

## CANDLEMAS (HIGH MASS FORM)

NB: the rite of Candlemas was revised in 1960 and published in subsequent editions of the *Missale Romanum*. Previously, the non-pontifical form of this rite was outlined in the *Memoriale Rituum*<sup>1</sup> which is still referenced for certain details not mentioned in the missal.

### SACRISTY & SANCTUARY PREPARATIONS:

-the liturgical color is white and festive.

-in the sacristy: white cope, stole and cincture, alb and amice for C.

-on the sedilia: white chasuble and maniple in vesting order.

-on the main credence: the usual items for a High Mass (including the *Lavabo* dish and towel) plus:

- silver ewer and basin set,<sup>2</sup> filled half way with warm water
- silver tray with a clean bar of soap
- small absorbent white towel
- aspersory
- extra missal set for the candle blessing ceremony

-on the altar: prepared as usual for a High Mass, except flowers are not to be put on the altar until after the procession with candles.<sup>3</sup>

-table for candles:<sup>4</sup> this should be situated *in plano* on the Epistle side of the sanctuary (or chancel) so that the celebrant can face the altar.<sup>5</sup> Like the credence, it should be covered on the top and sides with a white linen, while a white frontal should cover the front and rear. The candles are also covered with a white cloth. Those candles that need to be blessed for future use on the altar, the candles for the laity,<sup>6</sup> and the special candle for C<sup>7</sup> should be neatly placed out on the table and covered with a white cloth.<sup>8</sup>

### SYNOPSIS OF THE CEREMONY

1. PROCESSION (as usual for High Mass).<sup>9</sup>
2. BLESSING OF CANDLES:

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<sup>1</sup> The last edition was published in 1920, and it included the non-pontifical forms of the rites of Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday and Holy Week, now outlined in the *OHS* (first published in 1955 and subsequently slightly revised in 1957 and again in 1962). These rites can also be found outlined in the *Missale Romanum*. The pontifical forms of these rites are outlined in the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* (though since it was last revised in 1886, some of the details are now obsolete) and in Archabbot Aurelius Stehle's *Manual of Episcopal Ceremonies* (1961; so completely in conformity with the last revisions) in Volume II: Occasional Episcopal Ceremonies. There is also a pontifical form of the revised *OHS* (1957), but that does not concern the rite in question.

<sup>2</sup> A small, simple set should be used rather than a fancy one, since it is not for a Pontifical Mass and it is needed for one washing only.

<sup>3</sup> Adrian Fortescue, *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described* (1962), pp 262 and 263. In the *Memoriale Rituum*, violet was used for the candle blessing and procession and white was used for the Mass; though this color distinction has been abolished, the prohibition of flowers for the candle blessing rites apparently has not. Fortescue also recommends on p. 262, that the altar cards should not be placed on the altar until this time.

<sup>4</sup> Though the use of a separate table is more commonly seen, both the missal and Fortescue mention the secondary option of placing the candles on the Epistle side of the altar. In this case, the missal would be prepared as usual on the Epistle side and the candles (preferably placed on tray to prevent soiling the altar cloth) between the missal and the center of the mensa. If the blessing of the candles does take place directly at the altar, C kisses the altar first before starting the ceremonies. However, if a table is used *in plano*, this first kiss is omitted since the altar is not approached.

<sup>5</sup> "...stans versus ad altare..." *Missale Romanum*.

<sup>6</sup> Which for purposes of practicality, should be placed on a large silver tray. The surface of the tray should also be covered with a linen. In larger churches, two trays might be necessary, especially if two priests will be distributing candles. In this case, Cb should hold the second tray of candles and accompany the second priest since the acolytes must be available for other duties.

<sup>7</sup> A \*s candle with a draft resistor is ideal, especially if the candle procession is to be held outdoors. This candle may also be appropriately decorated either with a white ribbon, or with painted, applied or engraved symbols. Stehle in *Manual of Episcopal Ceremonies* (p. 58, section 225) refers to this candle as "richly ornamented".

