

ALTAR SERVER BOOKLET



ST. PATRICK
CATHOLIC CHURCH

PURPOSE OF ALTAR SERVING

Altar servers assist the priest and deacon during the celebration of the Holy Mass. Your role is liturgical, not a performance.

Servers help maintain reverence, order, and smooth transitions so the congregation can focus on worship.

THANK YOU FOR SERVING AT MASS

Thank you for saying yes to serving at the altar. When you serve at Mass, you help everyone pray better and show great love for Jesus and His Church. Remember that every time you put on your robes, you are doing something important and holy.

May God bless you for your service, strengthen you when it is hard, and fill your heart with joy as you serve Him.



WHAT IS AN ALTAR SERVER?

An altar server is someone who helps the priest during Mass. When you serve, you help everyone pray better and show respect to Jesus.

BEFORE YOU SERVE



- Arrive 15 minutes early.
- Dress modestly with dress shoes and long dress pants. (No sandals or brightly colored shoes.)
- Spit out gum in the trash.
- Put on your vestments neatly.
- Check with sacristan or priest about your assignments.
- Sign your name on the sheet.
- Pray silently and wait for Mass to begin.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT VESTMENTS



Cassock



Surplice

Cassock:

Length should be to just above your ankle.

Surplice:

Length should be just below your belt line.

Remember your size on the hanger for the next time you serve.

BEING A SERVER

Be sure to be quiet and focused while serving.

CROSS BEARER



The Cross Bearer carries the processional cross, which is a crucifix on a long staff or handle. It reminds us of Jesus' passion, death, and triumph.

The crucifix should be held far above the head. Hands should be far apart on the handle.

The cross is carried:

- during the procession when Mass begins
- at the recessional when Mass has ended

CANDLE BEARER



The Candle Bearer carries a lit candle. The candle reminds us that Christ is the Light of the World.

Candles should be held straight up and down with hands, one over the other, holding the base.

Candles are carried:

- during the procession
- during the Gospel
- at the recessional when Mass has ended

LINING UP BEFORE MASS

After prayer in the sacristy, line up based on your assignment:



Cross Bearer
(At the last pew)

Candle Bearers

Additional Server

Deacon or Lector

Priest



Cross Bearer
(At the last pew)

Candle Bearers

Deacon or Lector

Priest



Candle Bearers
(At the last pew)

Priest



Cross Bearer
(At the last pew)

Priest

ENTRANCE PROCESSION

After the bell has rung and the song has begun, begin to walk slowly toward the altar. Stop and line up beside each other at the stairs and wait for the priest.



Cross Bearer Candle Bearer Deacon
or Lector Priest Candle Bearer

After bowing reverently with your head, when Father genuflects, move slowly together as a group up the stairs:

The Cross Bearer should place the cross in the stand and be seated.

The Candle Bearer should carry the candles and place them near their seat and put the flame out. Be seated.



WHEN SEATED

Sit quietly and upright with hands folded in lap. Be attentive and ready.



Correct



Incorrect

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Servers should choose who will hold the **Roman Missal** (prayer book) for the priest.



Just before the priest says, “Let us pray,” stand, pick up the **Roman Missal** and hold the book steadily, against your collarbone. Hold it at a comfortable height so it can be read easily by the priest.

Afterwards, close it and set it on the **credence table** (table next to the priest) and be seated.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

During the First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, and Second Reading remain seated quietly and reverently.

THE GOSPEL

After the Second Reading and before the Gospel, servers should stand when the priest stands, light the candles and stand on either side of the altar with the priest or deacon:



Continue standing until the priest moves to the ambo. Move with him and stand on each side while holding the candle straight up and down. Listen attentively to the Gospel. After the Book of the Gospels is closed, return toward your seat, place the candle on the shelf and put out the flame. Be seated and listen to the Homily.



Correct



Incorrect

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

After the Universal Prayer (petitions for the Church, world, local community, etc.) assist with preparing the altar with items from your small table.



