

Altar Server Guidelines

WELCOME . . .

... to the elite group of Altar Servers of St. Theresa Parish. You are a valuable member of the team of parishioners who serve Mass. Always remember that it is an honor and a privilege to serve at Mass. Thank you for deciding to become an Altar Server.

This booklet will help you with the things you need to know to serve Mass at St. Theresa Parish. Please read this information carefully, study it, and keep it as a handy reference.

You must know the steps of how to serve Mass to do a good job, so please learn these steps well.

A SERVER'S PRAYER

Loving Father, creator of the universe
You call your people to worship.
To be with you and each other at Mass.
Help me, for you have called me also.
Keep me prayerful and alert.
Help me to help others in prayer.

Thank you for the trust you've placed in me.
Keep me true to that trust.
I make my prayer in Jesus' name,
Who is with us in the Spirit.

Amen.



Background

- You and your ministry are a wonderful gift to the whole parish. Your presence on the sanctuary is meant to help us pray; to help us celebrate liturgy. Always take care to be present in a respectful, prayerful, and sincere manner. We will genuflect to the altar once upon entrance and once upon leaving. No other genuflecting or bowing is necessary; just maintain a focused presence on what is happening – respectful, prayerful and sincere.
- When you pick up the binder be certain that the book is right-side up, and if possible, open it to the appropriate page. When holding the book, keep it as steady as possible and at a height that is comfortable for the presider.
- Be sensitive to the needs of the presider; a glance or gesture from them should be all that is required to indicate that action is needed.
- Throughout the liturgy, your posture should model that of the assembly. Avoid distracting movements such as playing with cinctures or tugging at albs.
- Remember that your function is to assist with the liturgy without interrupting the prayer of the assembly. As with other ministers of the liturgy, your attitude is the example and your level of participation speaks volumes.
- There will be three servers at all weekend liturgies.
- One server will be responsible for carrying the processional cross and holding the binder for the presider (**server 1**). Our present cross is rather heavy so this person needs to be sure they can carry the cross comfortably, steadily, with ease. It can be a boy or girl but should be an older server.
- Two servers will assist with the gifts and set the altar (**servers 2 & 3**).
- A reasonable attempt is made to schedule you for your preferred Masses. However, due to scheduling needs, you may occasionally be scheduled for any Mass, except for those at which you specifically indicate you cannot serve. Unless it is a hardship, each server is expected to occasionally serve at the 7:30 AM Mass.
- If you are not able to serve at your scheduled Mass, you are responsible for finding a substitute ahead of time. Refer to the phone list that comes with the schedule to find another server who will fill in for you.

Set-Up

- Get your altar robe on and cincture.
- Decide on jobs.
- Light candles at the altar.
- Assist with bread, wine, vessels if necessary. Ask sacristan if there is anything else needed.
- Cross Bearer takes up the cross from its stand on the altar, carry it to the vestibule for procession. Do not take the cross outside, walk down the side aisle.

Procedures

BEFORE MASS

1. Servers are to be present in the sacristy 15 minutes before mass begins to assist in set-up, get dressed, communicate with other servers about responsibilities, have a moment to quiet yourself and prepare for this liturgy. It really is important that you be there for this 15 minute preparation time.
2. Please sign-in using the sheet provided, initial next to your name. If you are substituting, cross-out the name of the person you are subbing for and write in your name.
3. As soon as all is ready, go out to the vestibule/entry area with the presider to greet parishioners and prepare for procession. You may walk through the church, but please do so reverently.

ENTRANCE PROCESSION:

1. The cross bearer elevates the cross, being sure it's held vertical, and that the crucifix faces the front of church. You should begin processing in no sooner than after the first verse of the entrance hymn and no later than the beginning of the 2nd verse. The pace is not slow and not fast; you have to develop a feel for it. Servers 2 & 3 walk side by side behind the cross.
2. Proceed, well spaced, processional pace. Upon arrival at the first step, cross bearer will go directly up and to the back right of the altar to place the cross in its stand and then come back down and line-up on the right. The other two servers will line up on the right. Leave enough room in the middle for the presider, lectors and at the 9:00 mass the Children's Liturgy of the Word Presenter. Genuflect reverently along with the presider. Then proceed up the steps to your chair with server 1 in the chair closest to the Presider.
3. Immediately, once the priest comes to the **CHAIR** the server who will hold the binder comes forward, picks up the binder from the stool by the priest's chair and stands close to the priest with the binder, standing at an angle so as NOT to be directly in front of the priest. The binder should be ready for the priest to open. After the priest concludes the opening prayer from the binder, close the binder and return it to the stool.

