**THE DEACONS DUTIES AND WORDS AT MASS**

I. THE DUTIES OF THOSE IN HOLY ORDERS

92. Every legitimate celebration of the Eucharist is directed by the Bishop, either in person or through Priests who are his helpers.

When the Bishop is present at a Mass where the people are gathered, it is most fitting that he himself celebrate the Eucharist and associate Priests with himself in the sacred action as concelebrants. This is done not for the sake of adding outward solemnity to the rite, but to signify more vividly the mystery of the Church, “the sacrament of unity.”

If, on the other hand, the Bishop does not celebrate the Eucharist but has assigned it to someone else to do this, then it is appropriate that he should preside over the Liturgy of the Word, wearing the pectoral cross, stole, and cope over an alb, and that he should give the blessing at the end of Mass.

93. A Priest, also, who possesses within the Church the sacred power of Orders to offer sacrifice in the person of Christ, presides by this fact over the faithful people gathered here and now, presides over their prayer, proclaims to them the message of salvation, associates the people with himself in the offering of sacrifice through Christ in the Holy Spirit to God the Father, and gives his brothers and sisters the Bread of eternal life and partakes of it with them. Therefore, when he celebrates the Eucharist, he must serve God and the people with dignity and humility, and by his bearing and by the way he pronounces the divine words he must convey to the faithful the living presence of Christ.

94. After the Priest, the Deacon, in virtue of the sacred Ordination he has received, holds first place among those who minister in the celebration of the Eucharist. For the sacred Order of the Diaconate has been held in high honor in the Church even from the early time of the Apostles. At Mass the Deacon has his own part in proclaiming the Gospel, from time to time in preaching God’s Word, in announcing the intentions of the Universal Prayer, in ministering to the Priest, in preparing the altar and in serving the celebration of the Sacrifice, in distributing the Eucharist to the faithful, especially under the species of wine, and from time to time in giving instructions regarding the people’s gestures and posture.[[1]](#footnote-1)

B) Mass with a Deacon

171. When he is present at the celebration of the Eucharist, a Deacon should exercise his ministry, wearing sacred vestments. In fact, the Deacon:

a) assists the Priest and walks at his side;

b) ministers at the altar, both as regards the chalice and the book;

c) proclaims the Gospel and may, at the direction of the Priest Celebrant, give the Homily (cf. no. 66);

d) guides the faithful people by giving appropriate instructions, and announces the intentions of the Universal Prayer;

e) assists the Priest Celebrant in distributing Communion, and purifies and arranges the sacred vessels;

f) carries out the duties of other ministers himself, if necessary, when none of them is present.

*The Introductory Rites*

172. Carrying the *Book of the 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 the 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 the 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 the 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*. 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 the 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 the Gospels.*

Lastly, the Deacon may carry the *Book of the 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*, *etc.,* 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 host, 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.[[2]](#footnote-2)

THE ORDER OF MASS

**THE INTRODUCTORY RITES**

1. When the people are gathered, the Priest approaches the altar with the ministers while the Entrance Chant is sung.

When he has arrived at the altar, after making a profound bow with the ministers, the Priest venerates the altar with a kiss and, if appropriate, incenses the cross and the altar. Then, with the ministers, he goes to the chair.

3. The Priest, or a Deacon or another minister, may very briefly introduce the faithful to the Mass of the day.

4. Then follows the Penitential Act, to which the Priest invites the faithful, saying:

6. The Priest invites the faithful to make the Penitential Act:

Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

A brief pause for silence follows.

The Priest, or a Deacon or another minister, then says the following or other invocations with Kyrie, eleison (Lord, have mercy):

The Priest, or a Deacon

**You were sent to heal the contrite of heart:**

**Lord, have mercy.** Or: **Kyrie, eleison.**

The people reply: Lord, have mercy: Or: Kyrie, eleison.

The Priest, or a Deacon:

**You came to call sinners:**

**Christ, have mercy.** Or: **Christe, eleison.**

The people: Christ, have mercy. Or: Christe, eleison.

The Priest, or a Deacon

**You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us:**

**Lord, have mercy.** Or: **Kyrie, eleison.**

The people: Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.

Or from APPENDIX VI[In the Dioceses of the United States]

SAMPLE INVOCATIONS FOR THE PENITENTIAL ACT

**THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**

14. Meanwhile, if incense is used, the Priest puts some into the thurible. After this, the Deacon who is to proclaim the Gospel, bowing profoundly before the Priest, asks for the blessing, saying in a low voice:

**Your blessing, Father.**

The Priest 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, X and of the Holy Spirit.

