

Translation of the First Roman Ordo¹

[The First Roman Ordo (OR I)]

Here begins the order of ecclesiastical ministry of the Roman Church or how Mass is celebrated.

1. First of all it must be observed that there are seven regions of the ecclesiastical order of the city of Rome and each region has its own regionary deacons.

2. And the acolytes of each region are subordinated under the control of the regionary subdeacon to the deacon of his region by reason of his office.

3. If any of the deacons ever dies, until someone is chosen as a replacement in his place, the acolytes of his region obey the archdeacon, because all acolytes of whatever region they are, by reason of their ecclesiastical office, belong to his ministry.

4. This too must be understood about the following orders: though protected by whomever after him of his own rank, they are all subordinated to the archdeacon by ministry of his own order, so that if someone, for instance, suffers violence either at the hand of a clergyman or some person in government service, if his legal proceeding is not fulfilled by the head of his own order, let the archdeacon, that is the representative of the pope, manage the trial: in this way he may be able to handle the legal complaints of those subordinate to him without the pope's knowledge. But let the others be settled by the minor orders.

5. For first it is necessary to know after the number of the ecclesiastical regions, that he who wants may know the number of the days in the week, by which order in a cycle they are observed: for on Sunday the third region, that is Easter, on Monday the fourth region, on Tuesday the fifth region, on Wednesday the sixth region, on Thursday the seventh region, on Friday the first region, on Saturday the second region, their own orders both in the procession as well as in the church, and wherever their own day compels them to go or to minister by the ancient statute on account of his rank, he is not able to absent himself from the pope's ministry without incurring any disciplinary judgment to himself of excommunication or punishment.

6. First according to a simple plan these ministries are divided doubly on each day, that is in the procession of the *apostolicus* to the stational church and in the exit of the sacristy until the completion of the Mass.

¹ This translation is intended as a complement to my work in the dissertation and an aid to comprehending OR I. I have intentionally tried to render the technical phrasing of OR I as accurately and even literally as possible in English. I am working from the text I identify as the form of the document when it left Rome in approximately the mid-eighth century. The chapters that appear in bold were added or revised in the second redaction of OR I. I am indebted to Stephen D'Evelyn (University of Bristol), who generously read this entire translation and provided me with numerous helpful suggestions. In the preparation for this new translation, I consulted two older translations: E. G. C. F. Atchley, *Ordo Romanus Primus* (London: Alexander Moring, 1905), pp. 116-49; and the partial translation of MS. St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek 614 in R. C. D. Jasper and G. J. Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*. Second Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 125-29.

7. And so on solemn days, that is Easter, first all the acolytes of the third region and *defensores* of all regions, meeting at daybreak in the palace of the Lateran, go ahead of the pope on foot to the stational church.

8. But the lay grooms walk to the right and the left of the horse so it does not stumble anywhere.

9. Those who go ahead on horseback, they are: the deacons, the *primicerius* [of the notaries] and the two regionary notaries, the regionary *defensores*, the regionary subdeacons. They go ahead in two troops, making a space between themselves and the *apostolicus*.

10. But after the horse these are the ones who are riding on horseback: the *vicedominus*, the *vesterarius*, the *nomincolator* and the *sacellarius*.

11. But one of the stationary acolytes goes ahead of the pope's horse on foot, carrying in his hand the holy chrism in a vessel wrapped in a napkin. But all the acolytes without sacks and linen cloths and chrism do not go ahead, which the stationary [acolyte] controls.

12. If anyone wants to approach the pope, if he is riding on horseback, immediately when he sees him, he descends from [his] horse and waits at the side of the road, until he can be heard by him.

13. And, after a benediction is requested by him, his case is examined by the *nomincolator* and the *sacellarius* and they signal to the pope and they settle [it]; that also will be observed even if someone without any petition for him is in the way.

14. But the one who is on foot, he stays fixed only in his place, so that he may be heard by him or blessed.

15. But on the day of the Lord's resurrection, after the regionary notary walks ahead of him to Saint Mary, the regionary notary stands in the place that is called Merolanas and, after having kissed the pope, says:

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, last night in St. Mary the Mother of God so many baby boys and so many baby girls were baptized.

