



ALTAR SERVER WORKSHOP

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Agenda

- Welcome / Opening Prayer
- Introduction & Expectations
- A Special Note to Parents
- Vocabulary Altar Servers Should Know
- Procedure
 - Dress and Posture Code
 - Upon Arrival
 - Things to do before Mass
 - Assisting at Mass
 - Entrance Procession
 - Setting the Altar
 - Offertory Procession
 - Communion
 - Recessional
 - Things to do after Mass



Opening Prayer

*Heavenly Father, We ask you to bless
all those here today whom we love,
And we give you thanks for your
goodness to us.*

*Be with us today and help us to
prepare for ministering in your name
as Altar Servers.*

*We pray in Jesus' name, through the
power of the Holy Spirit.*

Amen.



St. John Berchmans Patron Saint of Altar Servers



Introduction



- An altar server is a member of the Assembly who assists the Priest and Deacon
 - during the Celebration of the Eucharist
 - during other Liturgical Ceremonies.
- Being an altar server at Mass is a privilege and an honor.
 - It is a special way to serve God and God's Holy People.
- The service that you provide to God and His people during Mass is a vital and important role in the life of St. Joseph Church.
- Being an altar server at Mass
 - is worth doing and is worth doing well.

Expectations



- You will be expected to show up when scheduled
 - It is your responsibility to find a replacement
- Altar servers are required to dress appropriately
 - As ministers, we represent God's care for the people who come to worship
 - So dress nicely to show our respect for these members of the Body of Christ.
- Altar servers will fully participate in the Liturgical celebration by
 - joining with the assembly in prayer, song, reflective silence and attention
- The Senior Altar Servers are Mentors
 - Assists the Younger Servers

A Special Note to the Parents



- Parents must encourage and support their children who are Altar Servers.
- Parents must ensure that their children
 - arrive at church twenty (20) minutes prior to the scheduled start of Mass
 - are properly dressed
 - and are mentally and spiritually prepared to serve at Mass.
- Please **read the guidebook with your altar servers** and help them in their ministry with your feedback and encouragement.
- Siblings will serve together for all of the weekend Masses
- We've been really short of Altar Servers at the 4:30 Mass
 - Parents should always check the schedule to see if there are any openings if their children are not already scheduled.
- The Mass Coordinators would appreciate if the Parents please go back to the Narthex before the Closing Procession and assist the Altar Servers in hanging up their albs.

Vocabulary



- Parts of the Church Building
 - **Nave**: *The main body of the church where the assembly is seated.*
 - **Sanctuary**: *The part of the Church around the Altar where the Tabernacle, Ambo and Presider's chair are*
 - **Working Sacristy**: *The area behind the Sanctuary where the sacred vessels are stored and where the candle lighter/snuffer is located*
 - **Narthex/Vesitbule**: *The entrance area to the church were we prepare for the Entrance Procession*

Vocabulary



- Special Names for People
 - **Acolyte**: *One who serves at the Altar...another name for an Altar Server.*
 - **Crucifer**: *The Acolyte who is appointed to carry the church's processional cross with a long staff, during processions at the beginning and end of the service and during the Offertory Procession.*
 - **Deacon**: *An Ordained Minister whose special role in the liturgy is to read the gospel and preach the homily among others things.*
 - **Presider**: *The person who leads (presides at) the people's prayer. Most often is refers to the Priest's role at Mass*

Vocabulary



- Garments, Church Furnishing & Books
 - **Alb**: *A baptismal garment usually long and white as a reminder of baptism. It is the white garment that ministers wear for the celebration of the Mass and what the Altar Server garments are called*
 - **Ambo**: *The place from which the word of God is proclaimed. It is one of the primary symbols in a Catholic church.*
 - **Credence Table**: *A table in the church to hold items that will be used during the service and placed on the Altar.*
 - **Tabernacle**: *A receptacle that holds the consecrated hosts left over from Mass.*
 - **The Roman Missal**: *The book that contains all the prayers that the priest used at Mass. This is the book that the Altar Server brings to the priest.*

