

ALTAR SERVERS HANDBOOK



Sacred Heart Catholic Church

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SERVER'S PRAYER

Loving Father,
Creator of the
universe,
you call
your people to worship, to
be with you and each other at Mass. Help me,
for you have called me also. Keep me prayerful and
alert. Help me to lead others in prayer. Thank
you for the trust
you've placed
in me. Keep me
true to that trust.
I make my prayer
in Jesus' name,
who is with us
In the Holy
Spirit.
Amen.

DEFINITION OF ALTAR SERVER

It is a great privilege to serve at the Altar of our God and therefore Servers are chosen from those who display a desire for a more intimate relationship with our Lord and God, Jesus Christ who becomes present on the Altar, just as He was at the Last Supper. Accordingly, Servers have a solemn responsibility to do their assigned duties with dignity and reverence.

Our parish has Altar Servers (boys and girls), who were baptized Catholic, have made their communion, in third grade or higher and have completed the altar servers training. Servers are encouraged to continue for as long as they will serve. All servers should come to Mass regularly and have a desire to serve at the Altar and assist Father in Mass. Servers are generally scheduled once a month but this may fluctuate according to needs.

HOW SHOULD I DRESS WHEN I SERVE?

- † Clothes should be appropriate for church. Also, remember that it can get very warm while serving so dress according.
- † Try to refrain from wearing athletic shoes. Shoes should be affixed to foot. No slides or flip-flops.
- † Be clean. It is a good idea for girls to tie long hair back.

ALTAR SERVER RULES

- † Serve at every mass that you are scheduled for, or make arrangements to have someone fill in for you. If you cannot find someone to cover call the coordinator and let them know.
- † Arrive 15 minutes before the start of Mass to get dressed, light the candles, and decide which server will do what task.
- † Maintain good posture. Fold hands when they are not in use. Remember when to stand, kneel or sit.
- † Altar Servers should not leave the sanctuary after the start of Mass for any reason except bathroom emergencies, illness, or when directed to do so by the priest. If you are not feeling well and need help please let the Lector know (seated behind you).
- † Be quiet and respectful when on the Altar, you are role models. Be attentive to the Priest and fellow Servers who may need your help.

ALTAR SERVERS STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

BEFORE MASS:

1. Arrive and be dressed 15 minutes before the Mass begins
 - a) Make sure the alb is the RIGHT SIZE, the bottom should be right above the tops of the shoes
 - b) Check the calendar to make sure the cincture is the right color
2. Check to make sure that the Roman Missal is on the table by your chair. (If there is a visiting priest, talk to him ahead of time to see if you need to do anything differently for him)
3. Light the candles that you will carry in and decide with other servers what task each of you will do.
4. Gather in the Gathering Space with the priest, and lectors, and anyone else who will be in the entrance procession.

ENTRANCE PROCESSION:

1. The altar servers will line up with two side by side carrying the candles and if more than two they should come behind the servers with the candles.
2. Follow the usher with the Cross and go to the front of the Ambo and when you have placed the candles onto the holders turn and face the Altar. Wait for the lector to pass by you and follow them to your seats but remain standing.

GREETING:

1. The priest begins the mass with the Sign of the Cross
2. The priest begins with an introduction explaining the readings, or welcoming people to the Mass.
3. Penitential Rite-the priest asks us to recall our sins and ask God for forgiveness, we then respond with the “Lord Have Mercy, Christ Have Mercy, Lord Have Mercy”
4. The Gloria will then be recited or sung
5. During the Gloria, the priest will look at the altar servers and make a gesture with his hands like he is opening a book which is the cue for the server with the Roman Missal to bring the book over for the priest to read the opening prayer. Stand directly in front of the Priest as close as possible (the priest will be one step up from where you are standing). Sometimes for shorter servers he may ask you to step up on the step he is standing on.
6. After the priest is done with the prayer, the server will close the book and return to his seat and place the book on the table next to the chair. Everyone will be seated to listen to the first reading, the psalm, and the second reading.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

