

# GUIDELINES FOR ALTAR SERVERS AT THE CONFIRMATION MASS

*Distributed by Diocese of Northampton Guild of St Stephen: May 2008*

1. All the Altar servers of the parish may take part in the Mass, but eight are needed. If present, the Bishop's M. C. will take the servers through a short practice before Mass and give directions during Mass. The servers need to be at the Church at least half an hour before the start of Mass.
2. The Confirmation Mass celebrated by the Bishop is different from any ordinary Sunday Mass, so it is important to pay attention to the M. C.
3. During the Mass servers are:
  - (a) to bow to the Bishop when they pass in front of him (not genuflect);
  - (b) to join in with the prayers and singing;
  - (c) to stand quietly with hands joined when not doing anything;
  - (d) to be dressed smartly in cassocks & cottas or servers albs, wearing black shoes or school shoes.
4. The Order for the Entrance Procession:

servers / acolytes

thurifer and boat

cross bearer

7 or at least 2 candle bearers

any other servers

clergy 2 by 2

deacon carrying Book of the Gospels

other deacons and, if present, concelebrating priests

THE BISHOP

2 assisting deacons (a little behind him)

Bishop's servers (book, mitre, crozier, M.C.)

5. On arrival at the Sanctuary the servers bow or genuflect as appropriate and go straight to their places. The book bearer, mitre and crozier bearers sit near M.C.

6. The Bishop- holds his crozier for the Gospel; for the Renewal of Baptismal Promises, for the blessing at the end of Mass and when entering and leaving the church. The crozier bearer should stand near the Bishop with the crozier pointing towards the people during the anointing with Chrism Oil.
7. He wears his mitre for the Readings until the Alleluia for the Renewal of Baptismal Promises, for the actual administration of the Chrism Oil, for the Presentation of the gifts, for the blessing at the end of Mass and when entering and leaving the church.
8. During the anointing at Confirmation, the Bishop sits and puts on his mitre. The crozier bearer stands behind the Bishop to the left, holding the crozier which points towards the people. The Oil of Chrism is brought to the Bishop: the server remains holding the oil to the right of the Bishop.
9. His zucchetto is removed after he has said the Prayer over the Gifts.
10. If incense is used the following points should be kept in mind:
  - (a) Three lighted charcoals into the thurible before Mass.
  - (b) Once the Bishop has incensed the Altar take the thurible into the sacristy.
  - (c) The Bishop places incense into the thurible before the Gospel, the Gospel is incensed and after the reading the thurible is returned to the sacristy.
  - (d) Two more charcoals are put in the thurible.
  - (e) The Thurible is taken to the Bishop for incensing the Gifts and the Altar.
  - (f) If a deacon is present he incenses the Bishop, if not, the thurifer does this.
  - (g) The thurifer then incenses:
    - i the concelebrants (and deacons);
    - ii the congregation;
    - iii the Host and the Chalice, at their elevations.
  - (h) At the end of the Eucharistic Prayer the thurible is returned to the sacristy.

N.B. The thurible should be kept still when it is not being used otherwise it causes a distraction.

11. As well as the other jobs,
  - (i) after the Bishop has finished the anointing, two servers take (a) lemon, soap in a basin; (b) a jug of water and a towel to the Bishop, and
  - (ii) after Communion a jug of water, basin and towel.

## GUIDE-LINES FOR THE SACRISTAN

All the things normally required for the Mass will be needed and the following Items too:

- Basin with lemon & soap.
- Jug of water & towel.
- Thurible prepared with three charcoals lit before Mass and two to be added later.
- Incense boat filled. Thurible stand to be kept in sacristy.
- Matches to re-light candles if they go out during procession.

The Bishop normally brings his own vestments, but vestments will be needed for concelebrants. The colour will normally be red, but on Sundays of Advent, Christmastide, Lent and Eastertide and on Solemnities check with your Parish Priest.

### The Church and Sanctuary

1. The Bishop's visit gives you the opportunity to clean and polish all the silver and brass.; to clean the cassocks and cottas/servers' albs; to check that lights and the microphone system are in good working order; the organ tuned etc.
2. The Bishop presides from the Chair, with a chair on either side of him for concelebrating priests/deacons. A copy of the Confirmation Booklet should be placed on the Bishop's Chair before Mass. Sufficient booklets should be available for the other ministers on the sanctuary. The other concelebrating priests and the servers will also need seats on the sanctuary.
3. The altar should be dressed and ready before the Mass begins. Candles should be lit near or on the altar.
4. Besides the Altar candles, the Consecration candles around the Church should be lit, if you have them.
5. Flowers should be used in accordance with the Liturgical Season.
6. Different parishes use different kinds of hosts/bread. The Bishop prefers to have one or more large hosts for himself and the concelebrating clergy. He does not want to have to break up other large hosts into smaller parts for the people. If such large hosts are what are used in the parish, they should be already broken up before the Mass.
7. The Church bells should be rung before the Entrance Procession and after the Final Hymn.

***For further assistance please contact the Guild: [www.guildofststephen.co.uk](http://www.guildofststephen.co.uk)***