

SAINTS SIMON AND JUDE

Catholic Church

West Chester, PA

Altar Server Manual



“...and I will go onto the altar of God, to God the joy of my youth.”

(Psalm 43:4)

November, 2014

THE ALTAR SERVER'S PRAYER

Loving Father, creator of the entire world,
you call us to pray and to worship you.
I thank you for having called me
to serve at your altar.

May I be worthy of the trust placed in me. Give me the grace I
need to grow in holiness. Help me to serve you humbly in
everything that I do. I pray that through my example and service,
others will come closer to you.

I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,
who is Our Lord and Savior forever and ever.

Amen.

WELCOME!

Our pastor, Father Michael Gerlach, welcomes each of you who will assist at the altar during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. To be an altar server is an extraordinary ministry of grace given you to serve God and God's people.

Thank you for serving and may God bless your ministry.

This manual is for you. It describes your duties and your responsibilities. Read it very carefully and show it to your parents.



BASIC PROCEDURES for ALTAR SERVERS

Reverence, Respect and Reliability

Please show reverence to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament by genuflecting (briefly touch your right knee to the floor) when passing before the tabernacle. During Mass, if you walk in front of the altar, you stop in the center and bow toward the altar (a profound bow from your waist), not the tabernacle.

We should always show respect to all people we meet: clergy, parishioners, and fellow altar servers. Please show special respect for bishops, priests, deacons and religious sisters who are present in the Church. One common sign of respect is to stand when a bishop, priest, deacon or religious sister enters the room. Clergy are addressed with their proper title: “Your Excellency” or “Bishop (last name)” for a bishop, and “Monsignor”, “Father” or “Deacon”, as appropriate for a priest or deacon.

One key element of your service is reliability. The other ministers of the altar and our parishioners expect you to be present when you are scheduled to serve. Exercising the discipline to be reliable is also important to your growth as a person. Please be present when scheduled or find a substitute as noted below.

Schedules

The Altar Server Mass schedule is e-mailed to your parents by the Scheduling Coordinator. Often meetings, trainings, announcements, and other information will be sent through group emails. Please read them thoroughly!

If you are unable to serve at your scheduled Mass on occasion, ***it is your responsibility*** to find a replacement. Use the Altar Server list (attached to the schedule email) to find someone, or use the group email sent for the current schedule. If you do not have a copy of the list, contact the Scheduling Coordinator. Once you have found a replacement, please email the Scheduling Coordinator and advise who will be taking your place.

Keep in mind that altar servers are expected to serve throughout the year. If there are extended periods of time (months) that you cannot serve, please discuss your absence with the Scheduling Coordinator. Note: If you are at Mass, and you see that we do not have enough servers, please come forward to help.

Arrival Time and Dress Code

Please arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass, unless instructed to arrive earlier. **YOUR PARENTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO BE WITH YOU IN THE ALTAR SERVER ROOM OR THE SACRISTY.**

Please dress appropriately. To display proper reverence for the Lord, jeans, sneakers, flip flops and shorts should not be worn while serving Mass.

Albs and Cell Phones

Treat your alb with respect. When finished, hang it carefully in the closet, and take care to keep it neat. If you see other albs that have fallen, please pick them up and place them on a hanger.

Cell phones should not be used while preparing to serve and serving the Mass. It is highly recommended that cell phones be left in your parents' car to avoid the temptation to use them. If you have your phone with you, it should be turned off while in Church.

Behavior Prior to Mass and Mass Participation

The time before Mass should be quiet and prayerful. After vesting, servers should sit or stand quietly waiting for Mass to begin.

Approximately ten minutes before Mass is to begin, one of the altar servers should light the two processional candles and the altar candles (if not already lit from a prior Mass). When the lighting is completed, the cross bearer and the candle bearers pick up the cross and candles, quietly make their way to the vestibule of the Church and stand waiting for Mass to begin.