<sup>8</sup> Fortescue, p. 260; this follows the Roman practice of covering items that are about to be blessed (as also occurs with the ashes and palms) as also noted in the older Candlemas ritual found in the *Memoriale Rituum*.

<sup>9</sup> If Candlemas falls on a Sunday, the *Asperges* rite is performed first (Fortescue, pp 260 and 263). This means that the aspersory will need to be carried in by Th as usual, instead of being initially set up on the credence.

- A. Five orations.
  - B. Blessing of incense.
  - C. Blessing of candles first with holy water then with incense while *Asperges* is said.
3. DISTRIBUTION OF CANDLES:
- A. C goes to the predella, “*ante medio altare.*”<sup>10</sup>
  - B. Highest ranking cleric gives candle to C or MCI puts it to the side.
  - C. Clerics receive candles from C *solita oscula* on predella.
  - D. Servers receive candles from C *solita oscula* on predella.
  - E. Laity receive candles from C *solita oscula* at Communion rail.
4. LAVABO IN PLANO ON EPISTLE SIDE.
5. ORATION: *EXAUDI, QUAESUMUS.*
6. IMPOSITION AND BLESSING OF INCENSE.
7. PROCESSION WITH CANDLES.
8. HIGH MASS AS USUAL, except candles are held lighted:
- A. During the reading of the Gospel.
  - B. From the *Sanctus* to the *Agnus Dei.* <sup>11</sup>

### **PROCESSION**

-the procession to the altar takes place with C in cope and Th gently swinging the thurible. During the procession, MCI should be on C’s right hand side and hold the ophrey.<sup>12</sup> Otherwise, all process in as usual for a High Mass.

-upon reaching the sanctuary, all make the appropriate reverences, and go immediately to their places.

### **BLESSING OF THE CANDLES<sup>13</sup>**

#### **5 Orations**

#### **MCI**

-after genuflecting with C at the foot, MCI leads C to the candle table. He then uncovers the candles (putting the cover to the side of the table), opens the book for C and indicates the proper text. During the five orations, MCI holds the ophrey only when C signs the cross over the candles.<sup>14</sup> During the orations, all bows are made by all towards the altar.<sup>15</sup> C sings all of the orations in the second ferial tone.

#### **MC2**

-upon arriving at the foot, MC2 gfs, goes to the Epistle side of the sanctuary, and ensures that the duties described below are carried out correctly.

<sup>10</sup> *Missale Romanum.*

<sup>11</sup> Fortescue, p. 262

<sup>12</sup> This is done in imitation of the deacon and subdeacon.

<sup>13</sup> C.f. footnote 5 on these sheets, if Candlemas falls on a Sunday.

<sup>14</sup> Fortescue, p. 260

<sup>15</sup> Fortescue, p. 260

## **ACOLYTES**

-as soon as the acolytes have placed their processional candles on the credence, Ac1 picks up the book (with the opening facing left), and Ac2 picks up the aspersory.

-Ac1 then goes immediately to the Epistle side of the candle table, holding the book against his chest.

-Ac2 goes to stand in front of his stool.

## **CB**

-Cb does not at anytime during the candles ceremony close the Communion gate, as it will need to remain open to allow access for the acolytes to light the candles of the laity, and for the candle procession that follows.

## **Blessing of the incense**

### **MC2**

-while C is reciting the first of the 5 orations, MC2 forms Th, Bb and Ac2 into a box formation in front of the credence.

-during the last of the 5 orations,<sup>16</sup> MC2 leads Th, Bb and Ac2 to the candle table.

-MC2 arranges Th and Bb nearest to the table, while Ac2 is positioned behind or to the side of them while incense is imposed.

-after incense has been imposed and blessed, MC2 ensures that Th and Bb step out of the way, and simultaneously directs Ac2 to step forward to MC1 with the holy water.

-meanwhile during all of this, MC2 remains discretely out of the way.

### **MCI**

-when C has finished the last oration, MCI closes the book and signals Ac1 to depart. Incense is then imposed and blessed as usual *solita oscula*. MCI then returns the book to Bb and Th retains the thurible.

