

## 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 importance 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 (MSP).
2. You must arrive at least 15 minutes before the Mass time. If you are not there 10 minutes before Mass, it will be considered an unexcused absence. After 3 unexcused absences, you will be removed from the schedule until your parents and you meet with the pastor.
3. Please dress appropriately for Mass.
  - a. For boys: dark colored slacks, light colored shirt and dark dress shoes are required.
  - b. For girls: dark colored slacks or ankle-length skirts/dresses, light colored shirts and dark dress shoes are required. Shoes should not have heels.
  - c. Tennis shoes and flip flops are not appropriate attire for an altar server.
  - d. Remember that what you wear underneath an Alb will show through. For this reason, be sure to avoid bold stripes and designs that may show through your Alb. It is recommended that you wear solid colors. In particular, white is the most appropriate choice of shirts and blouses. Black and dark blue are the most appropriate colors for slacks, skirts and dresses.

## **Guidance about posture and hands**



1. In the standing position, hands should be held in the praying position as seen above.
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.

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

1. Sign in on MSP.
2. Put on your Alb and Cincture in the dressing area of the Priest's Sacristy. (*Alb sizes should match the numbers on the hangers and use the calendar on the bulletin board to find the Cincture color*). The cincture should be tied with the knot on the left.
3. Wait in the dressing area of the Priest's Sacristy for any special instructions.

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## Introductory Rites

1. Gather with the Priest and the other ministers for prayer in the main Sacristy.
2. After the prayer, proceed to the Gathering Space and line up outside the doors to the center aisle. Line up in the order described below depending on the number of altar servers.
  - a. With three (3) servers:
    - ☐ Cross bearer and book holder (**Server #1**)
    - ☐ Candle bearers (**Server #2** and **Server #3**)
  - b. With two (2) servers:
    - ☐ Cross bearer (Hospitality Minister)
    - ☐ Candle bearer (**Server #1** and **Server #2**)
  - c. With one (1) server: **Server #1** carries the Cross. Ministers of Hospitality will carry the candles.
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 genuflect or bow when reaching the steps of the Altar without being rushed.
4. When you reach the steps of the Altar:
  - a. If you are carrying a cross or candle, **bow, head only**.
  - b. If carrying the cross, proceed to the candle table and place the Crucifix in its holder. Go to your seat in the Sanctuary and remain standing.
  - c. If carrying a candle, proceed to the candle table and place the candles on the table. The candles should remain lit. Go to your seat in the Sanctuary and remain standing.
  - d. If you are not carrying anything, **genuflect** toward the Tabernacle, then go to your seat in the Sanctuary and remain standing.
5. Toward the end of the Gloria, **Server #1** will get the Missal from the table and stand in front of the Priest. When the prayer is finished, place the Missal 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 when the Priest stands,
  - a. **Server #1** will meet the Priest at his chair to hold the binder for the Creed and Prayer of the Faithful.
  - b. At the conclusion of the petitions the Priest will take the binder back from **Server #1**. You will then proceed to the credence table.

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## Offertory

1. **Server #1** proceeds to the credence niche after the Priest takes the binder. Pick up the Priest's veiled chalice and go to the Altar. Place the veiled chalice in the middle of the Altar. Bow toward the Altar and return to the credence niche.
2. **Server #2** brings the Missal and its stand from the table and stands near the left side of the Altar. After the Deacon finishes placing the corporal in the middle of the Altar, place the Missal and its stand at a slight angle on the left side of the Altar. Pick up the chalice veil and burse. Bow to the Altar and return to the credence niche. Place the chalice veil and burse in the credence niche. Make sure they are not near the water cruets.
3. **Server #1** and **Server #3** each take two communion bowls from the credence niche, walk to the altar and hands them to the Deacon. Bow to the Altar and return to the credence niche.
4. If there are any pyx in the credence niche, **Server #2** brings it/them to the Deacon. Bow to the Altar and return to the credence niche.
5. **Server #1** stands behind the Presider's Chair.
6. When the Priest stands from his chair and/or moves toward the steps, **Server #1** follows the Priest and stands on his left at the bottom of the steps to receive the wine.
7. The Priest will walk back to the Altar. **Server #1** will walk behind the Priest and proceed to the right side of the Altar near the Deacon.
8. **Server #2** will retrieve the water cruet with the handle facing out, remove the top and will stand next to **Server #1** (who is still holding the wine) to the Priest's right, near the Deacon.
9. Hold the wine and the water cruet (handle out) so that 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.
10. The Deacon will hand the wine and the water back to you.
11. Bow and walk back to the credence niche together.
12. **Server #1** places the wine in the credence niche.
13. **Server #2** holding the water cruet by the handle, picks up the hand-washing bowl from the credence niche.
14. **Server #1** picks up the towel and unfolds it.
15. Go back to the Priest on the left side of the Altar so that he may wash his hands. Go to the Priest, **DO NOT** make him come to you.
16. **Server #2** will slowly pour some water over the Priest's fingers.
17. **Server #1** hands the unfolded towel to the Priest.
18. When he has finished washing and drying his hands, bow to the Priest and return to the credence niche.
19. Place the water cruet, bowl and folded towel back in the credence niche and return to your seats. Do not put the towel inside the bowl.

