

Altar Server Guidelines

General

1. When on duty for Mass always be there at least 15 or 20 minutes before Mass begins. If you cannot serve please make sure you have a substitute organised.
2. Before you come to Mass please make sure you are neatly & properly dressed.
3. Make sure that you hang up your robe after Mass and that belts are put away neatly. Robes should not be left on the floor.
4. The rule at all sacred functions is 'Silence is Golden'. Unless it is very necessary, do not talk before going to the Altar.
5. Altar servers should respond clearly and distinctly to the prayers and responses during Mass.
6. While serving on the Altar servers should carry out their duties in a graceful and careful manner. This does not mean in a slow or a hurried manner.
7. Serving on God's Altar takes team work, so it is important to help one another in the duties that take place. Older servers can be a great help to new comers.
8. It is important to learn off and to be familiar with all things needed at Mass.
9. A special Altar Servers Prayer is to be said before and after Mass. (Can be found at the back of this booklet).

General Information

Chalice:

The Chalice is the sacred cup used to hold the wine that will be turned into Jesus' blood.

Ciborium:

The Ciborium is used at Mass to hold the bread that will be turned into Jesus' body and given to the people at Holy Communion.

Cruets:

The Cruets are used at Mass to hold the water and wine.

Thurible:

The dish with a lid that hangs from a long chain. It is used at funerals and other holy days.

Incense Bowl:

This holds the incense and is kept with the thurible.

Sacristy:

The room where everything is prepared for the Mass and where the Priest gets ready.

Purificator:

The Purificator is a small linen towel which the Priest uses to clean the sacred vessels.

Paten:

The Paten is the dish upon which the Body of Jesus is placed and can be found on top of the chalice.

Pall:

The Pall is a small linen card used to cover the chalice.

Sprinkler / Aspergillum:

Used to hold and sprinkle the water.

Paschal Candle:

The tall candle at the Baptismal Font. It is lit for baptisms, funerals and certain holy days.

Credence / Gift Table:

The table on which the chalice, ciborium and cruets are left before being brought to the Altar. It is over at the choir side of the Altar.

Taper:

Wax stick used for lighting candles.

Before Sunday Mass

- Come to the Church at least 20 minutes before Mass begins
- Put on your robe and make sure that it is not too long.
- Say the "Prayer before Mass".
- Talk quietly in the room as there will be people in the Church and voices carry.
- When you hear the bells line up for the procession at the beginning of the Mass.

During Sunday Mass

- Don't talk to the other servers.
- Everyone should know what they are doing.
- At the procession the cross and candle bearers go first, followed by the other servers.
- Line up at the steps in front of the Altar. Cross and candle bearers to the right.
- Remember to leave room for the Priest in the middle.
- Bow your head.
- While the Priest kisses the Altar go to your places.
- Put the cross and candles into the stand and go to your stools.
- Stand beside your stool and sit down for the start of the First Reading.
- Sit on your stools during the readings.
- All servers stand for the Gospel and sit for the homily.
- After the Prayers of the Faithful take the gifts over to the Altar. Chalice first, then cruets and last the ciborium.
- Take the bowl of water and the cloth for the priest to wash his hands. Stay at the Altar until he has washed and dried his hands, bow, then take them back to the ledge.
- Remain standing for the 'Holy, Holy'.
- Kneel for the Eucharistic Prayer.
- Ring the bell when the Priest raises the host and again when the Priest raises the Chalice.
- Stand for the 'Our Father', Sign of Peace and the 'Lamb of God'.
- Walk up to the Altar at the end of the 'Lamb of God';
- After Communion take the cruet of water to the Altar. Remove the top. When the Priest has finished cleaning the vessels take them back to the gift table.
- Make sure that there are no vessels left on the Altar.
- Take the cruet of water back as well.
- After the blessing go down and stand in front of the Altar step.
- After the Priest has kissed the Altar wait for him to come down to the Altar step. Wait until the Priest is ready to bow and then all bow together.
- The server carrying the cross leads the way followed by the candles.

After Sunday Mass

- Make sure that your robes are hung up neatly. There are hangers for all robes. Robes are not to be left on the floor. Leave the belts neatly in their place.

Altar Server's Prayers

Prayer Before Serving

Go before us, O Lord, in this our sacrifice of prayer and praise, and grant that what we say and sing with our lips we may believe in our hearts, and that what we believe in our hearts may we practise and show forth in our daily live.

Through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Prayer After Serving

Bless, O Lord, our hearts and minds, and grant that as we leave your house, we may continue to be aware of your presence.

Amen.