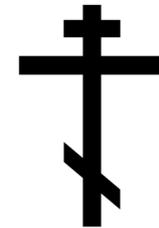




A Server's Guide



to the
Divine Liturgy



The Structure of the Liturgy

This handbook describes the roles and actions of altar servers as they are to be performed in order throughout the course of the Divine Liturgy, and making reference to the various parts. Here is a sequential outline of the order of the Liturgy for ease of reference.

The Preliminary Rites

Great Litany
First Antiphon
Short Litany
Only-Begotten Son
Second Antiphon
Short Litany
Third Antiphon

The Liturgy of the Catechumens

Little Entrance
Entrance Hymns (troparia & kontakia)
Trisagion (replaced by other hymns at certain times of year)
Prokimen
Reading(s) from the Apostle
Alleluia
Reading(s) from the Gospel
Sermon
Litany of Fervent Supplication
Litany for the Departed (omitted on Sundays and certain feasts)
Litany for & Dismissal of the Catechumens

The Liturgy of the Faithful

First and Second Litanies of the Faithful
Cherubic Hymn & Great Entrance
Litany of Oblation
Kiss of Peace
Creed (Symbol of Faith)
Anaphora
Litany before the Our Father
Our Father
Prayer with Bowed Heads & the Fraction
Communion of the Clergy
Communion of the People



*Samuel was ministering before the Lord,
wearing a linen ephod.*

1st Kingdoms 2:18

cool and the wax to solidify before replacing the dust covers on the Holy Table.

- The censer should be emptied of all remaining charcoal in the tin or other receptacle provided.
- Subdeacons or servers who have carried fans during the Liturgy should return them to their holders at the High Place.
- Once all of the above have been completed, the subdeacons and servers should ensure that the altar is left in a neat and tidy state.
- Each server makes three reverences to the Holy Table before leaving the altar for the final time.

Post-Communion hymns (*We have seen the True Light*, &c.)

Litany of Thanksgiving

Prayer Below the Ambo & Threefold *Blessed be the Name of the Lord*

The Sermon (if it has not taken place earlier)

Psalm 33

The Dismissal & Many Years

General Principles of Serving

The most important piece of practical advice for altar servers is simply this: know the services. This guide should become unnecessary after a while, for a server who knows the order and structure of the services can anticipate the next movement and prepare for it accordingly. If a procession is coming up soon, you know that you need to light the candles; if some particular item is to be blessed, you know that you need to prepare holy water and perhaps incense, and so forth. Fairly quickly, this becomes second nature.

However, even the most experienced of servers forget things and we are all learning all of the time. Therefore, the second most important principle is this: be alert, (the Church needs more lerts). Serving in the altar is a communal offering of service to God, and by observing the clergy and other servers, it becomes possible for servers to operate as a unit and serve almost any service smoothly and with dignity.

Finally, and above all, we must remember that everything we do is in service of God. Therefore, we try to maintain an atmosphere of prayer and worship in all that we do, for the sake of our own prayers and also in order to be an aid and not a hindrance to the worship of the congregation. Our services require swift movement but this should be dignified and should not appear rushed. If there is an accident, it should be rectified calmly and **without fuss**. If a mistake is made, discreetly remedy it if necessary, then move on with the service. Often, you will need to communicate something to the other servers in the altar. While this can usually be done with discreet eye contact and hand signals, there are times when this simply does not work. Although it is not ideal to speak aloud to get a message across, sometimes it is less irreverent and distracting than the confused chaos that can result from unclear miming and whispering.

Movement and Posture

The traditional Christian posture for prayer is standing. When standing in

church, we should do so with our arms at our sides, with our hands free to take part in the physical gestures of our worship. This is even more important for servers, who must be ready to assist manually with the service of God. We do not fold our arms or clasp our hands but we keep them free and ready to serve.

There are times when a prostration may be called for. This is done by leaning forward and falling onto the hands, only afterwards lowering the head and knees to the ground, then using the hands to push the body back into the upright position. If you kneel down first and then flop forwards, you will likely find it quite challenging to get up again. Those who have received Communion hold the Body and Blood of the Saviour within them. They never prostrate but instead make a reverence.