The pope responds: *Thanks be to God.*

And he receives one solidus from the *sacellarius*; the pope travels to the stational church.

16. On Monday, at the *remissa*, the same thing.

17. On Tuesday, at the fork in the road of the portico of St. Paul, only those who are on foot observe the same thing.

18. But on the holy day of Easter, all the acolytes of the third region at the same time and the *defensores* of all the regions meet at dawn in the Lateran palace, so that, when the pope walks in procession, they go ahead of his horse.

19. But the acolytes, who are from there [i.e. the region], take care that they may carry the chrism in front of the pope and the evangelary, the linen cloths and the sacks and aquamanile behind him, as we said above.

20. The subdeacon who is to read will have the epistolary under his care, the archdeacon [will have] the evangelary.

21. They take out the aquamanile, the daily paten, the chalice, the goblets and liturgical straws and other gold and silver small cruets, a silver and gold strainer and another larger silver one, silver cruets, the *cantatorium* and other gold and silver vessels,

a gold and silver candelabra from the Church of the Savior under the control of the first of the *mansionarii* and the porters carry [them].

22. But on feast days, the large chalice and the large paten and the large evangelary from the Sunday cloakroom leave under the seal of the *vesterarius* on account of the number of the gems, so that they not be lost.

23. The lay *cubicularius*, going ahead, carries the chair of the pope, so that it is prepared when he comes into the sacristy.

24. After having announced the stational church on feast days, early in the morning all the clergy goes ahead of the *apostolicus* to the church, except for those who accompany him in his service as we said above; and waiting for the pope in the church with the *supplementarius* and the porters and the rest who carry crosses, sitting in the presbytery, indeed the bishops are on the left of those entering, but the priests [are] on the right, so that when the pope sits, looking at them, let him see the bishops on his right, but the priests on his left.

25. But when the pope comes near the church, when the acolytes and *defensores* from that region whose day it is to [be] in the office in service come out, they stand ready for him in the appointed place, before he comes where he will dismount.

26. In the same way too the priest of the titular church where the stational church is, together with the major domos of the Roman Church, or the father of a *diaconia*, if however that church is in a *diaconia*, with the priest subordinate to him and the *mansionarius* carrying a censer in his service after having bowed his head when he comes.

27. The acolyte indeed with the *defensores* at first, then the priest with his men, after having asked for a benediction, after having divided on either side into groups, as they march, they go ahead of the pope up to the church.

28. But the advocates of the church themselves stand with the major [domos], but they do not go ahead with them, but they only follow the pope's seat with the acolyte who carries the aquamanile, who must always follow the pope, until he ascends to the altar, [he is] ready beneath the shoulder [of the pope] in the presbytery, when he is called by the regionary subdeacon to give water,

29. But when the pope enters the church, he does not ascend immediately to the altar, but first enters into the *secretarium*, with the deacons who receive him when he is descending from the saddle, holding his hands in *sustentatio*, where, when he enters, he sits in his seat and the deacons, after having kissed the pope, exit from the *secretarium* and in front of its entrance they change their vestments.

30. And the one who is to read prepares the evangelary; after having broken the seal, at the archdeacon's command, over the acolyte's chasuble, and if it is necessary on account of a larger evangelary, with two acolytes holding it over the chasuble, he prepares the evangelary.

31. After this is done, the acolyte carries the evangelary in front of the altar in the presbytery, with the second subdeacon walking in front of him, who, receiving [it] on top of his chasuble, places it with his hands honorably on the altar.

32. Now when the deacons exit from the *secretarium*, the *primicerius* [of the notaries], the *secundicerius*, the *primicerius* of the *defensores*, the regionary notaries, the

regionaly *defensores*, the subdeacons and the second subdeacon, who has the pope's pallium in his arm over his chasuble in his left arm with a pin, remain with the pope.

33. But the pope under the control of the regionaly subdeacons changes the solemn vestments in this order: the tonsured cubicularius carries them folded, after having received them from the hands of the ostiary, next to the end of the bench, to the regionaly subdeacon.

