

Serving Sunday Mass



Altar Servers

are members of the congregation who assist the Priests and Deacons in the celebration of the Mass and other liturgical ceremonies so the liturgy can be conducted with grace and reverence. Altar Servers are full and active participants in the Eucharist and have the added responsibility of being role models for the assembly. During the liturgy, the Altar Server models the activity of the congregation by singing, praying, listening, and maintaining silence at the appropriate times to enhance the worship for all.

In general, the role of the Altar Server is to *help and pray*.

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General Notes

1. Because of the important of this role in Mass, you **must** attend each Mass for which you are scheduled, or arrange for a replacement. Scheduling is done through a program called Ministry Scheduler Pro; you'll get more information about this after completing training.
2. Plan to arrive at least 15 minutes before the Mass time.
3. Please dress appropriately for Mass, and NO flip flops
4. Remember: what you wear underneath an Alb will show through. For this reason, be sure to avoid bold stripes and designs that may show thru your Alb. It is recommended that you wear solid colors, and in particular, white is the most appropriate choice of shirts and blouses. Likewise pants, dresses and skirts should also be of some solid color.

Guidance about posture and hands

1. In the standing position, hands should be held in the praying position as seen in most Christian artwork.
2. In the kneeling position, hands should be held the same as in the standing position. No slouching; please kneel upright.
3. When sitting, hands should be held on your lap or at your sides. Don't slouch, fidget, or play with your cinctures.

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Before Mass – Arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of Mass

1. Sign in
2. Put on your Alb and Cincture (*Alb sizes should match the numbers on the hangers, and use the calendar on the table to find the Cincture color*).
3. If there will be a Deacon assisting the Priest, get the Gospel book from Altar or Ambo and bring back to Gifts table.
4. Wait in the main Sacristy for any special instructions.

Introductory Rites

1. Gather with the Priest and the other ministers for prayer in the main Sacristy.
2. After the prayer line up outside the doors to the center aisle. Line up in this order:
 - a. Cross bearer (**Server #2**)
 - b. Candle Bearers (**Server #3 & #4**) side by side, being sure to keep the candles straight up and at similar heights.
 - c. Book holder (**Server #1**)
3. Proceed up the aisle after the first verse of the opening hymn. Keep a distance of two pews between yourself and the person in front of you; This will allow everyone time to bow when reaching the steps of the Altar without being rushed.
4. When you reach the steps of the Altar:
 - a. **Server #2 bow, head only.** Proceed to the candle table and place the Crucifix in its holder. Go to your seat and remain standing.
 - b. **Server #3 & #4 bow, head only.** Proceed to the candle table and place the candles on the table. Go to your seat and remain standing.
 - c. **Server #1 bow, fully from the waist,** toward the Tabernacle, then go to your seat and remain standing.
5. Toward the end of the Gloria, **Server #1** will come up to the presider's chair and get the Book of the Chair from the Deacon or pick it up from the table; then hold it for the Priest, opened to the first ribbon, for the Opening Prayer. The Priest will prompt you when to put the book back on the table and return to your seat. *During Advent and Lent (when the Gloria is omitted) **Server #1** will hold the Book for the Priest toward the end of the Penitential Rite ("May Almighty God have mercy....").*
6. Sit when the Priest sits.

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Liturgy of the Word

1. Sit during the Readings and the Responsorial Psalm.
2. Stand when the Priest stands to proclaim the Gospel.
3. Sit for the Homily.
4. After the Homily,
 - a. **Server #1** will meet the Priest at his chair to hold the binder for the Creed and Prayer of the Faithful.
 - b. Between the Creed and the petitions, **Server #3 & #4** will retrieve the candles from the candle table and proceed down the **choir aisle** to the gathering space to lead the Gift Bearers. *(Note: if there are only 3 servers the **Server #3** retrieves the Cross to lead the Gift Bearers.)*
 - c. At the conclusion of the petitions the Priest will take the binder back from **Server #1**. You will then proceed to the credence table.
 - d. **Server #2** takes the Missal from the Credence Table to the Altar and places it on the left side of the Altar at an angle as shown and opens it to the white ribbon, then proceeds back to the credence table. *(Note: the picture shown below is open to the purple ribbon which is incorrect; it should be the white ribbon.)*



Figure 1 - Placing the Missal on the Altar.

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Presentation of the Gifts

1. **Server #1** will proceed to the credence niche after the Priest takes the binder.
 - a. Pick up the Priest's chalice, the corporal and the purificator and take them to the Altar.
 - b. Place them on the left side of the Altar toward the Priest's chair.
 - c. If there is a Deacon present then he will spread the corporal and set the Chalice as shown in the picture below. If not, the Priest or some Sacristans can help, but you should be able to set this up too as shown.



Figure 2 - Setting the Corporal and Chalice

- d. Step back and stand at the left edge of the rug and wait for the Priest.