Remove the book stand



Place behind your seat

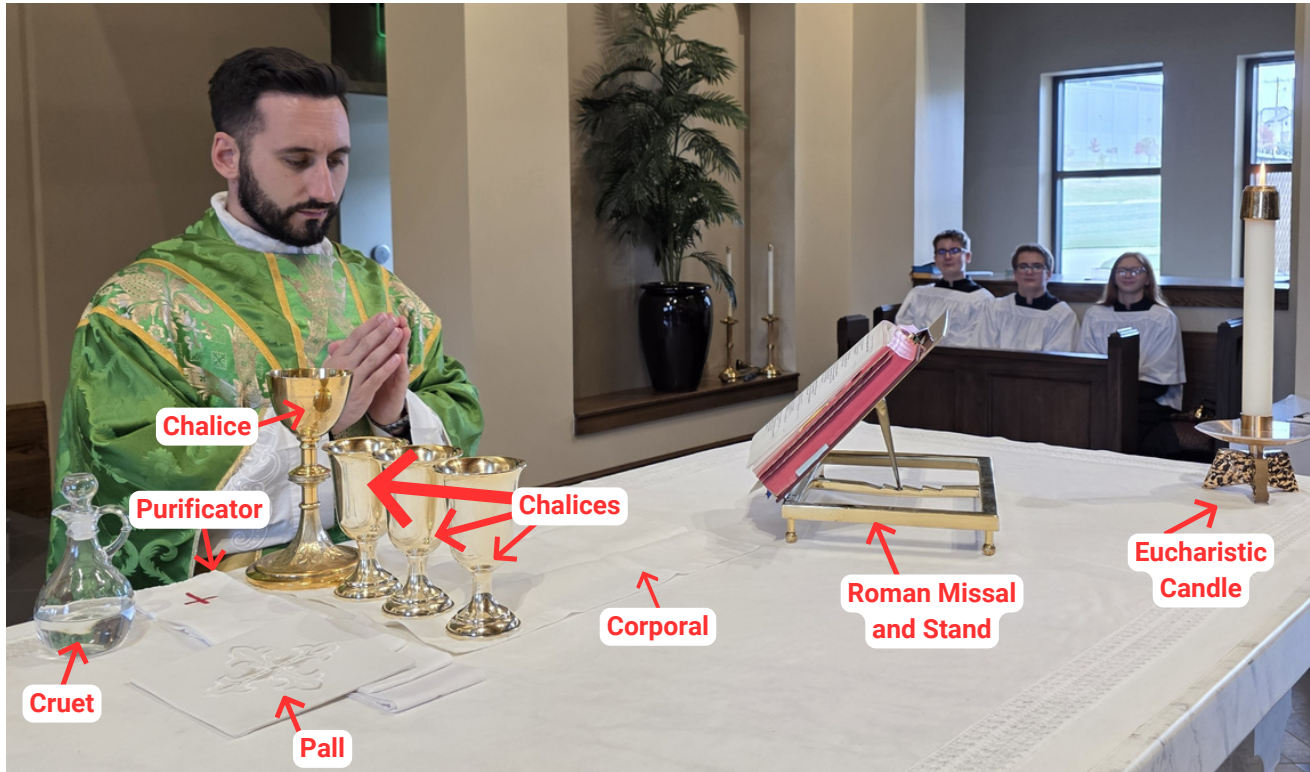


Together, servers should gather the following items and place them on the altar: **chalice set**, extra **chalices** and water **cruet**.



PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

The priest or deacon will arrange the items on the altar in the following way.



OFFERTORY

After preparing the altar, return to your seat and be seated. When the priest stands, walk with him to receive the gifts. Stand at his side. Take the gifts from the priest after he accepts them. Bow with the priest.



Follow priest back to altar and hand him the gifts one at a time. Return to your seat.

Receive the water and wine **cruets** from the altar.



Servers will then bring forward the water **cruet**, the **lavabo** (bowl), and the **towel**.

- One server will hold the **lavabo** and **towel** hung on their left arm.
- Another server will pour a small amount of water onto the fingers of the priest over the **lavabo**.

Bow after washing the hands of the priest. Return to your seat and remain standing.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

After Holy, Holy, Holy, kneel and prepare to ring the bells by setting it on the floor beside you. After each time, place the bells quietly on the pillow.



WHEN TO RING THE BELL



#1 Before the Consecration:

Just before the priest begins to recite Jesus' words at the Last Supper, when hands are extended over the gifts.

One, short ring of the bells.



#2 Elevation of the Host:

After the priest says, "This is my body," and elevates the Precious Body.

Three, long rings of the bells.



#3 Elevation of the Chalice:

After the priest says, "This is my blood," and elevates the Precious Blood.

Three, long rings of the bells.