- 1) First Reading-The lector will come forward to read the First Reading (No action is required by the altar servers)
- 2) The psalm will be recited or sung (No action is required by the altar servers)
- 3) Second Reading-The lector will come forward to read the Second Reading (No action is required by the altar servers)
- 4) Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia)-When the choir begins to sing the Alleluia, all servers will stand when everyone else stands.
- 5) The priest/deacon will read the Gospel and then end with “The Gospel of the Lord,” and everyone responds with “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.” Once everyone has responded everyone including Servers will sit down.
- 6) The priest/deacon will then give his Homily.
- 7) After the Homily, the priest/deacon will go back to their seat and remain standing to recite the Nicene Creed. Everyone including servers will stand for the Creed.
- 8) The priest will start the Prayers of the Faithful, and then the lector or deacon will read the petitions of the church (Everyone responds “Gracious God hear our prayer”). After the lector or deacon has finished the petitions, the Priest will say a prayer. All will respond with “Amen,” and the congregation and servers will sit down.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

- 1) OFFERTORY COLLECTION- After everyone has been seated, the Ushers will walk forward with the baskets for the collections of the Gifts.
 - (a) One altar server will carry the Roman Missal to the Altar when the Sacristan is setting the table (Altar) and return to seat.
 - (b) Another server will light the candles at the Altar and put out the candles at the Ambo and return to seat.

PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

Once the Gifts are collected and the priest walks up to the Altar to greet the presenters all servers join him standing behind but near and to the right of the priest.

- (a) As the priest accepts the water cruet he will hand it to one server and then the wine cruet to the other server. He will soon reach for each one and pour it into chalice. Once the priest has poured both the wine and water the servers will walk back and set the wine cruet to the cart.
- (b) From the cart one server will pick up plate, towel, and water cruet and return to Altar to wash the priest hands. One server

- (c) will have the water and pour a small amount on the priest hands when he is ready and the other will have the towel over their left arm while holding the plate. After washing, return all items to the cart and stand side by side next to the steps. Priest will ask everyone to stand for the Eucharistic Prayer.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

- 1) The priest then begins with the preface and then enters the into the HOLY HOLY which will be sung or recited
- 2) When the congregation kneels the altar servers will step up one step and kneel on step facing the Ambo. Remember to stay up straight, fold hands and hold as still as possible. The priest will continue with the Eucharist prayer by recalling the Last Supper
 - a. The priest will first pick up the host, to be consecrated, by saying "...take this, all of you and eat it; this is my body which will be given up for you." The priest will raise the Body of Christ above his head.
 - b. The priest will kneel and then pick up the chalice and say, "...take this and drink from it, this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven, do this in memory of me." The priest will raise the chalice above his head.
- 3) The priest will then proclaim the mystery of faith, which will be sung or recited
- 4) The priest will then finish up the prayer by remembering the saints, all those who have departed before us, and chant or recite, "Through Him, with Him, and in Him...."
- 5) The Great Amen will be sung or recited
- 6) All members will rise to recite the Our Father
 - c. The altar servers will rise and proceed to the altar, to hold hands behind the priest with ushers and lectors.
- 7) The priest will say the Sign of Peace prayer and ask congregation to share with each other a Sign of Peace
 - d. After the altar server has shared the Sign of Peace with the priest they may quickly share the Sign of Peace with the parent/guardian if sitting close.
 - e. When the server returns, one server will go to the left and one to the right a step down from the altar level and face the altar to receive communion and the Eucharistic ministers will line up between the servers.

COMMUNION

1. The Lamb of God will either be sung by the choir or recited by the priest and the congregation will join in
2. The congregation will kneel, while the servers and Eucharistic ministers will stay where they are for priest to bring Communion to them. You might need to step forward a bit so priest does not have to reach. Make sure you say “Amen”.
3. The priest will distribute the Body and Blood of Christ
 - a. Once the altar server has received both, they will go back to their seats and sit. Be careful not to run into the priest or Eucharistic ministers. When the last row is lining up for communion, one server should pick up the Roman Missal from the Altar and return it to the table next to the altar servers chairs. Another server will light the candles at the ambo and put out the candles at the Altar signifying that the meal is complete and then return to your seat.
 - b. Once the priest is done distributing communion, he will return to the altar to purify and clear the altar. After cleaning he will return to his seat and say a prayer.

CONCLUDING RITE

1. The priest will then stand, and then present the announcements.
2. Then the priest will ask everyone to stand and pray (the closing prayer)
 - a. The priest will say, “Let us pray...” Sometimes the priest will request the server to bring the Roman Missal book and stand in front of the priest to read the closing prayer. If he does not request the book then stand at your chair during the closing prayer.
3. The priest will then conclude the mass with the Sign of the Cross
4. The choir will then start the final song
 - a. When the final song begins the Usher will go get the cross and at that time the alter servers walk up on the Altar by the Ambo and pick up the candles. Once the usher passes you with the cross follow him down the steps and walk forward the center isle. When you get up the center isle turn around where you are facing the Altar, The priest will now be in front of you. When you see him start to bow you bow slightly being mindful of the candle and then turn and exit to the priest vesting room to blow out and place candles in their holders and return to hang your alb and cincture.



