADORATION:

1. After you have arrived and vested for the Mass with a red cassock and white surplice, if incense is to be used, you will be informed by the priest, deacon, or sacristan. The task of lighting the charcoal and insuring that sufficient incense is in the boat is the sacristan's responsibility—not an altar server.
2. If incense is to be used in the Mass, approximately 5 minutes before the Mass start time, proceed into the sanctuary, pickup the thurible and boat, and bring both items back to the main entry doors to the church's worship area to await the deacon and priest. Be careful in handling the thurible it is HOT!

CARRYING THE THURIBLE AND BOAT:

1. Do not attempt to genuflect while carrying with the thurible and/or boat. Because you are carrying an object, a simple head bow is the appropriate reverent gesture to the altar or tabernacle before entering or after leaving the sanctuary.
2. Practice processing and moving with an "empty" thurible (e.g., opening the top portion to add incense; making left or right turns, standing from a kneeling position; etc).
3. Carry the thurible in your right hand, holding it by the top ring of the chain (which is fully extended while standing) on your thumb finger.
4. Your right hand should be extending about a foot in front of you and about six inches to the right of and way from your body and alb. By practicing before the event or Mass, you will be able to find a point that offers you both comfort and the best control of the thurible.

5. When standing or walking with the thurible, let it swing *gently* back and forth (forward to back). This allows air to enter across the charcoal(s) and the smoke to escape.
6. When walking in procession, swing the thurible generally, no more than 90 degrees forward and backward no more than 45 degrees.
7. Use a minimum of hand and arm movements – you swing the thurible by use of your wrist and fingers.
8. Carry the boat on the palm of your left hand (holding it securely by the base with your fingers), with your elbow at a 90 angle and the boat toward your chest.
9. If there is a server assigned as a boat holder, while he/she holds the boat, simply rest your open hand with your palm against your alb, at about chest or waist height.

THE PROCESSION:

1. Before the procession, the presider will be asked to add incense to the thurible in the narthex or gathering area, at their discretion. The thurifer processes directly in front of the crucifer and therefore, sets the cadence of liturgical pace for the entire procession.
2. Note: The crucifer is directly behind you, so please swing the thurible with care.
3. Proceed to the sanctuary slowly and reverently.
4. If the altar is to be incensed, after a brief head bow to the altar (before the first step leading to the sanctuary), enter the sanctuary, turn to the left and proceed to the pre-positioned point behind the altar (on the tabernacle side) and wait for the presider and/or deacon to enter the sanctuary and reverence the altar, before approaching the presider and/or deacon with the thurible.
5. If the altar is not to be incensed until the gospel, gifts or later, after a brief head bow to the altar, proceed into the sanctuary, place the thurible and boat on its stand, and proceed to your assigned seat, remain standing, and participate with the remainder of the Opening Rite with the other altar server(s).

PRESENTING THE THURIBLE TO THE PRESIDERS TO ADD INCENSE:

1. When it is the appropriate time begin the Mass and/or to use the incense, approach and present the boat to the presider. Note: If there is a deacon present to assist the presider, hand the boat to the deacon to assist the celebrant.
2. Standing directly before the presider and with your left hand, grasp the thurible chain ring and with the right hand, elevate the thurible by the chain to enable you to present a fully opened thurible to the presider to add incense.
3. With your right hand, hold the thurible steady. Be careful, the thurible may be HOT! If the top portion of the thurible is too hot or won't open, don't open it! The presider will simply add incense through the openings of the top cover.
4. The presider will spoon incense into the thurible and bless it.
5. Once the presider has blessed it, lower the top and return it to along your right side; unless the presider asks for the thurible.
6. While the presider is incensing the altar, please step aside and wait there behind the altar, until the presider is finished and hands the thurible to you. Once it has been handed to you, return the thurible and boat to its stand.
7. If the incense is to be used for the blessing of the Book of the Gospels, after the incense has been added by the Presider (while seated in his chair), receive the boat, exchange a reverent head bow, step aside to either permit the presider to pass by you or for the deacon to receive his blessing from the presider.
8. If the incense is to be used for incensing the Book of the Gospels, proceed before the presider or deacon carrying the book to the ambo. Once at the ambo, stand to the right of and slightly behind the presider or deacon and facing them. Once they have said, "A reading from the Holy Gospel according to ..." be prepared to step forward and relinquish the thurible to them. Once the incensing of the Book of the Gospels is completed, the presider or deacon will hand the thurible back to you. Step back several steps behind them and continue to gently swing the censer forward and back during the proclamation of the Gospel. When the proclamation is finished, return the thurible and/or boat to its stand and return to your seat.
9. If the incense is to be used for incensing the gifts and altar, once the gifts are placed on the altar, proceed to a point approximately 5-8 feet behind the presider and the altar and wait. At the appropriate time, the presider and/or deacon will turn to you. As stated above, hand the boat to the deacon or presider (in the absence of a deacon) and open the thurible, if possible. Once the presider has added incense, relinquish the thurible to them, take back the boat, step back several feet, and wait until the incensing is completed.

