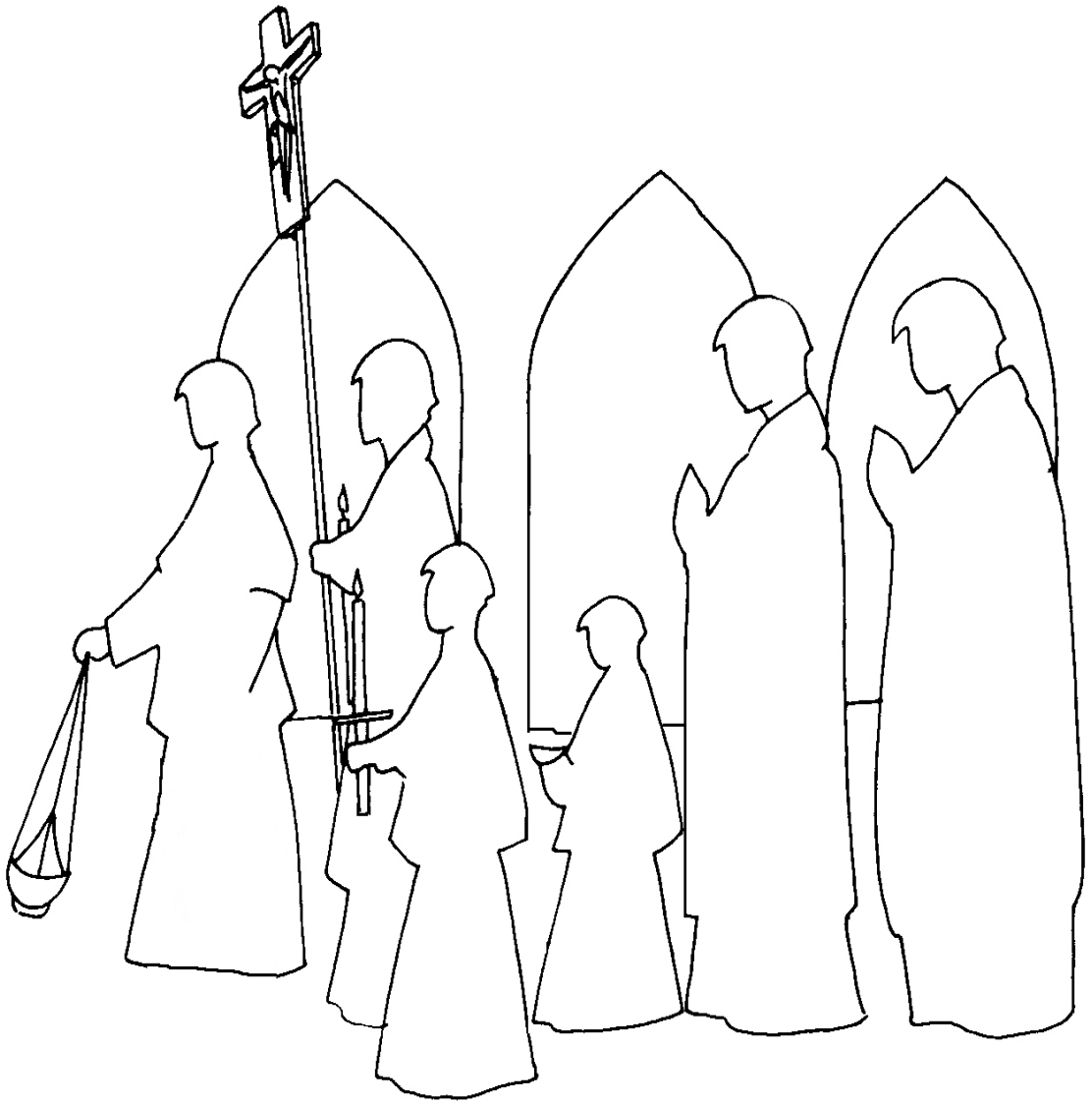


St. Joseph Catholic Church

Altar Server Manual



For the Server
(Revised May 19, 2014)

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Forward

Introduction

This manual is limited in scope to the server's duties during Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church. This manual is intended as a guide. It is a guide to the liturgy as practiced at St. Joseph parish and conforms to the Norms and Policies of the Archdiocese of Washington.