### **TH and BB**

-upon MC2's direction, both Th and Bb form at the credence to make a box formation with MC2 and Ac2.

-at MC2's lead, all proceed to the candle table, and take position at MC2's discretion.

-immediately after incense is imposed, Th and Bb return to stand slightly behind the table, so as to be out of C's way.

### **ACI**

-when MCI has closed the book, Ac1 returns it to the credence, then he returns to his normal position.

### **AC2**

-upon MC2's direction, Ac2 goes to the credence and takes position in a box formation with MC2, Th and Bb.

-at MC2's lead, all proceed to the candle table, and take position according to MC2's discretion.

-upon MC2's signal, Ac2 goes to MCI's right, and presents the aspergillum to him. Ac2 then goes to C's left and holds the ophrey while C sprinkles the candles. Afterwards, he returns to MCI's right hand side to retrieve the aspersory.

## **Blessing of the candles**

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<sup>16</sup> Which is the *second* oration prefaced with "*Domine Jesu Christe...*".

## **MCI**

-after the above actions have occurred, MCI presents the aspergill to C *solita oscula*, and then holds the right hand ophrey of the cope while C sprinkles the candles three times<sup>17</sup> while saying<sup>18</sup> only the *Asperges* antiphon (i.e., no *Gloria Patri*, etc.).

-when C has finished sprinkling the candles, MCI receives the aspergill back *solita oscula*, and returns it to Ac2.

-Th then steps forward and presents the thurible to MCI, who then presents it to C *solita oscula*. While C incenses the candles, MCI holds the ophrey.

-C incenses the candles with three singles fanned<sup>19</sup> saying nothing.

-MCI then receives the thurible back *solita oscula*, and returns it to Th.

## **MC2**

-as soon as Ac2 has received the aspersion from MCI, he directs Th to go to the right hand side of MCI. Th remains there until incensing is completed

-when Th has received the thurible back from MCI, MC2 forms up Th, Bb and Ac2 into a box formation again, and leads them back to the credence, where Ac2 returns the aspersion.

## **AC2**

-after Ac2 has received the aspersion back from MCI, he follows MC2's directions for where to stand. When Th has received the thurible back, MC2 will lead Ac2, Th and Bb back to the credence. Upon arriving there, Ac2 will then return the aspersion to the credence, and then take his normal position.

## **TH and BB**

-upon MC2's direction, Th goes to MCI's right hand side and presents the thurible to him. Th then goes to C's left and holds the ophrey while C incenses the palms. Afterwards, he returns to MCI's right hand side to retrieve the thurible. Meanwhile, Bb remains next to MC2. Th then follows the directions of MC2 and returns with Bb to their normal position behind MC2.

## **DISTRIBUTION OF CANDLES**

### **MCI**

-when MC2 has lead the servers back to their normal positions, MCI picks up the tray containing the laity candles (having placed C's candle on it first), leads C to the foot, gfs with him, and then accompanies C *in medio altare*, crossing to the right side of C (Epistle side of predella).

-the highest ranking cleric, "not wearing a stole",<sup>20</sup> then receives C's candle from MCI and presents it without *solita oscula*.<sup>21</sup>

-during the distribution of candles, MCI remains at C's right hand side, and holds the tray for C. At the Communion rail, each time MCI and C reach the center, both must turn to face the altar, gf and then they may continue the distribution.

### **MC2**

-after leading the servers back to their normal positions, MC2 then ensures that the clergy have begun to line up in pairs<sup>22</sup> in the chancel and are approaching the foot.

-MC2 then ensures that the highest-ranking cleric goes to the predella first, and presents C's candle to C without *solita oscula* (If no other clerics are present, MCI simply places it in the middle of the mensa).

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<sup>17</sup> "ter aspergit," *Missale Romanum*.

<sup>18</sup> "sine cante et sine psalmo," *ibid*.

<sup>19</sup> "et ter adolet incense," *ibid*.

<sup>20</sup> Fortescue, p. 261.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Fortescue, p. 261 on both accounts. This has changed from the description given in the earlier Candlemas rite outlined in the *Memoriale Rituum*. The 1962 edition of the *Pontificali Romanum* has now reduced the ceremony of the senior cleric presenting the candle to C kneeling with *solita oscula* to a mere presenting.