#4 Priest drinks of the Chalice:

As the priest takes a drink of the Precious Blood.

One, short ring of the bells.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Stand and recite the *Our Father* prayer and share the Sign of Peace with people beside you. Recite the *Lamb of God* prayer.

COMMUNION RITE

Kneel or stand to receive Holy Communion.



Afterwards, one server should stand and do the following:

- Remove the **Roman Missal** and stand - Place on table beside Father's chair.
- Bring the water **cruet** to the altar.
- Return to seat and kneel.

Once the priest returns to the altar after distributing Holy Communion, servers should line up to prepare to receive the items from the altar and place them on the **credence table**. When a server takes an item back to the table, the next server will move forward to receive the next item, and this will continue until the altar has been cleared. Be seated.

CONCLUDING RITES

Recite the *Anima Christi* prayer. Stand when the priest stands. One server, just before the priest says, "Let us pray," should pick up the **Roman Missal** and hold it for the priest. Afterwards, close it and set it on the **credence table**. Return to your seat and stand.

While the priest is reading, another server should stand and light the candles on the shelf. Return to your seat and stand.

RECESSION

Once the priest has ended Mass and begins walking, servers should do the following:

- Cross Bearer - Remove cross from stand
- Candle Bearers - Hold candles

Once the priest kisses the altar, line up in the center aisle of the church in the following order:



Stand and wait



Bow reverently



Walk slowly

Return to baptismal font and wait for the end of the *St. Michael* prayer.

Candle Bearers will return candles to table near baptismal font or sacristy and put out flame.

Cross Bearer will return the cross to the baptistry.

VESTMENT CARE



Incorrect

Please hang up your cassock and surplice neatly in the closet on the correct hanger for the next server.

SACRAMENTALS & DEFINITIONS



Bells – rung three (3) times each when the body and blood are elevated by the priest. Works best when both wrist and arm are used to shake them. They sit on a foam pad, to eliminate excess sound. Be careful not to kick or move them during Mass as it becomes a distraction.



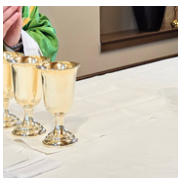
Chalice – the metal cup, usually brass or silver, used to hold the wine that will be changed to the blood of Christ and distributed.



Chalice Set – contains the chalice, purificator, paten, pall and corporal.



Ciborium – a metal container with a lid used to distribute the body of Christ at communion or used to store the consecrated hosts in the tabernacle.



Corporal – the large, white cloth which is placed on the altar underneath the chalice and paten.



Credence Table – the table located to the left of the altar that contains items needed for the Eucharist, such as purificators, ciboriums, the chalice set, pitcher, lavabo, cruets, lids, lighter, and towels.

SACRAMENTALS & DEFINITIONS



Cruets – water and wine containers



Eucharistic Candles – two candles placed on the altar, at each end of the altar.



Incense Boat – The container that holds the unburned incense and scoop.



Lavabo/Finger Bowl – bowl that catches the water which is poured over the priest's hands.



Monstrance - It looks like a sun burst with a glass center. The back of the monstrance has a small door. The inside holds a glass container called the luna. The priest puts a consecrated host in the luna, and places the luna in the monstrance. The monstrance is then placed on the Altar for Benediction or Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.



Pall – piece of cardboard or plastic which is covered in cloth used to cover the chalice.



Paten – the plate used to hold the large host which the priest elevates and will become the body of Jesus.

SACRAMENTALS & DEFINITIONS



Purificator – a long, narrow piece of folded cloth, used by the priest, deacon and Eucharistic ministers to wipe the chalice or used to clean up spills.



Pyx – Small metal container which is used to hold consecrated host(s) when visiting the sick or homebound.



Sanctuary - The raised area in the front of the church. It is considered a holy and special area because this is where the sacrifice of the is offered and where the word of God is read. It should be approached with great respect.



Thurible/Censer – The metal container that holds the hot coals, has air vents and a long chain in which incense is placed.



Towel – towel used for the priest to dry his hands. It goes on the altar server's left arm.



Aspergillum and Container - the Aspergillum, or sprinkler, usually looks like a ball on a handle. The priest puts the Aspergillum in a container of Holy Water, so that water will get inside the Aspergillum through little holes. The priest then walks through the church and blesses everyone by sprinkling them using the Aspergillum. This is used on special celebrations.