34. And then the other regionaly subdeacons according to their order receive these vestments to clothe the pope, one the alb, another a belt and another the *anagolaium*, that is the amice, another the linen dalmatic and another the large dalmatic and another the chasuble and thus in order they clothe the pope.

35. But the *primicerius* [of the notaries] and the *secundicerius* arrange his vestments, so that they hang well.

36. Last of all, he whom the lord pope wants from the deacons or the subdeacons, he whom he commands, takes the pallium from the hand of the second subdeacon, and he drapes [it] over the pope and fastens it with a pin behind and in front of the chasuble and on his left shoulder and kisses the lord, he says: *Decree, oh lord, a blessing.* He responds: *May the Lord save us. Amen.*

37. Then the regionaly subdeacon, having the pope's liturgical napkin in his left hand wrapped over the chasuble, going out to the portico of the *secretarium*, says: *Choir.* He responds: *I am here.* And he: *Who is singing the Psalm?* He responds: *He and he.*

38. And returning to the pope the subdeacon extends the liturgical napkin to him, bowing to his knees, saying: *The servants of my lord so-and-so a regionaly subdeacon is reading the epistle and so-and-so from the choir is singing.*

39. And at this point it is not allowed to substitute someone else for the lector or the cantor. If this were to be done, the *archiparafonista* will be excommunicated by the pope, that is the fourth one of the choir, who always announces to the pope about cantors.

40. When this is announced, immediately the fourth one of the choir follows the subdeacon, standing in front of the pope's face, until the pope signals to him that they may sing the Psalm; when he signals to him, immediately he goes out in front of the entrance of the *secretarium* and says: *Light [it] on fire.*

41. When they light [it] on fire, immediately the second subdeacon, having the golden censer, places the incense on the outside, so that he travels in front of the pope.

42. And the fourth of the choir comes into the presbytery to the prior of the choir, or the second or the third, after having bowed his head, says: *Lord, command.*

43. Then they, getting up in order, go in front of the altar; the two lines stand in order so far as [it is] according to order, indeed the *parafonistae* on either side on the outside, the children on both sides below in order.

44. And soon the prior of the choir starts the introit, when the deacons hear their voice, immediately they enter to the pope in the *secretarium*.

45. And then the pope, rising, gives his right hand to the archdeacon and the left [hand] to the second [deacon], or who is in order; and they, after having kissed his hands, walk with him in *sustentatio*.

46. Then the second subdeacon with the censer walks in front of him, sending out incense, and the seven acolytes of whose region the day is, carrying seven lit candelbra walk in front of the pope until [they are] in front of the altar.

47. But, before they come in front of the altar, the deacons in the presbytery remove their chausbles and the regionary subdeacon receives them and extends them to the acolytes of the region of which they are deacons.

48. And then two acolytes, holding open receptacles with the Eucharist, and the second subdeacon with them having his hand in the mouth of the receptacle shows the Eucharist to the pope or the deacon who walks in procession. Then, after having bowed his head, the pope or the deacon kisses the Eucharist and looks so that if it is too much, let him command that it is put in the repository.

49. Then passing on, before he comes to the choir, the candelabra are divided, four to the right and three to the left and the pope crosses into the front part of the choir and bows his head to the altar, getting up and praying and making the sign of the cross on his forehead, and gives peace to one bishop of the hebdomadary [bishops] and to the archpriest and to all the deacons.

50. And looking at the prior of the choir he signals to him that he may sing the *Glory*; and the prior of the choir bows to the pope and intones. But the fourth of the choir walks in front of the pope, so that he places the prayer rug in front of the altar; and approaching, the pope prays on it until the repetition of the verse.

51. Now the deacons get up when he says: *As it was*, so that they kiss the sides of the altar, first two by two in turn returning to the pope. And getting up, the pope kisses the evangelary and the altar and approaches his seat and stands turned toward the East.

52. But the choir, after having finished the antiphon, intones the *Lord, have mercy*. But the prior of the choir watches the pope, so that he signals to him when he wants to change the number of the litany and bows to the pope.

53. When they finish, the pope intones the *Glory to God in the highest*, if it is the season, and he does not sit before they say, after the first prayer, *Amen*.

