

ALTAR SERVER GUIDE



The altar servers of Ascension are a very special group of young people in our parish who have answered God's call to ministry. It is difficult to have a large Mass without attentive servers to assist. As an Altar Server you are a liturgical minister of our parish, and we need you. All the same, serving at the altar of God is a privilege. We hope you take this privilege seriously and enjoy your time serving God and His bride the Church.

Liturgical ministers have special tasks to perform during liturgies, especially during the celebration of the Eucharist (the Mass). The Altar Server is very important in helping God's people worship in a full and active manner.

As an Altar Server your main job,
the number one responsibility
will be to lead the people in prayer.

Please use this outline as a review of the Altar Server Training you have attended. Perhaps keep it in the car to look over on your way to Mass.

There is a glossary of terms at the end of this guide to help you understand the language of the Church. There are also two diagrams that will help you understand the procession.

BEFORE MASS

❖ **Sacristy**

- Please come to Mass appropriately dressed: pants/skirt, light colored shirt, and shoes. Please no shorts, sandals, or high heels.
- Arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass starts.
- Check in with the Sacristan or Priest.
- You are always welcome to serve even if you are not on the schedule.
- Pick an alb to wear, it should be as long as possible without dragging on the floor.
- Make sure the Missal is on the server's chairs.
- Light the candles.
- Pray the Altar Server's Prayer with Father

DURING MASS

Keep your eyes on the priest/deacon, listen to their instructions, and breathe, you will do fine! Everyone wants you to do well. Remain calm and confident.

❖ **Start of Mass:**

- Mass begins in this order: lights – bell – stand – cantor. When given the signal the server pushes the max button on the light switch counts four second and pulls the rope down about four inches and brings the bell back to position without letting go of the rope.

❖ **Order of Procession** (See Fig. 1 at the end):

- Cross Bearer, Other Servers together in pairs, Deacon (or Lector with the Book of the Gospels), Priests
- Lift high the cross with Jesus facing ahead.
- Someone will let you know when to begin the procession. It is always after the singing begins.

- Walk calm and steady not too fast, not too slow. Try and keep three pews between you and the person in front of you.

❖ **At the Steps** (See Fig. 2 at the end):

- The Cross Bearer gets to the steps and goes to stand on the left side.
- The other servers split and go to either side of the steps trying to keep the sides even.
- The deacon (or lector) with the priest will stand in the center.
- When the priest genuflects, you genuflect unless you are carrying something like the cross, or a candle, in that case you simply bow your head at that time.
- The servers take their seats as the priest and deacon reverence the Altar.

❖ **Collect - “Let us pray...”**

- Bring the Missal to Father holding it in such a way that he can easily open and read it.
- Hold the Missal carefully with two hands so it will not slide or fall to the floor.
- The priest closes the Missal, return to your seat.

❖ **Liturgy of the Word:**

- Listen attentively to the readings, singing the responsorial psalm and the alleluia, listen attentively to the homily, remember to bow during the correct part of the creed and respond to the petitions.
 - As a minister, you are an example for others.
Please sing and respond appropriately.
- Remain attentive - the priest may need you

❖ **Preparation of the Gifts:**

- Bring the Missal to the altar.
- From the credence table bring the chalices, patens, purificators and water to the altar.
 - Do not place any items directly onto the altar unless specifically asked to do so.
- Return to your seat and wait.
- When the priest stands, two servers go to receive the gifts, bow with the priest after gifts are received.
- The gifts are brought to the altar, wait for the wine to be poured and take the wine and water cruets back to the credence table.
- Bring the water cruet, lavabo bowl and towel to the priest.
- Pour a little water over the priest's hands into the center of the bowl.
- Take the bowl, towel, and water back to the credence table, return to seats.