Before and after any ceremonial action that requires leaving the altar, servers gather at the High Place, make a reverence to the east, then turn (by the right), and bow to the priest.

The Little and Great entrances are processions. Therefore, the servers form a procession and all go out of the north door at a “church” pace: unhurriedly and in a dignified fashion, until they reach their appointed places. For actions that are not processions (such as taking the lights and fans for the Gospel), it is better to maintain symmetry, so the servers leave the altar by both doors.

Generally, non-ceremonial movement should be as discreet as possible and kept to the minimum necessary for the performance of duties. If passing from one side of the altar to the other, servers always pass by the east side of the Holy Table, crossing themselves as they pass the High Place.

Incense

Let my prayer arise in thy sight as incense, and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice.

- Psalm 140:2

In our services, the censing of objects or people is the preserve of bishops, priests, and particularly deacons. However, servers are required to maintain the censer and have incense ready for when it is to be used. It is imperative, therefore, to learn when incense will be needed and to anticipate these moments.

After Communion, the servers return to stand reverently in their places for the Litany of Thanksgiving after Communion and the Prayer Below the Ambo.

If a liturgical action is performed within the Liturgy, the servers, (as many as necessary), take holy water, the book with the relevant prayers, the processional Cross, or whatever may be required, and they leave the altar with the priest for the Prayer Below the Ambo. The action takes place after the prayer. At its conclusion, the priest and servers return to the altar during the threefold singing of “Blessed be the name of the Lord, from this time forth, and for evermore!”

After *Blessed be the name...*, the service books appoint psalm 33 to be sung while the antidoron is distributed. If this custom is followed, **two servers** immediately take the basket/bowl of bread and another containing the people’s loaves, and leave the altar by the north (left) door to stand at the north side of the nave, some distance from the priest in order to avoid congestion.

However, psalm 33 is often omitted and the antidoron is distributed after the Liturgy, in which case the servers come out just before the dismissal, and take their places as described above.

A reader says the Prayers of Thanksgiving after Communion.

When the priest and servers return to the altar, **the deacon or subdeacons** close the Holy Doors and draw the curtain for the final time. Subdeacons and servers receive a blessing to remove their vestments.

After the Liturgy

The work of the servers continues even after the Dismissal. Here is a checklist of things to be done at the end of the Liturgy:

- Make sure that your vestments are either neatly folded or returned to their hangers, and put away.
- Jugs, bowls, and cups should be emptied reverently onto clean ground. Their contents have been used for a holy purpose and should not be poured down the sink. The vessels should then be washed with hot water to avoid corrosion from any residual wine.
- The lights on the Holy Table are to be extinguished once all prayers have been concluded. The subdeacons should allow any candles to

back, then have the deacon/subdeacon drape the cloth over the baby like a blanket. They seem to like this, and a happy baby makes for a good communicant.

After all have received, **the deacon and subdeacon** fold the houseling cloth and return it to the priest, who takes it, with the chalice, back into the altar.

Improvisation Note

- If there is no deacon, **two subdeacons/servers** come out of the altar and assist with the houseling cloth. The one to the priest's left usually wipes the communicants' lips. He may also assist the priest by reminding him of communicants' names, assisting to prevent any accidents, and discreetly instructing uncertain communicants in proper etiquette.

After Communion

A server takes the candle from the solea, through the south (right) door, and places it to the south of the Holy Table, while **another server** prepares incense and gives the censer to the deacon.

After the priest has blessed the people and exclaimed "*O Lord, save thy people...*" **a server** immediately takes the candle to the Oblations Table awaits the priest as he takes the chalice, containing the remainder of the Holy Things, to the Oblations Table. After the priest has censed the Holy Things, the server places the candle before the Oblations Table, where it remains lit until the Gifts have been consumed. He then relieves the deacon of the censer and puts it away.

Meanwhile, **the other servers** take the basket/bowl, wine jug, and cups from the zapivka table and put them away in the altar.