<sup>22</sup> The clerics should be formed from the highest to the lowest ranking cleric beginning from the front to the back of the paired line (i.e., in the type of formation that the Tbs make before going to the sacristy to obtain their torches).

-while the clerics are receiving their candles, MC2 ensures that the servers on the Epistle side have formed a single line and are ready to proceed to the foot. He should then ensure that the Tbs in the chancel have knelt down to receive their candles as they would for Communion.<sup>23</sup>

-when the last cleric has left the foot, MC2 leads the Epistle side servers to the foot, taking his place on the far Gospel side of the line, signals a gf, ascends to the predella, and signals a kneel as for Communion. There each server receives a candle, kissing the *candle first*, and then C's hand.<sup>24</sup>

-after all of the servers on the predella have received their candles, MC2 signals all to rise, then descends to the foot, signals a gf and then directs them to return to their normal positions, where they remain standing.

-afterwards, MC2 oversees and ensures that all carry out their duties during the distributing of candles as described below.

### **TH and BB**

-after Th has received his candle and returned to his normal position, he should then ensure that his thurible is sufficiently prepared for the candle procession, especially if it will be a rather long one. Charcoals should also be started for the Mass that will immediately follow the candle procession.<sup>25</sup>

-Bb should ensure that there is an ample supply of incense in the boat.

-both should extinguish their candles and leave them in the sacristy as they will not be able to carry them for the candle procession.

### **ACOLYTES**

-when the first five pews of the laity have received their candles, both acolytes go to the credence, extinguish their tapers, put them to the side and retrieve their processional candles.

-both then proceed to the foot, gf, and light the candles of the clergy first, and then the servers in the chancel.

-afterwards, and at an appropriate moment, the acolytes exit through the gate and proceed to the side aisles<sup>26</sup> of the pews and light the candles of those nearest the pew ends of the first two pews.

-the acolytes then return to the foot at an appropriate moment, gf, return their processional candles to the credence, and then with folded hands, return to their normal positions.

-when the distribution of the candles has nearly come to a conclusion, both acolytes return to the credence, Ac1 takes the towel and tray with soap,<sup>27</sup> while Ac2 takes the ewer and basin. Both then remain at the credence facing the sanctuary.

## **LAVABO TO ORATION: EXAUDI, QUAESUMUS**

### **MCI**

-when the distribution of candles is completed, MCI leads C *per longiorem* to the Epistle side in *plano* of the sanctuary (near the credence), where C washes his hands.

-MCI gives the tray to MC2, and then takes his position slightly behind and to the left side of C and holds the ophrey during the *Lavabo*.

-immediately after the *Lavabo*, MCI leads C to the missal on the Epistle side of the altar. MCI takes his normal Epistle side missal position and indicates the oration: *Exaudi, quaesumus*.

### **MC2**

-when MCI returns from the distribution of candles for C's *Lavabo*, MC2 takes the tray from MCI and puts it back on the candle table.

<sup>23</sup> Or they may form a paired line and receive their candles at the predella like the clerics. In this case, they should form up immediately after the clerics have left their stalls (the clergy will go around them upon returning to their stalls), and be ready to proceed to the foot when the last cleric has returned to his stall.

<sup>24</sup> Fortescue, p. 261; this is because they are receiving a sacramental.

<sup>25</sup> The first incensation of the altar will be the first action of the Mass, so fresh charcoals must be ready immediately for Mass.

<sup>26</sup> Not the center aisle in this case, or the traffic way for the laity will be blocked.

<sup>27</sup> A good method in which to do this is to hold the tray by both hands with the long edge of the towel between the tray and hands.

- MC2 then signals the Tbs to line up as they would at the Offertory at Mass, for the candle procession.
- MC2 then ensures that the other servers perform their duties as described below.

### **TH and BB**

- Th and Bb should be at their normal positions by the time C begins the *Lavabo*.
- after the acolytes and Cb have lined up for the candle procession, Th and Bb go to the Epistle side of the foot as at High Mass, for the imposition of incense.

