

Altar Server Training Guide

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ABOUT ALTAR SERVERS

Dear Altar Servers, you are, in fact, already apostles of Jesus! When you take part in the Liturgy by carrying out your altar service, you offer a witness to all. Your absorption, the devotion that wells up from your heart and is expressed in gestures, in song, in the responses: if you do it correctly and not absent-mindedly, then in a certain way your witness is one that moves people.

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the bond of friendship with Jesus. You are very close to Jesus in the Eucharist, and this is the most important sign of his friendship for each one of us. Do not forget it.

-excerpt from Pope Benedict XVI, Address to Altar Servers, August 2, 2006

The Altar Server's Ministry is a unique one in the Catholic Church. Other than priests and deacons, no one else is allowed to so closely play a part in the preparation of the Eucharist. Your participation as an Altar Server is special. When you serve the priests and deacons, you serve the people of God, and above all, you serve Christ.

Altar Servers must remember that everything that they do is for the Glory of God. They do it out of love for His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. St. Ignatius of Loyola called this attitude "AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM". This means "All for the Honor and Glory of God". It is the motto of a heart of service. Sometimes, we don't feel like doing our best.

Sometimes, we just want to sleep another 5 minutes later; or we want to not have to carry the candles today; or maybe we even want to just call in sick and let someone else serve.

When we feel that way, we should ask ourselves, "Would I do it if Jesus Himself asked me?"

Would I substitute for a sick server if Jesus Himself asked me?

Would I let the new server take my favorite part if Jesus Himself asked me?

Would I wear my best Sunday clothes if Jesus Himself asked me?

Would I put aside my daily worries and worldly concerns and instead come serve at Mass if Jesus Himself asked me?

He did ask. And you answered.

Now you have been chosen to be a special minister of the Mass.

As an Altar Server, you will do things that others will never do. You will learn things that others will never know. You will see the Mass in ways that others may never see it. You will do it all for the Honor and Glory of God.

Thank you for saying yes to Him, and welcome to Altar Service!

REQUIREMENTS TO BECOME AN ALTAR SERVER

All servers must meet these requirements before they will be accepted to the St. Joseph Altar Server Ministry:

QUALIFICATIONS

- Servers' families must be registered members of St. Joseph Parish.
- Servers must actively practice the Catholic faith and should regularly receive Communion.
- Servers must be in the second semester of 4th grade.
- **Servers should be currently participating in a program of Faith Formation**, either through the Parish Faith Formation Program, or through attendance at a Catholic school, or through structured home study. Servers not meeting this requirement should discuss their situation with the Altar Server Coordinators. Accommodations will be made.

INTENTIONS

New servers must meet with the Altar Server Coordinator to answer this question, "Why do you want to be an Altar Server?"

Altar servers must serve because they feel a **personal calling** to service. If you feel parents or others are pressuring you to serve, but you don't want to serve, quietly let the coordinator know. The coordinator is here to assist you. They are happy to help you determine if this is the right time for you to begin altar service. If this isn't the right time, then you are welcome to start again when you are ready.

Servers also must be prepared to meet the commitment required of them. They should understand the principles of Devotion, Dedication, and Discipline.

KNOWLEDGE

A new server must be willing to become very familiar with the Mass. They must understand why the Mass is important, and what happens during Mass.

Before they serve for the first time, a server will be required to demonstrate that they know the Order of Mass, the prayers of the Mass, and the postures and responses during Mass. All of this will be taught during the new server training period.

Altar Servers must also demonstrate the ability to make use of the "tools of the trade" such as matches, candles, candle lighters, books and sacred vessels. All of this will be taught in training.

BEING AN ALTAR SERVER

TRAINING

Training will be scheduled regularly for all new altar servers. Once servers have completed the initial training, they will be able to begin serving as an Apprentice. After a server has qualified to serve, they will be added to the regular altar server schedule. All servers continue to participate in ongoing training through:

- 1) the server advancement process
- 2) training resources
- 3) regular practices

Altar servers will be trained to handle all of the tasks assigned to each specific duty. Servers will be required to memorize the prayer responses of the Mass, know the names of the vestments and vessels of the altar, and to learn the Order of Mass.

All servers will complete an open note quiz with the help of their parents to assess this information.

PRACTICE

Practices will be held for special celebrations such as Holy Week, Sacraments, etc. If invited to serve you will be attending these special practices.

A mandatory retrain session will be held each fall for all servers. Practices give every server the occasion to improve their current skills as well as the opportunity to learn new ones.

ADVANCEMENT

As servers grow in their knowledge, their skill, and their maturity, they will be recognized through advancement in the Altar Server Program.

Advancement through the levels of the program is not automatic, nor is it guaranteed. Altar Servers will have to prove themselves ready for promotion by demonstrating their Devotion, Dedication, and Discipline.

Information on how to advance between each level is listed in the section, "Advancement Manuals" on page 20.

CONDUCT

GENERAL CONDUCT

Servers must be in a state of grace to serve at mass, meaning they should attend mass each weekend and receive reconciliation on a regular basis.

Altar Servers should come to Mass prepared to meet the Lord at His Holy Communion. They should consider whether they ought to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation ahead of time, and, if needed, make appropriate arrangements.

Once an Altar Server puts on the alb and cincture, their conduct always must be professional and reverent. From the time they put on the Alb before Mass until the time they take it off after Mass, an Altar Server is "on duty".

Altar Servers must always show respect for the sanctity of the church and the sacred vessels. The care of the vessels and vestments is a primary responsibility of the Altar Server.

SCHEDULING

Three Altar Servers are scheduled at each Mass. Up to one Apprentice may also be scheduled.