The Concluding Rites

If a seasonal blessing, a procession, or some other liturgical act is to be performed within the Liturgy, the servers prepare whatever is necessary during the hymns after Communion. If a blessing (such as fruit at Transfiguration or herbs at Dormition) is to take place, they set up a table in the middle of the nave and place on it whatever is to be blessed. It may be convenient to use the zapivka table for this.

At our parish, we use charcoal tablets which have been laced with saltpetre, which is a key ingredient in gunpowder and is used in many fireworks. This makes them very easy to light by being held by tongs in a flame for a few seconds. Charcoal should be lit a minute or two before the incense will be needed. One tablet is quite sufficient and anything more leads to excessive charcoal smoke and the censer becoming too hot, (which can lead to molten incense boiling, blending with the ash, and then solidifying on the inside of the censer. This is very difficult to clean). The only exceptions are occasions when the censer will be used outdoors or when the previous tablet is about to go out and there is not enough time to clean the censer before putting the new one in. In these cases, a second tablet may be used.

A few (3-4) grains is enough incense for a great censuring of the church. Fewer grains may be needed on other occasions. The burning of incense is primarily about the "aroma of spiritual fragrance" offered to the Lord. The aim is not to produce as much smoke as possible, so we should try to avoid the temptation to pour the incense all over the charcoal.

When it is not being used, the censer should be hung with its lid open, to allow air to flow over the charcoal. Closing the censer or adding incense to it unnecessarily merely serves to smother the charcoal, causing it to go out prematurely. It is also important to keep the censer as free as possible from old charcoal, ash, and burnt incense, which add to the smoke and can produce an acrid smell.

A Basic Glossary

Nave—the area of the church where the laity stand

Solea—the raised area before the iconostas on which the clergy stand to perform certain functions during the services of the Church.

Iconostas—the icon screen which stands at the top of the solea. There are three doors set into the iconostas: the Holy Doors, through which only the higher clergy may pass, and the deacon's doors, which are to the north and south of the iconostas, and are used by lay servers as well as clergy in minor orders.

Altar—also known as the sanctuary, this is the area behind the iconostas, where the Holy Oblation is offered. It houses the Holy Table and the Table of Oblation.

High Place—the easternmost part of the altar is called the High Place. It symbolises the Throne of God and is where the bishop's cathedra is placed. Whenever passing from one side of the altar to the other, servers make a

reverence to the High Place. Also, before and after leaving the altar to perform any ceremonial action, servers gather at the High Place, make a reverence to it, and then turn to bow to the priest. At certain points during the Liturgy, the servers are directed to stand at the High Place and face west. They should do so in two groups, slightly to the side. At no point should anybody stand in the centre with his back directly towards the High Place.

Zapivka—wine mixed with hot water for the cleansing of communicants' mouths. The term is also sometimes given to the bread that accompanies this wine.

Houseling cloth—the cloth used at communion to catch any fragments of the Holy Things that may fall, and to wipe the communicants' lips.

Stikhar—the long robe worn by servers, also called a tunic/dalmatic.

Preparation

Servers should be sure to arrive at church early enough to prepare for the Liturgy. Upon arrival at church, you should make the usual reverences and venerate the icons, and then enter the altar by one of the deacon's doors, first venerating the angel depicted on it. Upon entering the altar, make three prostrations to the Holy Table and then approach the senior priest for a blessing. Wait for the higher clergy to vest and only then approach them, with your stikhar (and stole, if blessed to wear it), folded in the customary manner. The priest will give you a blessing to vest and then place his hand on the stikhar. Kiss his hand, then the Cross on the vestments, then stand to one side of the altar, and reverently don the vestments, ensuring that they are properly in place before commencing your duties.

