

# Altar Server Instructions

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Thank you for volunteering to serve your parish as an altar server.

At Mass, the altar server assists the celebrant with various duties. Following is a description of these duties and how they should be carried out.

## Getting Vested:

**Please arrive at church 15 minutes before Mass.** Go to the sacristy. Find the appropriate size alb for yourself. Put on the alb making sure to close all snaps or Velcro closures. If the church has colored cinctures, please check the liturgical calendar to pick out one that is the appropriate color for the day. If long enough, double the cincture and wrap it around your waist. Do not twirl the cincture as it tends to unravel at the ends and is not respectful of the vestment.

***In general, whenever you are not carrying something, your hands should be folded together and not hanging by your side. Even when at your seat, try to keep your hands together in front of you. Also, never bow when you are carrying the cross.***

## 1. Processing In

We typically have two servers at mass. The first server will carry the cross (not at St. Bartholomew) and leads the procession. The second server will follow in line after the first (at St. Bartholomew they walk side-by-side), and then comes the lector and the celebrant.

When server #1, who is carrying the cross, reaches the front of the altar, **he or she does not stop to bow** but immediately goes and places the cross in the holder and then goes to his/her seat. The 2<sup>nd</sup> server stops at the altar, bows and **without waiting for the priest** then goes directly to the server seat. The celebrant then bows and will go to his chair. If there are three servers then servers #2 and #3 will carry the candles, stop to bow in front of the altar, and then continue to the side, putting the candles in the holders and going to their seats.

## 2. The Roman Missal (the maroon Book)

This book is at the servers' seating area. Bring the Missal to the Celebrant **during the Gloria**. When the Gloria is not used the priest will prompt you for the book. Stand to the side of the celebrant until he is ready to take the book. When he is ready he will take the book from you. After he finds the right page he will hold it in front of you at the correct height for reading. Try to keep the book at the same level that you receive it. Hold the book from the bottom not the sides. It will be easier for you. Also, you may rest it on your chest or forehead if it gets too heavy. For taller servers please stand to the side of the celebrant while holding the book to your left in front of the celebrant. When Fr. is finished reading, close the book and take it back to your seating area. **Do not place it on the altar at this time.**

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## 3. Setting up the Altar

After the General Intercessions and as soon as the ushers start the collection bring to the altar: the chalices, the purificators (these are the cloths with the cross on them), the corporal (square cloth), and the Missal. **Put all these items on the altar.** Do not open the corporal. Return to your seats. Both servers **together** should bring these items to the altar.

## 4. Offertory

Go to the front of the altar with Father – one on each side - to help him with the gifts. One server will take the offertory basket from Fr. and Fr. will give the other server the carafe of wine. Fr. will usually carry the hosts to the altar. Do not take the gifts yourself from the presenters but let Father receive the gifts first and then hand them to you.

Put the basket in front of the altar and return to Credence table.

Place the carafe of wine on the altar and return to the Credence table.

Server #1 will bring the carafe of water up to Fr. with the handle **facing out** towards Father (the handle is for him, not for you) while Server #2 waits at the credence table. Server #1 will bring both the empty wine carafe and water carafe back to the credence table.

### **Washing his hands – both servers will go to the altar together**

Server #1 will carry the finger bowl and the pitcher (if there is not already water in the bowl).

Server #2 will carry the towel - Open the towel. Hold it **open** and wait for him to dry his hands.

After he dries his hands he will give the towel back, usually folded, to Server #2. Bring both the bowl and towel back to the Credence table. **Both servers will go back to the Credence Table together.** Then take your seat.

If there is only one server then the towel can be carried on your left arm. The celebrant will place the towel back on your arm when he is done.

## 5. Communion

You may receive Communion at the altar after the Extraordinary Ministers or simply receive as the first in the line in the center aisle, then return to your seats, keeping your hands folded.

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## 6. After Communion:

Be ready to go to the altar to help remove items from the altar and put back on the credence table. The Eucharistic ministers or the Deacon usually removes items on the altar, but if, for some reason, not everything is removed (except the Missal if the priest uses it at the altar for the final prayer) the servers will then remove anything left on the altar to the credence table.

## 7. Communion Prayer

If the priest wishes to pray the Communion Prayer at the chair, take the Missal to Father so that he may read the prayer and hold it for him as you did at the beginning of the Mass. Return the book to your seating area.

## 8. Recessional

When the celebrant leaves the altar, Server #1 will get the cross and both servers stand one on each side of Fr. at the foot of the altar. After bowing, **remember not to bow if you are holding the cross**, you will process out in the same order as you came in; the cross bearer, Server #2, then Father or both servers first, then Father, if there is no processional cross.

Try to always keep your eyes on the celebrant. He will help you and let you know if you have forgotten something. If you have questions don't hesitate to ask your priest or altar server trainer.

Thank you and God bless you for your service.