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## **Eucharistic Prayer, Communion Rite, and Sign of Peace**

1. Stand and kneel with the congregation.
2. At the Epiclesis, when the Priest has his hands over the gifts, [Server #3](#) rings the bells one time. (For Eucharistic Prayer #1, listen for the phrase, “Be pleased, O God, we pray ...”. The Deacon will make a fist with one of his hands as a signal.
3. The bells should be rung at the consecration of the Body and at the consecration of the Blood. Three sets of three rings at the consecration of the Body and three sets of three rings at the consecration of the Blood.
4. At the Our Father, all Servers will stand with their hands in the praying position.
5. Servers exchange the Sign of Peace with each other.
6. All Servers remain standing.

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## Communion

1. After the Priest receives the Precious Blood from the chalice, Servers stand beside the right side of the Eucharist Minister of Holy Communion on the Presider's chair side.
2. After taking communion, return to your seats and kneel. Hands should be in the praying position.
3. When the Priest is finished distributing communion and returns to the Altar:
  - a. All Servers stand.
  - b. When the Eucharist is placed in the Tabernacle, Servers genuflect at the same time as the Priest.
  - c. Servers proceed to the credence niche.
  - d. **Server #2** will remove the top from the water cruet.
  - e. **Server #3** will pick up the chalice veil and burse.
  - f. **Server #2** walks to the Priest on his left side with the water cruet. Pour some water into the Chalice or communion bowl over the Priest's fingers (the Priest will tell you when to stop) so that he may purify it. Return the water cruet to the credence niche and replace the top.
  - g. After the vessels have been purified, **Server #3** will take the chalice veil and burse to the altar and hand them to the Deacon.
  - h. Servers will remove all communion bowls from the Altar and place them in the credence niche. The Priest or Deacon will either hand you the vessels or place them on the left side of the Altar.
  - i. **Server #1** retrieves the Missal and its stand. Place it on the table by the Presider's Chair.
  - j. After the Deacon returns to his seat, **Server #2** will go to the Altar and pick up the veiled Chalice. Take a step back and bow to the Altar. Proceed to the credence niche and place the veiled Chalice in the niche.
  - k. There should be nothing on the Altar except the Crucifix before all Servers return to their seats.

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## Concluding Rite

1. When the Priest stands, **Server #1** retrieves the Missal and stands in front of the Priest. When he is done, return to your seat and place the Missal back on the table.
2. When the final hymn is announced, Servers walk to the candle table to retrieve the Crucifix and candles. All Servers then proceed to the main aisle.
  - a. **Server #1** with the Crucifix stands between the fourth row of pews and faces the Altar.
  - b. **Server #2** and **Server #3** with candles stand between the third row of pews and face the Altar.
  - c. The Priest, and Deacon if present, will walk down the steps and face the Altar.
  - d. When the Priest genuflects, Servers bow their heads.
  - e. Turn around and proceed down the aisle (keeping one row of pews between you) to the gathering space. Stand in front of the St. Cecilia room and face the Church.
  - f. Bow to the Crucifix with the Priest after he says, "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ", respond "Both Now and Forever. Amen."
  - g. **Server #1** replaces the Crucifix in the holder.
  - h. **Server #2** and **Server #3** blow out the candles and return them to the table in the gathering space.

## 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 Noon Mass, take the Lectionary, the Gospel Book, the Missal and the 3-ring binder to the Priest's Sacristy.
4. Remove your Alb and hang it up using the same numbered hanger. The cincture should be returned to its original place.