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# Introduction

## The Altar Server's Charge

As you accept the honor and privilege of becoming an Altar Server for St. Ann Catholic Church, you acknowledge that you are now a member of the Altar Server Ministry.

Your duty as an Altar Server is to assist the Priests and Deacons at the holy Mass. In performing your duties, you will have the tremendous privilege of being in the Sanctuary and at the Altar of our Lord.

With the honor and privilege bestowed upon you as members of the Altar Server Ministry, comes a responsibility to act with reverence at all times; to be alert and ready to assist our Priests and Deacons.

Please be ever mindful that you are to participate in the Mass, to pray, to sing and to worship as you give the gift of your time and service to our Church.

# A Prayer for Altar Servers

*Our Loving Father,  
Creator of the universe,  
I thank you for the privilege,  
Of being part of this ministry of service.  
I ask for your guidance and direction  
In this place of worship.  
Help me perform my duties in a manner  
That will promote peace, comfort, and consolation.  
Thank you for the trust You have placed in me.  
Keep me true to that trust.  
This I pray in Jesus' name,  
Who is with us in the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.*

# The Dress of an Altar Server

- † Please take care to dress carefully and conservatively when you are serving at the Mass. Whatever you wear underneath an alb may show through.
- † You will wear the vestments of an Altar Server: Alb, Cross, Cincture
- † The Cincture is tied in a loose knot and should hang to the right of your Alb.
- † The color of your Cincture will be noted for you on the Altar Server bulletin board.
- † Hair should be clean and well-groomed.
- † Refrain from wearing high-heels or flip-flops. Dress shoes are preferred.

# Altar Server Preparation for the Mass

It is both an honor and a privilege to serve at the Altar of our Lord. If you are always mindful of the special duty you are performing, you will be guided to be reverent and respectful at all times during your service.

- † Please arrive at least **FIFTEEN** minutes before Mass begins.
- † Sign in on the Altar Server sign-in.
- † Dress in your Alb, Cincture and Cross.
- † Determine if there are any special requirements
  - Incense
  - Holy Water
  - Palm Fronds
- † Work with the other Servers to determine who will serve as:
  - The Cross Bearer
  - First/Second Book
  - Gifts and basket
  - Other responsibilities
- † Please be as quiet as possible in the Sacristy, as the Priests and Deacons use this time to prepare for the Mass.

# Protocol

- † Your posture should be one of grace and reverence. Unless you are holding something in your hands, hands should be folded in the prayer position, or placed upon your lap, if sitting.
- † Please take care to sit up straight and tall, with both feet planted on the floor.
- † If you are unable to attend a Mass for which you have been scheduled, **please arrange for a substitute**. If you are unable to get a sub, please call your Altar Server Coach.
- † No drinking or eating is allowed in the Sacristy or in the Sanctuary.
- † Please wash your hands prior to Mass.
- † Please have the Gather Hymnal and the Missalets out and ready to use during Mass.
- † Be alert and pay attention. Remember that during mass, people are watching you.
- † By paying attention, you will be able to anticipate what the Priest or Deacon needs next.
- † Be watchful, as the priest may signal you for help.
- † Participate in the Mass
- † Pray
- † Sing
- † Listen to the readings and the homily

# Serving at Mass

## The Entrance Procession

- † You will leave the Sacristy/Vestibule when Father is ready, or when instructed to go by the Priest. (Usually begin walking when congregation begins to sing.)
  
- † The Procession forms at the side of the Church in the Vestibule.
  
- † The order of the Procession is:
  - The Cross Bearer
  - The 2<sup>nd</sup> and/or 3<sup>rd</sup> Server, if present
  - The Deacon, if present
  - The Concelebrants, if present
  - The Priest
  
- † Walk with reverence, at a slow and even pace.

\*\*Cross Bearer – Please be sure that the Cross does NOT hit the top of the door. Wait until you are through the doorway to raise the cross!

# Arriving at the Altar of Our Lord

- † Arriving at the Altar, line up with the Cross Bearer to the right of the Priest.
- † The 2<sup>nd</sup> and/or 3<sup>rd</sup> Server, if present, will go to the left of the Priest.
- † Wait for Father to lead you. You will bow slightly, and then proceed over to the front pew on the left of the Sanctuary.
- † The Cross Bearer will place the Cross in it's stand, facing the people, then procede to the front left pew.
- † Remember to continue to stand until after the Opening Rite is concluded.
- † When you see Father sit, please be seated.



