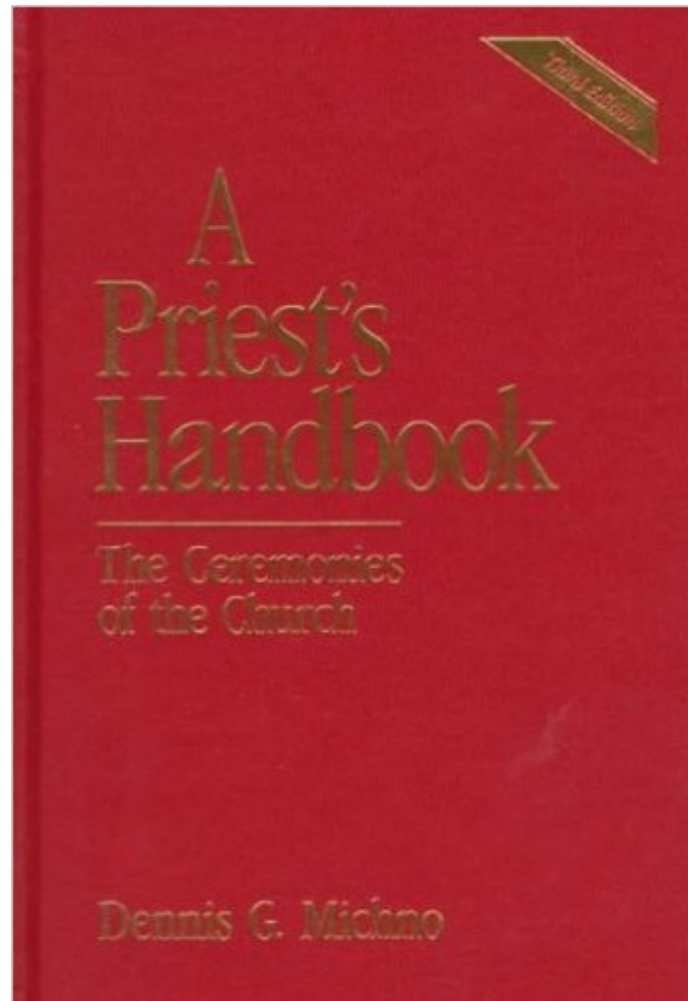


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# A Priest's Handbook: The Ceremonies Of The Church (3rd Edition)



## Synopsis

The definitive reference work that simplifies liturgical officiating and celebrating of the rites of the Episcopal Church. A Priest's Handbook explains the appropriate use of vestments, color, altar preparation, as well as gestures and movements during the various services. It also explores the particular prayer and liturgical options for the Holy Eucharist, Holy Week, Baptism, and other events in the Church's calendar. Sections on the use of the lectionary and the Daily Offices make this handbook truly comprehensive.

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## Customer Reviews

You'd think after the years of aspiration and discernment, the three years of seminary and subsequent service in the transitional diaconate, that ordination to the priesthood would not leave one fumbling to conduct the ceremonies of the Episcopal Church (ECUSA). Fortunately, wise souls who have gone before us knew better and this outstanding reference was the result. The beauty of our liturgical heritage is preserved when the celebrant is aware fully of his or her duties in each ceremony. "A Priest's Handbook" gives each fledgling priest a vital grounding in the essential elements of presiding over and celebrating the rituals of the Church. More importantly, the handbook reaffirms the gravity and solemnity of the celebrant's role and the necessity of leading a given service effectively. This handbook is an excellent reference for Lay Eucharistic Ministers as well, but no deacon or priest should be without it and should approach no ceremony until thoroughly

familiar with its contents.