Altar servers are always expected to participate fully in the Mass. Stand tall! Sit straight! People in the pews will look to you to give good example as leaders. Always make the Sign of the Cross when appropriate, recite the proper responses to the prayers and sing the hymns. Missals are provided for you at your seats. You set an example for the entire congregation while serving at the altar. Remember to keep your hands folded in front of you at all times when standing, when walking, when sitting and when kneeling. Walk. Never run.

When there are three servers present for Mass, the cross bearer also serves as the book bearer. The candle bearers are called acolytes when they are not carrying the candles. If there are only one or two servers it becomes necessary to improvise. The priest and/or deacon will help. DON'T PANIC! Hopefully another server or two will come up and help out.

Procession

The Procession starts when the congregation begins to sing. Walk at a slow to normal pace. Do not hurry. The cross bearer sets the pace. Candle bearers should be sure that the candles are held at the same height. If there are only two servers, one should carry the cross and the other walks behind that server without carrying a candle.

After Mass

Return to the altar server room. Extinguish the processional candles and return the cross to the stand. Place the candles on the table. Make sure all candles—including the altar candles—are extinguished [after the Noon Mass]. Remove alb and return it to its proper place.

ALTAR SERVER GLOSSARY

Alb – Long, white robe worn by bishops, priests and deacons under the chasuble and stole or dalmatic and stole --- also worn by Altar Servers without a stole. It covers the body to the ankles.

Ambo – (Sometimes referred to as the pulpit) Readings from Sacred Scripture are proclaimed from this place.

Basin – Bowl or dish used to capture the water when the priest washes his hands at the Preparation of the Gifts.

Benediction - The celebrant blesses the people with the exposed Eucharist.

Boat - Container for holding the incense

Chalice - The cup used to hold the Precious Blood of Jesus

Chasuble & Stole - Vestments worn by the priest or bishop over the alb during Mass

Ciborium - Container for the consecrated hosts; plural, ciboria

Cincture - Rope placed around the waist over the alb

Cope - A vestment used for Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The cope resembles a cape.

Corporal - White cloth placed on the altar under the chalice, paten and ciboria.

Credence Table - Table where the vessels used for the Mass are placed.

Cruets - Small glass jars used to hold wine and water for Mass.

Dalmatic and Stole - Vestments worn by a deacon over his alb; a dalmatic resembles a chasuble but with sleeves; a deacon wears his stole over his left shoulder

Exposition - The consecrated host is placed in a Luna which is placed in the Monstrance, which is then placed on the altar for people to worship and adore the Blessed Sacrament.

Finger Towel - White cloth, without cross on top, used to dry the priest's fingers

Flagon - Glass jar that holds extra wine when Holy Communion is to be distributed under both species.

Funeral Pall - Large white cloth placed on top of the casket at the beginning of a funeral Mass.

Holy Water Container - Container used for Holy Water; used at funerals, weddings, and for special occasions

Humeral Veil – Shawl-like vestment placed over the cope on the shoulders of the celebrant during Benediction

Lectionary - Book containing the scripture readings for Mass

Luna - The small glass case that holds the consecrated host to be placed in the Monstrance during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Monstrance - Vessel used to display the consecrated host during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Offertory Table - Table near the baptismal font used for the gifts brought forth in the Offertory Procession

Pall - White cloth-covered cardboard placed on top of the chalice during Mass

Paten - Plate, dish or bowl that holds the host

Processional Cross - Large cross carried by the altar server. The cross leads the priest and other ministers into the church as Mass begins. Candles are on either side of the cross in procession.

Purificator - White cloth, with cross on top, used to purify the chalice

Roman Missal - Book with all of the prayers for Mass

Sacrarium - “Sacred Sink”-Sink used only to purify the chalice and paten. The sink runs directly into the ground.

Sacristy - Room where the celebrant, concelebrating priests, and deacons vest, and where all items used for Mass are kept.

Taper - Wick used to light the candles in church

Thurible - Bowl with chain that holds the charcoal for burning incense

Thurifer - Server who holds the thurible.

Universal Prayer – Proper title for the prayers of petition led by the Deacon or Lector following the Creed at Sunday Mass or the homily at Masses where the Creed is not said.