Vocabulary



- Liturgical Objects
 - **Patens (Bowls)**: *Holds the consecrated hosts during the distribution of Holy Communion*
 - **Chalice (Cups)**: *A cup with a stem that holds the wine/Precious Blood before and after consecration.*
 - **Corporal**: *A square cloth positioned in the center of the Altar on which the bowls and cups holding the consecrated bread and wine are placed.*
 - **Purificator**: *The linen cloth used by the Celebrants and the Eucharistic Ministers for wiping the chalices after each communicant has drunk from it.*
 - **Finger Bowl/Lavabo & Towel**: *The small bowl over which the priest holds his hands to catch the water as the Altar Server pours it over them and towel that the priest uses to dry his hands.*
 - **Cruet**: *Small **CLEAR** pouring container that holds the water that is poured over the priests hands and a drop poured into the wine before consecration.*



ALTAR SERVER PROCEDURE





Procedure - Dress

- Dresses, Skirts or Long Pants
 - No shorts
- Dress Shoes, Clean Sneakers or Good Sandals
 - No Flip Flops or High Heels (dangerous)
- Hair Neatly Combed
- Hands Clean and Nails Trimmed



Procedure - Posture

- Place Your Hands On Your Knees When Seated
- Fold Hands In a Prayer Position When Standing or Processing.
- Walk Slowly – Do Not Rush
- Always Walk BEHIND Father, NEVER in FRONT of Father
- Genuflect when passing in front of the tabernacle
- Remember the 3 P's of serving:
 - Participate, Prepare, Posture



Procedure – Upon Arrival

- Ideal Number of Altar Servers is 3:
 - Cross Bearer (CB)
 - Acolyte 1 (A1) who rings the Bells and sets the Altar
 - Acolyte 2 (A2) who is the Book Bearer and sets the Altar
- If ONLY 2 Altar Servers
 - Cross Bearer
 - Helps with the Washing of the Hands
 - Helps clear the Altar after Communion
 - Acolyte 1 who is Book Bearer, Rings Bells, Sets the Altar
 - Does NOT Process in or out with the Candles



Procedure – Upon Arrival

- If ONLY 1 Altar Server
 - Cross Bearer who does EVERYTHING
 - Processes with Cross
 - Book Bearer
 - Sets the Altar
 - During Offertory, does NOT process with Gifts – Stays with the Priest at the Altar
 - Bring the Finger Bowl, Pitcher of Water and Towel to the Priest for Washing of the Hand
 - Rings Bells
 - Clears the Altar after Communion



Procedure – Upon Arrival

- Arrive at LEAST 20 Minutes before Mass
 - Important because plans will change if there are not enough Altar Servers
- Check with the Mass Coordinator regarding anything special for this Mass
- Put on your vestments located in the coat closet in the narthex



Procedure – Before Mass

- The **FIRST** Altar Server to arrive for Mass will Light the Tabernacle and Altar Candles:
 - Walks up the music side aisle and takes the Candle Lighter from the Work Sacristy and lights the candles around the Tabernacle and the Altar.
 - Genuflect whenever passing in front of the Tabernacle.
 - Return the candle lighter to the Work Sacristy, and then return to the Narthex along the music side aisle.
- If candles are going to be used in the Procession:
 - When directed by the Mass Coordinator, Priest or Deacon, light the candles.
 - CB picks up the Processional Cross
 - Wait for the Priest, Deacon and Lector at the entrance door into the Nave



Procedure – Assisting Mass

- ENTRANCE PROCESSION

- When the Priest, Deacon or Mass Coordinator indicates, begin the Entrance Procession in this order:

- CB
- A1 and A2 side by side with lit candles
- Lector
- Deacon
- Priest.

- Process in slowly.



Procedure – Assisting Mass

- ENTRANCE PROCESSION
 - As you reach the steps to the sanctuary,
 - **CB** – Pauses very briefly, then processes to the right of the Altar around the platform and places the cross on the rack in the north passage. He or she then goes to their seat and remains standing.
 - **A1&A2** – take their place in front of the altar, to the outside of the Priest, Deacon, and the Lector
 - Because you are still holding the candles, bow your heads **ONLY** with the priest
 - The Acolyte who is standing on the Music side, waits for the other Acolyte and **TOGETHER**, they walk to the Ambo
 - Both walk **STRAIGHT** up the steps
 - Both place the candles in the stands by the ambo
 - Both turn towards each other, walk down the steps and **TOGETHER** walk to your seats



