

GUIDELINES FOR ALTAR SERVERS

Christ Our Redeemer Catholic Church

Being an altar server is a sacred privilege and a very special responsibility. These guidelines outlines the policies for altar servers, our expectations of you, and how we serve Mass here at Christ Our Redeemer. All altar servers are expected to study this brochure and understand its contents.

Becoming an Altar Server

Those selected should:

- ◆ Be a baptized member of the Catholic Church.
- ◆ Have received your First Communion and receive communion regularly at Sunday Mass
- ◆ Have your family registered members of Christ Our Redeemer parish.
- ◆ Arrive 15 minutes before Mass when scheduled to serve
- ◆ Participate in the initial server training process and participate in the ongoing formation of the altar servers.
- ◆ Wear conservative shoes. NO Flip Flops or Beach Shoes.
- ◆ Wear a plain shirt or blouse (No design) – a design or pattern shows through the Alb.
- ◆ Have clean hands. You will be touching the sacred vessels and receiving God in your hands.
- ◆ Show reverence in Church. It is how we honor God.
- ◆ Participate in the worship with the assembly by singing the songs in the music issue and following the Mass parts in the Missalette.
- ◆ NOT cause distraction by laughing or giggling, talking unnecessarily or acting board or fidgeting.
- ◆ Pay close attention to the priest and deacon so that they are ready to respond when they are called upon.
- ◆ Be a mature person who has been entrusted with an important ministry within the worship of the Roman Catholic Church.

Before Mass the Altar Server Will

Arrive 15 minutes before Mass begins.

- ◆ 5:15 PM on Saturday, 7:15 AM on Sunday,
10:15 AM Sunday
- ◆ Go immediately to the Sacristy to check in with the Deacon or Sacristan. Vest carefully (make sure the Alb is your size...it should reach your ankles)
- ◆ Sign in on the clipboard located in the Brides' Room.
- ◆ Make sure the Processional Cross is ready for you in the Brides' Room

The altar server knows the various parts of the Mass. You know that the Mass has two general parts: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. There are Introductory Rites to "introduce" the first part and Concluding Rites following the second part. The first part is a preparation for the second and more sacred part of the Mass. Memorizing the outline of the Mass will help you to be more confident on the altar by knowing what is occurring or about to occur at all times. This will help you to move slowly and deliberately from one action to another without looking like every action is a surprise to you. An altar server needing to be reminded when an action is supposed to be happening is like a leapfrog on the altar jumping up and hopping from one action to another. Knowing the framework will allow you to follow smoothly from one action to another adding to the sacredness and dignity of the Mass and not subtracting from it as a distraction.

Outline of the Order of the Mass

Introductory Rite

- ◆ **Procession:** The entrance, down the center aisle, of the celebrant and other ministers to the Altar
- ◆ **Greeting:** Celebrant makes the sign of the cross and invites the congregation to join him in this celebration.
- ◆ **Penitential Act:** Asking forgiveness of our sins to make us more worthy to celebrate this Eucharist.
- ◆ **Sprinkling of Holy Water:** Optional according to the season.
- ◆ **Glory to God:** Hymn of Praise used on Sundays in Ordinary Time and on Solemn Feasts.
- ◆ **Opening Prayer:** Prayer of petition to the Father.

Liturgy of the Word

- ◆ **First Reading:** Selection taken from the Old Testament and read by the Lector.
- ◆ **Responsorial Psalm:** A recited or sung response to the first reading.
- ◆ **Second Reading:** Used only on Sundays and special celebrations. It is usually taken from one of the Epistles.
- ◆ **Gospel Acclamation:** An Alleluia or other chant sung before the Gospel.
- ◆ **Gospel:** A reading taken from one of the four Gospels and read either by the Celebrant or the deacon
- ◆ **Homily:** A further explanation or instruction on the Scripture readings.
- ◆ **Profession of Faith:** All recite the Creed.
- ◆ **Universal Prayer:** The petitions of the faithful.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- ◆ **Preparation of the Gifts:** Preparing and bringing the bread and wine to the Altar.
- ◆ **Eucharistic Prayer:** Includes the Preface, the Consecration and the Great Amen.
- ◆ **Communion Rite:** Begins with the reciting of the Our Father and ends with the Prayer after Communion of the Faithful.