The Parts of the Mass Explained – A Guide for Altar Servers

The Mass is a memorial of Jesus's death and resurrection. It is our participation in the eternal sacrifice of Jesus. The Mass leads us more deeply into the mystery of who we are as members of the Body of Christ. It affirms that we are redeemed by the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ.

The items carried in procession and the ministerial participants of the Mass are as follows:

- Cross – It symbolizes the Trinity and is a reminder of our redemption from sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- Candles – They remind us that Christ is the light we bring into the world.
- The Deacon with the Book of Gospels – The deacon is ordained to be the personification of Christ the Servant. He is entrusted with proclaiming The Word of God, which is contained in the Book of the Gospels. Christ is present in both the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
- The Celebrant/Priest is ordained into the Priesthood of Christ. He represents the Person of Christ as teacher and sanctifier. (If the celebrant is a Bishop, he represents the fullness of the priesthood --- Christ as the head of the Body --- the Church)

Order of Procession:

(Thurifer)

Candle-Cross-Candle

(Children and Leaders of childrens' Liturgy of the Word)

Lector(s)

Deacon of the Mass

(Attending Deacons)

(Concelebrants)

Celebrant

PROCESSION

The Mass begins as the people rise to sing. You begin to move when the singing begins not when the music starts.

Actions of the Altar Servers[Procession]:

All process slowly to the foot of the altar. When the Celebrant reaches the base of the altar, he will either genuflect or bow. The cross bearer and the candle bearers make a slight bow of the head and immediately proceed to the back of the sanctuary. They place the cross and candles in their proper place behind the sanctuary. They then proceed to their proper places, with hands folded in the “praying” position.

The cross bearer is also the book bearer, and brings the Roman Missal to the celebrant as soon as the congregation stops singing, or if there is no music, immediately after the celebrant arrives at the presider’s chair.

Arrival of the Priest [and Deacon]

The Book of the Gospels is laid flat on the altar by the deacon. If there is no deacon, the Book of the Gospels may be used in procession and placed on the altar by one of the Lectors.

The priest (and deacon) will reverence the altar with a kiss, because the altar is from that point the central focus of the Mass (the altar of sacrifice). The altar was consecrated as a holy place when our Church was dedicated. It was anointed with the Sacred Chrism and contains relics of certain Saints. During the Mass, the focus is on the altar, which is the place where the sacrifice of Christ is made present.

INTRODUCTORY RITE

The Sign of the Cross and Greeting – Reminds us of our Baptism, where we were claimed by and drawn into the presence of Christ.

Actions of the Altar Servers[Introductory/Penitential Rite]:

With the cross bearer/book bearer holding the Roman Missal in front of the celebrant, the priest opens the Roman Missal to the proper place, and begins the Introductory Rite.

The other servers remain at their place with ***hands folded in the praying position.***

Penitential Rite – We recognize that we are sinful and need God’s mercy.

(Mass with a Deacon):

If there is a deacon present, the priest will open the Roman Missal to the proper page. The book bearer will turn the Missal slightly toward the deacon. The deacon will step forward and pray the

three-fold petition. The deacon then takes a slight step back toward his place and the book bearer turns back toward the priest.

(Mass without a Deacon):

If the priest prays the Confiteor [“I Confess,”] or if no deacon is present, the book bearer simply remains facing the priest.

Gloria – We give Glory to God for God is worthy of all our praise and adoration.

Collect /Opening Prayer - This prayer draws the Introductory Rite to a close by gathering the prayers of all the people into one. The Collect sets the theme of the Mass. We are now prepared to hear the Word of God.

After the Collect, the book bearer places the Roman Missal on the left side of the altar and returns to his/her seat. All servers listen attentively to the readings and join with the faithful during the Responsorial Psalm. ***Your hands rest palms down on the top of the thigh/knee area, or folded on your lap.***

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Old Testament Reading - God’s love for his people is made plain in the reading of Sacred Scripture. We hear the Word of God and let it change us. The Old Testament foreshadows the New Testament, it gives the account of God’s election of the Jewish people and the establishment of a covenant relationship with them. God promises to be with His people.

Responsorial Psalm - We respond to God’s Word by acclaiming His goodness and faithfulness.

