



**Our Lady of Victory Altar Servers' Handbook**  
(last updated 8/28/2017)

## **Table of Contents**

Our Lady of Victory Altar Servers' Handbook (last updated 8/28/17) .....	1
Table of Contents .....	2
NOTES about gestures of reverence (bowing and genuflecting) .....	3
Notes on gestures of reverence: .....	3
General rules of thumb.....	4
Vocabulary to Memorize (pictures are below) .....	6
Pictures of vocabulary items .....	13
Some tips, tricks and details.....	16
Sunday Mass procedures.....	18
Before Mass .....	18
Mass procedures.....	18
Quick Reference Guides (Crib sheets).....	24
Sunday Mass Offertory .....	24
Weekday Chapel Offertory .....	24
Weekday Church Offertory (School Mass, Lent) .....	24
Sunday Mass Offertory summary .....	25
• Trip #1:.....	25
• Trip #2:.....	25
• Trip #3:.....	25
Beginning of Mass (reverencing altar) .....	25
Daily Mass procedures.....	26
Procedures for the Chapel.....	26
Special procedures .....	27
Gospel Procession.....	27
Funeral procedures.....	28
Procedures for Adoration and Exposition.....	29
Prayers for Altar Servers.....	30

## ***Gestures of reverence (bowing and genuflecting).***

The gestures of bowing before the altar and genuflecting before the tabernacle are a sign of love and respect for Our Lord Jesus Christ. These acts help us to remember that what happens on the altar at Mass is literally the most important thing in the world: Jesus sacrifices Himself for our salvation, so we can get to Heaven. We also remember that Jesus Christ (God Himself) is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament, in the tabernacle, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

Genuflecting means kneeling briefly on the right knee while keeping the rest of the body straight.

Occasionally, the server might bow to the priest. This is a reminder that the priest acts *in the person of Christ*, especially at Mass. Christ Himself acts through His priest to sacrifice His life for us and bring us His Body and Blood.

### **Notes**

- Genuflect every time you pass in front of the tabernacle when setting up for Mass and putting things away after Mass, if your hands are empty. If you are carrying something like a candle which would make it awkward or dangerous to genuflect, pause and bow your head instead.
- During Mass, genuflect only at the beginning of Mass, the end of Mass, when the priest reverences the altar. Again, bow your head if you are carrying something so you can't genuflect.
- After you wash the priest's hands, he might bow to you. If so, bow back to him (together at the same time if there are more than one of you).

## ***General rules of thumb***

- Rule #1 (memorize this). Always be attentive to the priest and the deacon. You should be ready **at any time during Mass** to approach them or to respond to their request or gesture. Make sure you are watching them out of the corner of your eye, so that they are never kept waiting if they need you. [Think of it like being a waiter at a restaurant. The waiter is not doing his or her job if the customers have to flag them down and get their attention.]
- **Rule #2: Always** be on time for Mass. For a Sunday Mass, this means being present at least **15 minutes early**. For a weekday Mass, be **at least 10 minutes early**.
- **Rule #3:** Anticipate the priests actions and *do not keep him waiting*. A good server knows the sequence of Mass and knows what happens next, so that the priest is not kept waiting while he moves into place.
- **Rule #4:** Always check in with the priest or deacon before Mass begins to see if there are any special instructions or reminders he needs to give you.
- **Other rules:**
- Whenever possible, walk together at the same pace, and side by side, shoulder to shoulder. (Picture two soldiers walking next to each other in formation).
- Always be focused and prayerful. Since you are always visible to Massgoers, you help to set a prayerful tone. **Never** wave to friends, slouch in your chairs, talk to your fellow servers (except to give each other instructions as needed), chew gum, or do things that would be distracting to people.
- When the priest is praying at the altar, listen to him and watch him. When the deacon or lectors are reading at the ambo, listen to them and watch them.
- Your hands should be folded at or above the waist, in a gesture of prayer, unless you are holding or carrying something.
- Don't worry about making a mistake. If you are unsure what the priest or deacon needs, ask him (in a quiet voice).
- Check with the sacristan/Mass Captain or the priest or deacon before Mass if you are unsure what to do. They may give you instructions for special Masses.
- Always sign in at every Mass. We will have some incentives for servers who are present, but you must sign in for us to know you are there.
- Always walk slowly but deliberately. Don't run, but don't walk like you're in slow motion either.