Here is a checklist of things to be prepared before the Liturgy begins. These jobs ought to be shared among the subdeacons and servers:

- A subdeacon removes the dust-cover from the Holy Table.
- Ensure that the lamps in the altar, on the iconostas, and around the nave, are lit. If there are candles or a candelabra set on the Holy Table itself, ask a subdeacon or one of the higher clergy to light these for you. Nobody below the rank of subdeacon is to touch the Holy Table or anything upon it.
- Make sure that servers' candles are in place, secure, and long enough to last for the duration of the Liturgy.
- Prepare a bowl, a clean towel, and a jug of fresh water for the clergy to wash their hands.
- Boil sufficient water in a kettle and pour it into a vacuum flask, which

door.

Another server prepares hot water in a vessel and waits, ready to give it to the deacon and to receive the empty vessel back from him afterwards.

Another server or a number of servers prepare a basket/bowl of bread and add hot water to the zapivka jug. The bread, wine, and a number of cups are placed on the zapivka table at the north (left) side of the nave, which is brought out a little from the wall. During the communion of the people, one of the servers stands at the table in order to refill the cups after each communicant. The zapivka serves the purpose of cleansing the people's mouths of any remaining trace of the Holy Gifts. Therefore, the server should encourage them to drink of it freely and not merely take a tiny sip to wet the lips.

If there are concelebrating priests, a cup of hot wine and two pieces of bread are prepared for each concelebrant. **A server** presents this to each one in order for him to purify his mouth after receiving communion.

Servers who are not at least ordained as readers and who intend to receive communion now remove their vestments in order to receive as laymen. If they will be required to assist with the houseling cloth or at the zapivka table, they may receive communion first among the laity so that they may resume their duties.

The Communion of the People

After the clergy have received Holy Communion, and the priest has given the signal, **two servers** pull aside the curtain and open the Holy Doors. **A server** moves the candle, which remains lit, to before the icon of the Saviour on the solea. **A subdeacon or server** then descends the solea on the north (left) side. He makes a prostration at *With fear of God...* and stands reverently while the priest says the prayers before Communion.

As each communicant approaches, the **deacon and subdeacon/server** hold the houseling cloth, fully unfolded, like a hammock, immediately before the chalice and under the chin of each communicant, so that any particles that fall may be reverently caught. After each person has received, the deacon wipes the communicant's lips and he and the subdeacon/server lower the cloth, allowing the communicant to kiss the base of the chalice. In the case of babies, it is often easier to ask the parents to hold the baby on its

stand in awe, the servers face east, and cross themselves, before turning again to face west. For the remainder of the anaphora, they make the same customary reverences as the people:

- They make a prostration at *It is meet and right to worship...*
- They make a reverence after the words of the Saviour, each time, at *...for the remission of sins*.
- They bow low from the waist and remain in this position throughout the epiklesis, from the priest's words, *send down thy Holy Spirit upon us and upon these Gifts* until the deacon's threefold *Amen*, when all make a full prostration.
- Likewise, they make a full prostration at the words "we magnify thee" at the end of *It is truly meet*, or its seasonal or festal equivalent, in honour of the Mother of God.

After the epiklesis, a **server** quickly prepares incense and gets ready to hand the censer to the deacon in time for the hymn to the Mother of God (zadostoinik). Once the censuring of the Holy Table and altar is complete, the server stands at the High Place to the right of the deacon, and with him bows to the east, then to the priest, before relieving the deacon of the censer.

Improvisation Note

- If there is no deacon, the server hands the censer directly to the priest, kissing his hand as usual. The priest does not cense the altar after the Holy Table so the server will need to be ready to relieve him of the censer sooner than on occasions when a deacon serves.

The "Our Father" and Pre-communion rites

At the beginning of the "Our Father", all within the altar make a full prostration. On non-festal weekdays, we remain prostrate until *but deliver us from the evil one*.

The deacon directs the people to bow their heads while the priest prays. During the long *Amen* at the end of this prayer, a deacon or **server** draws the curtain.

A **server** lights a candle and, as the priest exclaims *Holy things for the holy*, the server takes the candle out of the north (left) door, places it on the ambo directly before the Holy Doors, and re-enters the altar by the south (right)

is sealed and brought back to the altar. If there is no flask, fill the kettle with water, ready to be boiled near the end of the Anaphora.

