

Altar Server Instructions

revised 2/15/18

Attitude

Altar service is an important ministry. It requires attention, flexibility and reverence. Remember that you help the Mass run smoothly and gracefully by moving with thought and care and by keeping alert for cues or problems. You also inspire other worshippers by holding your hands in a prayerful posture, paying attention to the priest, deacon, and lectors, and showing your willingness to participate in the Mass. It is one of the most challenging ministries because it lasts for the entire Mass!

Before Mass

Arrive 15 minutes before Mass. Check in with the Sacristan.

If needed, use the restroom and wash your hands.

Put on the alb and cincture. The cincture must match Father's Chasuble in color.

Light candles at the altar and ambo.

Sort Jobs

-Server 1 - carries the cross and prepares the altar by taking the Roman Missal to the altar, opening the corporal and taking the stand for the Book of the Gospels back to the credence table.

-Server 2 - carries a candle in the procession at the beginning of Mass and at the reading of the gospel and holds the Roman Missal for the priest when he says, "Let us pray".

-Server 3 - carries a candle in the procession at the beginning of Mass and at the reading of the gospel and rings the bell at the Consecration.

Servers ring the bell 10 minutes before Mass.

Entrance Procession.

Line up: cross bearer, servers with the candles, deacon and priest. When the music begins, servers walk slowly to the altar - each beginning about 3 pew lengths behind the person ahead. (If you have something in your hand, you do not bow in front of the altar.)

Server 1 - walks to the right of the altar and places the cross in the stand and walk to the pew. **Servers 2 & 3** - follow Server 1, walking side by side up to the right of the altar to the ambo, and placing the candles in the holders on each side of the ambo. Walk to your pew by way of the ramp.

Opening Prayer

After the Gloria, when the priest says, "Let us pray", **Server 2** takes the Roman Missal up to the priest, gives it to the priest upside down, and then holds it as the priest reads the prayer. After the prayer, take the Roman Missal back to the credence table and return to your pew.

Reading of the Gospel

When the congregation stands, **Servers 2 & 3** walk behind the priest to the ambo and take the candles from the candle holders. Walk over to the priest/deacon and stand on each side of the priest/deacon. At his signal, process to the front of the altar to the ambo - the first server leading the way behind the ambo. The second server ends up at the candle nearer the altar. Face the ambo, holding the candles. At the conclusion of the Gospel, place the candles back in the holders and proceed to your pew by way of the ramp.

Preparation of the Gifts

Server 1 takes the corporal and Roman Missal up to the altar. Place the Roman Missal on the left lower side of the altar, move the holder for the Book of the Gospels to the left, place the corporal in the center of the altar - open the sides first, then fold the upper third up - followed by the lower third toward you.

Never shake the cloth open. These cloths are used more than once and may have bits of the Body of Christ on them. Take the holder for the Book of the Gospels back to the credence table, then take the cross to the back of the church by way of the center aisle to process back to the altar with the gifts.

Servers 2 & 3 bring up the tray with the cups, the chalice, the purificators, and the water cruet. Go back to your pew.

Receiving the Gifts

When the priest stands, walk with him to the foot of the altar to receive the gifts. Stand to the left of the priest. **Server 1** walks up the steps of the altar, turns and faces the congregation. **Servers 2 & 3** receive whatever gifts the priest gives you. The collection basket is placed in front of the altar.

Now all turn and follow **Server 1** as **Server 1** places the cross in the stand. **Servers 2 & 3** walk over to the other side of the altar, turn and wait for the priest to receive the gifts from you. Stay there! **Server 1** brings the lavabo bowl and towel to the server who will hold these two items.

Washing of Hands

One server puts the lavabo towel over the forearm of the other and holds the lavabo bowl.

The other server picks up the water cruet from the altar and pours the water over the priest's hands so that the water lands in the bowl. The servers then remove the tray, the bowl, the towel, and the cruets, put them on the credence table, and return to their seats.

Eucharistic Prayer

Kneel on the bottom step. **Server 3** kneels nearest the credence table with the bells on the bottom step next to him or her. Fold your hands and keep your eyes on Father. During the **Consecration** keep your eyes on the bread and wine as it is changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus. As the priest raises the host, **Server 3** rings the bells 3 times. As the priest raises the chalice, **Server 3** rings the bells 3 times.

Our Father

Hold hands and say the Our Father with the congregation. Then give the Sign of Peace. You may go to your families for the Sign of Peace. After the Sign of Peace, **Server 1** takes the two small bowels from the credence table and places them on the altar.

Communion & After

Receive Communion after the choir and return to your pew. Stand quietly with your hands folded, looking straight ahead. During Communion, **Server 2** brings the Roman Missal from the altar and places it on the credence table. After the priest returns to the altar, **Server 3** goes up to the altar and brings all remaining vessels back to the credence table. When the priest returns to his chair, **Server 1** extinguishes all the candles.

Recessional: "Thanks be to God"

Server 1 gets the cross and proceeds to the center aisle followed by **Servers 2 & 3**, the deacon and priest. Stay there facing the altar. When Father genuflects, **Servers 2 and 3** also genuflect. Turn around and proceed to the sacristy with the cross bearer leading. **Servers 2 and 3** walk side by side with hands folded.

After Mass

Hang up your alb and cincture neatly.

You are finished; **thank you for serving God so reverently!**