55. And then the regionary subdeacons ascend to the altar, stationing themselves at the right and the left of the altar.

56. But the subdeacon who is to read, soon when he sees the bishops and priests sitting again behind the pope, ascends to the ambo and reads.

57. After he reads, a cantor with the *cantatorium* ascends and says the response. If it is the season in which he may the *Alleluia*, fine; but if [it is the season], the tract; if neither, only the response.

59. Then the deacon, kissing the feet of the pope, and silently the pope says to him: *May the Lord be in your heart and on your lips*. Then he comes in front of the altar and after having kissed the evangelary, lifts in his hands the book and two regionary subdeacons walk in front of him lifting the censer from the hand of the second subdeacon, sending out incense, and in front of him there are two acolytes carrying two censers; coming to the ambo these acolytes divide in front of the ambo and the subdeacons and deacon cross with the evangelary among them.

61. The one who is without a censer, turning to the deacon, extends to him his left hand, in which he places the evangelary, so that the place in which the sign of the reading is placed is opened by the hand of the subdeacon.

62. And, after having inserted his finger in the place of reading the deacon ascends to read and the two subdeacons return to stand in front of the descending step of the ambo.

63. After the Gospel is finished, the pope says: *Peace be with you. The Lord be with you. And with your spirit.*

64. But after the deacon descends, the subdeacon who previously opened, receives the evangelary and extends it to the second subdeacon, who stands in line; who having [it] in front of his chest above the chasuble extends [it], with all kissing [it] in the order of the ranks in which they stand;

65. and after this after the acolyte is prepared at the enclosure next to the ambo with the receptacle in which the same subdeacon places the evangelary so that it is sealed. But the acolyte of the same region whose [day it is] and the subdeacon return the evangelary to the Lateran.

67. Then, after the deacon travels to the altar, with the acolyte standing with the chalice and the corporal over it, he lifts the chalice in his left arm and extends the corporal to the deacon, so that he receives it over the chalice, and places it above the altar at the right, throwing the other end to the second deacon so that they may spread [it] out.

68. Then the *primicerius* [of the notaries] and the *secundicerius* and the *primicerius* of the *defensores*, with all the regionaries and notaries ascend to the seat; but the subdeacon with the empty chalice follows the archdeacon.

69. But the pope descends to the *senatorium*, with the *primicerius* of the notaries holding his right hand and the *primicerius* of the *defensores* his left [hand], and he receives the lay offerings of the first men by the order of their dignities.

70. The archdeacon behind him receives the vessels and pours them into the large chalice, with the regionary subdeacon holding it, whom the acolyte follows with the goblet over his chasuble, into which the full chalice is poured.

71. The regionary subdeacon receives the lay offerings from the pope and extends [them] to the second subdeacon and the second subdeacon places [them] into the linen cloth that the two acolytes hold.

72. The hebdomadary bishop receives the remaining lay offerings behind the pope, so that he by his hand may place them into the linen cloth that follows him.

73. After this the deacon, who follows behind the archdeacon, receives [the chalice] and with his hand pours it into the goblet.

74. But the pope, before he crosses into the women's part, descends in front of the *confessio* and receives the clerical offerings of the *primicerius* [of the notaries] and the *secundicerius* and the *primicerius* of the *defensores*; now on feast days they offer behind the deacons at the altar.

75. The same thing when the pope ascends into the women's part in the order in which he completes everything above.

76. Then, after the *primicerius* [of the notaries] and the *secundicerius* take his hand, he returns to the seat.

77. The archdeacon standing in front of the altar, after having completed the reception, washes his hands; then he looks at the pope's face, he signals to him and he, after having returned the signal, approaches to the altar.

78. Then the regionary subdeacons, lifting the clerical offerings from the hand of the second subdeacon over his arms, extend [them] to the archdeacon and he arranges the altar; now the subdeacons extend [them] from either side.

79. After the altar is dressed, then the archdeacon takes the vessel of the pope from the *oblationarius* subdeacon and pours it over the strainer into the chalice, then the

deacons' [vessel] and on a feast day [the vessels] of the *primicerius* [of the notaries], of the *secundicerius*, of the *primicerius* of the *defensores*.