Concluding Rite

- ◆ **Greeting & Blessing:** The Celebrant blesses the congregation.
- ◆ **Dismissal:** The Celebrant sends the people out to “live the Mass” in their daily lives and he and other minister's process back down the middle aisle to the vestibule of the Church.

Standard Altar Server Positions

Server One: Processional Cross, Roman Missal, Book of the Chair (colored three ring binder).

Server Two: Assist at the Altar and the Water, Lavabo & Bowl.

Server Three: Assist at the Altar and the Water, Lavabo & Bowl.

Altar Server Instructions Weekend Masses

Introductory Rites

Entrance Procession

There are usually three servers assigned for a weekend Mass. When we are ready for Mass, assemble in the Narthex (back of the church) at the center aisle, just in front of the Baptismal Font.

After the people have sung one verse of the opening hymn, server 1, the cross bearer leads the procession down the aisle with servers 2 and 3 **walking two pews behind** both even with each other at a reverent pace. When incense is used, server with the censor (Thurable) walks in front of cross bearer. If incense is not used, and there are four servers, the server without the cross walks behind servers 2 and 3.

Arriving in front of the altar, the cross bearer continues without stopping and places the cross in its place for Mass. Everyone else stops and lines up in front of the bottom step. The priest and deacon will take their places in between the two sets of servers. When the priest bows, you bow also and then proceed to your place in the pew behind the credence table.

The cross bearer server will bring the Roman Missal to the priest at the times when it is needed. Make sure that you hold the book with the front cover facing away from you. When the priest gives you the open book to hold, rest the top of it against your chest, and hold the bottom slightly away from you. This will prevent the book from moving while you're holding it and will make it easier to hold. Whenever you are not carrying anything, you should have your hands prayerfully folded in front of you.

Penitential Act, Gloria, Opening Prayer

When the Gloria is ended, the server with the Roman Missal walks over by the priest, so that when the priest says “Let Us Pray,” you are standing right by his side ready to go, holding the Roman Missal for him for the opening prayer.

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading, Psalm Response, Second Reading and Gospel

All servers will sit for the three readings. (First reading, Psalm Response, Second Reading.) Listen to, and reflect on, the readings and the homily.

Please remember that you are very visible where you are sitting so that anything you do, the people can see. Make sure that you maintain proper attitude during the whole Mass. There should be no inappropriate talking or giggling. Make sure you sit erect and do not slouch over the pew or on the kneelers.

If Incense Is Used At The Gospel

If incense is used at the gospel, the server designated as Thurifer who is not server 2 or 3, or cross bearer will bring the Thurable and the boat up to the priest. He will then put some incense into the censer. The server will go to the front of the altar and in the center face the altar with your back to the people. When the deacon comes around to the front of the altar with the Book of Gospels; this server will then lead the deacon to the Ambo. The server will stand just behind the Ambo and close to the Altar steps.

After the deacon/priest says “A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to...,” he will turn to the server and take the censer and incense the Gospel book. He will hand the censer back to the server. This server stands in place, prayerfully listening to the Gospel. When the Gospel reading is over, he returns the censer and boat back to the stand.

Profession of Faith, Universal Prayer

The cross bearer will bring the colored three ring binder to the priest and all stand for the Profession of Faith and the Prayers of the Faithful.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Gifts

At the Offertory, the servers will bring the following items to the altar in this order:

- Corporal
- 4 or 8 cups
- PYX at the 7:30 Mass
- Chalice
- Water Flagon
- Purificators
- The Roman Missal.

When done, bow your heads to the altar and then proceed to your chairs.

