

## Using Incense

How to Prepare the Incense for use at Mass

- Light the thurifer five minutes before Mass.
- Take the thurifer and boat to the Priest in the sacristy. He will put the incense in.

Does charcoal need to be added during Mass?

Yes. The charcoal disks last about 40 minutes, so by about halfway through Mass the charcoal will be burning out. Near the beginning of the Homily, place an additional charcoal disk on top of the existing charcoal. The charcoal needs enough time (about 10 min) to get hot enough to use incense.

If incense is being used, before the procession begins, the Priest puts some into the thurible and blesses it with the Sign of the Cross without saying anything.

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #120*

- The thurifer and the boat bearer lead the entrance procession.
- They bow their heads at the steps of the sanctuary when the Priest and other ministers genuflect. (Those who are carrying an object in a procession do not genuflect.)
- Once the Priest and other ministers have genuflected or revered the altar with a bow, all Altar Ministers move to their seats.

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- The thurifer and boat bearer move with the celebrant to behind the altar.
- The thurifer and boat bearer stand at an appropriate distance from the Priest while he venerates the altar.

The Priest goes up to the altar and venerates it with a kiss. Then, if appropriate, he incenses the cross and altar, walking around the latter.

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #123*

- Once the Priest has finished incensing the cross and altar he moves back behind the altar and hands the thurible to the Altar Minister which is then taken to an appropriate place.

During the singing of the Alleluia or other chant, if incense is being used, the Priest puts some incense into the thurible and blesses it. Then, with hands joined, he bows profoundly before the altar and quietly says the prayer (Cleanse my heart...).

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #132*

### At the Gospel Reading

The Priest or Deacon then moves to the Altar, where the book of the Gospels has been placed when processed in at the entrance procession. He then moves to the ambo. The book is carried slightly elevated. He is preceded by the Altar Ministers, who may carry the thurible and the candles.

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At the ambo, the Priest or Deacon opens the book and, with hands joined, says, The Lord be with you, to which the people reply, And with your spirit. Then he says, A reading from the holy Gospel, making the Sign of the Cross with his thumb on the book and on his forehead, mouth, and breast, which everyone else does as well. The people proclaim, Glory to you, O Lord. The Priest or Deacon incenses the book, if incense is being used.

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #134*

The thurifer leads the procession to the ambo and stands just near or behind it ready to hand the Priest or Deacon the thurible. After the Priest or Deacon has said “Glory to you, O Lord”, he takes the thurible to incense the Book of the Gospels.

### Procession

Thurifer

Candle bearers side by side

Priest or Deacon carrying the Book of the Gospels.

- Once the Ambo is reached the thurifer moves off to the side near the ambo.
- The candle bearers stand either side of the ambo.
- Once the Book of the Gospels has been incensed the thurible is taken to an appropriate place ready for the incensation during the Eucharistic Prayer.
- Three swings of the thurible are used to incense the Gospel Book which is done by the Priest or Deacon.

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### Preparation of the Gifts

Thurifer

Candle bearers side by side

Priest or Deacon carrying the Book of the Gospels.

- Once the Ambo is reached the thurifer moves off to the side near the ambo.
- The candle bearers stand either side of the ambo.
- Once the Book of the Gospels has been incensed the thurible is taken to an appropriate place ready for the incensation during the Eucharistic Prayer.
- Three swings of the thurible are used to incense the Gospel Book which is done by the Priest or Deacon.

After placing the gifts on the altar, the Priest bows profoundly and says quietly (With humble spirit).

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #143*

If incense is being used, the Priest then puts some in the thurible, blesses it without saying anything, and incenses the offerings, the cross and the altar. While standing at the side of the altar, a minister incenses the Priest and then the people.

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #144*

- After the gifts of bread and wine have been processed to the sanctuary and the Priest has received the gifts and placed them on the altar he then prepares the chalice and prays quietly. Once this has all taken place incensation begins.

## Using Incense at Mass

- The thurifer and boat bearer move to the Priest behind the altar.
- The Priest adds incense to the thurible and then incenses the bread and wine, the cross and the altar, with three swings of the thurible.
- While this is happening the incense boat bearer moves back to his position with the other Altar Ministers.
- The Altar Minister who has handed the thurible to the Priest stands off to the side on the sanctuary while the Priest incenses the bread and wine, cross and altar.
- Once this action is complete the Priest then hands the thurible to the Acolyte or Altar Minister who then incenses the Priest with three swings of the thurible.
- The Acolyte or Altar Minister then moves to the front of the sanctuary, bows to the people and incenses the people using three swings of the thurible (see page 10).
- The three swings go in different directions to take in the whole congregation. The minister bows again.

## The Eucharistic Prayer

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.  
*General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #277*

If incense is being used, when the host and the chalice are shown to the people after the Consecration, a minister incenses them

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #150*

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- At the Holy, Holy, Holy the thurifer alone moves to the front of the Altar and kneels on the Sanctuary step.
- At the elevation of the Body and Blood of Christ there are three swings of the thurible at each elevation. (No bows are made during this action.)
- When the Priest announces The Mystery of Faith the thurifer moves back to his position with the other Altar Ministers.
- The incense is then taken to an appropriate place in the church and is not used in the procession out of the church.

