

HOW TO USE INCENSE AT MASS

Before Mass

- 1) Move Glass Board, Tongs, Charcoals, Thurible, Boat, and Stand to the Chapel and place on the table there. REMOVE THE WHITE CLOTH.
- 2) Make sure the boat is full of incense. If it is not at least 2/3rds full, add incense from the bag in the bottom drawer under the incense supplies.
- 3) Light 2 charcoals by holding them upside down with tongs and using a lighter to light the outer ring, blow on them a couple times and place them in the thurible.
- 4) Swing the thurible back and forth vigorously for several minutes so that the charcoals are burning brightly
- 5) Carry the boat and thurible to the sacristy or gathering area and wait for the entrance procession.



Entrance Procession

- 1) Immediately before Mass, while announcements are being made, hand the boat to the priest and hold the thurible at his hand level so that he can impose incense onto the charcoals.
- 2) Take your place at the front of the procession
- 3) Swing the thurible back and forth on your right side, holding the boat in your left hand, or alternate sides while swinging making a V pattern in front of you
- 4) Proceed directly into the sanctuary and stand behind the altar near the lector chairs
- 5) After the priest and deacon reverence the altar, approach the altar from the side like you would when bringing items to the altar. Hand the boat to the deacon and hold the thurible up to the priest to impose incense.



- 6) Hand the thurible to the deacon by holding the top of the chain and allowing him to grab the middle of the chain.
- 7) Take several steps back and watch the priest incense the altar
- 8) When he is in front of the altar, the priest will stop to incense the crucifix. Bow when he bows and bow again with him when he finishes.
- 9) As he completes the circuit of the altar, step forward to receive the thurible again from the deacon
- 10) Exit through the credence table side door and go around through the working sacristy to the chapel. Place the thurible on the stand outside or have it in the chapel with the outside door propped open. Return to your seat through the chapel door to the sanctuary



At the Gospel

- 1) During the Second Reading, go to the chapel and swing the thurible vigorously for a minute to get the charcoal glowing again
- 2) As soon as the second reading ends, take the thurible and boat, go through the chapel door and approach the priest at the Presider's Chair. He SHOULD stand, but you stay standing even if he does not.
- 3) Hand the boat to the deacon and hold the thurible at the priest's hand level so that he can impose incense onto the charcoals.
- 4) Receive the boat back from the deacon and go stand directly in front of the tabernacle, facing the altar
- 5) When the deacon turns to start his procession (usually when the alleluia verse begins), turn to the left and lead him around the perimeter of the sanctuary and to the ambo



- 6) Stand about 3 feet behind the ambo
- 7) After the deacon's dialogue (when we say "Glory to you, O Lord"), he will turn to you. Hand him the thurible by holding the top of the chain and allowing him to grab the middle. He should return it to you the same way.
- 8) During the Gospel, swing the thurible back and forward slowly—just enough to keep some smoke rising.
- 9) After the Gospel, as the deacon moves to place the Book of the Gospels on the front of the ambo, turn and exit through the door by the credence table as during the entrance procession.



At the Offertory

- 1) It is probably necessary to light 2 new charcoals during the creed and to swing the thurible vigorously during the creed and petitions
- 2) While 1 and 2 set the altar, go around the back of the working sacristy and stand near the credence table. You can be in the sacristy, but it may be better to stand near the ramp and out of the way.
- 3) After 1 and 2 hand the wine and water to the deacon and return to the credence table, you approach the altar as at the entrance procession
- 4) Hand the boat to the deacon and hold the thurible up to the priest to impose incense.
- 5) Hand the thurible to the deacon by holding the top of the chain and allowing him to grab the middle of the chain.
- 6) Take several steps back and watch the priest incense the altar
- 7) When he is in front of the altar, the priest will stop to incense the crucifix. Bow when he bows and bow again with him when he finishes.



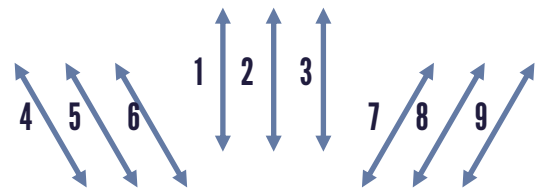
- 8) The priest will hand the thurible to the deacon to incense him and then the people. Step forward to receive the thurible from him as he returns to his place at the altar.
- 9) *[IF THERE IS NO DEACON, you must set the boat down on the arm of the ambo while the priest incense the altar. You will receive the thurible from the priest, take a step back, and bow to him. You incense him with 3 sets of 3 swings of the thurible (center, left, right). Bow again.]*
- 10) *Then, proceed to the center front of the sanctuary, gesturing to the assembly to stand. Bow to them. You incense the assembly with 3 sets of 3 swings of the thurible (center, left, right). Bow again.]*
- 11) Exit through the credence table side door and go around through the working sacristy to the chapel. Place the thurible on the stand outside or have it in the chapel with the outside door propped open. Return to your place kneeling in front of the sanctuary through the chapel door to the sanctuary.