Procedure – Assisting Mass

- THE INTRODUCTORY RITES
 - Remember the 3 P's of serving:
 - Participate, Prepare, Posture
 - Respond to:
 - Greeting
 - Penitential Act
 - Gloria
 - During the Recitation or Singing of the Gloria:
 - The Book Bearer picks up and holds the Roman Missal.
 - At the last line of the Gloria: **“with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen”**,
 - The Book Bearer should immediately move to the priest's side with the Roman Missal (the book)
 - Do NOT wait for the Priest to say, **“Let us pray”**

NEW



Procedure – Assisting Mass

- During the Readings:
 - Remember the 3 P's of serving:
 - Participate, Prepare, Posture
 - Sit straight with your hands on your knees
 - Look at the Lector as he or she Proclaims the Word.
 - Respond with the assembly to the sung and spoken responses.
- Look at the Priest Or Deacon and listen to the Homily
- Respond to the petitions during the Prayer of the Faithful





Procedure – Assisting Mass

AFTER the Prayers of the Faithful...

... and...

... the START of the Collection...

IT IS TIME TO SET THE ALTAR



Procedure – Assisting Mass

- SETTING THE ALTAR
 - Cross Bearer (CB)
 - Goes through the passage and picks up the Cross
 - Processes down the Font side aisle to Narthex in preparation for the offertory procession



Procedure – Assisting Mass

- SETTING THE ALTAR

- Acolyte 1 (A1)

- A1 goes straight to the Credence Table and picks up the **Priest's Chalice and Paten** from the Credence Table and brings it to the Priest or Deacon (or places it on the altar).

- Acolyte 2 (A2)

- Carries the Roman Missal and places it on the Altar, then picks up the Roman Missal **holder** for the Gospel book and RETURNS it to the Credence Table.
- Picks up the communion cups and brings them to the priest/deacon

- Both A1 & A2 return to the Credence Table and bring:

- The remaining Communion Cups
- The Purificators
- The **CLEAR** Cruet of Water



- After Altar is Prepared:

- A1 & A2 Return to their seats by walking **BEHIND** the celebrant's chair and sit down
- Watch Father & Deacon



Procedure – Assisting Mass

- OFFERTORY PROCESSION

- The Priest and Deacon will walk around the Altar and down the front steps of the Sanctuary
- **A1 & A2** will take their position on either side of the Priest and Deacon.
 - Walk **BEHIND** the Priest (and Deacon)
 - The Acolyte on the **Right** side of the Priest will receive the **Carafe of Wine**
 - The Acolyte on the **Left** side of the Priest will receive the **Host**



Procedure – Assisting Mass

- OFFERTORY PROCESSION
 - Upon a signal from the Priest, the **CB**:
 - Will lead the procession up the center aisle
 - Pauses very briefly, then processes to the right of the Altar around the platform and places the cross on the rack in the north passage.
 - If **THREE** Altar Servers serving Mass
 - The CB then goes to their seat and remains standing
 - If **TWO** Altar Servers serving Mass
 - The CB then goes to the Credence Table
 - Picks up the Finger Bowl and small Pitcher of Water
 - Waits for the other Acolyte



Procedure – Assisting Mass

- OFFERTORY PROCESSION

- The Gift Bearers present the Bread and Wine to the Priest, and the Acolytes receive the Bread and Wine from the Priest/Deacon
- **A1 & A2** return to the Altar with the Priest and Deacon
 - The **Acolyte** with the **Paten**
 - Hands the Large Paten with the hosts to the Priest or places it on the Corporal
 - Returns to the Credence Table and picks up and holds the **Finger Bowl and Pitcher of Water** and waits for the other Acolyte.
 - The **Acolyte** with the **Carafe of Wine**
 - Returns to the **choir side** of the Altar, **places the carafe on Altar** (or hands to Deacon) and **REMAINS** standing **NEXT** to the Altar
 - The priest (or deacon) will prepare the chalice with the wine
 - » **Take the Carafe** when the Priest (or Deacon) hands it to you and **WAIT**
 - » The priest (or deacon) will pour a tiny bit of water from the Cruet into the Chalice
 - » **Take the Cruet of Water** when the Priest (or Deacon) hands it to you
 - Return to the credence table and pick up the Towel

On your way to the Credence Table bow to the Tabernacle if you are carrying something, genuflect if your hands are empty