When the deacon goes to the center aisle for the gifts, two servers go with him. One stands on left of deacon, the other on the other side with the deacon in the center. The deacon will hand the gifts to you. Usually one will receive the wine cruet: the other will receive the paten with the hosts.

The deacon will go to the altar. Both servers will stand on the bottom step behind the deacon. The deacon will take the wine from the server and then give the wine and water back to the server. The deacon then takes the paten with the host from the other server and hands it to the priest. Both servers then bow toward the altar and return to the credence table. The server who has the water cruet will place it on the credence table and pick up the finger bowl and the other server will pick up the finger towel. They will then go up one step and stand in front of the priest's chair. The priest places his hands in the bowl then removes them. The priest will then turn to the other server and get the towel to dry off his hands. This server should have the towel open.

If Incense Is Used Here....

If the priest indicated that incense would be used at the offertory here is what happens. Before the priest washes his hands, Thurifer will bring up the censer and the boat and stands next to the altar near the priest. The priest will take the boat and put some incense into the censer and return the boat back to the server. The priest will then take the censer from the server. The priest will walk around the altar. The server remains standing where he/she is. When the priest returns and if there is no deacon present, he will hand the censer back to the server who places it and the boat back on the stand. The priest will then wash his hands and everything resumes as normal. If there is a deacon, the priest will hand the censer to the deacon who will incense the priest and the people. When the deacon goes to incense the people, the priest will wash his hands. When the deacon returns, he gives the censer back to the server who places it back on the stand. Return to your seat at this time.

Prayer Over The Gifts, Preface, Eucharistic Prayer, Our Father

Stand for the Prayer over the Gifts, the Preface and the Holy, Holy. Kneel for the Eucharistic Prayer. Be sure to pray and pay attention.

If Bells Are Used

The server assigned the task of ringing the bells will come to the first step and kneel on the pad next to the deacon's chair. The bells are also located next to the chair. During the Eucharistic prayer after the priest says, "My Body, which will be given up for you" and he holds up the host, the server will bend down and pick up the bells and gently ring them for about two or three seconds and then puts the bells back down again.

Later, when the priest says, "Do this in memory of me," he will hold up the chalice at which time the server will ring the bells again for two to three seconds. These are the only two times they bells will be rung.

Stand for the praying of the Our Father. Pray it out loud.

Sign of Peace, Lamb of God

At the Sign of Peace, all servers should shake hands with each other (quickly) and with anyone who may be seated behind you. Then immediately turn back facing the altar and keep your eyes on the priest and deacon just in case they need your assistance. Server 1 & 2 will bring the large Paten and at the 10:30 Mass the two small Ciboria to the deacon.

Communion

You may receive either on the tongue or in the hand. You may also receive the Precious Blood from the cup. When all of you have received, return back to your seats and sit quietly, praying in thanksgiving for the gracious gift of the Eucharist. During communion, one server will go to the altar and remove the Roman Missal and the Chalice and place them on the credence table. After communion when the deacon indicates the servers will remove any items given to them by the deacon and place them on the credence table. The deacon will purify the vessels after communion, and return to his chair. There is usually silence for a time at this point.

Prayer After Communion

When the priest says "Let us pray..." the server in charge of the Roman Missal will take it and stand in front of the priest and deacon. The priest will read the prayer after Communion. He will indicate to the server whether or not he will need the book for the solemn blessing or not. If not, the server returns the book to its place. If the priest needs the book, then the server waits until the completion of the final blessing when he will return the book to the table.

Recessional

When the Roman Missal is returned to the server's table, the server will gather and the cross bearer will get the cross. When the priest moves to the bottom stair, the servers will take their places behind the priest and deacon, facing the altar. When the priest and deacon bow at the front of the altar and turn around to leave, the servers will turn around and lead the procession out, the cross bearer in front, then servers 1 & 2. If there is a Thurifer that person always leads the procession.

After Mass the Altar Server Will

Return the Cross to Brides' Room and change out of Alb and hang it up properly in the Sacristy closet.

Altar Server Coordinators



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