At the Elevation

- 1) For some Masses – Holy Thursday, Easter Vigil, Corpus Christi, and Priest & Deacon's First Masses – incense will be used along with the bells at the elevations of the Host and Chalice
- 2) After the Offertory, when you return to the Chapel, add a couple scoops of incense to the thurible and leave the boat in the chapel [ALTERNATE: if there is an MC, give them the boat. They will impose incense as part of the next step]
- 3) During the Holy, Holy, Holy, proceed from the chapel door around the foot of the sanctuary to the center and kneel when the other servers do.
- 4) Swing the thurible gently from side to side while the Eucharistic Prayer is said



- 5) When the Host is elevated, you incense it with 3 sets of 3 swings of the thurible (center, left, right)
- 6) Repeat when the Chalice is elevated, incensing it with 3 sets of 3 swings of the thurible (center, left, right)
- 7) Remain kneeling with the incense until the Great Amen
- 8) During the Amen, proceed around the foot of the sanctuary to the chapel door. Place the thurible on the stand outside or have it in the chapel with the outside door propped open. Enter through the chapel door to the sanctuary and participate in the Sign of Peace, as usual.



At the Recessional

- 1) During the Final Blessing and Dismissal, go to the Chapel and impose a scoop or two of incense in the thurible yourself
- 2) Come back out the chapel door to the sanctuary at the dismissal to join the recessional. You stand behind the cross, as you will lead the procession out just as you led it in
- 3) When you reach the back of the Church, circle back to chapel immediately and dispose of the coals and incense outside
- 4) Clean up all of the incense materials from the chapel and return them to their counter in the sacristy, leaving it in better condition than you found it



Some General Notes About Incense

- 1) Incense is a powerful symbol of God's presence in the Liturgy. Using it well should enhance the assembly's experience of prayer. We want a lot of

visible smoke, but not so excessive so as to cause coughing fits or to have the fire department alerted (aka the Kyle Rosser Event).



- 2) I recommend preparing the incense equipment ahead of time wearing only a cassock so as not to get ash and dirt on the white surplice. Vest in your surplice only after all preparations are made, either by placing the boat and thurible on the second stand in the vesting sacristy or by handing them to another server.

- 3) Incense burns best when the coals are hot and glowing. I recommend scraping off excess incense from the coals with the spoon from the boat when you stow it in the chapel between uses and vigorously swinging the thurible with short, quick swings immediately before bringing it out for the next use. If communion is long, you may need to light a single extra charcoal before the recessional.



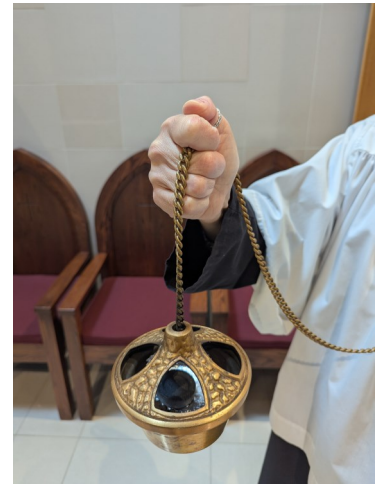
- 4) When you are carrying the thurible while standing or in procession, hold the chain straight down in your clenched fist, with the ring on the end of the chain looped around your thumb (this is for safety). You may want to double up the chain you are grabbing, or loop it around your hand once to shorten the length and make it comfortable for you to swing. Be careful to unloop it before handing it to the priest or deacon.

- 5) When holding the thurible for the priest to fill, simply hold the chain with your right hand as close to the thurible as you can without it being too hot (2-4 inches above the thurible should be fine). DO NOT TOUCH THE THURIBLE AT ALL – YOU WILL BURN YOUR HAND. Our thurible does not have a handle – it can be filled through the large vents in the top. Do not injure yourself.

- 6) If there is a deacon, you should always hand the boat and the thurible to him, never directly to the priest.



7) If there is no deacon and you are incensing the priest and the people, hold the end of the chain with your left hand on your chest. Hold the other end of the chain about 6 inches above the thurible, pinching it between your thumb and forefinger and resting it over your middle, ring, and pinky fingers. Use your wrist to generate the swing and be careful to always keep control of the swing – do not be too enthusiastic.



8) Before and after an incensation, a profound bow is made to the person or object that is incensed, except for the incensation of the altar and the offerings for the Sacrifice of the Mass.

9) The following are incensed with three swings of the thurible: 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 the Gospels, the Paschal Candle, the priest, and the people. (GIRM 277)



10) After Mass, lift the lid of the thurible using tongs and remove the charcoal remains. Dispose of them into the coffee can either outside on the ground (preferred) or on the glass cutting board. Use the wooden pestle to crush it completely and cover it with dead ash until it stops smoking. Do not leave the pestle in the coffee can.