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Presentation of the Gifts (continued)

2. When the Priest stands from his chair and/or moves toward the steps,
 - a. **Server #1** follows the Priest and stands on his left at the bottom of the steps to receive the wine.
 - b. **Server #2** will continue to wait at the credence niche.
 - c. **Server #3 & #4** lead the Gift Bearers up the main aisle. When you reach the Priest, bow your head and proceed to the candle table. Place the candles on the candle table and return to your seat. (*Or, if only **Server #3**, put the Cross back on the Cross stand.*)
3. The Priest will walk to the back of the Altar on the left side and **Server #1** will walk to the back of the Altar on the right side.
4. **Server #2** will retrieve the water cruet with the handle facing out, remove the top, and will go stand next to **Server #1** (who is still holding the wine) just to the Priest's left.
5. Hold the wine and the water cruet (handle out) so that the Priest or the Deacon can **take them from you** to prepare the chalice. Stand close enough that they can easily reach out for the wine and the water.
6. The Priest or Deacon will hand the wine and the water back to you.
7. Bow and walk back to the credence niche together.
8. **Server #2** holding the water cruet by the handle, picks up the hand-washing bowl from the credence niche.
9. **Server #1** picks up the towel and unfolds it
10. Go back to the Priest so that he may wash his hands. Go to the Priest, **DO NOT** make him come to you.
11. When he has finished washing his hands, bow to the Priest and return to the credence niche.
12. Place the water cruet, bowl and folded towel back in the credence niche and then return to your seats.

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Eucharistic Prayer, Communion Rite, and Sign of Peace

1. Stand and kneel with the congregation
2. At the Our Father all Servers will stand with their hands in the Orans Position (hands stretched out with palms facing upward towards God the Father in Heaven).
3. After the Our Father, **Server #2** goes immediately to the Priest and offers the Sign of Peace, then goes to the credence niche.
4. Servers #1, #3, #4 exchange the Sign of Peace with each other and anyone in the pew directly behind.
5. **Server #2** takes the communion bowls to the Altar, places them to the left of the corporal and returns to his/her seat.

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Communion

1. Wait for the ushers to invite you to communion; this should be **before** the choir and anyone else.
2. After receiving communion:
 - a. **Server #1** will go to the credence niche, retrieve the pyxs (if any), place them on the Altar, then retrieve the Cup Tray from the Altar, place it on the credence table, and then return to his/her seat.
 - b. **Server #2** can do the above step instead if the servers agree; it really doesn't matter as long as it gets done. Otherwise, **Server #2** will just return to his/her seat.
 - c. **Server #3 & #4** will return to their seats.
3. When the Priest is finished distributing communion and **returns to the Altar**:
 - a. **Server #1 & Server #2** will proceed to the credence niche and wait until the Priest is ready. This is **usually** after the Priest, Deacon, or Sacristan has placed the Ciborium in the Tabernacle, but not always.
 - b. **Server #2** walks to the Priest with water cruet. Pour some water into the Chalice (the Priest will tell you when to stop) so that he may purify it. Return the water cruet to the credence niche.
 - c. **Server #1 & Server #2** will remove all communion bowls, the Priest's chalice, purificator, and corporal from the Altar and place them in the credence niche. Return to the Altar to retrieve the Missal, put it back on the credence table, and then return to your seat.

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Concluding Rite

1. When the Priest stands and says “Let us Pray” **Server #1** will come up to the presider’s chair and get the Book of the Chair from the Deacon or pick it up from the table; then hold it for the Priest for the final blessing. When he is done, place the book back on the table and return to your seat.
2. When the final hymn begins **Servers #2, #3 & #4** walk to the candle table to retrieve the crucifix and candles. All Servers then proceed to the main aisle.
 - a. **Server #2** stands between the second row of pews and faces the Altar
 - b. **Server #3 & #4** stand between the first row of pews and face the Altar
 - c. **Server #1** stands in front of Servers #3 & #4
 - d. The Priest, and Deacon if present, will walk down the steps and face the Altar.
 - e. When the Priest bows, **Servers #2, #3 & #4** bow their heads only and **Server #1** will bow fully from the waist. (Note: if the Priest genuflects instead of bowing, **Servers #2, #3 & #4** will still only bow their heads because they are carrying the cross and candles, but **Server #1** should then also genuflect.)
 - f. Turn around and proceed down the aisle (keeping one row of pews between you) to the gathering space.
 - g. **Server #2** places the crucifix in the holder outside of the Saint Cecilia chapel.
 - h. Bow to the crucifix with the Priest. After he says “Blessed be the name of the Lord”, respond “Both Now and Forever”.

After Mass

1. All Servers proceed to the credence niche to assist the Sacristan with taking all of the items into the Eucharistic Sacristy.
2. Note that it is the role of the Hospitality ministers – NOT the Altar Servers – to extinguish the candles on the Altar.
3. After the 11:30/Noon Mass, take the Lectionary, the Gospel Book, the Missal and the 3-ring binder to the Priest’s Sacristy.