Greeting

Penitential Rite

Gloria

Opening Prayer

LITURGY OF THE WORD

1. **Server 1**, after the homily the presider will return to his chair. Be prepared to hold the binder for the presider.

Creed

Prayers of the Faithful

At the end of the prayers close the binder and place it on the stool.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

1. While the collection is being taken **Servers 2 & 3** will prepare the altar.
Sacramentary (to the left of the corporal)
cups, placed on the corporal along the top edge
purificators, placed next to the corporal on the right
2. After the collection has been taken the presider will come forward to receive the gifts. **Servers 2 & 3** will accompany him and assist with the gifts. If you are handed the bread or wine, carry it around to the altar holding it raised to eye level and place it on the corporal on the altar.
3. **Servers 2 & 3** return to the credence table. Both servers approach the altar, one server will carry the cruet of water. The second server will remove the empty wine decanter and stopper. When finished both servers return their items to the credence table.
4. **Servers 2 & 3** will bring the water, bowl and towel for washing the presider's hands. After he has washed his hands return the items to the credence table and return to your seats.
5. **DURING THE SIGN OF PEACE** server **2** will bring the bowls from the credence table and place them on the left side of the altar.
6. During communion **servers 2 & 3** remove the Sacramentary and bread plate from the altar. Place them on the credence table.

CONCLUDING RITE

1. After communion the presider will sit for a short period of time. **Server 1** should be prepared to hold the book for the presider when he stands.

Prayer After Communion

Announcements

Final Blessing

2. After the final blessing and sending forth the presider will go to reverence the altar. As he does this the Cross Bearer will go to get the cross. The other servers will move to the front with the presider, turn to face the altar, leaving enough room for the lectors to stand on either side of the presider. Genuflect with the presider and go forth in the same order as the entrance. Cross Bearer hold the cross high. Return the cross to the sanctuary using the side aisle. Do not take the cross out of the church.

AFTER MASS

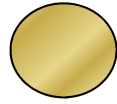
1. Extinguish candles, clear all vessels, tray for cups, cruets and hand washing items.

After the Saturday Mass and final Sunday Mass the servers remove the Sacramentary, lectionary and Book of the Gospels.

2. **All albs must be returned to the closet and HUNG-UP neatly IN SIZE ORDER. Cords are to be hung on the holder on the wall.**

