

LOW MASS FOR A BISHOP Simple Form¹

Preparations

The preparations are as usual for a Low Mass with these exceptions:

On the vesting table

to the right of the vestments, place on two salvers² the bishop's skullcap³ and pectoral cross (or this can be prepared in vesting order after the cincture).
if the bishop uses his purple biretta, it will be prepared as usual.

On the credence

a medium-size ewer filled halfway with warm water and a basin (instead of the usual *Lavabo* bowl, the water cruet is still necessary though), and a large, finger towel (this should be rather absorbent)

On the altar

a salver is placed on the Epistle side near the tabernacle (or altar cross)⁴ for the bishop's skullcap.⁵
four (or even just two) candles may be lit.

In the center of the foot

the maniple is placed on the first altar step in front of Ac2's *Confiteor* position.

On the sedilia⁶

a pillow of the color of the Mass for when the bishop kneels during the Leonine Prayers.

Serving

Serving a Low Mass for a bishop is performed in the same manner as for a priest with these differences:

Preparatory Prayers

-upon reaching the foot, Ac1 takes the bishop's biretta (if used), giving the *solita oscula* to the bishop's ring instead of his hand. Both acolytes genuflect even if the bishop just bows.
-after the acolytes have said the *Confiteor*, the bishop will say the *Misereatur* and *Indulgentiam* prayers, which the servers both respond to with "Amen," then Ac2 gives the maniple to the bishop, kissing first the bottom cross on the maniple and holding it so that the bishop may kiss the center cross easily (if necessary; Ac2 may stand to perform this action).⁷
-if the *Gloria* is said, the bishop will turn for the Collect and say, "Pax vobis," to which the acolytes respond, "Et cum spiritu tuo." If the *Gloria* is not said, the bishop says, "Dominus vobiscum" instead.

¹ The full pontifical form of Low Mass is executed with two to four chaplains, bugia and *Pontifical Canon*. The version given here is the simplified form performed with just two acolytes and is the more common form that is used.

² A salver is a small tray, usually round in shape.

³ Called *zucchetto* in Italian.

⁴ If the altar mensa is not deep enough, this can be placed on the gradine.

⁵ When he removes it after saying the Secret; he puts it back on after performing the first part of the ablutions.

⁶ Or this may be placed on the credence if there is room, though the sedilia is good position, especially if it close to the Epistle side of the foot.

⁷ Ac2 does not kiss the bishop's ring in this instance; cf. L. O'Connell, pg. 469

During the *Lavabo*

- upon returning to credence after the Offertory, Ac1 picks up the towel as usual, and Ac2 picks up the ewer and basin as he would with cruet and bowl, both then proceed to the Epistle side steps.
- when the bishop joins his hands in an arc-like motion for the *Veni sanctificator*, both ascend to the second altar step and kneel,⁸ but do not bow (the reverence of kneeling replaces the bows).
- when the bishop has finished drying his hands and has returned the towel to Ac1, the bishop will present his ring to each acolyte to kiss (Ac1 first, then Ac2), then he will bless them silently with the sign of cross.
- both acolytes then rise and return to credence.

The second *Lavabo*

- after the acolytes have switched the missal and veil, they proceed to the center of the foot *per longiorem* and then immediately to credence. There they retrieve the *Lavabo* items, and proceed to the foot of the Epistle side steps. When the bishop has placed the burse on the assembled chalice, both acolytes ascend to the predella, and perform the *Lavabo* in the same manner as described for the first *Lavabo*.
- afterwards, they replace the *Lavabo* items and then turn over the Communion cloth (having genuflected first at the center of the foot before going to the rail). They then return to their normal positions.

The Last Blessing

- after the bishop has said “*Ite, missa est,*” and then silently the *Placeat tibi* (for which he bows low), he will then stand erect and facing the altar will say these responses with the acolytes:

Bishop: “*Sit nomen Domini benedictum in sæcula.*”

Acolytes: “*Ex hoc nunc et usque in sæculum.*” [pronounced *ehx ohk noonk eht oos-kweh een seh-koo-loom*]

Bishop: “*Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini*” (the acolytes do not sign themselves for this response⁹)

Acolytes: “*Qui fecit cælum et terram.*”

- the bishop begins to pronounce the blessing and then he will turn towards nave and give the episcopal triple blessing.¹⁰ The acolytes sign themselves only once, and this should be done in conjunction with the cross the bishop makes in the center.
- after responding “*Deo gratias*” for the Last Gospel, Ac1 retrieves the pillow from the sedilia, placing it on the first altar step (or on the predella if the bishop will kneel there instead) for the bishop to kneel upon during the Leonine Prayers.
- after the Leonine Prayers, Ac1 will return the pillow to the sedilia, retrieve the biretta (if used), and after the acolytes have genuflected while the bishop bows, Ac1 presents the biretta giving the *solita oscula* to the bishop’s ring instead of his hand.

⁸ NB: the *Lavabo* is administered to an auxiliary bishop in the same manner as to a priest, standing and making the bows before and after.

⁹ This follows the same principle that is used during the Divine Office for the little chapter at the hour of Prime: since it is preceding a blessing, the cross is not made for this response.

¹⁰ I.e., from the bishop’s left, to his center, to his right.