- Be careful with the Missal book. Do not move the ribbons out of place. Keep them exactly where you found them.
- For Sunday Masses, boys should wear long pants (even in the summer) and black dress shoes. If you are not wearing black shoes, we will have black shoes for you in the sacristy. Girls should wear dress clothing. For all Masses, flip-flops and sandals should never be worn. Always make sure your hair is combed and appearance is neat. Your alb or your cassock should reach down at least to the top of your ankle.
- If you can not serve, it is your responsibility to get a substitute. You can do so by using the Ministry Scheduler program, available on the parish website. You will have to check if someone answered your sub request. If you can't find anyone, you should call Mrs. Reinkemeyer in the office at 347-8823 weekdays before 4:00 on Friday. If something comes up at the last minute (such as becoming ill) so that you can't serve, call the sacristy phone line at 347-8842 and leave a message.

## ***Vocabulary to Memorize (pictures are below)***

Make sure you know the names for all of the following items. The ones marked with the asterisk (\*) are especially important because they are involved every time you serve. Items marked in SMALL CAPITALS are cross-referenced to another entry in this glossary.

**adoration** – sometimes called “Eucharistic adoration” -- a special time of quiet prayer where we take time out of our day to adore the Lord, who is deserving of all our love and praise. We remember that, especially with Our Lord, sometimes there are no words to thank and praise Him enough, and that silence is the best way to spend in His company. Sometimes in an adoration service, Scripture is read, special Eucharistic hymns are sung, or the Rosary is prayed, as we focus on Christ.

**alb\*** – the white robe that servers may wear to celebrate Mass. It reminds you of the fact that you are baptized into Christ. (When you are baptized, you wear a white robe). The name for this robe comes from the Latin word for “white”. See also CINCTURE. (The priest also wears an alb under his vestments).

**altar\*** – the table where the Mass is celebrated. Christ sacrifices His own Body and Blood here through His priest. The altar is also a symbol of Christ.

**ambo\*** – also called “**pulpit**” or “**lectern**” – The bookstand furnishing from which the priest or deacon proclaims the Gospel and preaches, and also the lectors or cantors read the Scripture readings. It usually has a microphone and is designed to hold the book at waist or chest-level. There is a shelf underneath the book stand, where the priest might ask you to leave homilies or other written materials

**aspergillum** – Also called a holy water sprinkler. It is a perforated metal ball on a handle that holds holy water for the priest to sprinkle on people to bless them (used during Easter season to bless the people in the pews, during funeral Masses to bless the casket, and at other times).

**aspersorium** – the bucket for holy water.

**baptismal font** – the large basin that holds holy water, where babies are baptized during the year, and adults baptized during Easter week.

**benediction** – A special blessing administered by a priest or deacon, where Christ Himself, through His presence in the Blessed Sacrament, blesses His people. This is usually done with special prayers, including a litany (list) of prayers called the “Divine Praises,” where we list out the holy attributes of God that we praise.

**Blessed Sacrament** – Another name for the consecrated HOST, which is the Body of Christ Himself.

**boat** – small metal container that holds the incense used for the THURIBLE (also called CENSER). It has a cover with a hinged lid and comes with a small spoon. It is usually either round, or shaped like a little boat (because the Church is the Barque (ship) of St. Peter, the vessel that carries us to Heaven).

**book bearer** – the server who holds the missal book or other books for the priest and deacon at Mass

**book stand** – (or MISSAL stand). The wooden stand designed to sit on top of the altar to raise the missal book so that the priest can easily read the Mass prayers from it.

**bow** – A gesture of reverence given at Mass either to the altar, the symbol of Jesus Christ; or to Christ present in the priest. The bow made during the Mass to the altar is a “deep bow,” meaning that you keep your body straight, bow at the waist and bow your whole body down at least 45degrees. The bow to the priest is a smaller bow. See also GENUFLECT.

**burse** – a large square piece of material with a pocket built into it that holds the corporal. It may be placed on top of the veiled chalice and usually matches the liturgical color.