New Testament Reading - New Testament readings focus on the Person of Christ, the Mystical Body of Christ and the New Covenant in the Church. Jesus Christ is made present to God’s people and the “Word become flesh” invites us to be transformed.

Gospel Procession (Mass with a Deacon) - The procession with the Book of the Gospels sets the Gospel apart. This action honors the words Jesus proclaimed in the Gospel.

Gospel Acclamation - This is always sung or chanted, never spoken --- always an Alleluia except during the Lenten season

Gospel Proclamation - It is the words of Jesus Christ. Christ does for us what has been anticipated in the Old and made plain in the New Testament.

Actions of the Altar Servers[Gospel]:

NOTE: *All turn toward the ambo (with hands folded in the praying position) as the Gospel is proclaimed.*

Homily - The homily is an explanation of the Gospel. The homily uncovers what Christ has done in our lives and invites us to be transformed in light of the readings. Our response is to hear the Word and live it.

Actions of the Altar Servers[Homily]:

All servers listen attentively to the homily with hands folded on the lap or resting palms down on the thighs.

Creed - Having heard God's Word, the Creed encapsulates God's love for man and what we believe is God's plan of salvation.

Universal Prayer – This prayer expresses our love of neighbor as we pray for the general needs of the community.

Actions of the Altar Servers[Creed and Universal Prayer]:

As we pray the Creed and Universal Prayer, all servers stand, face the ambo, and place ***their hands in the praying position.***

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation of the Altar

Actions of the Altar Servers[Preparation of the Altar]:

Once the Universal Prayer is completed, the servers immediately assist the celebrant or deacon in preparing the altar by doing the following:

- A server ***brings the chalice with paten, pall and corporal to the altar and gives it to the deacon or priest*** for the deacon or priest to unfold.
- A server brings over additional ciboria and/or chalices and places them to the right side of the corporal.

Presentation of the Gifts - The gifts of bread and wine, which are the work of our hands, are offered to God.

It is sometimes the custom of the priest to wait until the altar has been prepared before receiving the gifts. If so, once the altar is prepared, the servers return to their place and sit reverently, waiting to assist in receiving the gifts.

At other times the priest will receive the gifts immediately following the Universal Prayer. If so, the altar servers will leave one server to assist the priest or deacon in placing the vessels on the altar.

As the gifts are received, the servers proceed as follows:

- If the server receives the ciborium he/she will take it to the altar, and place it on the right side of the corporal.
- If the gift is the wine cruet, he/she will proceed to the credence table.

When both servers are at the credence table, the candle bearer/acolyte without the wine cruet will take the water cruet from the credence table and both servers will immediately take them to the side of the altar and present them to either the priest or the deacon, ***holding them at the base, and with the handle facing out.*** The server carrying the wine cruet should be closer to the altar. The priest or deacon will first take the wine cruet. He will pour wine into the chalice and then the water. Both servers stay together until the comingling of the water and wine is completed. The servers will bow to the priest or deacon after the cruets are given back to them. They then return the cruets to the credence table.

Washing of Hands – Also known as the Lavabo --- the celebrant cleanses his hands with a silent prayer.

Actions of the Altar Servers[Lavabo]:

After the Chalice is prepared, the servers immediately take the lavabo dish/basin and water cruet, along with the hand towel (unfold the towel) to the side of the altar and approach the priest so that he can wash his hands. The server carrying the water cruet will also carry the basin, and the other server will carry the open towel. The server carrying the towel should be to the right side. If the priest bows after the washing, return the bow. Return the items to the credence table. The servers then take their place at their chairs standing, ***with their hands in the praying position.***

Invitation to Prayer – “Pray my brothers and sisters...” ... Servers and congregation stand.

Introductory Dialogue to the Eucharist Prayer - Our prayer is made to the Father through Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.

All servers remain standing at their places with ***hands folded in the praying position.***

Preface - The Preface prayer prepares us to acclaim the Lord by focusing on some aspects of the goodness of God.

Acclamation/Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy) - We respond to God’s goodness in praise to God by affirming what the celebrant has said in the Preface.