When you registered as an altar server, you specified the Masses you prefer to serve. You will be scheduled through **Ministry Pro** for the Masses you prefer, except in extraordinary circumstances, or if you request otherwise. If you are available to substitute at another Mass, please let the Coordinator know. If you would like to serve at an extraordinary Mass (for example, Easter Vigil or Christmas Midnight) please let the Coordinator know.

The schedule is typically prepared a month or more in advance, three months at a time. Schedules are available in several locations:

- sent by email to you when they are completed
- an email reminder is sent on Monday for upcoming weekend servers
- posted in the sacristy
- listed in the Sunday bulletin the week before your scheduled date

Servers should work with their parents to ensure that they are serving at the Masses for which they are scheduled. However, emergencies sometimes happen. Every server is required to make sure that their position is covered whenever they are scheduled. You must arrange your own substitutes. If, after a valid effort, a server is not able to find a substitute, they should call the Coordinator to seek further assistance.

If a server cannot serve at the mass he/she is scheduled please request a sub through Ministry Pro.

ATTENDANCE

Failing to show when you are scheduled places an unfair burden on the other servers, and disrespects the Altar Server Ministry. The following "no show policy" will be closely enforced.

NO SHOW POLICY

THE FIRST TIME A SERVER IS ABSENT FROM A SCHEDULED MASS, WITHOUT FINDING A SUBSTITUTE, THE SERVER WILL BE PLACED ON "WARNING" STATUS FOR A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS. THE COORDINATOR WILL CONTACT THE SERVER'S PARENTS TO ENSURE THAT THE SERIOUSNESS OF THEIR COMMITMENT IS WELL UNDERSTOOD. A SERVER WHO IS ABSENT FROM MASS AN ADDITIONAL TIME DURING THE "WARNING" PERIOD WILL BE ASKED TO MEET PERSONALLY WITH THE COORDINATOR TO DISCUSS THEIR INTEREST IN THE MINISTRY. THEY WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE SCHEDULE UNTIL THIS MEETING OCCURS. **SERVERS ARE ASKED TO UTILIZE OUR ONLINE PROGRAM (MINISTRY PRO) TO REQUEST A SUBSTITUTE.**

ARRIVAL

Altar Servers must arrive early to prepare for Mass. It is important to arrive before your designated serving time, a minimum of 20 minutes prior to Mass beginning. There are several duties that a server must perform before Mass. Often, there is some additional instructions regarding that day's liturgy that the priest and deacon may need to give to the servers.

A replacement will be assigned for servers not in albs by 15 minutes prior to the beginning of mass. If the scheduled server arrives late, please be forgiving to the newly assigned servers and let them serve in the position that they are assigned.

Attendance times:

- 15 minutes before Mass: All scheduled Altar Servers have arrived in the sacristy and are dressed in albs
- 10 minutes before Mass: Any server standing by can fill-in for any absent server. Servers arriving after this time are "absent", even if they show up later.
- 5 minutes before Mass: The lead server "locks-in" the roles: no further changes are made.

All servers are responsible for signing in when they serve. This should be your first duty before Mass.

- Read any "Notes to Servers" on the bulletin board.
- Write your initials next to your name on the schedule. If you are substituting, please mark through the name of the person you are replacing and write your name next to it.

APPEARANCE AND DRESS

All servers are expected to wear "Sunday clothes" at the weekend Masses. Modesty should be preferred over fashion. Jeans, shorts, and t-shirts are not preferred. "Skorts" of appropriate length and style may be allowed.

Albs are made from lightweight material. What you wear under an alb will show through. For this reason, the server should be sure to avoid stripes and designs of any kind. These distract by showing through the alb. It is recommended that servers wear light, solid colors. White is strongly preferred for the shirt or blouse. Navy blue, tan, or black is preferred for the pants or skirt.

Shoes must be clean dress-style shoes. Black, brown, (or white for girls, shoes should have a conservative heel, and good traction) dress shoes should be worn whenever possible.

Athletic shoes and open-toed shoes are not allowed.

Dress code requirements that present undue hardship on a server or their family should be brought discreetly to the attention of the Altar Server Coordinator so that accommodations can be made.

Servers should refrain from excessive or flashy jewelry or accessories. Headbands and hair accessories should be dark solid colors.

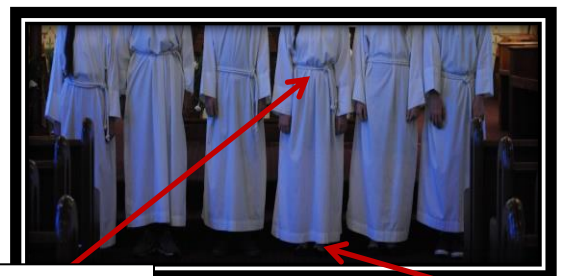
Other than a cross or sacred medal worn under the alb, and modest earrings for girls, all other jewelry should be removed and left with a friend or parent. Watches may be worn if they are not a distraction to the server or others. Watch alarms must be silenced. Cell phones are not allowed while serving.

Young ladies wearing makeup should prefer modesty. Albs have been stained in the past by makeup. Makeup should never be applied so that it is distracting or so that it is heavy enough to stain vestments.

Short hair is strongly preferred for boys. Long hair for boys or girls must be very neatly presented so as not to fall into or on any sacramental.

ALBS

Albs are sorted in the vestry by size. Select an alb that fits comfortably, and is long enough to cover your ankles. Fasten the alb at the waist with a cincture matching the liturgical color of the week. Tie the cincture in a "girth-hitch" knot snug enough to hold the alb in place. See the appendix "How to tie a rope cincture" on page 30.



Cincture tied on left side

Alb close to or below ankle

After Mass, return your alb to its original place (by size), facing the correct direction. Unknot your cincture and hang it on the proper hook.