### **ACOLYTES**

- when C arrives at the credence, the acolytes perform the *Lavabo* with the usual bows.
- after the *Lavabo*, the acolytes return the *Lavabo* items to the credence, and immediately pick up their processional candles.
- when Cb has joined them at the credence, the acolytes and Cb then proceed to the foot to line up for the candle procession.

### **CB**

- during the *Lavabo*, Cb extinguishes his candle, and puts it on his stool.
- immediately after the *Lavabo*, Cb retrieves his processional cross, and takes his place in formation at the credence, and then accompanies the acolytes to the foot as usual.

### **TORCHBEARERS**

- upon MC2's signal, the Tbs (with their candles still lighted), take up their Offertory formation and remain there facing the altar.

## **IMPOSITION AND BLESSING OF INCENSE**

### **MCI**

- when C has finished reading the oration, MCI descends *in plano*, receives the boat from Bb, and then ascends with Th to the second altar step<sup>28</sup> to have incense imposed and blessed as usual *solita oscula*.
- when Th and Bb have departed, MCI ensures that C has retrieved his candle from the *mensa*, and then leads him *per breviorum* to the center of the foot.
- MCI then takes C's candle *solita oscula*, lights it from Acl's processional candle, and returns it to C *solita oscula*.
- C then turns towards the people and chants, "*Procedamus in pace*", to which all respond, "*In nomine, Christi, Amen.*"
- MCI then signals a genuflection for all, and the candle procession begins.

### **MC2**

- while incense is being imposed and blessed, MC2 ensures that all are lined up correctly for the candle procession (*i.e.*, the same formation as for the Recessional at Mass). If necessary, during this time, MC2 should have the clergy line up in two parallel lines on the *outside* edges of the Tbs (*i.e.*, closest to the chancel walls) in order of precedence. The position of the clerics in the candle procession is after the servers.<sup>29</sup>
- During the candle procession, everyone should be holding their candles in their outside hand.
- MC2's position during the candle procession should be in front of the Tbs' formation with his hands folded (*i.e.*, empty).

### **TH and BB**

- after the oration, Bb presents the boat to MCI as usual, and Th ascends to the second altar step with MC for the imposition and blessing of incense, which is as usual.

<sup>28</sup> Fortescue says that this should be done from the Epistle corner, without C having moved from the missal after the oration.

<sup>29</sup> If there is a liturgical schola, its position in the candle procession is between the servers and the clergy.

-when MCI holds out the boat, Bb retrieves it and follows Th to the chancel to lead the candle procession.

## **PROCESSION WITH CANDLES<sup>30</sup>**

### **MCI**

-during the candle procession, MCI remains at the right side of C and holds the ophrey. MCI does not hold a candle during the candle procession.<sup>31</sup>

### **MC2**

-during the candle procession, MC2 ensures that the procession takes place in an orderly fashion, which each pair of servers remaining at a distance apart of at least four pews.

### **TH and BB**

-during the candle procession, Th gently swings the thurible.

-if the procession is rather long, and if necessary,<sup>32</sup> Bb may add more incense, but only a spoonful or two.

-upon their arrival back into the sanctuary, the servers make the reverence that is appropriate to their position, and then return to their normal positions.

### **MCI**

-upon arrival at the foot, MCI signals a gf, and then leads C to the sedilia to vest for Mass.

-MCI extinguishes C's candle, and then gives it to Ac2 (if available) to put on the credence, and gives the cope to Ac1 (if available) to take to the sacristy.

-MCI then assist C to vest Mass as usual, then leads C to the foot, and signals a gf.

-MCI now immediately goes to the Epistle side of the foot for the first incensation of the altar.

### **MC2**

-upon MC2's arrival at the foot, he gfs and goes to the Epistle side to ensure that the various duties are carried out as described below, filling in if and where ever necessary (e.g., assisting with the removal of the candle table, or with the cope).