All servers kneel at their places and one server prepares to ring the bells.

Eucharistic Prayer:

Introduction

Epiclesis - Invocation of the Holy Spirit over the gifts of bread and wine

Actions of the Altar Servers[Epiclesis]:

Server rings the bells once when the priest extends his hands palms down over the gifts.

During **Eucharist Prayer I**, the epiclesis will be when the priest prays the following words:

*“Be pleased, O God, we pray,
to bless, acknowledge,
and approve this offering in every respect;
make it spiritual and acceptable,
so that it may become for us
the Body and Blood of your most beloved Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ. ”*

During **Eucharist Prayer II**, the epiclesis will be when the priest prays the following words (almost immediately after beginning the prayer):

*“Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray,
by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall,
so that they may become for us
the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

During **Eucharist Prayer III**, the epiclesis will be when the priest prays the following words:

*“Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you:
by the same Spirit graciously make holy
these gifts we have brought to you for consecration,
that they may become the Body and Blood
of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ,
at whose command we celebrate these mysteries.”*

Institution Narrative

The priest now prays the words of institution and the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus. Server rings the bells once when the priest elevates the Host and then once again when the priest elevates the Chalice.

Doxology – “Through Him with Him and in Him...” We give glory God through the Trinity.

Great Amen – We respond, “Yes Lord, I believe, may it be so.”

Actions of the Altar Servers[after Great Amen]:

At the conclusion of the Eucharistic prayer, the congregation stands and the servers also stand facing the people, *with their hands folded in the praying position*.

Communion Rite

Lord's Prayer - We pray for the coming of God's kingdom as Christ, Himself commanded us to do. We open ourselves to the will of God. We pray to be justified, transformed and delivered.

Sign of Peace – We show our union with Christ who is “the sign of peace” and with each other.

Actions of the Altar Servers[Sign of Peace]:

The servers approach the left side of the altar and stand side by side to receive the Sign of Peace from the priest. Only after receiving the sign of peace do they offer the sign of peace to each other.

Fraction Rite (The Lamb of God) – the priest breaks the Host into smaller pieces --- a sign of Jesus broken for us.

At the conclusion of the Lamb of God, all servers kneel at the position where they received the sign of peace.

Invitation to Communion - we have heard the Word of God and responded with our belief in the God's plan of salvation --- now we enter a deeper union with Jesus as we receive His real presence in the Eucharist.

Actions of the Altar Servers[Communion Rite]:

The servers stand side by side at the edge of the oriental carpet and wait to receive Holy Communion. After receiving Communion the servers return to their seats and kneel until everyone has received Communion and the Blessed Sacrament has been reposed in the tabernacle.

Reposition of the Blessed Sacrament – The priest or deacon takes the fragments of the Eucharist and combines them into one or more ciboria. He then proceeds to the open tabernacle, places the ciboria into the tabernacle, genuflects and closes the door to the tabernacle.

All servers stand and with hands folded in the praying position and turn toward the tabernacle when reposition is taking place. All genuflect with the priest or deacon.

NOTE: If the priest or deacon purifies the chalice at the altar, a server closest to the ambo will bring him the cruet with water.

After reposition of the Blessed Sacrament, a server will light the processional candles while book bearer brings the Roman Missal to the priest for him to pray the Prayer after Communion.

Prayer after Communion – We give thanks for what we have received and ask for the grace to live out our faith in Jesus.

Final Blessing and Dismissal - The priest blesses the congregation and the priest or deacon speaks the words of dismissal

Actions of the Altar Servers[Blessing and Dismissal]:

Immediately following the final blessing and the dismissal by the priest or deacon, the servers retrieve the cross and processional candles.

While the priest (and deacon) move to reverence the altar, the servers process down the steps and face the front of the altar. The priest (and deacon) will come down the steps in front of the altar. The servers wait for the priest to genuflect or bow and immediately lead out from the altar with the cross bearer first followed directly by the candle bearers.

The servers will then extinguish the processional candles and return the cross and candles to their proper place in the altar server room. Servers then return their albs to the proper place.