- Light a candle in the sacristy or other side room by the altar, from which charcoal and candles may be lit. This remains alight throughout the Liturgy.
- Light charcoal and place it in the censer ready for use by the priest and deacon when they commence the proskomede. If there is no deacon, it may be helpful to the priest if the censer stand, with some incense, is placed next to the Oblations Table so that he can easily reach it when necessary.
- When the priest is ready to begin the proskomede, collect the people's loaves with the lists of the names of people to be commemorated, and place them near the Oblations Table. If there is nowhere to put them other than on the Oblations Table itself, then ask a subdeacon or one of the higher clergy to do this for you. Under no circumstances must anybody below the rank of subdeacon touch or place anything upon the Oblations Table. Be sure to put the basket/bowl back in its place so that any laity who come late can offer their loaves.
- When the priest has finished the proskomede, cut the remaining bread into small portions for the zapivka and antidoron. Remember that some people take more than one piece of bread for consumption during the week or to take to sick friends or relatives, so cut more pieces than appears necessary. If there is not enough time to do this before the Liturgy begins, it can be finished during the antiphons.
- Prepare the zapivka. For each of the higher clergy, prepare a small cup half-filled with wine and place it on a paten with two pieces of bread. For the laity, place a number of cups on a tray, along with a jug of wine—enough so that the communicants may purify their mouths. Hot water will be added to the wine in the jug later in the Liturgy, just before they are needed.

The Hours

At the end of the Third Hour, a **server** stands ready to open the curtain at the Holy Doors in time for the beginning of the Sixth Hour. The doors themselves remain closed.

At the same time, a **server** prepares incense and gives the censer to the deacon (or priest, if there is there is no deacon), who performs a great censuring of the church and people. He stands ready to receive it back from him once the censuring is complete. **Two servers** should stand ready to open

and close the side doors to allow the deacon to pass through them unhindered.

The servers then stand prayerfully in their usual places.

The Short Litany and Beatitudes/Third Antiphon

During the hymn, *Only-Begotten Son*, a **server** lights the candles in readiness for the Little Entrance.

At the *Amen* of the second Short Litany, **two servers** open the Holy Doors.

At the Beatitudes or Third Antiphon, the **two servers** carry the fans while the **all remaining servers** carry candles. They stand in two groups at the High Place, facing towards the centre.

The Little Entrance

When the priest and deacon begin to make their reverences to the Holy Table, the **servers** turn to the east, sign themselves with the Cross, and bow to the High Place, then turn by the right and bow to the priest. They then form a procession out of the north (left) door in the following order:

Candle-bearers

First fan-bearer

(Second deacon, if there is one, carrying the censer)

First deacon, carrying the Gospel

Second fan-bearer

Priests, in order of seniority

The **candle-bearers** descend the solea, forming a line across the base of the ambo, all facing east. If there are concelebrating priests, the candle-bearers stand a little further to the west (away from the ambo) to allow enough room for the priests to stand in front of them. The **fan-bearers** remain on the solea, accompanying the Gospel in the procession: one before and one after. When the first deacon, carrying the Gospel, stops on the ambo, the fan-bearers stand to either side of him, facing east. After the priest has venerated the Gospel, the they extend the fans over it.

The first deacon exclaims: 'Wisdom! Stand upright!' and the choir sings the entrance hymn as the clergy enter the altar. The **fan-bearers** hold the fans upright. They and the **candle-bearers** remain where they are, facing east, until the priest blesses them to enter the altar. They turn to face towards

Improvisation Notes:

- If there is no deacon, at the beginning of the Cherubic Hymn, a server waits for the priest to finish the prayer. Then, after the priest has blessed the incense, the server hands the censer directly to him, kissing his right hand. He again kisses the priest's right hand when he relieves him of the censer, and makes his way to the Table of Oblation. There, he hands the censer to the priest with the customary kiss and, when he has received it back, he holds it aloft so that the priest can hold the aer in the rising incense. Then the server immediately puts the censer away, takes his candle or fan, and joins the other servers at the High Place. If it is not practical for him to put the censer away, he may carry it **discreetly** before the Gifts in the procession. If so, he does not walk backwards and most certainly does **not** cense the Gifts. Under no circumstances must anybody below the rank of deacon ever cense anybody or anything with the censer.
- If there is no deacon, after the servers have put their candles away, a server immediately retrieves the censer and stands ready to hold it aloft so that the priest may again hold the aer in the rising incense. The server then hands the censer to the priest and later relieves him of it, kissing his right hand as usual. He then puts the censer away and takes his place among the other servers.
- If there is no deacon, two servers close the Holy Doors at the moment that the priest places the aer over the Gifts. Once the censer has been handed to the priest, a server draws the curtain.

The Litany of Oblation, the Kiss of Peace, and the Symbol of Faith

After the deacon's exclamation, *Let us love one another...*, and after the clergy have exchanged the kiss of peace, **the servers** line up at the High Place, facing west, ensuring that none of them stands in the centre with his back to the throne. They join in the singing of the Creed.

At the deacon's exclamation, *The doors! The doors!* a **server** pulls the curtain aside, then takes his place at the High Place with the others.

The Anaphora

During the Anaphora, the servers remain at the High Place, standing reverently in prayer. At the deacon's exhortation *Let us stand well, let us*

Entrance, the servers arrange themselves at the High Place in two groups, facing towards the centre. When the priest and deacon are ready with the Gifts, the servers turn to face east, sign themselves and bow to the High Place, and then form a procession in the following order:

Candle-bearers

First fan-bearer

(Second deacon, if there is one, carrying the censer aloft)

First deacon, carrying the diskos, *(with the censer draped over his arm, if there is no second deacon)*

Senior priest, carrying the chalice.

Second fan-bearer

Other priests, in order of seniority

The **candle-bearers** descend from the solea, forming a line across the base of the ambo, all facing east. If there is a second deacon or a larger number of concelebrating priests, the servers stand a little further to the west (away from the ambo) to allow enough room for the clergy to stand in front of them.

The **fan-bearers** remain on the solea, accompanying the Gifts: one before and one after. When the deacon and priest are in place in the centre of the ambo, facing the people, the fan-bearers face towards the centre and extend the fans over the Gifts.

At the end of the final commemoration (for those present), the **servers and people** commemorate the priest, saying, *'May the Lord God remember thy priesthood in his Kingdom, always, now and ever, and to the ages of ages.'*

After the senior priest has completed the commemorations, the fans are held upright. Once all of the priests have returned to the altar, the **fan-bearers and candle-bearers** turn to face towards each other, bow to each other, then re-enter the altar by alternate doors in a criss-cross fashion. They proceed directly to the High Place, sign themselves and bow to the east, turn and bow to the priest, then close the side doors and put their candles and fans away.

If there is a second deacon to carry the censer, the **first deacon** closes the Holy Doors at the precise moment that the priest places the aer over the Gifts. He then draws the curtain. A **server** stands ready to relieve the deacon of the censer.

each other, bow to each other, then re-enter the altar by alternate doors in a criss-cross fashion. The re-entry of the servers is not an end in itself and should be done with some degree of dignified haste. They move briskly to line up at the High Place. Once all servers are in place, they sign themselves and bow to the High Place, turn, bow to the senior priest, and only then do they close the side doors and put their candles and fans away.

Improvisation Notes

- If there is no second deacon, the censer serves no purpose and is not carried in the procession.
- If there is no deacon at all, the senior priest carries the Gospel and the fans go before and after *him*.

The Trisagion, Prokimen, and Reading from the Apostle

Near the end of the Trisagion or its equivalent, a **server** prepares incense and gives the censer to the deacon. The deacon presents it to the priest for a blessing, performs a lesser censuring, and then returns the censer to a server, who puts it away. During the reading from the Apostle, a **server** lights two candles in preparation for the Gospel.

Improvisation Note

- If there is no deacon, the server himself takes the censer directly to the priest at the end of the Trisagion or its seasonal equivalent. After the priest has blessed the incense, the server hands the censer to him, kissing his right hand as he does so. The server again kisses the priest's hand when he relieves him of the censer.