80. Then the second subdeacon descends to the choir, receives the ewer from the hand of the *archiparafonista* and carries [it] to the archdeacon and he pours [it] into the chalice, making the sign of the cross.

81. Then the deacons ascend to the pope: seeing them, the *primicerius* [of the notaries], the *secundicerius* and the *primicerius* of the regionary *defensores* and the regionary notaries and the regionary *defensores* descend from the lines, so that they may stand in their place.

82. Then the pope rises from his seat, descends to the altar and kisses the altar and receives the clerical offerings from the hand of the hebdomadary priest and the deacons.

83. Then the archdeacon receives the clerical offerings of the pope from the *oblationarius* [subdeacon] and gives [them] to the pope.

84. When the pope places them on the altar, the archdeacon lifts the chalice from the hand of the regionary subdeacon and puts it on the altar next to the clerical offering of the pope to the right, wrapping the handles with the offertory veil, which he places in the corner of the altar, and stands behind the pope.

85. And the pope, bowing slightly to the altar, looks to the choir and signals that they are to be silent.

86. Then, after having finished the offertory, the bishops are standing behind the pope, the first [bishop] in the middle, then in order, and the archdeacon to the right of the bishops, the second deacon to the left and the others in order in the prescribed line.

87. And the regionary subdeacons, after the offertory is finished, go behind the altar, looking at the pope, standing erect until they start to say the angelic hymn, that is *Holy, Holy, Holy*.

88. When they have finished it, the pope alone rises and enters into the canon; but the bishops, deacons, subdeacons and priests in the presbytery remain bowing.

89. And when he says: *To us sinners too*, the subdeacons rise; when he says: *Through Whom all these things, o Lord*, the archdeacon alone rises; when he says: *Through Him and with Him*, he lifts the chalice with the offertory veil around the handles and holds [it], raising it next to the pope.

90. But the pope touches the side of the chalice with the clerical offerings, saying: *Through Him and with Him*, until: *Forever and ever*, and places the lay offerings in their place and the archdeacon [places] the chalice next to them, having taken off the offertory veil from the handles of the same [chalice].

91. Now what we omitted about the paten, when he starts the canon, the acolyte beneath the shoulder [of the pope] having the linen cloth tied around his neck comes, having the paten in front of his chest on the right side until the middle of the canon.

92. Then the second subdeacon receives it over [his] chasuble and comes in front of the altar, waiting until when the regionary subdeacon receives it.

93. But when the canon is finished, the regionary subdeacon stands with the paten behind the archdeacon.

94. When he says: *and safe from all trouble*, the archdeacon turns and, having kissed the paten, gives it to the second deacon to hold.

95. When he says: *May the peace of the Lord always be with you*, he lets a piece of the Eucharist fall into the chalice.

96. But the archdeacon gives peace to the prior bishop, then the others in order and the people.

97. Then the pope breaks the clerical offering at the right side and leaves the particle that he breaks on the altar; but he places the remaining lay offerings into the paten that the deacon holds.

98. And he returns to the seat. Soon the *primicerius* [of the notaries] and the *secundicerius* and the *primicerius* of the *defensores* with all the regionaries and notaries ascend to the altar and stand at the right and left.

99. But the *nomincolator* and the *sacellarius* and the notary of the *vicedominus*, when they sing *O Lamb of God*, then they ascend to stand in front of the pope's face, so that he signals to them to write the names of those who are being invited either to the table of the pope by the *nomincolator*, or to the [table] of the *vicedominus* by his notary; when these names are complete, they descend to invite [them].

100. Now the archdeacon lifts the chalice and gives it to the regionary subdeacon and holds it next to corner of the altar on the right side.

101. And when the second subdeacons approach with the acolytes who carry the sacks from the right and the left of the altar, after the acolytes have extended their arms with the sacks, the second subdeacons stand in front so that they prepare the opening of the sacks for the archdeacon to insert lay offerings, first on the right, then on the left.

102. Then the acolytes go to the right and left through the bishops around the altar; the rest descend to the priests, so that they may break hosts.

103. The paten walks in front next to the seat, after two regionary subdeacons have carried it to the deacons so that they may break [hosts].