The primary role of the altar server is to assist the priest in the celebration of the liturgy during Mass. This is done through specific actions and by setting an example to the congregation by active participation in the liturgy by their actions, singing of hymns, responses of the people, looking alert and sitting or standing at the appropriate times.

Servers carry the cross, the processional candle(s), hold the Roman Missal (the book) for the priest celebrant when he is not at the altar, carry the incense and censer, present the bread, wine, and water to the priest or deacon during the preparation of the gifts or assist him when he receives the gifts from the people, wash the hands of the priest, assist the priest celebrant and deacon as necessary.

Requirements

I General Requirements

- Servers will be required to vest in white Alb and a cincher in the proper liturgical color as directed by the pastor, the deacon or the coordinator of servers.
- Dress shoes and appropriate socks or stockings must be worn. The sanctuary is no place for sneakers, running shoes, or any other sports footwear.
- Servers carry the cross, the processional candle(s), hold the Roman Missal (the book) for the priest celebrant when he is not at the altar, carry the incense and censer, present the bread, wine, and water to the priest/deacon during the preparation of the gifts and assist him when he receives the gifts from the people, wash the hands of the priest, and assist the priest celebrant and deacon as necessary.

II Specifics

Who may serve?

A server can be any person who is at least nine years old and/or has received first Holy Communion.

Required Basic Knowledge of the Mass

A server candidate is required to know the principal prayers of the Mass:

- The Gloria
- Our Father
- Nicene Creed
- Lamb of God
- Lord, I am not worthy
- Holy, Holy, Holy.

All candidates should know and recite the basic flow of the mass. They must learn this so as to later perform their tasks at the proper times. They should be taught the use of all the liturgical items they will be handling and the purpose of each item. See the end of this manual for definitions.

1. All candidates must demonstrate their ability to make use of the “*tools of the trade*” such as matches, candle lighters, books and candles, processional cross, what items are placed on the credence table, chalice, mass colors, etc.

2. New servers should not be allowed to be alone without the guidance of experienced servers for several masses. At St. Joseph we usually have the new servers “shadow” the more experienced servers for at least two weeks.
3. All server candidates must be able to demonstrate their ability to genuflect, bow and make the sign of the cross.
4. They must understand genuflecting is reserved for and to the Real Presence of the Lord Jesus Christ whether exposed on the altar or reserved in the tabernacle.
5. Servers should be shown how to bow in respect to the altar as it is where Jesus offers his Body to the Father for the forgiveness of our sins.

Duties

Servers are not a wall decorations, they are primarily there to assist the priest or deacon and to discern their vocation if they have one. Here is a short list of server duties.

- The server should arrive at the Church early, usually 15 to 20 minutes before Mass to get vested and check with the deacon or celebrant for any changes or special duties for that Mass.
- Servers must remain in the sanctuary during the entire Mass and are not to leave the sanctuary during Mass for any reason other than illness or the direction of the priest or deacon.
- Servers have many specific duties depending on the celebrant. These duties include presenting the wine and water to the priest or deacon, washing the priest's hands, ringing bells, standing, sitting and kneeling.
- When sitting the hands should be held on the lap or at the sides. Never slouch. Never play with the book, the bells, pick your nose or otherwise cause a public reason to take notice of you.
- Every altar server must attend every Mass they are scheduled for. When a server cannot be present, that server must arrange for a replacement.

Ranks of Servers

There are five “ranks” of servers at St. Joseph’s, junior novice, senior novice, junior servers, senior servers, and junior MCs. At Mass, one of the senior servers or a server MC will be the “lead” server. This server will make sure all goes well at the liturgy. The lead server is usually the cross bearer. It is the responsibility of the lead to guide the younger servers in their duties.

Proper Dress

At home the server should dress in the proper clothes and footwear for Mass.

