

Altar Server Procedures

Plan to arrive at Mass at least 10 minutes early. It is better to arrive 15 minutes early if you can. When you get to church, sign in on the Sign Up Sheet hanging in the closet where you get your server alb. Dress yourself with an alb that hangs down approximately to your ankles and a white cincture. To tie the cincture, start by folding it in half. Wrap it around you with the folded end on your right side. Make a loop on the folded end, then turn it on itself and pull the double cord up through the loop. Tuck the knotted ends of the cincture through this hole then pull the cincture tight to fasten it. Place the knot on your right hip.

Check that all items are in place for the Mass:

- Roman Missal is on the server chairs
- Bells are at the server chairs
- Bowl, pitcher with water, and towel are on the credence table
- Stand for the Book of Gospels is on the altar
- Chalice, purificator, paten, and pall (if used by the priest), are on the credence table
- Communion chalices are on a tray on the credence table
- Processional cross is at the back of church

Once you have ensured everything is in place, light the candles on the sanctuary:

- Two oil-lamp candles on either side of the Tabernacle
- Two beeswax candles on either side of the altar
- During Advent, light the appropriate number of candles on the advent wreath
- During Eastertime, light the Paschal candle
IMPORTANT: If you cannot reach the top of the Paschal candle, ask the Deacon or Mr. Schaal (the music director) to help you.
- If there is a baptism during Mass, light the Paschal candle

When all servers have arrived and dressed, decide whom is processing the altar candles and whom is processing the cross. Those processing candles then take the lit candles from the altar and go to the back of church. The other server(s) also go to the back of church.

Processional

All servers stand in one line for the processional. If there are more than three servers, the two altar candles and processional cross stand in line at the front of the procession, and all other servers stand in line(s) behind them. If there is incense at your Mass, the Thurifer stands alone in line, either at the front of the procession or immediately behind the candles and cross, as the priest directs you. After the entrance song begins, walk slowly down the aisle to the sanctuary. Do not stop or bow when you reach the sanctuary unless you are not carrying anything. Instead, continue up the steps and place candles into the stands astride the altar, or, place the cross in its stand against the back wall. Take your place at your seats.

Opening Prayer, or, Collect

When the priest says "Let us pray," immediately carry the Missal to him. Hold the book upright with the spine at your chest. The priest will find the Collect and adjust where he needs you to hold the book. If the top of your head is above the priest's shoulder, please stand to his side when holding the Missal. Return the Missal to your seats after "Amen."

Liturgy of the Word

Listen to God's message to you through his sacred Word. When the music begins for the Alleluia, two servers immediately get their altar candles and stand at the left side of the altar, facing the other servers that are still seated. Once the priest or deacon has lifted the Book of Gospels and turned to face you, walk slowly to the ambo. One server goes to each side of the ambo and down the steps to the lowest landing. Stand, facing each other across the ambo, at the front corners of the ambo. Hold your candles level so you do not spill wax. Remain here for the entire reading of the Gospel. The Gospel concludes with "the Gospel of the Lord." We all respond "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ." Carefully walk your candles back to the altar, place them into their stands, and take your seats. Listen carefully to the homily.

Presentation of the Gifts

After the Prayers of the Faithful are said, collection is taken in the church. Music is sung during this time. As soon as the song begins, start to prepare the altar for our celebration of the Eucharist.

- Remove the book stand to the credence table
- Take the chalice, purificator, paten, and pall, which are all together in one stack, to the altar
- Take the communion chalices to the altar
 - The deacon or priest will remove the chalices from the tray to the altar while you hold the tray
 - On the occasion where there is no minister to remove the chalices, another server does this. Place the chalices on the corporal, leaving space for the gift of bread
- Take the Roman Missal to the altar
 - If your priest uses a book stand, bring this to the altar from the credence table first, then place the Missal on the stand
- Take the extra (empty) ciboria to the altar

In general, when you take an item to the altar, place it on the left side. The priest or deacon will move it from there to where they need it.

When the priest goes to the front of the sanctuary to receive the gifts, follow him. Stand in line on the step, behind the priest. The basket(s) of food are placed on the carpet in front of the altar. The pitcher of wine and the large paten with hosts are placed on the altar. At some Masses, you will hand these items to the Deacon. If there is not a Deacon at your Mass, just place the pitcher or paten onto the corporal.

Eucharistic Prayer

One server brings the cruet of water from the credence table and stands at the altar. The priest or Deacon will add a small amount of water to the wine while he prays, "*In this mingling of water and wine may we share in your divinity, O Lord, who humble yourself to share in our humanity.*" You will then be handed back the cruet and the empty wine pitcher. Take these items to the credence table.

Two servers assist the priest in washing his hands. One holds the bowl and pours water from the pitcher on the priest's hands. The other holds the towel. As the priest washes he prays, "*Cleanse me of my iniquities, O Lord, and remove from me my sins.*" Return the pitcher, bowl, and towel to the credence table.

After the *Sanctus* (the “Holy, Holy, Holy” prayer), kneel on the carpet along with the rest of the congregation. Have the bells ready. The consecration of the Body of Christ concludes with “...*this is my Body, which will be given up for you.*” Ring the bells three times as the priest elevates the host. The consecration of the Blood of Christ follows. This prayer concludes with, “*Do this in remembrance of me.*” Ring the bells three times as the priest elevates the chalice.

After the Eucharistic Prayer, we pray the Our Father and exchange the Kiss of Peace. While the congregation is singing the *Agnus Dei* take your place for communion. Altar servers stand in front of the lower step of the Tabernacle, behind the altar. Stand together in a line, but leave a space for the priest or another minister to walk up to the Tabernacle if needed. After you have received communion, return to your seats and offer thanks to God for this great gift.

Cleaning Table

After the Extraordinary Ministers of Communion have taken their places in the church, you may begin to help clear the altar. The Missal is returned to the server chairs, and if a book stand was used please take it to the credence table. You may carefully arrange the chalice, purificator, paten, and pall then take them as a stack to the credence table. If the large processional paten was not removed during the distribution of communion, take it to the credence table. All lids for the ciboria must remain on the altar.

After communion concludes, the priest or Deacon will consolidate all remaining consecrated hosts into a few ciboria. Empty ciboria are placed on the left of the altar. You may take these to the credence table.

Prayer After Communion

When the priest says “Let us pray,” immediately carry the Missal to him. Hold the book upright with the spine at your chest. The priest will find the prayer and adjust where he needs you to hold the book. Return the Missal to your seats after “Amen.”

Recessional

As soon as the closing song begins, get the processional cross and the altar candles and take your places in line, in the aisle, standing approximately at the second pew. Face the altar and hold your places. If there are more than three servers, the cross and candles stand at the back, at the third pew, and the other servers stand in line(s) in front of them.

When he is ready, the priest will come to stand at the end of the aisle, facing the altar. He might stand there and sing the song for a verse or two. Please hold your places! The priest will either genuflect or bow. When he does, please turn and begin to walk slowly down the aisle to the back of church.

When you reach the back of church, extinguish the altar candles. Hang up the processional cross. Servers with candles may immediately return up the main aisle to the sanctuary and place the candles in their stands astride the altar. You do not need to wait for the music to end.