Altar – The table where the 2nd part of the mass the “Eucharist” is celebrated. It is where the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered. The congregation gathers at the Altar to share a meal of Jesus Body and Blood.



Sanctuary – The raised open space immediately around the altar. This is where you find the presider’s chair, the ambo, the altar, cross and candles all used for the liturgy.



Sacristy – The room where the altar servers vestments and liturgical items used for mass are kept. The items used for mass are kept in a special place. This is also where the Eucharistic ministers wash the items used for Communion.



Ambry – Blessed oils that are used in the reception of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, and the Anointing of the Sick. These oils are blessed by the bishop at the Chrism Mass during Holy Week at the Cathedral. They are placed in a vessel made of glass, placed on a shelf in the Ambry and then locked up until needed.



Ambo – The Ambo is the wood reading stand where all the readings are proclaimed. The lectors will read the first and second reading and the priest or deacon will read the Gospel.



Paschal Candle/Easter Candle – Holy Saturday night when we gather for the Easter Vigil the first part of the celebration is a blessing of the new fire and of the Paschal Candle. The candle is very large and is the symbol of the “light of Christ”. It remains lit at all celebrations during the Easter Season and for Baptisms and funerals during the year.



Alb – A long white robe sometimes tied at the waist with a cincture. The priest wears an Alb under the chasuble. It is also worn by the altar servers. It is a reminder of the white garment we received at Baptism. The rope is called a cincture. Altar servers wear the color that represents the church season.



Tabernacle – This is a solid, unbreakable, and locked container. After mass any uneaten Eucharist is placed here to be used by ministers of the sick and homebound as needed and for private devotion.



Baptismal Font – This is the structure which contains the water that is used for baptism. When there is a Baptism during Mass the priest will ask for two of the altar servers to assist him during the Baptism at the Baptismal Font.



Roman Missal – The large book that contains the prayers of the Mass. The altar server holds this book when prayers are said by the priest. It is the book that the servers also place on the altar.



Lectionary – The large book which contains the Word of God and is used by the lectors to read the first and second reading during Mass. This book stays on or near the Ambo.



Book of Gospels – This book contains the Gospel readings for each Sunday and Feast Day. The lector carries the book in the entrance procession and places it on the altar. During the Gospel Acclamation the priest carries the book to the ambo and it remains there during Mass.



Taper – The altar servers use a taper to light the candles in the sanctuary. It includes a snuffer on the opposite side to put out the candles.



Chalice – A chalice is the cup used for the wine by the priest at the altar during the Eucharistic prayer and is used by the Eucharistic ministers to give communion of the Blood of Christ to the congregation.



Paten – The bowl or dish which is used for the bread by the priest at the altar during the Eucharistic prayer and is used by the Eucharistic ministers to give communion of the Body of Christ to the congregation.



Ciborium – Any Eucharistic bread that remains after communion is placed in a ciborium. It is covered with a lid and placed into the tabernacle for safe keeping until the Eucharist is needed for the sick or dying in between Masses.



Cruets – Small glass bottles which hold the water that is poured into the wine and that is used to wash the priest's hands.



Corporal – A square white cloth with a cross embroidered in the center is placed on top of the altar cloth in the center of the altar by the Sacristan. The chalice, paten, wine pitcher are placed on top of the corporal. The corporal is generally folded into a square.



Purificator – Like a liturgical napkin, the purificator is used by the Eucharistic minister to wipe the cup as the Blood of Christ is shared with the congregation. It also has an embroidered cloth and is generally folded into a rectangle.



Monstrance – Used by the priest during the Eucharist Adoration and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Though there are different shapes of monstrance the center of each is a glass enclosed place where the consecrated host can be placed for the adoration of the people.



Censur (thurible) and Censer – As a sign of reverence and prayer incense is used during celebrations. The incense is a perfumed mixture and is placed on top of hot coals in a pot like container called a Censur (thurible). The Censur is used in processions. It is placed in a bowl shape with a cover called an Incense Boat. The altar server helps the priest with the incense.