I once had a book (loaned to a priest who never returned it to me!) entitled 'What They Didn't Teach You in Seminary'. That might in some ways be the subtitle of this text, for often people learn in seminary the theological and historical underpinnings of liturgy, but somehow the actual mechanics falls short (this is true in many denominations). It is particularly difficult for denominations who require their ministers to wait until after ordination to begin many of the actual liturgical actions; they get no real experience prior to being on-stage for the first time. Also, given the wide range of liturgical practice within a denomination, each parish adapts to its own use, and it is hard for seminaries to teach specifically to all practical situations. This is where Michno's text comes in very handy. Dennis Michno served as a priest and music director, learning first-hand the ins and outs of church liturgical functions. In addition to this text, he wrote 'A Manual for Acolytes', which I used as a base text when I was an acolyte master and senior sacristan. His work in 'A Priest's Handbook', supplemented for the third edition by Christopher Webber, a priest also known for helpful books on liturgical practice, as well as vestry functioning, serves as a guide for priests in almost every possible setting. The book follows in broad strokes the format of the Book of Common Prayer, the base text for Anglican worship, as it is in its 1979 American variety. The book begins with an introduction discussing the intentions of the book, other liturgical books, and those pre-service things that need to be seen to prior to the formal liturgy. Some of the things addressed here are the basic movements of the service, both ceremonial acts (bowing and the like) and manual acts (crossing, etc.). These are illustrated by line-art drawings, done by Richard Mayberry, which continue throughout the text in the form of personal drawings, line art maps and diagrams. The introductory material concludes by looking at vestments, candles, and the general atmosphere of reverence and respect in the silence of liturgical preparation. The section the Holy Eucharist follows the basic patterns set forth in the 1979 BCP, dealing with both forms of the traditional (Rite I) prayer and all four forms of the contemporary (Rite II) prayer. Nothing is left to chance here, and all movements and motions, acts and considerations are brought into play. This includes how to use incense (or not), processions, manual acts, and other liturgical practices. There are additional sections on the calendar, the lectionary, the Daily Office, and liturgical explanations for additional services both in the BCP and also found in the Book of Occasional Services (BOS). Michno gives particular attention to Holy Week, Baptism (including Emergency Baptism), other sacramental rites and services such as marriages and funerals. Michno talks about what is appropriate and what is not in such services, often a hard thing for ministers to enforce given the high emotions of the

situations. There is an appendix that goes into a lot of detail about special events in the career of a priest, from an order prior to the priest's first eucharistic celebration to the burial of a priest. Many of these elaborate on the services found in the Book of Occasional Services. The Book of Common Prayer, the Book of Occasional Services, and other liturgical resources often have rubrics, but these are rather spare and non-specific about a lot of detail. On the other hand, the rubrics allow for local variation and adaptation that a rigid set of rules would not permit. Michno's handbook is a good via media (as befits a good Anglican) at addressing the need to know without being dogmatic or inflexible about the need to do. It fills in many of the gaps of practice, and this book is a necessary reference for any priest and deacon in the Anglican church, and can be of great benefit to ministers in other traditions who look for liturgical guidance. This book is also a good guide for laypersons who observe services, so that they can become more accustomed and knowledgeable about the services of which they are an integral part. The priests are supposed to be acting on their behalf and as their representatives -- it is meet and right that laypersons would understand what is going on. This is not a book with lengthy theological discourse -- this is more of a book on what is done, rather than why it is done. There are other texts available for that. This is a good book on mechanics, on choreography if you will, and we are all invited to take our part in the liturgical dance.

Many of us in ministry have never had so much as a single seminary lecture devoted to proper liturgical practice. If you have ever questioned the proper way to administer communion to the sick or homebound, if you have ever questioned the appropriate way to impose ashes on Ash Wednesday or do a Palm Sunday processional, you need this book. Although it is deliberately Anglican, and thus gives guidance for the liturgies particular to that tradition (Cf. References to BCP 1979 throughout), it is grounded in the Scriptures and informed by ancient and broadly catholic practice. You can easily dispense with items that are incompatible with your own tradition and keep what remains.

This book is a great resource for Episcopalians who want to know the liturgical elements behind the service. Albeit it really doesn't go all out to explain WHY, it still shows a lot of things you have seen or may not have. As a member of a church who has presided over services like Morning and Evening Prayers to The Great Litany, I have found this to be a very cool resource: it marks everything down to the proper clothing to wear for a layperson celebrant. There are illustrations, by the way-- pretty cool. Really, the only thing I have against the book is the fact it doesn't go all out to tell us why things are done, but then again, it really doesn't have to. I have all kinds of books for

that, and I'm sure there's more out there. Happy reading!

Fascinating facts for every Episcopalian with questions small and large. Very easy to read and has great detail resulting in a greater appreciation of every word and every motion during an Episcopalian Church Service !

A must for training Anglican priests in any Province. While it relates to the now dying 1979 BCP, Michno is still the best guide available. Those leaning toward the 1662 can gain appropriate understanding of the Mass by reviewing his reflections on Rite I liturgy in the US. Those moving toward postmodernity probably don't want a guide in any event.

An excellent source of information for the seminarian or newly ordained. Coupled with the Book of Occasional Services, this product goes far in preparing clergy for presenting liturgy in all its beauty and power.

Definitely a Priest's handbook as it includes modest to detailed information on all aspects of leading worship. Somewhat of a "dictionary" to help you understand the movements of a liturgical service such as the history behind why the Priest kisses the Altar as well as the various forms of "bowing" and lifting the Chalice. In a nut-shell, it is really the "all you need to know" book on high, formal, liturgical worship. Very good for Catholics, Lutheran, Anglican and Methodists who are familiar with "high church." Would work well as an additional source for students attending Catechism or Confirmation.

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