# The Opening Rite

- † Our service begins with the Penitential Rite, and is then usually followed by the Gloria.
- † The server will listen for the cue near the end of the Gloria. When you will hear the Priest say, "***For you alone are the holy one, you alone are the Lord***", you will get ready.
- † Carry the Roman Missal (with both hands extended out in front of the body) when you hear Father say, "***Let us Pray***".
- † The Book will be marked with a ribbon where Father will open the pages.
- † Please stand in front of Father with the Book held up against chest and flat so he can easily read it.
- † Take care to not to block the Book's writing with your fingers and to not move about while the priest is reading. Wait until Father closes the book to go back to your seat.
- † After the opening prayer, replace the Roman Missal on the bottom shelf of the Credence Table.
- † After the opening rite, be seated when you see Father sit.

# The Reading of God's Holy Word

- † You will be seated for the:
  - The First Reading
  - The Responsorial Psalm
  - The Second Reading (but please pay attention and get ready)
  
- † When you hear the Alleluia begin you will stand up, (be prepared to stand when the Priest stands).
  
- † The priest/deacon will then come to the pulpit to read the Gospel.
  
- † All servers should sit down together, at the same time.
  
- † The priest or deacon will begin the Homily.

# The Offertory

- † The Offertory begins right after the Prayers of the Faithful.
- † As the offering begins, prepare the Altar. Be sure to wait until the Ushers have started the collection before you go. Take the tray containing the Priest's Chalice, cups, and purificators up to the Altar and arrange so that the Chalice is to the left of the cups.
- † The Roman Missal is placed on the left side of the Altar. Take off the Gold book holder and put on the second shelf of the Credence table.
- † Return to your seat until Father is ready to take the gifts. Stand in line behind him to assist in taking the gifts.
- † Father will hand the gifts basket to the first server. This is to be placed either next to the Altar or next to Father's chair (Priests prefer different locations – make sure to check with Father prior to Mass).
- † The next server will take the Ciborium and/or wine and wait for Father at the Altar. Father will then take them and place them on the Altar.
- † You may need to hold the wine until another Server brings the cruet with water for blessing the wine. Father will bless the wine and pour into cups. You will then take the empty wine container back to the Credence table.
- † Prepare for the hand washing when you return to your seat.
- † Father will hold the Host up in blessing and then he will hold up the Chalice for blessing. He will then step back from the Altar and bow. As Father steps back from the Altar, servers will immediately bring the finger towel, pitcher, and Lavabo bowl to assist Father in washing his hands. (“Lord, wash away my iniquity, cleanse me from my sins.”)
- † One server will have the finger towel draped over his/her left arm, carrying the Lavabo bowl.

- † The other server will carry the pitcher.
- † Father will place his hands over the bowl. The server holding the pitcher of water will pour water, so that Father can easily wash his hands. Please pour slowly, so water does not splash/spill out.
- † Father will then dry his hands on the towel and place it back on the left arm of the server.
- † Return the towel, pitcher, Lavabo bowl and cruet to the Credence table and return to stand in front of your pew.

## The Liturgy of the Holy Eucharist

- † After the Eucharistic Prayer begins and after "Holy, Holy", all will kneel. The servers will all be on the left side of the Altar, and will kneel either in front of the pew or in front of the steps. Wherever you are, all servers must kneel together, with both knees on the floor and hands folded in front of you.
- † After the Great Amen, all will stand to say the Lord's Prayer and then give the sign of Peace.
- † Servers should give the sign of peace only to those immediately around you and Father and Deacon if present.
- † The Eucharistic Ministers will come up to the Sanctuary, where they will receive communion and then help distribute the Hosts and wine.
- † During communion, please clear the Altar. Take the book, tray, Chalice and napkin to the Credence table.

- † The Priest will then cleanse the Chalices and Ciboria at the Credence table.
- † When Father has completed the cleansing of the Chalices and Ciboria, get ready to carry the Roman Missal for the closing prayer. (Your cue is Father saying, "Let us Pray".)
- † After the blessing Father or the Deacon will say, "***Mass has ended, go in peace***".
- † Wait for Father to move to the Altar, then the Cross Bearer gets the Processional Cross from the stand.
- † Proceed to the front of the Altar with the Priest.
- † Wait until you see Father bow, then process out in the following order:
  - The Cross Bearer first
  - The second/third server, if present
  - The Deacon/Concelebrants, if present
  - The Priest

# After Mass

- † After the processional at the end of Mass, you will return to the Sacristy.
- † Remember to move slowly and quietly back to the Sacristy.
- † The Cross Bearer will replace the Cross.
- † Back in the Sacristy, please return your Alb to the proper place in the closet (by its size) and replace your Cross and Cincture.
- † (School Mass only) Extinguish the candles using the snuffer and bring the gifts basket into the Sacristy.
- † Check with Father to see if any thing else needs to be done.

**Thank you for your service to the Mass!**