Dress shoes should be worn. Girls should not wear high heels or open toe shoes. Sneakers, no matter how expensive, are for casual dress and sporting events and have no place at the Altar of Our God.

Genuflection

When should a server genuflect? Whenever entering or leaving a Catholic Church (usually when entering a pew) or crosses in front of the tabernacle. The church sanctuary light, the red light, hanging by the tabernacle, will indicate when Jesus is reserved in the tabernacle. Genuflecting to the tabernacle is required. As a general rule, altar servers should genuflect whenever crossing in front of the tabernacle, or entering and leaving the Church (usually as they enter a pew). Consult with your training leader for more information.

How to Genuflect

There are two prescribed methods of genuflection.

1. When the tabernacle is closed and Jesus is not present on the Altar after the consecration or exposed for Eucharistic Adoration, genuflect in this manner:
 - Stop, then turn and face the tabernacle.
 - Genuflect on the right knee so the right knee touches the floor.
 - Pause with the right knee on the floor and bow your head to Jesus. Many make the sign of the cross but this is not necessary
 - Rise from the floor, still facing the tabernacle.
 - Turn and continue in the direction you were heading.

2. When the Body of Jesus is present on the Altar or Jesus is exposed in the monstrance during Eucharistic Adoration and a server (or anyone is entering or leaving the church) double genuflect in this manner:
- Stop and face Jesus.
 - Double genuflect by placing both knees on the floor, the right knee first.
 - Pause with knees on the floor and bow your head to Jesus.
 - Rise from the floor, still facing the tabernacle.
 - Turn and continue in the direction you were heading.

An exception to this requirement is when you are carrying any liturgical object or book. There your job requires you to carry that in a dignified manner and not endanger yourself or the object by losing your balance.

Preparation for Mass

At five minutes to mass time a server should light all appropriate candles.
At least the two altar candles must be lighted.

- If candles are at sides of the tabernacle, one on each side should be lighted.
- From the Easter Vigil Mass till Mass at Ascension Thursday, the Paschal candle should be lighted also.
- The advent wreath is usually lighted during the Mass.
- Be sure you know which candles in the wreath to light. Ask the priest or deacon.
- After lighting the candles, extinguish the taper candle lighter by pulling the taper into the lighter until it is extinguished and then pushing it out again so that the taper will not stick in the lighter.

The lead server should make sure the Roman Missal containing the opening and closing prayers is in the proper place on the credence table.

Duties during Mass

The cross-bearer (**usually the lead server**) and the candles will lead the procession into and from the sanctuary. Upon reaching the sanctuary the cross-bearer and candles will go immediately into the sanctuary and put the cross and candles away. Then go to their seats and remain standing.

During the *Gloria* (*Lord have mercy . . .* during lent), the appointed server (book bearer) will pick up the Roman Missal and wait for the priest to say, *Let us pray*. The server will proceed directly in front of the priest and the priest or deacon will open the book to the proper page. Hold the book open so that the priest can read the prayer. When the priest is finished, he or the deacon will close the Roman Missal. The server returns the book to its place. Then return to your chair for the readings.

After the Prayer of the Faithful, the lead server assembles the servers to assist in setting the Altar. When the Deacon (or Celebrant) is at the altar, the servers bring the Roman Missal, on the altar stand, the main vessels and purificators, and the communion cups etc. to the altar. Note do not form-up. Bring things up, in the order stated. The lead server is to coordinate this.

If the cross and candles are used in the procession of the gifts they should, during the last collection, pick up your cross and candles. Walk in procession, by way of the side aisle of the church, to the center aisle of the church and wait for the rest of the gift procession. **(wait in front of the Baptismal font)** When the ushers have the procession ready, they lead the gift procession to the celebrant.

- The cross and candles should walk slowly together toward the sanctuary.
- When you reach the sanctuary, pass around the priest and deacon and proceed directly to the stands in the rear of the sanctuary.
- Set down your cross and candles. Move to your positions at the credence table or assist the priest/deacon in accepting the gifts if no other servers are available.

