

# Altar Servers

## Before the Mass

- Servers should arrive at least 10 minutes before the Mass dressed appropriately. This means no jeans/shorts, sneakers or sandals.
- Servers should speak with the priest if they have any questions as to procedure or if something special has to be done. Not all priests are alike! By arriving early, you can ask any questions and go over anything with them.
- Select a robe that covers you. It is not a dress and you should look reverent. Tie the robe around your waist in a knot.

## During the Mass

### The Beginning:

- Altar servers lead the procession in.... the cross bearer is first followed by any additional servers. Following is the Lector and then the priest.
- A server should be ready to hold the Sacramentary/binder as soon as the opening song is finished. During the Gloria you may return to your seat, but be ready! After the Gloria, the Sacramentary/binder is held for the opening prayer. When finished, return to your seat and listen attentively to the readings, Gospel and homily.

### The Creed:

- The binder is held for the priest to recite the Creed. When finished, he will open it for the intentions. You will need to hold it until he finishes with the concluding prayer.

### Preparation of the Altar for Communion:

- When the servers go up to the altar be sure to bring the Sacramentary if it is at the priest's chair and place it on the altar.
- Bring the priest's chalice (the one that is covered), the 3 other chalices, purificators, and water to the altar and place them neatly.
- Up to 2 servers should go to the back of the church to lead those presenting the gifts to the front. When the priest comes to the center aisle, start walking

back up. When you get to the front stand on either side of the priest so he can hand you the gifts. Walk back up to the altar and he will take them from you.

- The priest will hand you the empty wine carafe to place back on the side table. When done, place the towel over your arm and hold the dish and bring the water to the priest so he can wash his hands. When complete, return these to the table. (2 servers can do this.)

### During the Consecration and the Bells:

- When the congregation kneels the 1<sup>st</sup> time, the servers kneel as well.
- During the consecration, the bell should be rung 3 times.
  - The 1<sup>st</sup> is when the priest says, “ Bless these gifts....send your spirit...”  
Note: This will be hard to pick up on at first... Don’t worry if you miss this one.
  - The 2<sup>nd</sup> is when the priest is finished saying the prayer over the host, listen for the words, “which will be given up for you.” As soon as he is done saying them, ring the bell. Keep ringing until he starts to put it down.
  - The 3<sup>rd</sup> is when the priest is finished saying the prayer over the chalice, listen for the words, “do this in memory of Me.” As soon as he is done, ring the bell. Keep ringing until he starts to put it down.
- When the congregation stands, you stand too for the Our Father. After the sign of peace, when the congregation kneels again, you stay standing. The Eucharistic Ministers will be on the altar at this point too. Let them stand in front and the servers at the end of their line near the gold grates. You will receive Communion when they do.

### During and After Communion:

- After the ministers go to their places, go to the altar and bring the Sacramentary down to the priest’s chair.
- Go back to the altar and place the water and the covering for the priest’s chalice on it. You can go sit until Communion is done.
- When Communion is done, the priest will purify the chalices and wipe them. He will then hand them to you to place on the table. Once everything is done, you may return to your seat.

## Concluding Prayers:

- After Communion be ready to hold the book again. After the prayer is read the cross bearer should get the cross. When the priest starts to go to the altar, the servers should go to the center aisle and face the altar, genuflect when the priest does, and then process out with him in the same order as you processed in (the cross bearer, other servers, the lector and then the priest.)

## After Mass:

- The Eucharistic Ministers will take care of bringing in everything. You should make sure the candles are blown out.
- Be sure to HANG UP your robes on the hangers. Once you do, you are free to leave.

## IMPORTANT NOTES:

This sheet is meant to help you prepare for serving and to help you practice. This is not a set in stone way things are done. Each priest has their own style and routine. The priest will try to help you as much as he can during the Mass. Your best bet is to be sure to arrive early to ask any questions you may have, and to go over anything you are unsure of.

Don't worry if you mess up or forget to do something. No one will get mad or yell. Just try your best. It will get easier as you serve more.