

Crucifer

Lead Cross

The symbol of the Cross is common to Christians of all traditions, and has been since the beginning of Christian history. It is to be seen in art, in and on our Churches, and as ornaments on our bodies. All of this is appropriate for Christians, because the sign of the Cross constantly reminds us of what Christ did for us all. This idea is at the heart of Christian belief: that resurrection is the reward or goal, but the Cross is the means. The road to God and eternal life leads through the Cross.

Basic description and duties

The lead cross or crucifer has one basic responsibility: to carry the processional cross at the entrance, Gospel, Offertory, and retiring processions. Members of the congregation and the clergy will reverence the symbol you carry. Your deportment should reflect the fact you carry the Cross of Christ.

The Entrance Procession

- Follow the thurifer's pace at a distance of about three pews.
- You will be accompanied by two acolytes walking in line with you on either side, as a group.
- Maintaining a light contact with the elbows of the acolytes with your own helps to keep the group together.
- As the leader of this group, the crucifer determines when the first step and on which foot this step will start. Make these arrangements with the acolytes before the processional hymn begins. For example, "*Start with the left foot, on the count of three.*"
- As a group, pause briefly at the sanctuary entrance but do not reverence; at your signal, turn left as a group.
- Secure the cross in the hooks using the cords and enter the Gospel side of the choir; remain standing for the remaining procession and entrance rite.

The Gospel Procession

- Begin your preparations as soon as the Psalm ends so that you are standing in front of the Tiffany window during the Epistle.
- After the thurifer has taken position near the chancel steps, proceed with the cross and pause briefly at the sanctuary entrance, facing the altar.
- Turn to face the congregation and proceed midway down the chancel.
- Turn again to face the altar.

- The book bearer will take position between the torchbearers; turn at the book bearer's turning and follow the thurifer's pace down the center aisle.
- Two pews before the second structural column, the thurifer will stand aside on the Epistle side.
- Proceed two pews past the second structural column, pause, and turn to face the altar.
- The book bearer's back will be toward you.
- After the proclamation, the book bearer and priest will stand aside; you will pass between the torches and follow the thurifer.
- Pause at the sanctuary entrance and turn left.
- Secure the cross and return to the choir for the homily.

The Offertory Procession

- At the Peace, walk as unobtrusively as possible to the rear of the nave.
- A second processional cross is placed near the baptismal font for use in the offertory procession, so there is no need to carry a cross from the chancel.
- You may be accompanied by acolytes, but this is optional.
- The procession consists of the crucifer, oblationers, and ushers bearing the offering, and in that order.
- Start walking at the first notes of the presentation hymn—there is a lot going on during the singing of the hymn, and the unconsecrated elements (common gifts) and offering must be brought to the altar promptly.
- The procession proceeds at a dignified pace down the center aisle; pause briefly at the sanctuary entrance.
- If both the lead cross and the ministers' cross have been secured on the Gospel side of the chancel, secure the offertory cross on the Epistle side—it prevents noise and helps minimize the crosses falling.
- Return to the choir for the Communion liturgy.
- At the Invitation to Communion, after the torches have left the communion rail, move the kneeling pad into the opening of the communion rail and close the entrance gate with the brass rail.

The Retiring Procession

- Prepare at the first notes of the hymn.
- After the thurifer is in position, walk to the sanctuary entrance; you will be preceded by one acolyte and followed by another.
- Pause briefly and signal the turn.
- Proceed down the center aisle in line with the acolytes.
- The retiring procession normally proceeds up the Epistle side aisle; one torch should precede and one follow the lead cross in single file due to space limitations.
- Stop as indicated by the thurifer; turn and face the congregation for the dismissal.