

Altar Server Guide

Updated April 18, 2018

Before Mass Starts:

- Please arrive fifteen minutes early and sign in to mark your attendance.
- Put on Alb (robe) and cincture (cord).
- Light the acolyte candles in church before the beginning of Mass.
- Gather with priest and other Mass ministers in the narthex for prayer.
- Line up inside church door for the entrance procession.
- If there is a fourth server, he or she walks behind the cross with hands folded.

At the Beginning of Mass:

- Wait for the priest's signal and walk slowly up center aisle.
- Bow in front of the altar, and then go to the side with the cross and candles.
- Fourth server, walks with hands folded, and genuflects toward tabernacle.
- Place cross and candles on their stands on left side of sanctuary.
- Stand in front of the chairs near pillar.
- The server in charge of the Roman Missal (book) comes up with the book during the last verse of the Gloria. The book will be open. Taller servers should hold the book at his/her side so as not to block the view of the priest.
- After the reading of the Collect, the server closes the book and sets it on the stand on the altar, bows and returns to seat.

During the Liturgy of the Word:

- On Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, for the Gospel reading, two servers come to the ambo with candles before the deacon or priest arrive at ambo (during Alleluia verse).
- Servers should go down to the chairs as soon as the Gospel is over, before the deacon or priest leaves the ambo, when deacon or priest says, "The Gospel of the Lord".

At the Beginning of the Offertory:

- As soon as the Offertory music begins, the cross server goes to the back of church with the cross.
- Another server brings the chalice and sets it on the altar. He/she bows and goes back for more vessels.
- The third server brings ciboria.
- When all the ciboria and chalices are brought up from the credence table, two servers help the priest or deacon receive the gifts of bread and wine at the sanctuary steps.

At the Offertory Procession:

- The cross server leads the gift bearers from the back of church to the foot of the steps when the priest or deacon comes down the stairs.

- The two servers bring the bread and wine up to the altar via the south side steps.
- Another server brings water pitcher at the same time, holding the bottom of the pitcher, leaving the handle free.

At the Offertory:

- If incense is used, servers stand back out of the way.
- The cross server brings the bowl, second pitcher and towel (over his/her forearm) to the priest.
- Servers bow toward altar and one returns the wine pitcher to the Mass Coordinator.
- After washing priest's hands servers bow and come down the stairs, return everything to the credence table, and stand in front of the chairs.

The Eucharistic Prayer and Communion

- Servers kneel during the Eucharistic prayer.
- *At Solemn Masses, servers may kneel at front of the altar with candles.*
- One server rings the hand bells, once at Epiclesis (when priest reaches his hands, palms down, above the bread and wine), three times at elevation of the host and three times at the elevation of the chalice.
- After the Great Amen, servers stand in front of chairs until after the Sign of Peace.
- After Lamb of God, servers stand on middle stair to receive Holy Communion from the priest (and deacon, if receiving both species) before the extraordinary ministers receive Communion.
- During Communion the book server brings the water pitcher up to the altar, and the book down the stairs and opens it to the marked page, at the credence table.

After Communion:

- When the priest or deacon returns to the altar after Communion, the servers return to the altar.
- The priest or deacon hands the vessels to the servers to be taken (bowing) to the side table.

At the End of Mass:

- The book server brings the Roman Missal up to the priest when he begins to stand, and holds it for the closing prayer. At the end of the prayer, the server carries the book down to the table, and takes the cross.
- The other servers pick up the candles and at the Dismissal (Go in peace...) all servers line up in the main aisle for the recession.
- When the priest genuflects, servers bow their heads or genuflect, turn and lead the way out of church.

After Mass:

- Return cross and candles to their stands in church.
- Extinguish candles and hang up Albs and cinctures in the closet.

- If server neglected to sign in before Mass, please sign in after Mass.
- THANK YOU FOR SERVING AT THE ALTAR!

NOTE: If you are unable to fulfill your scheduled obligation, arrange for a substitute to take your place. Telephone/email lists of servers for each Mass time may be requested from the Liturgy Director.