## **ACOLYTES**

-immediately upon returning their processional candles to the credence, the acolytes should remove the candle table from the sanctuary, if not done so already by the sacristan.<sup>33</sup>

-when completed with the removal of the table, the acolytes should immediately return to their normal positions.

-when C arrives, Ac2 should take C's candle from MCI and place it on the credence, after the wax has cooled. Ac1 should take the cope and return it to the sacristy as usual. Both then return to their normal positions.

-if possible, the acolytes should also remove the extra missal, tray of soap, absorbent towel and the ewer and basin, since they will no longer be needed.

### **TH and BB**

-immediately upon their arrival back, Th should be prepared for the first incensation of the altar, which will take place momentarily.

### **CB**

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<sup>30</sup> During the candle procession, the church bells should be rung. Fortescue, p. 262.

<sup>31</sup> Fortescue, p. 262 in reference to the deacon who accompanies C.

<sup>32</sup> I.e., barely any smoke is being emitted.

<sup>33</sup> This also holds true if the flowers were not set up on the altar before the candle procession or if the sacristan did complete this task.

-after returning the processional cross, Cb returns to his normal position. If the acolytes are still in the process of removing the candle table when C returns, Cb should take the candle and cope from MCI.

## MASS

Mass is as usual with these exceptions:

- The preparatory prayers at the foot of the altar are omitted inclusive to *Aufer a nobis* and *Oramus te*. Instead, the first incensation of the altar takes place immediately.
- **ACOLYTES:** After C has been seated for the sung<sup>34</sup> Gradual and Alleluia, the acolytes light the candles of the clergy, servers in the chancel, and the laity in the first two pews as they did after the distribution of the candles. However, this time they may light the laity's candles from the center aisle. Upon finishing these duties, they go to the foot, gf and:
  - if time allows, they return to the credence and await Th to arrive for the Gospel action.
  - if time does not allow, they go to the foot, gf and remain there for MCI, MC2 and Th to arrive.
- **MC2 and MCI: Gospel motion and C's candle**
  - after the acolytes have departed from the credence, MC2 goes to the credence and retrieves C's candle, and then resumes his normal position at the sedilia with MCI. The candle is held in his outside hand, but remains momentarily unlighted.<sup>35</sup>
  - MC2 does everything as usual for the Gospel motion, except, upon arrival on Gospel side, MC2 lights C's candle from Acl's processional candle, and then gives it to MCI.
  - meanwhile, MCI switches the missal as usual and then goes *per longiorem* to MC2 and takes C's candle.
  - MC2 presents thurible as usual to C, and when MC2 receives the thurible back, MCI goes *per longiorem* to the right hand side of C and presents the candle to him *solita oscula*.
  - MCI then goes *per breviorem* to his normal position (i.e., Epistle corner *in plano*), gfing in the center.
  - after C has been incensed, and MC2 ascends to the predella to move the missal to the Canon position, receives the candle from C without the *solita oscula*, extinguishes it, and then descends *in plano* with C as usual.
  - then sometime afterwards, MC2 signals the clergy and laity to extinguish their candles.
- **MCI:** The Preface is of the *Nativitate Domini*,<sup>36</sup> but the Canon is as usual.
- **CB:** After the Tbs have been led into the sanctuary with their torches, Cb should wait to close the gate until the acolytes have returned from lighting the candles of the laity.
- **ACOLYTES:** After the bells have been rung for the *Sanctus* (and the Tbs are already kneeling with their torches), the acolytes repeat the same procedure for lighting the various candles of the clergy and laity. These candles stay lit inclusive to the *Agnus Dei*.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> If this is sung in psalm tone mode only, then the acolytes should do this immediately after the Epistle. In fact, it is recommended that they retrieve their processional candles and line up at the foot while the Epistle is still being read. But, for symbolic purposes, they should not gf and begin lighting the candles until the Epistle is completed.

<sup>35</sup> Unless acolytes arrive back early. If this is the case, MC2 can light C's candle then.

<sup>36</sup> *Missale Romanum* (within the propers themselves) and Fortescue, p. 263.

<sup>37</sup> I.e., at the Pax. Fortescue, p. 264, ff 7.