

SERVING LOW MASS CORAM SANCTISSIMO

While every Low Mass served has the condition of *coram Sanctissimo*¹ occurring for a short length of time,² there are special times when this special condition lasts until the end of Mass (partially), or for even the entire period of Low Mass (i.e., from the beginning until the end). These times occur:

- A. After the distribution of Holy Communion until the end of Mass on these feast days [**partially**]:
 - *Corpus Christi* (for the SSMM procession).³
 - Holy Thursday (for the translation of the SSMM to the altar of reposition).
- B. During the Forty Hours Prayer [**entirely**].

During these times⁴ the SSMM is either:

- A. In a monstrance on the altar.
- B. In a pyx or luna on the altar.
- C. In a ciborium on the altar (after the tabernacle has been closed).

GENERAL RULES

Solita oscula

Out of respect for the SSMM, all extraneous reverences that are not considered necessary to the Mass are omitted. Hence, all *solita oscula* usually performed by the servers are omitted.

Turning

If there are two servers, they still continue to turn inwards when they are shoulder to shoulder. However, this action is slightly modified when descending the altar steps. The servers turn slightly towards each other, and then almost side-step their descent to the foot. In this way they do not turn their backs to the SSMM when leaving the predella or the altar steps.

Bowing

When standing, all prescribed bows for a word or phrase that regards a Person of the Holy Trinity,⁵ are directed to the SSMM and not the tabernacle or altar cross.

Genuflecting

The special rules for genuflecting while the SSMM is exposed are as follows:

Single knee genuflection: A single knee genuflection is made:

1. When crossing the center of the altar *in actu functionis*.⁶
2. Upon arriving at or leaving from the center of the foot.
3. **Before** an acolyte **ascends** to the predella (made at the foot *in plano*⁷).
4. **After** an acolyte **descends** from the predella (made at the foot *in plano*).
5. If the acolyte is standing when a word or phrase is said that requires a genuflection, then he does so towards the SSMM.

Double knee genuflection: A double knee genuflection is only made:

1. When entering or leaving the sanctuary.⁸

¹ The rubrical term "*coram Sanctissimo*" ("*in the presence of the Most Holy*") refers to the circumstance of when the Blessed Sacrament is considered to be exposed. The Latin phrase is declined in the ablative due to the word "*coram*." It is declined in the nominative when used alone to refer to the Blessed Sacrament, "*Sanctissimum*" here after abbreviated as "SSMM."

² *I.e.*, from the Consecration until the end of the distribution of Holy Communion (which usually terminates with the closing of the tabernacle). This is why the servers are required to follow the special rules of genuflecting *in plano* at every Low Mass when descending from the predella immediately after the Consecration action and upon ascending and descending from the predella before and after receiving Holy Communion.

³ As well as for the Feast of Christ the King if the Mass is concluded *coram Sanctissimo*.

⁴ Cf. L. O'Connell, p 38, ff 18, sections a, c and d.

⁵ *E.g.*, the Holy Name or a doxology.

⁶ *I.e.*, during or *in the act of the function*. Outside of the ceremonies, one always makes a double knee genuflection to the SSMM, as every approach is considered to be an *accessus*. Cf. L. O'Connell, p 38.

⁷ This is the special rule for inferior ministers, as they do not have the privilege to genuflect on the predella, as the sacred ministers do, per SRC 3975¹ and SRC 4135³, as well as L. O'Connell, p 38, ff 18, d, J.B. O'Connell, p 364; Callewaert, pp 28 & 35. Cf. also the *General Principles of Ceremonies* book for more details.

2. When leaving the view of the altar (e.g., when going to the Communion rail to turn over the cloth).⁹

SERVING LOW MASS CORAM SANCTISSIMO WITH TWO SERVERS

Low Mass is served as usual with the differences noted below.

PROCESSION

- upon arriving at the foot, AcI does not give the *solita oscula* when taking the biretta from C.
- the acolytes then make a double knee genuflection in unison with C.
- after depositing the biretta, AcI does not genuflect again upon returning to the foot.