❖ **Liturgy of the Eucharist:**

- Sit, stand, or kneel at the same time as the assembly. The people should look to you to know what to do.
- While kneeling you may be asked to ring the Sanctus bells – these bells help to point out especially sacred moments in the Eucharistic prayer with practice you'll be able to ring them just fine.
 - No matter which Eucharistic prayer we are using, the bells are rung at three separate occasions.
 - The first is the Epiclesis – this is when the priest extends his hands and calls down the Holy Spirit. It generally happens early in the

Eucharistic prayer. As the priest extends both hands over the paten and chalice you ring the bell once – each ring of the bell is a motion in which you shake your wrist three times without pause – think of it like trying a doorknob three times really quickly.

- The other two times you ring the bells are always the same – after the words of Institution (This is my Body, This is my Blood). The priest goes from bowing, to lifting the paten or the chalice for the people to see – during this pause you ring the bells.
 - These two times are longer: three rings with each ring consisting of three shakes of the wrist. You will do this for the Body of Christ and for the Blood of Christ.
 - To recap: first ring (one set of three shakes), second ring (three sets of three shakes), third ring (three sets of three shakes)
 - Ringing the bell can be the time that causes you the most anxiety, if you miss your cue don't worry, we'll work on it after Mass
- After you stand share the sign of peace with the Priest and Deacon.
 - Kneel after the Lamb of God
 - Stand when Father goes to the hand sanitizer.
 - Receive Holy Communion at that spot.
 - After the assembly begins to receive Holy Communion bring the water cruet and set it on the altar, retrieve the Missal, return to your seat, and remain attentive to the priest.
 - If the Precious Blood is accidentally spilled, you may need to help by bringing a purificator or even the lavabo towel.

❖ **Prayer after Communion - “Let us pray...”**

- Hold the Missal for Father so that he can read.
- When the priest closes the Missal return to your chair.
- If the priest does not immediately close the missal, but instead motions for you to step to the side, he is preparing for the solemn blessing, remain there until the Missal is closed.

❖ **Recessional**

- Cross bearer - watch for the priest to indicate it is time, then retrieve the processional cross.
 - Leave the Roman Missal on the seat
- Return to your spot at the steps.
- When the priest genuflects, you genuflect unless you are carrying something, in that case you simply bow your head at that time.
- After the genuflection the cross bearer leads the recession, followed by the servers, the deacon, and the priest.

AFTER MASS

❖ **Final Duties and Leaving Well**

- In the sacristy, pray the prayer after Mass.
- After the singing has concluded, not before, and while maintaining reverence take the candle snuffer and put out the candles.
 - Never blow the candles out as it can get wax on the altar. Try and not push the candle follower down onto the candle.
- Hang your alb up neatly. Check around the sacristy to see if you can be of assistance. Please don't leave without telling Father goodbye.

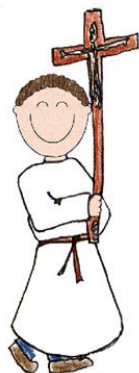
TRAINING & SCHEDULING

Any baptized Catholic can serve. Generally, 4th grade and up will be trained during the school year. Younger children may serve with parent's approval. Ministry schedules for the parish weekend Masses are prepared quarterly. Once permission slips are in you should receive a notification. At least two servers are scheduled per weekend. If you are unable to keep your commitment to serve, please find a substitute.

What do you call that thing?

Eucharist – a Greek word meaning Thanksgiving – it is truly the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ

Processional Cross – a Crucifix, on a pole, used to lead a procession. The server who carries the processional cross is called the crucifer



Thurible, Boat, Thurifer - The metal orb on a chain is called the thurible, the boat holds the incense, and the person who carries them is called the thurifer.

Books:

Roman Missal – the book that the priest uses.

Lectionary – the book that the lector (reader) uses at the ambo

Book of the Gospels – the book carried by the deacon which contains the four Gospels.

Gospel – a word meaning “Good News”

Homily – the “talk” that Father or Deacon prepares and delivers after the Gospel

Prayer of the Faithful – the petitions, when we pray for those in need.

