

## Roles and Responsibilities of Altar Servers

**VERY IMPORTANT: Arrive at church at least 15 minutes before Mass and sign in on the forms in the Ministers' Vestry. Put on your alb after signing in.**

Before each Mass, agree who will be the "Cross/Book" Server and "Candle" Servers

- Usually, the "Cross/Book" Server is the tallest server or the server in the highest grade at school. If all Altar Servers are about the same height and in the same grade, decide among yourselves before Mass who will be "Cross/Book" Server and "Candle" Servers.
- When there are only two Altar Servers, there will be no candles in the opening and closing procession. The candles are used at the Gospel reading. The "Cross/Book" Server will perform all duties for Server #3

### THE FOLLOWING THINGS HAVE TO BE DONE BEFORE MASS:

- **Ten minutes before Mass, the two Candle servers will light all the altar candles.**
- **Five minutes before Mass, all three servers go to the altar and return to the back of the church with the two candles and the cross for the entrance procession.**

### ENTRANCE PROCESSION & BEGINNING OF MASS

The "Cross/Book" Server will stand at the back of the church followed by the two "Candle" Servers. The "Candle" Servers will be side-by-side about three feet behind the "Cross/Book" Server.

**REMEMBER: YOU ARE A TEAM! MOVE AND WORK AS A TEAM!**

When it is time to begin Mass, the song leader will announce the entrance hymn. The entrance procession begins when signaled by the Deacon or Priest.

- The "Cross/Book" Server, carrying the cross, slowly leads the procession up the center aisle. The two "Candle" Servers carry the candles about one pew behind the cross.
- When you reach the front of the church, the "Cross/Book" Server stops with the "Candle" Servers on either side. Pause briefly (count "one-one thousand, two-one thousand"), and then put the candles in the candle stand and the cross in the cross stand.
- Return to the front of the altar and join the Priest, Deacon and others. One "Candle" Server goes to the left side, the other to the right side with the "Cross/Book" Server.
- Wait for the Priest and Deacon to bow, and then proceed TOGETHER AS A TEAM to the altar servers' chairs.
- Stand straight with hands folded above the waist.

### GLORIA AND OPENING PRAYER

*"Gloria"* - This hymn is sung (or said) on all Sundays outside of Advent and Lent and on great feasts. It begins, "Glory to God in the highest..."

*Opening Prayer* - Begins with the priest saying "Let us Pray.."

- At the end of the "Gloria", the Priest will be ready for the Opening Prayer. The "Cross/Book" Server should anticipate the end of the Gloria (listen for the words "**For you alone are the Holy One**"), and remove the Sacramentary (small brown prayer book) from the credence table
  - Walk behind the Priest's chair to the Deacon who will open the book.
  - Stand to the side of the Priest with the book held steady.
  - When the Priest finishes, walk behind the Priest's chair and return to your chair.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

*First Reading* - This reading is given by a lector. It is usually taken from the Old Testament.

*Responsorial Psalm* - This is usually led by the cantor (song leader), with the people repeating the refrain, called an antiphon. It can also be recited rather than sung.

*Second Reading* - This reading is also given by the lector.

- Altar servers have no special duties during this part of the Liturgy. Sit and stand when appropriate.

### GOSPEL

*Gospel Acclamation* - This is usually a sung Alleluia unless we are in Lent. The cantor sings it first and we all repeat.

*Gospel* - This is read by the deacon or the priest. It is taken from one of the four Gospels.

- When the Deacon goes to the Priest for his blessing before the Gospel, the two “Candle” Servers move as a TEAM to the front of the altar and get their candles.
  - Wait for the Deacon at your spot in front of the altar.
- When the Deacon bows, walk side-by-side as a TEAM and lead the Deacon to the Ambo.
  - Stand side-by-side at your spot beside the ambo, facing the community during the Gospel.
- When the Gospel is done, walk side-by-side as a TEAM to the front of the altar. Put the candles in their holder and return as a TEAM to the altar servers’ chairs.

## **PREPARING THE ALTAR**

Homily – This is the talk that is given by the deacon or priest after the Gospel. The Homily gives us an explanation of the Scripture readings.

Profession of Faith - This is when we all say the Creed (or Profession of Faith) together. (“We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth...”)

General Intercessions - We also call these the prayer of the faithful.

- Lector: “...let us pray to the Lord.”
- All: “Lord, hear our prayer.” [or a similar response, repeated after each petition]

Preparation of the Gifts - This is also called the offertory. This is when the gifts are brought forward and the altar prepared

- Following the Intercessions, the Ushers begin the collection. When the Priest sits, the Servers assist the Deacon in preparing the Altar.
- All Servers move to the credence table.
  - The “Cross/Book” Server brings the wooden book stand to the altar and then goes to the back of the church to lead the people who are presenting the gifts.
  - The two “Candle” Servers work as a TEAM to make several QUICK trips to the Altar to bring the:
    - Sacramentary book
    - Chalice
    - The Silver Cups
    - The Purificators (cloths)
- After all items are brought to the Altar, one “Candle” Server will go to the spot on the right side of the Deacon and Priest in front of the Altar.
- The other “Candle” Server will get the water cruet (remove stopper); the lavabo dish and the towel from the credence table. This “Special Server” is the altar server seated in the middle chair. Take the water cruet, lavabo dish and the towel to the Altar and wait.
- The “Cross/Book” Server will lead the people with gifts up the center aisle when signaled by the Deacon, and then join the other servers to the right of the Priest and Deacon.
- After the Servers receive gifts from the Deacon, bring them as a TEAM to the Altar.
- When the gifts are placed on the Altar, the two “Candle” Servers will prepare to wash the Priest’s hands. Remember to unfold the towel. The “Cross/Book” Server returns to his/her chair.
- When the Priest turns to wash his hands, pour water over the Priest’s fingers.
- When the Priest places the towel back across your arm, **BOTH SERVERS BOW TO HIM** and return **TOGETHER** as a TEAM to the credence table. Place the bowl and towel neatly on the credence table and return to your chairs.

