

The Ministry of the Altar Server



A. – Preparation of altar server and worship space before Mass:

1. Come to church 15 minutes before Mass is to begin. Go to the **Sacristy** and pick out a white robe (**Alb**) that fits well. The hem should fall to around the ankles
2. Select the color of cord (**cincture**) as indicated on the calendars in the sacristy. Look at the color that is indicated for Sunday even if serving a Saturday evening Mass. G=Green (Ordinary Time), W=White (Holy day, Funerals), V=Violet or purple (Lent), R=Red (Good Friday)
3. Use one of the available candle lighters to light the candles in the **Sanctuary**. Light the wick on the candle lighter using either the flint lighter or matches. Note: Take precautions with matches when lighting the candle lighter wicks. Place used matches on the metal dish on the countertop. After lighting the candles, return the candle lighters to the **Sacristy** and make sure that the wick is retracted far enough so as not to occupy the hot metal area of the candle lighter end.
4. Place the book holder (**lectionary holder**) at the center front of the altar.
5. A person (the **Sacristan**) who gets things ready for Mass should have the Offertory tray with the **ciboria** (for the hosts), **chalices** (for the wine), and **purificators** (the white cloths to clean the chalices) on it ready to be taken to the table (**cruet table**) behind the servers' chairs.
6. The **Sacristan** should also have the **Presider's chalice, a purificator** in it, and a **water cruets** ready to be taken to the table (**cruet table**) as well.
7. The **Sacristan** should have the Communion bowl with the hosts and the flask with the wine on the counter top ready to be taken to the Offertory table in front of the Baptismal area at the back of the church (**nave**).
8. After all these duties are completed, close the door to the **Sacristy**.
9. Then one of the servers takes the Cross and each of two servers take a candle holder and all go to the back of the church where the **Presider** (the **priest** or **celebrant**) for the Mass should be waiting just before Mass is to begin. If there are two servers at Mass, please take the two candles.
10. **A word of caution:** Some of the candlesticks are fluid filled and must be carried in a straight, upright position or the fluid may spill out and cause a flame up or an explosion.
11. **Note:** When passing immediately in front of the tabernacle while not carrying anything, face the tabernacle and pause and bow. When carrying something, just pause reverently.
12. Whenever walking in the **Sanctuary** and not carrying anything, walk slowly with hands together or at the side.
13. Always keep an eye on the **Presider**. He will help with directions whenever necessary! If the **Presider** is a guest, the servers may need to help the **Presider**!

B. – Role of altar server during the Gathering Rite:

1. The readers (**Lectors**) follow the altar servers when in the entrance procession
2. Walk reverently during the entrance procession, whether carrying cross or candles.
3. Upon reaching the **Sanctuary**, replace the Cross and candle holders to their stands and return to the foot of the altar. With the **Lectors** and the **Presider**, all bow reverently towards the altar.
4. Proceed to the chairs designated for the altar servers and continue to participate in the liturgy with the assembly.

C. – The role of the altar server during the Liturgy of the Word:

1. While seated, listen to the Proclamations.

D. – Role of the altar server during the Canon (the part when the Consecration occurs):

1. When the **Ushers** come to take up the collection, one server goes to where the **Presider** is stationed and picks up the book (**Sacramentary**) and places it on the left side of the altar and walks around to the front of the altar and takes the **lectionary holder** off the altar and returns it to the **cruet table**.

At the same time, another server goes to the **cruet table** and picks up the **chalice** with the **purificator** and the **water cruet** and places them on the center right side of the altar.

The server then goes to the **cruet table** and carries the Offertory tray to the Offertory table at the side of the altar and places the **chalices** on the altar.

2. The servers return to their chairs and sit until the **Presider** begins to walk to the center of the first step to receive the offertory gifts of bread and wine.
3. Walk with the **Presider** and stand on either side of the **Presider**. When the **Presider** receives the gifts, the **Presider** will give the Communion bowl to one of the servers and the wine flask to the other server. Take them from the **Presider** and carry the gifts to the left side of the altar (as they face the altar).
4. The **Presider** will take the gifts from the servers and when he finishes pouring the water into the wine, he will give the servers the **water cruet** and the **glass stopper** from the wine flask.
5. Take the **water cruet** and the **glass stopper** and, walking together; bring them to the side (**cruet**) table.
6. Be seated in the servers' chairs until assembly stands for the beginning of the prayers of the Canon. Knee during the Canon prayers just before the Consecration of the bread and wine.
7. When the **Presider** raises the host/bread **after** he says, "This is my Body", one server will ring the bells three distinct times. The same will be done when the **Presider** raises the chalice/wine **after** he says, "This is the cup of my blood, of the new and eternal testament, the mystery of faith: which shall be shed for you and for many for the remission of sins, do this in remembrance of me".
8. Exchange the sign of peace with the other servers and anyone nearby.
9. For communion, walk to a position at the front of the line of the nearest **Eucharistic Minister**. After receiving Communion, return to the servers' chairs and be seated.

E. – Role of the altar server during the Concluding Rite:

1. After the prayer and the announcements, sometime during the closing song, the **Presider** will stand to walk to the foot of the altar. Then the servers rise and take the cross and candlesticks from their stands. They walk to the foot of the altar and stand on either side of the **Presider** and leave room for the **Lectors**. The cross bearer stands behind them.
2. After the **Presider** bows (bow only when you are not carrying something), turn and leave in the same order as the entrance procession.

F. – Duties of the altar server after Mass:

1. Return the cross and candlesticks to their holders and extinguish all candles.
2. Please hang up robes and cords neatly.

Note: *The altar server's ministry is to represent the assembly and assist the Presider. This is best accomplished by participating with respect in the Mass with the assembly. Thank you for your willingness to be of service.*