Furniture:

Ambo – where the readings, psalm, and Gospel are proclaimed, and where the homily may be given

Altar – the large “table” where the Eucharist is celebrated

Presider’s Chair – where the priest sits during Mass

Credence Table – the small table where the chalices, purificators, water cruet and bowl are kept

Items on Credence Table:

Purificator – white cloth used to wipe the chalice

Cruet – the small container that the water is in

Lavabo bowl & towel – from the Latin ‘to wash’ It is a small bowl and towel used to wash the priest’s hands

Chalice – Latin for cup. It is blessed, sacred, and holds the wine that becomes the Blood of Christ

Paten – Latin for plate. It also is blessed and sacred and it holds the hosts that become the Body of Christ

Corporal – white cloth square that goes on top of the presider’s chalice.

Vestments:

Alb – the white robe that represents baptism. It is worn by the servers, but also deacons and priests under their vestments.

Cincture – long cord/rope used as a belt for an alb

Stole – the “scarf” that goes over the alb but under the priest’s Chasuble or the deacon’s dalmatic. A priest’s stole is vertical, the deacon’s stole is diagonal.

Chasuble – the vestment that the priest wears during mass, on top of everything else; the colors change according to the liturgical season.

Dalmatic - the vestment that the deacon might wear during mass.

Cope – a heavy “cape” worn at some liturgical events

Cassock – long black robe with buttons from the collar to the floor.

Surplice – a white garment worn over the cassock

Other Interesting Liturgical Items:

Ciborium – a cross between a chalice and a paten, it has a lid on it and is used to hold the consecrated hosts in the Tabernacle

Tabernacle – the metal “box” where the Eucharist is reserved so that priests, deacons, and lay ministers can bring Jesus to the sick and the dying. Also a focal point of private prayer before and after Mass.

Monstrance – a large ornate stand used to hold the Blessed Sacrament for adoration or for processions

Pyx – a small container used to carry the Blessed Sacrament to the sick, the dying, and the imprisoned.

Aspergillum – the holy water sprinkler

Aspersorium – the bucket used to carry holy water

Pall – white cloth that is placed over the casket at a funeral. It symbolizes the baptismal white garment. It is also the name of the white square used to cover the chalices or patens.

† = cross bearer

S = server

D = deacon (or Lector)

P = Priest

Fig. 1 – the procession:

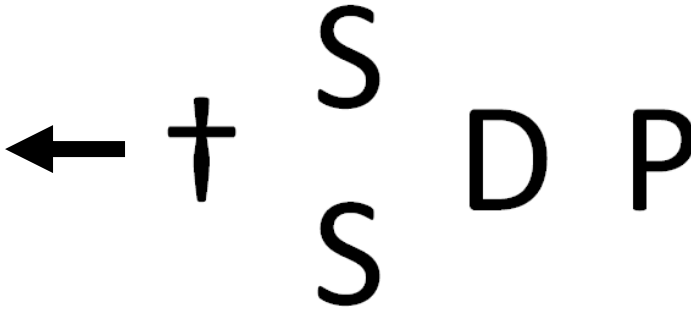
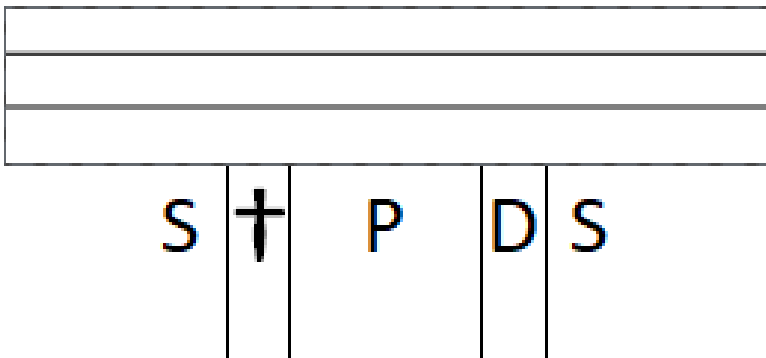


Fig. 2 – at the steps:



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