## **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER & COMMUNION**

Eucharistic Prayer - There are various Eucharistic prayers, but the responses you will need to know are pretty much the same for each. Here are the parts of the Eucharistic prayer which you should know: the preface; the Holy, holy; the institution (also called the consecration); the memorial acclamation; and the great amen.

Communion Rite - This part begins with the Our Father and ends with the prayer after communion.

- When the people stand for the Our Father, all Servers go on to the Altar. The “Cross/Book” Server should stand beside the Deacon; the two “Candle” Servers should stand beside the Priest. Return to the altar servers’ chairs after the Our Father.
- When the Eucharistic Ministers go onto the Altar, all three Servers will also go onto the Altar and stand next to the Eucharistic Ministers to receive the communion bread and wine. Return to the altar servers’ chairs for a brief prayer.
- While the Priest and Deacon are distributing communion, all three Servers will clear the Altar. Remove all items from the Altar EXCEPT the Corporal (small square cloth on the altar). Bring the lids for the Ciboria from the credence table and stack them neatly on the Altar.
- When the Deacon returns to the Altar after distributing communion, the two “Candle” Servers will go to the Altar and stand next to the Altar to assist the Deacon. When the Deacon leaves the altar, take the

all the Ciboria (gold bowls with lids). Place all Ciboria on the Credence table; DO NOT bring the Ciboria into the tabernacle. When done, the Servers return to the Altar Servers' chairs.

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

- When the Priest returns to his chair after distributing communion, he will be seated for a few moments of quiet prayer. When he stands and says "Let Us Pray", the "Cross/Book" Server brings the Sacramentary (prayer book) to him. When the Priest finishes, he will close the book and the Server returns to the Altar Servers' chairs.

### **CONCLUDING RITE & RECESSIONAL PROCESSION**

*Greeting and Blessing* - The priest blesses the people.

*Dismissal* - The Priest and Deacon send the people out to love and serve the Lord and all people.

- The Deacon saying "Go in Peace" signals all 3 Servers to go get the cross and candles and return to the main aisle TOGETHER. The "Cross/Book" Server stands at the 1<sup>st</sup> pew and the "Candle" Servers stand in their spot in front of the Altar. All servers face the Altar.
- When the Priest and Deacon turn away from the Altar, this signals that Servers should turn and proceed slowly TOGETHER AS A TEAM to the back of the church.

### **THE FOLLOWING THINGS HAVE TO BE DONE AFTER MASS:**

- **Use a side aisle to return the cross and candles to their holders on the Altar. Watch out for people leaving. Be polite.**
- **Put out the Altar candles.**
- **Hang your alb in the proper place. If you see any albs on the floor, please hang them as well.**

### **Cross Bearer**

- Carries the cross at the beginning and conclusion of the Mass-
- Brings the Presider's book to the priest for the opening and closing prayers.
  - Opening prayer is after the Gloria ("for you alone are the Holy One") or after the Kyrie (Advent & Lent) and starts with "Let us pray ... "
  - Closing prayer is after communion when the priest stands and starts with "Let us pray...'
- During Offertory
  - Along with the other servers assists the Deacon setting up the altar
  - Leads the Offertory Procession - waits until Candle Bearers and Deacon have completed setting up the altar.
  - Stands on Deacon's side to receive Gifts from Offertory Procession
  - Takes Wine Flagon from Deacon and brings to Credence Table
- During Communion along with the other servers partially clears the Altar
  - Removes the Wooden Stand
  - Places the Ciborium Lids on the Altar
- After Communion along with the other servers finishes cleaning the altar

### **Candle Bearer #1**

- Carries a candle at the beginning and conclusion of the Mass and during the Gospel Procession
- During Offertory
  - Along with the other servers assists the Deacon in setting up the altar.
  - Prepares the Water, Bowl and Finger towel and waits at the Ambo
- During Communion along with the other servers partially clears the Altar
- After Communion along with the other servers finishes clearing the altar

### **Candle Bearer #2**

- Carries a candle at the beginning and conclusion of the Mass and during the Gospel Procession
- During Offertory
  - Along with the other servers assists the Deacon in setting up the altar.
  - Goes with Deacon to receive Gifts from Offertory Procession
  - Takes Finger Towel from Candle Bearer #1 for priest's Hand Washing

- During Communion along with the other servers partially clears the Altar
  - Removes Chalice, Paten, & Purificator from the Altar
- After Communion along with the other servers finishes clearing the altar
  - Removes empty Ciboria & lids

#### Fourth Altar Server

- Beginning of mass - walk between the two candle holders during the entrance procession
- Offertory - work as a team to set the altar (bring the cups, bowls, purificator cloths, etc. to the altar)
- Communion - While communion is being distributed, work as a team to remove all items from the altar EXCEPT the Corporal (square cloth with red cross on the altar). Bring the lids from the credence table and stack them neatly on the altar.
- End of mass - walk between the two candle holders during the procession to the back of the church

#### Setting the Altar:

- Sacramentary (Big Book) and Wooden Stand
- Priest's Chalice, Corporal, Paten, Purificator
- Six Chalices and 6 Purificators for the Eucharistic Ministers
- Zero to 6 Ciborii filled with hosts

#### Clearing the Altar during Communion

- Remove the Sacramentary (Big Book) and Wooden Stand
- Remove the Priest's Chalice, Paten and Purificator.
- Leave the Corporal
- Put Ciborii Lids on the Altar

#### Clearing the Altar after Communion

- Removes empty Ciborii & Lids
- Remove Corporal