POSTURES

The posture of the Altar Server should be one of near invisibility. If people are paying attention at Mass, they should not even notice you. **If someone looks at you, they should see a server who is reverent and paying attention. It should remind them that they, too, should be paying attention to the Mass, and not to you.**

In general, your posture should be confident, but calm. You should look reverent and prayerful, but comfortable. Move smoothly, but deliberately, not slowly.

Always look "where the action is". When someone is speaking or reading part of the Mass, you are listening to them. **When the Eucharist is being consecrated**, you are looking at it. When the choir is singing, you are singing with them.

Make no distracting motions or noises. Do not wave, smile, or wink at people. Friends and family will be very proud of you. They may smile or even wave at you. Impress them further by attending to your duties at Mass without acknowledging them. You will have time to visit with them after Mass.

Coughs and sneezes should be covered with a handkerchief or facial tissue. Make a habit of bringing them with you in case they are needed. Suppress the urge to yawn.

Do not leave your place during Mass for any reason. Bodily needs should be attended to before and after Mass. Servers are not allowed in the sacristy during mass, unless they have been sent to retrieve something by the priest.

If you are holding anything, you are excused from the hand motions at that time. For example, the server holding the book at the beginning of Mass does not raise their hands at "And with your spirit", if the book is in their hands.

STANDING



When standing, stand up straight. Balance your weight evenly on both feet, but do not lock your knees.

Anytime you are not holding anything, place your hands with palms together, in the "prayer position". Point your fingertips upward, with the right thumb over the left. Hands should be held comfortably at about the middle of your chest.



Free hand covers heart

If you are holding something, hold the item firmly with one or both hands, as needed. The free hand, if you have one, should cover your heart. Grasp items firmly and deliberately.

When handing something to someone else, make sure they have a firm grip so as not to drop it.

HANDS

Place your hands with palms together, in the "prayer position". Point your fingertips upward, with the right thumb over the left. Hands should be held comfortably at about the middle of your chest.

PROCESSING

The procession is a sacred act. It is more than just a way for the priest to get to the altar. It is a very formal way of welcoming and glorifying Christ himself into our presence.

When you process, walk at a deliberate, but respectful pace. It should be just slower than you normally walk. If you are not the lead in the procession, keep pace with the lead.

When carrying something while processing, hold it reverently with both hands and slightly in front of you, not resting on your chest.



Cross Bearer
 -Top hand at chin level
 -Low hand at waist level

Candle Bearer
 Hands away from body and at waist level

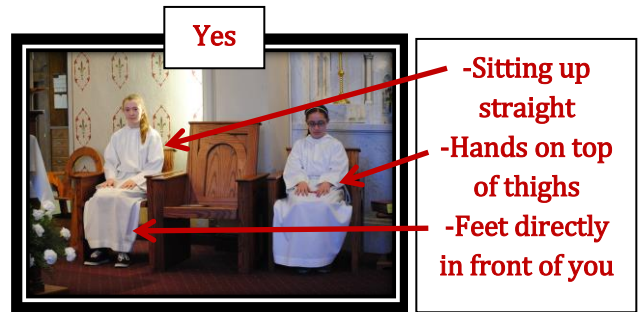


WALKING

Walk. Never, run. You are the model of reverence, calm and grace. Walk deliberately to your station. Watch for others in your way and plan ahead to step around them. **Never get in the way of the presiders, or of any minister holding the Blessed Sacrament.** Hands are folded prayerfully or firmly grasping whatever you may be carrying.

SITTING

While sitting, sit up straight, not slouching. Feet should be directly in front of you. **Legs should never be crossed.** Keep your legs and feet still. Hands are placed on top of thighs. Respond to prayers and sing songs deliberately, and fully participate in the Mass.



KNEELING



While kneeling, keep your torso up straight, not slouching or resting on feet. If kneeling behind a chair or pew, do not lean over it. Feet should be directly behind you. Keep your legs and feet still. Hands are folded prayerfully.

BOWING

Never bow when carrying the cross or candle.

There are two types of bows:

The bow of the head: Lower your chin to your chest and hold it there briefly. There are several times in the Mass when this is done. Also, anytime a priest bows to you, return the bow with a brief head bow.



The profound bow (full bow): Bend at the waste and bow forward (like a Japanese greeting). This is used during the Profession of Faith and a few other times.



GENUFLECTING

Never genuflect when carrying anything.

With your back straight and your hands folded prayerfully, **lower yourself onto your right knee, and hold that position briefly.** You will almost always make the sign of the cross when genuflecting.

Genuflecting to the tabernacle, whenever Jesus is reserved in the tabernacle, is required. Our Lord's presence in the tabernacle is usually signified by the red sanctuary light. When it is not lit, the tabernacle is empty, as on Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