SWITCHING MISSAL

- after the Epistle, when Ac2 goes to switch the missal, he genuflects in the center as usual and goes to the foot on the Epistle side of the altar.
- when C moves away from the missal, AcI turns towards the altar, genuflects *in plano*, ascends and picks up the missal, goes *per brevior* without turning his back to the SSMM (Ac2 almost side-steps his way down), genuflects, ascends to the Gospel corner of altar and puts the missal in position.
- he then takes his usual position within the edge of the altar. If the Holy Name is mentioned, Ac2 turns (and AcI too) in unison with C and bows *towards* the SSMM exposed. Ac2 then turns right, descends to the foot *in plano*, turns towards the altar, genuflects and then returns to his position facing the *Gospel* as usual.

OFFERTORY

- the acolytes proceed to the credence and obtain their cruets as usual.
- before immediately ascending, both acolytes genuflect *in plano* and then ascend to stand inside the edges of the altar as usual. Bows are performed as usual, but the customary kisses to the cruets are omitted.
- when the acolytes have finished serving C for the Offertory, they bow to C, and then facing each other, descend to the floor, turn to face the edge of the foot, genuflect *in plano*, turn inwards and then return to the credence.

LAVABO

- the *Lavabo* is performed by C *in plano* at the Epistle side of the foot, facing the people.
- when the acolytes have their *Lavabo* items ready, they proceed shoulder to shoulder to the Epistle edge of the foot, but then swing around to turn and face the back sanctuary wall (their backs are to people). When completed with this movement, the acolytes must ensure there is sufficient room between the wall and them for C.
- C then descends to the floor and the *Lavabo* is performed as usual with bows.
- after the *Lavabo* is performed, the acolytes return the *Lavabo* items to credence. AcI picks up the bells at this time too. Both acolytes then turn inwards and return to their normal positions as usual.

RINGING OF BELL — CONSECRATION ACTION

The bell is rung as usual, and the Consecration actions are the same as described for a regular Low Mass with this exception:

- after ringing the bell for the *Hanc igitur*, AcI picks up the bell, both acolytes stand, genuflect *in plano* from their positions (the acolytes are not required to genuflect at the center) and then ascend to the predella.

ABLUTIONS

- when the tabernacle has been closed, the acolytes proceed to the credence as usual, retrieve their cruets and proceed to the foot.
- When C tilts the chalice, both acolytes genuflect *in plano*, ascend to the second altar step (AcI to the predella) and perform the Ablutions as usual with bows to C.¹⁰

⁸ However, "... if the place of genuflection and kneeling would be exactly the same, the genuflection would be omitted."²³ L. O'Connell, p 40 with ff 23 citing Callewaert, p 35. I.e., a server always genuflects on the floor, and so if he were to kneel immediately on the *in plano* for some reason instead of the first altar step, he would omit the genuflection.

⁹ "One is not said to leave the (sight of) altar when one goes to the credence table, to the sedilla, ...; at such time a double genuflection is not required." L. O'Connell, pg. 38.

¹⁰ Be aware that C has the option to remain in the center for all parts of the ablutions. If this is the case, Ac2 simply ascends to the predella with AcI and performs his parts of the ablutions there.

-when the ablutions have been finished, both bow to C and descend from the predella facing each other, genuflect *in plano* at the foot, turn inwards and return to the credence.

CHANGING MISSAL AND VEIL — COMMUNION CLOTH

-after returning their items to the credence, both acolytes turn inwards, proceed to the center of the foot as usual, genuflect and then proceed *per longiorem* to their respective sides of the foot.

-when both acolytes are facing each other, they genuflect *in plano*, ascend to the predella, pick up the missal and the veil, descend *per breviorum* facing each other, genuflect [for descending and switching sides], and ascend to the predella.

-after both have deposited their items, they turn outwards and descend *per longiorem* as usual, but having reached the floor, both acolytes turn to face each other across the predella, genuflect *in plano*, then proceed to the center of the foot, make a double-knee genuflection, and then go to turn over the Communion rail cloth as usual.

-upon returning to the foot, both acolytes make a double-knee genuflection again, switch sides and then return to their normal positions.

LEONINE PRAYERS — RECESSIONAL

-after the Leonine Prayers, AcI (without genuflecting) retrieves the biretta.

-when C has descended to the foot with the chalice, C and acolytes make a double knee genuflection, AcI gives the biretta to C without the *solita oscula* and then all recess out as usual.