The Deacon signs himself with the Sign of the Cross and replies:

**Amen.**

The Deacon, or the Priest:

**A reading from the holy Gospel according to N.**

and, at the same time, he makes the Sign of the Cross on the book and on his forehead, lips, and breast.

Then the Deacon, or the Priest, incenses the book, if incense is used, and proclaims the Gospel.

16. At the end of the Gospel, the Deacon, or the Priest, acclaims:

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

Then he kisses the book, saying quietly:

**Through the words of the Gospel may our sins be wiped away.**

**THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

21. When all this has been done, the Offertory Chant begins. Meanwhile, the ministers place the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, the pall, and the Missal on the altar.

24. The Deacon, or the Priest, pours wine and a little water into the chalice, saying quietly:

**By the mystery of this water and wine**

**may we come to share in the divinity of Christ**

**who humbled himself to share in our humanity.**

27. If appropriate, he also incenses the offerings, the cross, and the altar. A Deacon or other minister then 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.

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 host, until the people have acclaimed, *Amen*.

127. The Priest, turned towards the people, extending and then joining his hands, adds:

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

The people reply: And with your spirit.

128. Then, if appropriate, the Deacon, or the Priest, adds:

**Let us offer each other the sign of peace.**

134. After this, he takes the paten or ciborium and approaches the communicants. The Priest raises a host slightly and shows it to each of the communicants, saying:

The Body of Christ**.**

The communicant replies: Amen. And receives Holy Communion.

If a Deacon also distributes Holy Communion, he does so in the same manner.

137. When the distribution of Communion is over, the Priest or a Deacon or an acolyte purifies the paten over the chalice and also the chalice itself.

While he carries out the purification, the Priest says quietly:

**What has passed our lips as food, O Lord, may we possess in purity of heart, that what has been given to us in time may be our healing for eternity.**

141. Then the dismissal takes place. The Priest, facing the people and extending his hands, says:

The Lord be with you.

The people reply: And with your spirit.

The Priest blesses the people, saying:

May almighty God bless you,

the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

The people reply: Amen.

144. Then the Deacon, or the Priest himself, with hands joined and facing the people, says:

**Go forth, the Mass is ended.**

Or:

**Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.**

Or:

**Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.**

Or:

**Go in peace.**

The people reply: Thanks be to God.

145. Then the Priest venerates the altar as usual with a kiss, as at the beginning. After making a profound bow with the ministers, he withdraws.

146. If any liturgical action follows immediately, the rites of dismissal are omitted.[[3]](#footnote-3)

**Moments when the deacon says words –**

**and the Roman Missal might not be available.**

THE GOSPEL

Bowing in front of the presider:  **Your blessing, Father.**

Before you read the Gospel: **The Lord be with you.**

**A reading from the holy Gospel according to N.**

When the Gospel is concluded as you reverence the Book:

**Through the words of the Gospel may our sins be wiped away.**

PRAYERS AT/NEAR THE ALTAR

The Deacon pours wine and a little water into the chalice, saying quietly:

**By the mystery of this water and wine**

**may we come to share in the divinity of Christ**

**who humbled himself to share in our humanity.**

Then, after the Eucharistic Prayer, if appropriate, the Deacon adds:

**Let us offer each other the sign of peace.**

While he carries out the purification, the Deacon says quietly:

**What has passed our lips as food, O Lord,**

**may we possess in purity of heart,**

**that what has been given to us in time**

**may be our healing for eternity.**

AT THE DISMISSAL

**Go forth, the Mass is ended.** Or:

**Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.** Or:

**Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.** Or:

**Go in peace.[[4]](#footnote-4)**

1. [*The Roman Missal: Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II*](https://ref.ly/logosres/rmnmsslnglshtrn?ref=Page.p+40&off=46), Third Typical Edition. (Washington D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), 40–41. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [*The Roman Missal: Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II*](https://ref.ly/logosres/rmnmsslnglshtrn?ref=Page.p+51&off=1277), Third Typical Edition. (Washington D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), 51–53. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [*The Roman Missal: Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II*](https://ref.ly/logosres/rmnmsslnglshtrn?ref=Page.p+673&off=135&ctx=irit.%0aAll%3a%0a+%0aAmen.%0a%0a~144.+Then+the+Deacon), Third Typical Edition. (Washington D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), 673. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [*The Roman Missal: Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II*](https://ref.ly/logosres/rmnmsslnglshtrn?ref=Page.p+673&off=229&ctx=the+people%2c+says%3a%0a+%0a~Go+forth%2c+the+Mass+i), Third Typical Edition. (Washington D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), 673. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)