104. But they look at the pope's face, so that he signals to them to break [hosts]; and when he signals, returning the signal to the pope, they break [hosts].

105. And the archdeacon, after having cleared the altar of clerical offerings, looks to the choir and signals to them that they sing the *O Lamb of God* and goes to the paten with the others.

106. After the breaking is completed, the lesser deacon, after having lifted the paten from the subdeacon, carries [it] to the seat, so that the pope may receive communion.

107. When he receives communion, he places a piece of the same Eucharist that he bit into the chalice in the hand of the archdeacon saying: *Let the mixture and consecration of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ make we who receive it enter into eternal life. Amen.*

Peace be with you. And with your spirit.
And so he is given the cup by the archdeacon.

108. Then the archdeacon with the chalice comes at the side of the altar and announces the communion station and after having poured a little from the chalice into the goblet in the hands of the acolyte, the bishops approach first to the seat, so that they receive communion from the hand of the pope according to order.

109. But all the priests too ascend so that they receive communion at the altar.

110. The first bishop receives the chalice from the hand of the archdeacon and stands at the corner of altar in the following order until the *primicerius* of the *defensores*.

111. Then the archdeacon, after having received the chalice from his hand, pours it into the goblet that we said above and hands over the chalice to the regionary subdeacon, who hands over to him a liturgical straw with which he gives the cup to the people.

112. But the second subdeacon receives the chalice, gives [it] to the acolyte, who returns [it] to the *paratorium*.

113. When he receives the cup, that is those to whom the pope gives communion, the pope descends from the seat, with the *primicerius* of the notaries and the *primicerius* of the *defensores* holding his hands, so that he gives the communion to those who are in the *senatorium*, after which the archdeacon gives [them] the cup.

114. After the archdeacon [gives the cup], the bishops give the communion to the people, after the *primicerius* [of the notaries] signals to them with his hand under his chasuble after the pope is asked; after they [give communion], the deacons give the cup.

115. Then they cross into the left side and do the same thing.

116. But the priests, after having signaled to the *primicerius* [of the notaries], at the pope's command they give communion to the people and they themselves in turn give the cup.

117. Now, as soon as the pope starts to give communion to [those] in the *senatorium*, immediately the choir starts the communion antiphon and they sing the Psalm until all of the people have received communion, let the pope signal that they sing the *Glory to the Father*; and then they are silent after the verse is repeated.

118. Now the pope, as soon as he has given communion in the women's parts, returns to the seat.

And he gives communion to the regionaries in order and those who stood in line and on the feast days twelve [members] of the choir. Now, on other days, they receive communion in the presbytery where they can.

119. After all these people return, the *nomincolator* and the *sacellarius* and the acolyte who holds the paten and the one who holds the liturgical cloth and the one who gives water receive communion at the seat.

120. After the pope [gives communion], the archdeacon gives them the cup.

121. But the regionary subdeacon stands in front of the pope's face, so that he signals to him. But he, looking at the people if they already received communion and signals to him.

122. And he [the regionary subdeacon] goes to the [pope's] shoulder, looks at the first of the choir, making a cross on his forehead, signals to him to say *Glory*; and he, returning the signal, says *Glory, As it was*, and the verse.

123. After the antiphon is finished, the pope rises with the archdeacon and coming to the altar, delivers the final prayer.

124. After it is finished, [the one] of the deacons whom the archdeacon commands looks at the pope, so that he signals to him, and he says to the people: *Go, the Mass is finished*. Resp[onse]: *Thanks be to God*.

125. Then the seven candelabra and the regionary subdeacon with the censer walk in front of the pope to the *secretarium*.

126. After he [the pope] descends into the presbytery, the bishops first say: *Decree, o lord, a blessing*. He responds: *May the Lord bless us*. They respond: *Amen*; after the bishops the priests, then the monks, then the choir, then the *draconarius* soldiers,

that is [the ones] who carry the standards; after them the porters; after them the candle-bearers; after them the acolytes who guard the gate; after them, outside of the presbytery, the cross-carriers, then the junior *mansionarii*; and they enter into the *secretarium*.