Once the incensing is completed, the thurible will be handed back to you. Please place the thurible and boat on its stand and return to the normal servers' position.

Note: The incensation of the gifts and altar are BEFORE the washing of the presider's hands.

10. If the incense is to be used during a funeral for the incensation of a casket or urn of cremains, once the presider has finished the Prayer after Communion and the Song of Farewell has begun or when you are motioned by him, step forward to present the boat and thurible. Once the presider has added incense, relinquish the thurible to them, take back the boat, step back several feet, and wait in the sanctuary until the incensing is completed. Once the incensing is completed, the thurible will be handed back to you.

If the incense is to be used during the recession, do not return the boat or thurible to its stand. Simply hold it and stand near the servers' chairs, because the presider will be motioning for you, the crucifer, and/or candle bearers to soon get into your positions for the recession out of the church.

If the incense is not to be used during the recession, once the thurible is handed back to you, please return it and the boat to its stand and stand in front of your server seat.

11. (For the Bishop)

If the presider has asked you to incense the host and chalice during the elevations, after it has been returned to you (#9 above), add a small amount of additional incense to the charcoal quietly and inconspicuously. Leave the boat on the stand. Once the Holy, Holy, Holy has begun to be sung, go to the front of the altar and remain standing facing the presider and altar. When the singing is completed, kneel in front of the altar, along with the assembly. Refer below for further instructions.

PHYSICALLY GIVING AND RECEIVING THE THURIBLE:

(e.g., incensing gospel or altar)

1. To present (give) the thurible to the deacon or presider, bring it in front of you, lift it up and grasp the ring with your left hand and the thurible chain(s) with your right hand (so the thurible chain goes across the front of your chest/body).
2. Maintain your hands (making sure your thumb is no longer in the ring) at a height so that the presider or deacon does not have to reach up, down or out for the thurible. Present the thurible with both hands and then give a reverent bow.
3. Once they have received it, step back slightly and out of the way. Be observant to the actions, motions, and requests of the presider or deacon.

4. When they are finished using the thurible, step forward to receive it back.
5. Receive the thurible as it is presented to you and then give a reverent head bow.
6. If at the ambo, refer to #6 and 7 above for further instructions.
7. If at the altar, refer to #8 above for further instructions.

*** (FOR THE BISHOP)

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER ELEVATION OF CONSECRATED SPECIES:

1. As you are assuming the kneeling position before the altar, grab the chain ring in your left hand and grasp approximately the half-way point of the chain using your right hand. This will: (a) Prevent the thurible from striking the floor surface during swinging and, (b) Enable you to incense the Species' elevations easier.
2. While the presider is reading the Eucharistic Prayer, gently swing the thurible in your right hand along your right side.
3. As the presider elevates the consecrated host, raise the thurible and incense the Body of Christ with three, single swings (3, 1's).
4. After the incensing is completed, return to gently swinging the thurible in your right hand along our right side.
5. As the presider elevated the chalice of consecrated wine, raise the thurible and incense the Blood of Christ with three, single swings (3, 1's).
6. After the incensing is completed, return to gently swinging the thurible in your right hand along your right side.
7. As the presider and assembly begin to sing or recite the response to "Let us proclaim the mystery of faith", stand, go place the thurible on the stand, and return to the appropriate servers' position.

RECESSION:

** Before the Mass or event, determine from the presider if they wish the incense to be used during the recessional. If not, simply leave it on the stand during the recessional. If the incense is to be used during the recessional:

1. Add a small amount of incense to the thurible quietly and inconspicuously (if necessary) and proceed to the front of the altar and await the presider and/or deacon.
 2. The thurifer is positioned in such a manner that the crucifer and other servers are in front of him.
 3. Once the presider and/or deacon have bowed to the altar or genuflected to the tabernacle (as appropriate), after a brief head bow, the thurifer will turn around and lead the recession out. Once again, the crucifer sets the cadence of liturgical pace for the recession.
 4. The crucifer is directly behind you, so please swing the thurible with care.
 5. Proceed out to the narthex or gathering area and discretely return the thurible and boat to the sacristy.
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