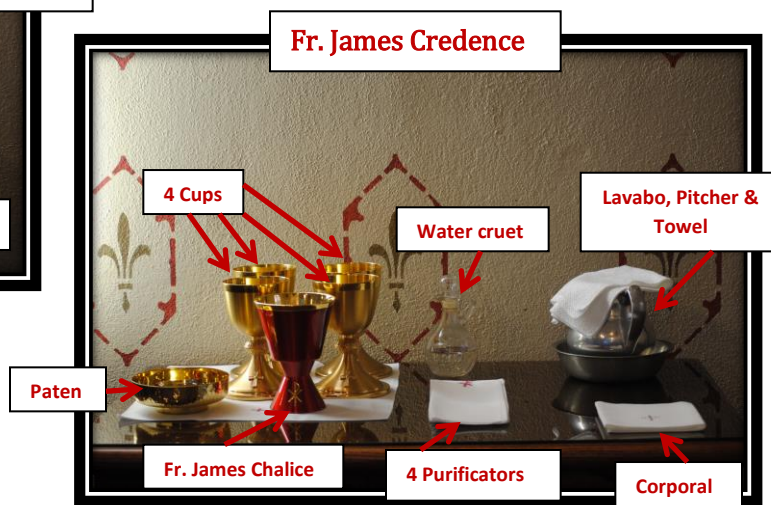
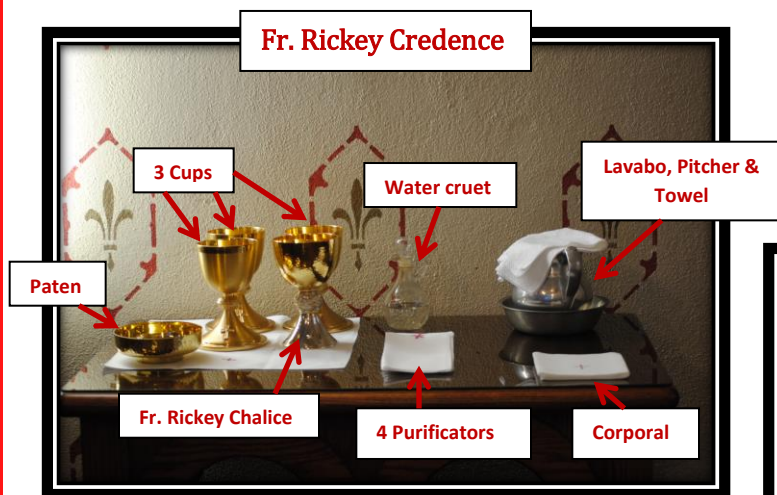
GENUFLECTING



ORDER OF MASS

Before Mass

- a) Arrive at least 20 minutes early to be sure you have time to dress and properly prepare for the Mass.
- b) **Remember to be quiet when in the sacristy – your voices carry all the way to the back of church**
- c) All servers should sign in at the Altar Server Bulletin Board.
- d) Find correct size Alb and cincture length
 - Check calendar & find color of the day – use Sunday color.
- e) Recite Preparation Prayer on bulletin board as a group.
- f) Senior server will decide what each server will be responsible for
 - Tallest is always cross bearer
- g) Use the Pre-Mass Checklist to ensure everything is set up properly. (Study Pictures)
 - Check the credence table to be sure everything is set out
 - Ciborium, chalice, purificators, large corporal, cups, water cruet, water pitcher, lavabo and towel.
 - Book holder should be placed on altar (except for 7:30 am)



- f) **7:30 mass only** - Make sure candles at the altar are lit.
- g) Make sure that there is a Sacramentary on the small table near the servers' chairs.
- i) Check that the Offertory gifts (Paten with Hosts and Wine Cruet) are on the table at The back of church.



Introductory Rites – Part I

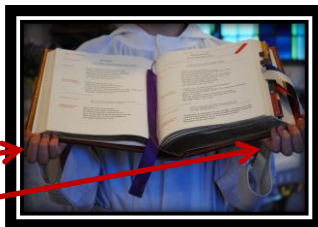
Entrance Procession

- a) Candle Bearers get their candles (will light them in back of church). Cross Bearer gets the cross. All wait quietly in the back with the priest and the ministers.
 - **Procession begins once lyrics to song begin.**
 - **Cross and Candle Bearers should hold candles reverently.**
- b) Cross Bearers set the pace by walking very slowly and reverently.
 - **Always wait 3 steps between each other when processing**
- c) When you get to the front of the altar, wait for each person to line up.
 - **Carrying something = pause, bow your head slightly**
 - **Not carrying anything = you would pause, bow reverently to the waist**
- d) **Priest proceeds to altar first – once priest get behind altar candle bearers move forward**
 - Walk to your seats and remain standing.
 - Always sit and stand in unison, when possible



Collect

- a) **Fr. Jim will use the white penitential folder**
- b) As soon as the Book Holder hears the priest say the words “Let us pray” retrieve the book and bring it to him.
 - There are usually two times during the Mass when this happens – at the beginning before the readings and again at the end after communion.
 - Note: There are exceptions during special Masses which include sacraments, baptisms, funerals etc. but you will be told about the changes beforehand. Be alert and ready to hold the book whenever the priest motions to you that he needs the book, even if he has not yet said “Let us pray”.
- c) **Hold the book exactly where the priest places it.**
 - **Hold the book with your hands on the edge of bottom corners and rest book against your chest**
 - **Watch the priests’ eyes until he finishes.**



**Fingers on
bottom corner**



**Rest book
against chest**

- d) When finished, bow your head (only) to the priest, and return the book to the table, and take your seat.

Liturgy of the Word – Part II

First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, Second Reading

- a) Sit and respond (eyes on action and hands on top of thighs)



Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia) and Gospel

- a) Stand and respond (prayer hands and eyes on action)



-Stand with prayer hands
-Eyes on action

Homily

- a) Sit and listen (eyes on action)

Profession of Faith

- a) Stand and respond (prayer hands and eyes on action)
b) Make a **PROFOUND BOW** at the words “and by the power of the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.”

Universal Prayer

- a) Stand and listen (prayer hands and eyes on action)

Liturgy of the Eucharist – Part III

Offertory

Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Altar

- a) When the ushers get to the first pew, the servers begin to prepare the altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
- b) The Book Holder brings the book to the altar and places it at the far left of the altar, leaving room in the middle for the Corporal to be placed.
- c) The other two servers:
- Remove Gospel book stand.
 - Lead Server will unfold the corporal in the center of the altar and spread smoothly on the altar.
 - Cross at bottom against bottom edge of altar.