Sanctuary

Credence Table



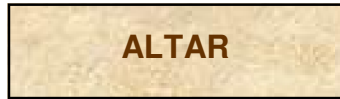
Tabernacle



Processional Cross

3
2
1

Altar Servers



ALTAR



Presider

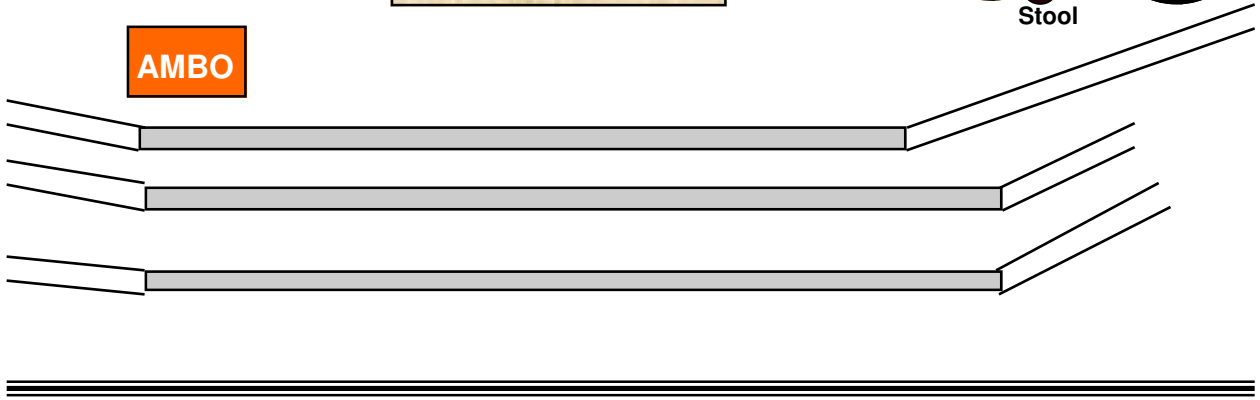


Stool



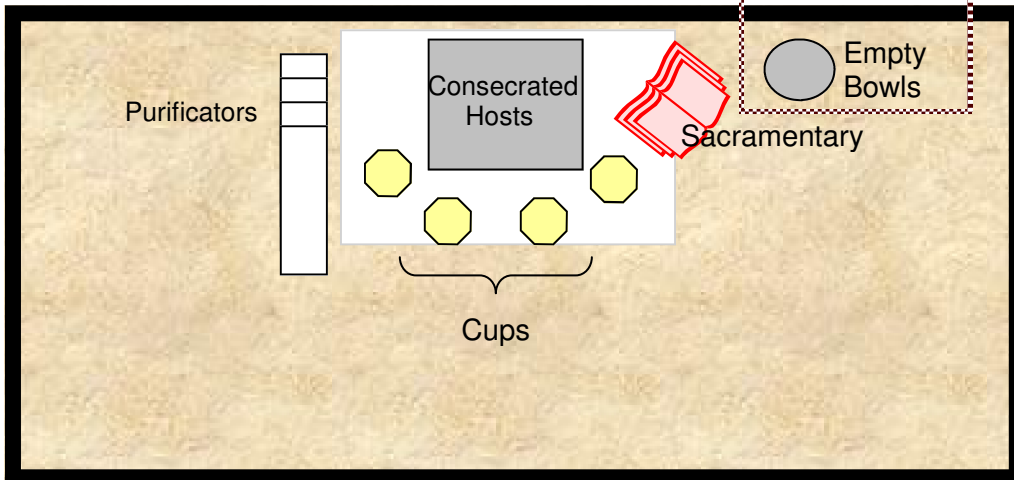
FONT

AMBO



Altar

Placed on the altar during the Sign of Peace



IMPORTANT TERMS TO KNOW FOR SERVING

ALB -- The white robe that the priest and servers wear.

ALTAR -- Table at the center of the sanctuary.

AMBO -- The place from where the Scriptures are proclaimed and the homily is given.

BAPTISMAL FONT -- The “pool” of Holy Water used for baptisms.

BOAT -- Metal container where incense is kept for priest to put in censer.

BINDER -- Book of prayers used by the Presider from his chair.

BOWLS -- For holding the hosts. Also "ciborium" is a little deeper and has a lid for hosts to be kept in tabernacle.

CENSER -- (Thurible) Metal bowl shaped container on chain in which.

CHARCOAL -- is burned (Used at funerals and at special liturgies).

CHALICE (CUP) -- Vessel or cup used for holding the wine at Mass.

CINCTURE -- rope “belt” that is tied around the alb.

CORPORAL -- Large white napkin size cloth which is placed on the altar and on which the cup and plate with hosts are placed during the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

CREDENCE TABLE -- The shelf by the Tabernacle in the Sanctuary on which the cups, plates, chalice and water bowl are placed before Mass begins.

CRUETS -- small containers used for water.

DECANTER -- Larger “pitchers” used to hold the water and wine.

GIFT TABLE -- Table near church entrance doors for Offertory gifts to be placed.

HOST -- Altar breads consecrated for communion at Mass.

LECTIONARY -- Book containing the readings for Mass. (The Gospel Book contains the Gospels and is brought in precession at Mass).

PEWS -- The bench-like seats in the main body of the Church.

PRESIDENTIAL / PRESIDER'S CHAIR -- The chair where the priest sits.

PROCESSIONAL CROSS -- a cross or crucifix carried by the server in the procession in and out.

PURIFICATOR -- The linen type towel the priest and Eucharistic Ministers use to dry the chalice or communion cup.

SACRAMENTARY -- The red book used by the priest for the prayers during Mass. It is placed on the altar.

SACRISTY -- The room next to the Sanctuary where the priests, Altar servers and other ministers prepare for Mass.

SANCTUARY -- The whole area above the steps where the Altar, Ambo, etc. are located.

STATUES -- images of people or events in of faith history that remind us of what we believe or of holy people from the past.

TABERNACLE -- The gold "safe" in which the Blessed Sacrament (Consecrated hosts) is stored.

TOWEL -- White hand towel for drying the priest's hands at the Offertory.

VESTIBULE -- The back of the Church where the main entrance doors to the Church are located. Where the Entrance procession usually starts from.