The remaining server may stand when the priest and deacon stand and follow them to the assigned positions. Servers should wait behind the priest. The server should take whatever of the gifts the priest gives them and take them to the altar and wait there. If there is no deacon, another server should take anything else brought up in the procession and take it to the altar and wait. The priest or deacon will put the vessels on the Altar.

After the offering,

- Servers get the bowl, towel and pitcher.
- Approach the altar, one server holding the bowl and water pours the water over the priest's fingers, collecting the water in the bowl until the priest indicates enough.
- The other server will then hand the towel to the priest.
- When the server has the towel back, both servers should bow to the priest and return to the credence table.
- Neatly arrange the pitcher, towel, and bowl on the table.
- All servers should return to their place and kneel after the Holy, Holy, Holy.

Bell Ringing - The bell should be rung at the specific times during the Mass as is the local custom. **(This is the responsibility of the lead server.)**

Typical times for ringing the bell are:

- three short rings at the elevation of the Consecrated Host.
- three short rings at the elevation of the Consecrated Wine.

After Communion of Faithful - After the priest or deacon returns to the altar the servers should stand nearby to assist the deacon or priest in removing all objects from the altar after the purification and prior to the Closing Prayer. **The lead server should re-light the candles for the recessional during the announcements.**

Closing Prayers - All sit until the priest says: "Let us pray." The book bearer will proceed directly in front of the priest and the priest/deacon will open the prayer book to the proper page. When the priest finishes, close the Roman Missal and return it to its place.

Exit Procession - At the end of Mass, after the deacon/priest announces the dismissal, the servers should, pick up the cross and candles from the credence table and go to a position in front of the first pew in the center aisle. They should be facing the altar. The priest and deacon approach the altar, make a reverence and proceed to the foot of the sanctuary steps. When the priest and deacon genuflect, all servers then turn and begin the procession. All processions are always in order of rank, cross and candles, other servers, lector, extraordinary ministers, deacons, priests. The servers should extinguish the candles after you exit the main doors of the worship space and before you walk down the hall. Remember that you are still in procession until you get to the vesting room.

Duties after Mass

Extinguish the candles by using the proper tool - the snuffer on the end of the wick lighter. Do not smash the wicks. Do not blow out the candles.

- Remove your liturgical vestment and hang it neatly in its proper place or put them into your carry bag.
- Clean up any messes you made on the credence and preparation tables.
- Remove all notes and papers from the sanctuary and pulpit and place them where directed.

Vestments for ministers at Mass

Who wears what?

Priest

Please refer to the dictionary for a description of each of these items.



Alb



Chasuble



Cope



Humeral veil



Amice



Stole



Cincture

Deacon

Please refer to the dictionary for a description of each of these items.



Alb



Dalmatic



Stole



Humeral Veil



Cincture

Altar Server

Please refer to the dictionary for a description of each of these items.



Alb

Sacred Vessels, Tableware, Linens, and Furniture



Water and Wine Cruets



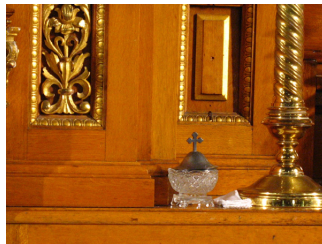
Tabernacle



Sacred Oils



Chalice and Paten



Ablution Cup



Holy Water Bucket



Monstrance



Lavabo Towel



Thurible/Incense Boat



Ciborium



Lavabo Bowl



Credence Table



Paschal Candle



Purificator



Flagon



Corporal



Kneeler



Reliquary



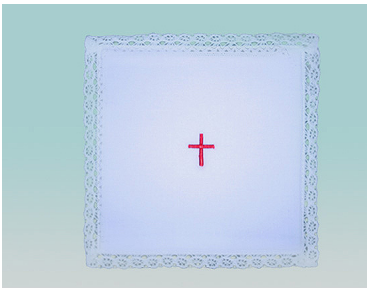
Bells



Ambo



Holy Water Font



Chalice Pall



Pyx



Altar



Processional Cross