Unfold to left



Unfold to right

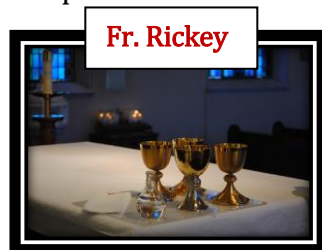


Unfold to top



Unfold to bottom

- Go to the credence table and bring the Chalice, Corporal, Purificators, water (leave cap) and extra cups to the altar.
- e) Place the Chalice and cups where the priest who is celebrating Mass prefers it. (see photos for priest placement preference)
- f) Remove the purificators, and place them, still folded, beside the cups as shown in the photo.



- g) Line up in front of the credence table when finished.

Receiving the Gifts

- a) **Follow *behind*** the priest to the front of the altar.
- b) Depending on which gift you are handed by the priest you do one of the following:
- Server who is handed the collection basket should place it on 1st step of back altar.
 - **If Fr. Jim presides, the server that is handed the ciborium with hosts will place it on the corporal on the altar.**
 - Server who is handed the wine cruet, proceeds directly to the credence table and also picks up the water cruet and waits until the Priest has set the host on the Altar.

Prayer over the Offerings

Preparing for the Consecration

- a) When the priest has finished pouring out the wine and water, he will return them. Bow reverently to the priest, and return the cruet to the credence table.
- b) The other two servers should bring the bowl and pitcher and towel to allow the priest to wash his hands.
- **Move towards priest and stop. Don't make the priest come to you.**
 - **Do not make the priest wait.**
 - Towel = Left side - Drape the towel over one arm
 - Lavabo (Bowl) = Center
 - Water = Right - pour just a small amount of water over the priest's fingers and pause while he wipes his hands.
- Then **bow in unison** to the priest and return the bowl, pitcher and towel to the credence table.
- Leave altar and stand below the steps next to the ambo.



Preface

- a) Stand with hands folded through the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy...)

Ringing of the Bells

- a) Upon reciting the Holy, Holy, Holy prayer, all servers kneel (with prayer hands) along with the congregation.
- b) When the priest holds up the host and is **completely elevated and stops** = 1 twist of the wrist
- c) Same for the cup

Eucharistic Prayer

- a) When Sanctus ends, kneel with hands folded through the remainder of the Eucharistic Prayer. Sing and Respond as appropriate.

Communion Rite

- a) After the Doxology and the Great Amen, all stand, with prayer hands

The Lord's Prayer

- a) Stand with prayer hands

The Sign of Peace

- a) When the priest calls for an exchange of Sign of Peace, walk to side of altar and **greet priest first** *then each other*, immediately proceed to the credence table.

Lamb of God

- a) Stand with prayer hands

Communion

- a) Upon completing these tasks, all servers return to your places standing next to credence table.
- b) After the priest consumes the body and the blood of Jesus, the servers will receive the Eucharist, wait for the altar to clear and go to their seats and sit in unison.
- c) After receiving communion, one server will wait to clear the altar while the others are requested to return to their chairs.
 - The distribution of Holy Communion is a very holy time and the Altar Servers should sit quietly and prayerfully.
- c) While clearing the Altar, be careful to fold the Corporal inward to contain anything that may be fallen on it during the consecration. Place the Pall and the folded Corporal on the Chalice as shown in the picture and place all of these on the Credence Table.

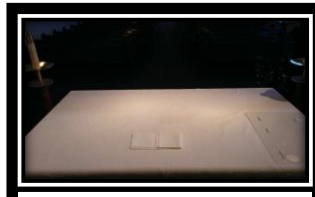
- Fold corporal = top – bottom – right - left



**Fold bottom
to middle**



**Fold top
to middle**



Fold right to middle



Fold left to middle

Concluding Rites – Part IV

Greeting and Blessing (Closing Prayer)

- a) After a few moments of meditation, the priest will say “let us pray” at which point the book bearer brings him the book [as discussed in section 3].
- b) Upon the concluding prayer, return the book to its place and go back to your seat.

Dismissal and Recession

- a) **Go in peace = cross bearer**
- b) **When lyrics begin = Candle bearers go and get candles**
- c) The Cross Bearer lines up to the right side of altar.
- d) The Candle Bearers line up on each side of altar.
- e) The Priest will line up in the front of altar.
- f) When the Priest genuflects, any Altar Server with something in their hands should bow their head only.
- g) All turn and process slowly to the back of church.

After Mass

- a) Extinguish the candles and return them and the cross to stand in the back of the church.
- b) **Don't run back to sacristy – remain reverent until you have removed alb and left sacristy**
- c) **Recite Thanksgiving Prayer together**
- d) **Replace Albs and cinctures in correct spots**

No Servers leave until everything is done.

ADVANCEMENT LEVELS

THE ALTAR SERVER COMMITMENT

Service at the altar is a serious responsibility. Altar Servers must demonstrate commitment at all times:

DEVOTION: A COMMITMENT TO WHAT WE BELIEVE

- A love of God and the Catholic Faith
- A strong desire to do God's work and serve his people
- A willingness to conduct yourself in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord

Even if they are not serving, anytime an Altar Server is in the church their actions should be an example to the rest of the people at Mass. Altar Servers wearing vestments are an extension of the clergy.

Devoted Altar Servers know that their service is important to the whole faith community. Through their service at the Altar, others are able to grow in their love of the Lord.

DEDICATION: A COMMITMENT TO HOW WE ACT

- The commitment to fully meet the requirements of the service for which you have been chosen
- The commitment to fulfill your duties when you are scheduled
- The commitment to help the entire altar server team to do well. Dedication to service comes from our love and Devotion to the Lord. Dedicated Altar Servers know that others are counting on them. They help less skilled servers when needed, and they never say "That's not my job."