Procedure – Assisting Mass

- WASHING OF THE HANDS
 - With Finger Bowl, Cruet of Water and Towel:
 - A1 & A2 immediately return to the Altar and wait at the edge of the rug
 - After the Presentation of the Wine
 - The **Acolyte** with the **Cruet of Water** pours the water over the Priest's hands
 - The **Acolyte** with the **Towel** hands the Priest the towel to dry his hands.
 - A1 & A2
 - Turn TOGETHER and return the Finger Bowl, Cruet of Water and Towel to the Credence Table
 - Place the cushions on the lower step of the Altar in front of their seats and kneel



Procedure – Assisting Mass

- EUCHARISTIC PRAYER
 - Be attentive during the Eucharistic Prayer kneeling with your **hands folded** in a prayerful position.
 - Respond with the assembly to the sung and spoken responses.
 - **A1 rings the bells**
 - 3-times during the elevation of the Body of Jesus Christ
 - 3-times during the elevation of the Blood of Jesus Christ.
 - Sing/recite the “Our Father” with the congregation and greet each other during the exchanging of the Sign of Peace



Procedure – Assisting Mass

- COMMUNION

- Receive communion with the Eucharistic Ministers at the Altar

- **CB** will bring the **patens** (typically 2) to the Altar
- CB, A1 & A2 will stand on the Font side of the Altar to receive Communion.

- After Receiving Communion,

- **A2** goes to the Altar and grabs the **Roman Missal** and return it to their Seat
- **CB** will go to the Credence Table, grab the **Water Cruet**, place on the Altar and return to cushion to kneel and pray
- **A1 & A2** will go back to their cushion to kneel and pray



Procedure – Assisting Mass

- CLEARING THE ALTAR

- After Communion

- **All Altar Servers** will help Deacon and/or Priest clear the Altar of the patens, cruet of water and chalice.
 - Meet the Deacon / Priest at the Altar
 - Take whatever Deacon/Priest hands them and take to the Credence Table until the Altar is clear
- After the Altar has been cleared
 - Return to your seats
- The Book Bearer will pick up the Roman Missal and hold it in his/her hands ready to walk to the Priest
 - As soon as the Priest stands up, the Book Bearer **WITHOUT hesitation**, walks to the Priest's side.
 - Do NOT wait for the Priest to say, “Let us pray.”

NEW



Procedure – Assisting Mass

- PROCESSION AT THE END OF MASS
 - After the blessing and the beginning of the final hymn/song
 - The **CB**
 - Picks up the cross from the passage
 - Slowly walks to the front of the Altar to the second set of pews
 - Turns towards the Altar and waits
 - **A1 & A2** Side-by-Side
 - Slowly walk to the Ambo to pick up the candles
 - Go up the steps and remove candles from candle holder
 - Turn towards each other and walk **STRAIGHT** down the steps
 - Walk to the front of the Altar and **stand** on the **Crosses inlayed on the floor**
 - Turns towards the altar and waits
 - The Priest and Deacon will kiss the Altar and Process down the steps and turn toward the Altar
 - When the Priest and Deacon Genuflect,
 - CB, A1 & A2 bow just their heads.
 - When the priest and deacon turn around towards the narthex
 - The CB, A1 & A2 turn around
 - Process slowly to the Narthex, led by the CB



Procedure – After Mass

- Extinguish the processional candles and place them and the processional cross on the holder.
- Whoever lit the Tabernacle and Altar candles is to extinguish them
 - Walk up the choir side aisle
 - Pick up the candle lighter/snuffer from the work sacristy
 - Extinguishes the candles around Tabernacle.
 - Genuflect or bow your head when passing in front of the tabernacle.
- Remove your Alb and **HANG** them neatly in the closet.
 - Remember to fasten the Velcro on the SHOULDER
 - Make sure the Alb is on the hanger properly and straight
 - Face the Alb towards the back of the coat room



ALTAR SERVER
A JOB SO BIG ONLY A KID CAN DO IT

THANK YOU FOR ASSISTING AT MASS

YOU ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR CELEBRATION





QUESTIONS?



Closing Prayer

*Jesus, bless these hands
you have chosen as your tools.*

*Always keep us aware
and in awe of our sacred mission.*

*Make us worthy of this great ministry
we have humbly accepted,
and send us out into the world
to distribute your love. Amen*



St Guy of Anderlecht

Patron Saint of Sacristans