The Alleluia and Gospel

For the Gospel, two fans and only two candles are required. Any surplus servers simply remain in the altar, where they may assist by opening and closing the side doors at the appropriate times, to allow others to pass through them unhindered.

As soon as the second deacon/reader begins to intone the Alleluia, a **server** places a lectern, facing east, on the ambo, leaving enough room for the deacon to pass by. **Two candle-bearers** and **two fan-bearers**, (one of each on either side), again move to stand at the High Place, where they

immediately sign themselves and bow to the east, turn and bow to the priest, and then leave by the side doors to stand on the solea: one fan and one candle out of each door.

All four servers stand to beside the lectern—one fan-bearer and one candle-bearer on either side—facing east. The fan-bearers stand a little to the west of the candle-bearers (they may descend from the solea if there is not enough room), also facing east. They hold the fans upright. After the priest gives the blessing, ‘Peace be to all’, **all four servers** turn to face the centre while the **fan-bearers** extend the fans over the Gospel.

At the end of the Gospel, during “Glory to Thee, O Lord...”, the **all four servers** return immediately to the altar through the same side doors out of which they came, and line up at the High Place. They sign themselves and bow to the east, turn by the right and bow to the senior priest, then close the side doors before putting their candles and fans away. A **server** puts the lectern away.

The deacon or else **two servers** close the Holy Doors. If a sermon is to be given here, they wait until after the sermon to close the doors. The servers may stand on the solea to listen to the sermon.

Improvisation Notes

- If there are not enough servers to carry both fans and candles, either two candles or two fans may be carried at the Gospel, according to preference. As before, if there is only one server, he carries a candle, as the fans are only ever used in pairs.
- If there is no deacon, the priest reads the Gospel. In that case, the server who puts the lectern in place must ensure that it is facing west.

The Litany of Fervent Supplication

This is a quiet time during which servers have no particular ceremonial duties and should stand prayerfully in their places. This is often a convenient time to dispose of ash from the censer and to light new charcoal. A receptacle (a metal tin with a lid or a small vessel of water) should be on hand in the sacristy or side room for collecting the used charcoal for reverent disposal after the Liturgy. Ash from used charcoal should never be allowed to accumulate in the censer. This may also be a good time to check for the last time if there are any more people’s loaves to be offered.

The Litany for the Departed

At the *Amen* of the Fervent Litany, **two servers** open the Holy Doors. Shortly before this, a **server** prepares the censer with fresh incense, takes it to the priest to be blessed, then goes out onto the solea and hands the censer to the deacon, before returning to the altar. At the end of the litany, the server relieves the deacon of the censer and puts it away. After the priest’s exclamation, the **servers** again close the Holy Doors.

The Litany for the Departed is not said on Sundays, during the paschal season, or during certain other festal periods. If in doubt, the server should check with the deacon beforehand whether this litany will be said. If this is not possible, it is better to err on the side of caution and have the censer ready. If it turns out it isn’t needed after all, there will be no harm done.

Improvisation Note

- If there is no deacon, the server himself takes the censer directly to the priest. After the priest has blessed the incense, the server hands the censer to him, kissing his right hand as he does so. He again kisses his right hand when he relieves him of the censer.

The Litanies of the Faithful

During the second Litany of the Faithful, a **server** prepares incense and gets ready to hand the censer to the deacon for the lesser censuring before the Great Entrance. At the long *Amen* of this litany, **two servers** open the Holy Doors.

The Great Entrance

At the beginning of the Cherubic Hymn, a **server** prepares incense and hands the censer to the deacon (if he has not already done so), who performs a lesser censuring of the church, after which the censer is returned to the server, who makes his way to the Oblations Table. After saying the Cherubic Hymn, the priest and deacon make their way to the Oblations Table. Again, the server hands the censer to the deacon, then joins the other servers.

Meanwhile, **another server** lights enough candles for the servers to carry. **Two servers** take the fans. **All other servers** carry candles. As at the Little