DISCIPLINE: A COMMITMENT TO HOW WE SERVE

- The self-control that allows Altar Servers to carry out their duties with precision
- The determination to do what needs to be done, the right way every time
- The desire to be prepared, to arrive early to help prepare for Mass, and to ensure that the rest of the Altar Server Team is prepared
- The initiative to pay attention and think about what they will do next
- The ambition to improve each time they serve. Asking at the end of each Mass, "What could I have done better?"
- The motivation to listen to coaching with an open mind and a willing heart

Dedication to proper service pushes us to be more disciplined.

The most disciplined Altar Servers are rewarded with more responsibility, including training new servers.

ADVANCEMENT LEVELS

APPRENTICE

An Apprentice is a candidate that is learning how to become an Altar Server. Apprentices will be scheduled at the Masses they wish to serve. At the discretion of the presiding priest, Apprentices may process in the opening and closing procession. Apprentices sit in reserved seats that allow them to be close enough to directly observe and learn from the Altar Servers.

Altar serving can be a little scary at first. The apprentice program is a chance for new servers to get past being nervous and build the confidence that they need to enjoy service. It also gives the Altar Server Coordinator an opportunity to observe new servers and determine when they are ready to be active Altar Servers

JUNIOR ALTAR SERVER

Once an apprentice becomes certified, they are promoted to Junior Altar Server. Junior Altar Servers are learning new parts of the Mass and new responsibilities. In this first year, they are demonstrating to themselves and to the community that they are fully capable of service at all parts of the Mass.

SENIOR ALTAR SERVER

The main body of servers is made up of Senior Altar Servers. They are promoted to this position based on their proven track record of service. This includes:

- Fulfilling scheduled assignments
- Willingness to serve when asked to fill in at last minute

They may learn new responsibilities for special services, but their competence at weekend Mass is well established.

LEAD ALTAR SERVER

Some Senior Altar Servers will show a commitment to leadership in their service. They reach out to newer servers to help them learn. They drive their Altar Server teams to excel. These servers may be recognized as Lead Altar Servers, and given responsibilities beyond what other servers are asked or permitted to do.

- Has fulfilled all duties of previous levels of server
- Shows ability to help younger servers when appropriate
- Has been asked by Altar Server Coordinator to become a Senior Altar Server

APPRENTICE

The Apprentice Program gives new Altar Servers the opportunity to learn by closely watching experienced Altar Servers. The Apprentice's job is to watch and learn.

Apprentices dress in albs and walk in procession with the regular Altar Servers. **An apprentice will be assigned the position of book holder for a minimum of *three* initial masses.**

REQUIREMENTS:

Persons meeting the requirements to become an Altar Server (see page 4) are admitted to the Apprentice level after attending a new Altar Server training.

Apprentice Altar Servers are expected to be familiar with the Order of Mass. They should know the Prayers of the Mass well enough to participate fully. For reference, see "Missal Guide to Mass" on page 31.

- 1) Apprentices must be able to recite the following prayers from memory:
 - a. The Lord's Prayer
 - b. Lamb of God
 - c. Holy, Holy, Holy
- 2) Following training, Apprentices must be able to identify the following parts of the church:
 - a. Altar
 - b. Ambo
 - c. Sanctuary
 - d. Sacristy
 - e. Altar Server chairs
 - f. Presider's Chair
- 3) Following training, Apprentices must be able to identify the following Sacramentals:
 - a. Book of Prayers (vs the white binder)
 - b. Sacramentary
 - c. Chalice
 - d. Ciborium
 - e. Cruets

After three Masses serving as an Apprentice, the Altar Server may request to become certified as a Junior Altar Server.

JUNIOR ALTAR SERVER

Junior Altar Servers are learning to master service at the Mass. They are competent in their duties, and are working to learn more about the various roles and responsibilities of the Altar Server.

REQUIREMENTS:

Served at least three times as an apprentice, and attended two practices; or obtained the Altar Server coordinator's sign-off (for example, if they are transferring from a different parish)

- 1) Must meet all of the Apprentice requirements.
- 2) Must be able to recite the following prayers from memory:
 - a. all of the Apprentice prayers
 - b. Gloria
 - c. "May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands..."
 - d. at least one Memorial Acclamation
- 3) Must be able to identify the following parts of the Church:
 - a. Credence Table
 - b. Nave
- 4) Must be able to identify the following Sacramentals:
 - a. All the Sacramentals from the Apprentice list
 - b. Book of Gospels
 - c. Lectionary
 - d. Lavabo
 - e. Corporal
 - f. Purificators
 - g. Pall
 - h. Paten
 - i. Finger Towel
- 5) Must be able to show the following:
 - a. Profound Bow
 - b. Head Bow
 - c. Genuflection
 - d. How to light candles using the candle lighter
 - e. How to carry the processional candles and cross
 - f. How to tie a cincture
 - g. How to use the lavabo with one server and with two servers

SENIOR ALTAR SERVER

Senior Altar Servers have demonstrated a high proficiency at regular service at the Mass. They have served at special occasions and are capable of fulfilling almost all of the needs of the Parish for Altar Service.

REQUIREMENTS:

Served at least one calendar year as a Junior Altar Server, with a minimum of 10 Masses; Served in all positions (CROSS and CANDLES); served at least two special Masses or services (Easter Vigil, Christmas Midnight, Stations of the Cross)

- 1) Must meet all of the Junior Altar Server requirements.
- 2) Must be able to recite the following prayers from memory:
 - a. all of the Junior Altar Server prayers
 - b. Nicene Creed
 - c. Confiteor ("I confess to almighty God...")
 - d. all other acclamations of the Mass
- 3) Must be able to identify the following parts of the Church:
 - a. all of the parts of the church required of Junior Altar Servers
 - b. Ambry
 - c. Narthex
 - d. Sacramarium
 - e. Tabernacle
- 4) Must be able to identify the following Sacramentals:
 - a. all the Sacramentals from the Apprentice list
 - b. Aspergillum
 - c. Aspersorium
 - d. Boat
 - e. Lunette
 - f. Monstrance
 - g. Pyx
 - h. Thurible
- 5) Must be able to show the following:
 - a. All of the postures and duties at Mass
 - b. How to serve with only one or two servers
- 6) Must directly participate in the direct training of a more junior server

LEAD ALTAR SERVER

Lead Altar Servers have at least three full years of experience as an Altar Server. They have mastered service of the regular Mass and have participated in multiple special occasion Masses.








Lead Altar Servers are the Peer Leaders of the Ministry. They help train other servers, particularly Apprentices. They advise the Altar Server coordinator in the conduct of the ministry.




Not all servers will qualify as Lead Altar Servers. Those who aspire to higher dedication in their service should discuss their intentions with the Altar Server Coordinator.

REFERENCES

VESTMENTS






The vestments we use today are very ancient in origin. They help us tell easily who is doing what at Mass. In the earliest days of the Church, Mass was usually celebrated in people's homes. There were relatively few Church members then. The priest and other ministers wore what everybody else wore. As years passed, the Church community got much bigger, so Mass had to be celebrated in large buildings. Sometimes there were thousands of people there. People had to be able to tell easily who the various ministers were. As a result, special garments were adopted for the various ministers at Mass.














ALB		The Alb is a long, white, dress-like vestment and can be used by all liturgical ministers. It is used by altar servers in place of a cassock and surplice. Alb is short for tunica alba, which means "white tunic".
CASSOCK		A long outer garment worn by some clerics and servers. It is usually black, but for servers red or white cassocks may be worn for special feasts.
CHASUBLE		The chasuble is the sleeveless outer vestment, slipped over the head, hanging down from the shoulders and covering the stole and alb. It is the proper Mass vestment of the priest and its color varies according to the feast.
CINCTURE		This is a long cord used for fastening some albs at the waist. It holds the loose-fitting type of alb in place and is used to adjust it to the proper length. The cincture is usually white, although the liturgical color of the day may be used.
COPE		A cape-like vestment that is put on over the shoulders and hangs to the ankles, it is open in the front and clasped at the neck. The priest frequently wears it in processions, at Benediction, and in other services. Copes can be found in any of the liturgical colors.
DALMATIC		The dalmatic is a loose-fitting robe with open sides and wide sleeves worn by the deacon. It takes its color from the liturgical feast.
HUMERAL VEIL		The humeral veil is a long, narrow, shawl like vestment used at Benediction and in processions where the Blessed Sacrament is carried.


SERVERS ALB		This is a vestment used by servers in place of the cassock. It is similar to the priest's alb, but sometimes has a cowl (hood). It is usually fastened around the waist with a cincture, often in the liturgical color.
STOLE		A stole is a long cloth scarf, often ornately decorated, of the same color and style as the chasuble. According to the manner in which it is worn, it is a mark of the office of priest or deacon. A priest wears it around the neck, letting it hang down in front. A deacon wears it over his right shoulder and fastened at his left side like a sash. (There is a smaller stole, white on one side and purple on the other, which many priests use for the anointing of the sick and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.)
SURPLICE		This is a wide-sleeved garment, slipped over the head, covering the shoulders, and coming down below the hips. It is worn over the cassock for services in which the alb is not used.

SACRAMENTALS

The Sacramentals that we use at Mass are also ancient in origin. Some come from the ancient traditions of the Old Testament sacrifice. Some are modeled after things we use every day. The most special of these are used to hold the Blessed Sacrament. Anything which touches the Eucharist is washed in a special sink, so that not even the smallest part of Christ's Body or Blood is treated disrespectfully.





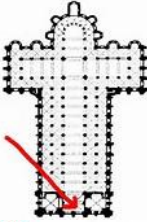
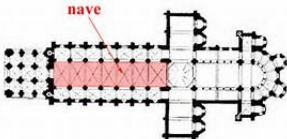
Aspergil (Aspergillum)		The Aspergil is an implement used to sprinkle holy water. It may be a type of brush, or it may be a ball on a handle with holes in it. Early aspergilla were made from the Hyssop plant. The bucket into which the aspergillum is dipped is called the aspersorium.
Boat (Incense Boat)		The Incense Boat is a covered metal bowl with hinged lids used to hold the incense to put in the Thurible. It usually has a matching spoon.
Book of Gospels		A special edition of the Lectionary, the Book of Gospels contains only the gospel readings for Mass. It is carried in procession. The Book of Gospels is often more decorated than the simpler lectionary.
Candlelighter		The Candlelighter is a long hollow tube with a wick in it for carrying the flame to light the altar candles. Our serves a dual purpose, as it has an extinguisher on the end of it.
Candles		There are two main kinds of candles used in most Masses: The Processional Candles are carried in the procession, and used to call attention to the Ambo when the Gospel is being read. The Altar Candles remain on either side of the Altar. Other candles used include the Pascal Candle, the Chapel lamp, and the Advent





		candles.
Chalice		A Chalice is a special cup lined with gold used to hold the Blessed Blood at the Eucharist. Every Priest has at least one chalice of his own.
Ciborium (plural: Ciboria)		A Ciborium is a bowl, sometimes on a pedestal, lined with gold and used to hold the Blessed Body of the Eucharist.
Cruet		A cruet is a small pitcher with a stopper used to hold the water and wine for consecration.
Finger Towel		A Finger Towel is a plain white linen towel for the priest to dry his fingers after the ceremonial washing (lavabo).
Lavabo		The Lavabo is the small bowl that catches the water poured over the priest's hands at the ceremonial washing. The name comes from an ancient prayer in Latin which begins, "I will wash" (lavabo, in Latin).
Lectionary		The Lectionary is the book of Scriptures from which the First and Second reading, and sometimes the Psalms are read.
Lunette		The Lunette is a small, circular windowed box that holds the Blessed Sacrament in the Monstrance.
Monstrance		The Monstrance is a large, ornate, often gold covered vessel to display the Blessed Sacrament for Benediction.
Pall		The Pall is a square stiff linen cloth used to cover the chalice.
Paten		The Paten is a small ornate plate which sits on top of the Chalice and hold the Host at consecration
Purificators		Purificators are linen towels, folded in thirds, used to wipe the edge of a Chalice or Communion Cup after each communicant has received the Eucharistic Blood.
Pyx		A pyx is a small metal box to hold the Eucharist to be taken to the Ministry of the sick or homebound.
Sacramentary		The Sacramentary (officially called the Roman Missal) is the book of prayers and instructions for the priest which includes all Masses, special prayers, and rites.

Thurible		The Thurible is a metal container on a chain in which incense is burned
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THE CHURCH BUILDING

Churches have changed over the centuries. Early Christians met in private homes to celebrate the Eucharist. Often, they met in secret, to avoid persecution. Churches in the middle ages were often the center of a town, and the largest building. Today's churches can be large or small, traditional or modern. All Catholic churches have important features in common.

AMBO		The Ambo is the raised reading stand where the Scriptures are read and the homily is normally given. It is sometimes incorrectly called a "lectern" or "pulpit". The term "Ambo" means that there is only one stand which serves all of the purposes.
AMBRY		The Ambry is the locked cabinet that stores the blessed oils used for Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, and the Anointing of the Sick. The bishop blesses these oils during Holy Week at the Chrism Mass. When they are brought back to the Parish from the Cathedral the oils are placed in glass vessels and stored in a locked cabinet or niche located near the baptismal pool.
CHAPEL OF RESERVATION		The Chapel of Reservation or Eucharistic Chapel is the small room where the tabernacle is kept. Its door is marked with a red candle to indicate the presence of Christ in the Tabernacle.
CHOIR		The choir refers to that group of persons who assist the assembly in their duty of singing the liturgy. Choir also refers to that area of the church space reserved for this group of persons. Musical instruments that support the music ministry are located in this space as well.
CREDESCENCE TABLE		The Credence Table is a smaller table near the altar where the sacred vessels are kept during mass when they are not being used at the altar.
NARTHEX		The Narthex is the enclosed room between the outside doors and the nave. Our Narthex is a gathering space for people to meet before and after Mass. Our Narthex allows access to the cry room.
NAVE		The Nave is the main area of the church where the people at mass sits. The term "nave" comes from the same word as "navy" and represents the ship of our salvation, like in Noah's Ark.

<p>SACRARIUM (also PISCINA)</p>	 <p>The Sacrarium</p>	<p>The Sacrarium is a sink with its drain going directly into the ground, usually fitted with a cover and lock. It is used to dispose of sacred linen wash and rinse water, used holy water, used baptismal water and blessed ashes. The Sacrarium is never used for anything else.</p>
<p>SACRISTY</p>		<p>The Sacristy is the room where the vestments and Sacramentals are kept.</p>
<p>SANCTUARY</p>		<p>The sanctuary area is the open space immediately around the altar. Our Sanctuary is a raised platform with steps. It is in this space that you find the presider's chair, altar, ambo, cross, and candles.</p>
<p>STOUP</p>		<p>The holy water fountains or bowls at the entrances of the church.</p>
<p>TABERNACLE</p>		<p>The Tabernacle is a gold-lined box that holds the consecrated Eucharist. It is locked to prevent the Eucharist from being treated sacrilegiously.</p>

APPENDICES

HOW TO TIE A CINCTURE



CM ALMY HOW TO TIE A ROPE CINCTURE



Fold cincture in half



Wrap around waist with knots on your right side



Grab end of loop made by the fold and overlap as shown



Using right hand, slip loop over left hand, keeping hold of cincture



Grab knotted end with your right hand



Slip knotted ends through loop (where left hand is making sure that single loop is on top of double cincture.) Feed knotted ends through loop from top to bottom



Drop loop and then tighten around waist



Knot is on left hip

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MISSAL GUIDE TO MASS

ORDER OF MASS

Introductory Rites

- Entrance
- Greeting
- Penitential Act
- Glory to God
- Collect

Liturgy of the Word

- First Reading
- Responsorial Psalm
- Second Reading (on Sundays and solemnities)
- Gospel Acclamation
- Gospel
- Homily
- Profession of Faith (on Sundays, solemnities, and special occasions)
- Universal Prayer

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Altar
- Prayer over the Offerings
- Eucharistic Prayer
 - Preface
 - Holy, Holy, Holy
 - First half of prayer, including Consecration
 - Mystery of Faith
 - Second half of prayer, ending with Doxology
- The Lord's Prayer
- Sign of Peace
- Lamb of God
- Communion
- Prayer after Communion

Concluding Rites

- Optional announcements
- Greeting and Blessing
- Dismissal

PREPARATION PRAYER / PRAYER BEFORE SERVING

Father in Heaven, your Son, Jesus Christ, showed his love for you by serving his brothers and sisters in need. I now ask you to give me your help as I serve you and your people. Open my mouth to praise you in word and song. Open my ears to hear your word. Open my hands to do your work well. Take from my heart all evil and distracting thoughts. Help me to know what I should do, and do it well. Help me to serve reverently at your holy altar, and so give you praise and glory, now and forever.

Amen.

THANKSGIVING PRAYER / PRAYER AFTER SERVING

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the eternal High Priest. You lead all your saints in heaven and your people on earth in praising God, our Father. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for letting me come before your altar, so that, with your help, I can praise my Father in heaven as his server. Help me to find joy in serving at your altar. Help me to find gladness in knowing and doing your will in all things. Glory to you, Lord Jesus, and to the Father and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.

Amen.