**candle lighter\*** – also called **snuffer or extinguisher** – Used to light and extinguish candles. It has a long pole, and contains a long, retractable wick which goes inside it (called a taper). One side holds the wick, the other holds the bell-shaped “snuffer” to put the candles out. See “Tips and Tricks” section for things to look out for.

**casket** – The box, made of wood or metal, which holds the corpse (body) of the person whose funeral Mass is being celebrated. It is covered with a white burial cloth called a PALL.

**cassock** – A long black robe worn by the priest as a mark and sign of his priestly state, or a seminarian as a reminder of what he is training for. (The priest will often wear a clerical suit instead of the cassock: black pants and black shirt with a partially white collar.). It dates back hundreds of years to the Roman empire, which helped to make Christianity a religion spread around the world.

The altar boys also wear cassocks at Mass, like priests and seminarians, as a reminder that their service at the altar might help them to prepare for the priesthood in the future, if that is what God wants for them.

At Mass, seminarians and altar boys wear a loose fitting white top over the cassock, called a SURPLICE, to remind them of their baptism. The priest wears this cassock and surplice for sacraments and prayer services (such as confession and Eucharistic benediction).

**censer** – see THURIBLE

**chalice\*** – the cup used to hold the wine that is transformed into the Precious Blood of Christ. The large, ornate one the priest uses at the consecration is called the “priest’s chalice” and the smaller, simpler ones to distribute to the people at Mass are called “side chalices.” The priest’s chalice is usually made out of gold or silver, or some other precious metals, and is beautifully crafted to remind us that what is inside is the most precious thing we have in this life: Christ’s own Blood. The chalice is sometimes covered with a veil.

**chasuble\*** – pronounced “chaz uh bull” – the outer robe a priest wears, that fits over the top of his vestments like a poncho. (It has no sleeves). Its color is symbolic of the mystery or liturgical season being celebrated (for example, red for martyrs of the Holy Spirit, purple for the penitential season of Lent, gold for special solemn feasts like Christmas and Easter, white for Mary’s feast days, etc.) It is a symbol of the charity of Christ.

**ciborium\*** – pronounced “suh BORE ee um”. (Plural: ciboria, pronounced “suh BORE ee uh.”) A bowl or vessel with a lid that holds the host to be consecrated for Mass. We have two kinds: silver bowls with a side handles, and a gold bowl on top of a stem.

**collect** – (pronounced KAHL ekt) the prayer said at the beginning of Mass, where the prayers of all the people are “collected” and offered as Mass begins.

**cincture\*** – A long rope belt used for tying the alb at the waist.

**consecration\*** – The time during the Mass that the priest, acting in the person of Christ, says a special prayer of blessing and thanksgiving and raises up the bread and wine. At this time, through the power of Christ working through him, the bread and wine are transformed. They are no longer bread and wine (even though they still look and taste like it), but they become the real Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

**consecration bells** – or “sanctus bells” – Special bells that are rung during certain times during celebration of the Mass. (We currently use these only for Masses in the main Church). These are usually three or four bells connected together with a handle. They are rung at the consecration of the bread and the wine, when Jesus becomes truly present in the gifts. They may also be rung at the *epiclesis*, the time the priest invokes the Holy Spirit to come down upon the gifts at the beginning of the Eucharistic prayer.

**cope** – a long cape, used in certain ceremonies outside Mass, including Eucharistic adoration, benediction, and baptisms.

**corporal\*** – a rectangular piece of white cloth that is unfolded like a table cloth and placed on the center of the altar so that the crumbs and fragments of the Host are not lost. It is usually placed on top of the priest’s chalice.

**credence table\*** – sometimes called “servers’ table” – the table to the right side of the altar (when facing it) where the servers keep the supplies needed for celebration of Mass. (In the day chapel, it is to the left of the altar).

**crucifer** – the server who carries the PROCESSIONAL CROSS (CRUCIFIX) at Mass



**Crucifix\*** – the image of Jesus crucified on (nailed to) the Cross: a reminder of what the Mass is about when we enter into the mystery of Jesus’ suffering, death, and Resurrection, and we receive the fruits and merits of His Passion (suffering) as He sacrifices Himself as a victim to save us. There is a large crucifix on the back wall of the Church, and also one the servers carry at Mass, called the “processional crucifix” or “PROCESSIONAL CROSS”

**cruets\*** – these are small glass bottles with caps (usually cross-shaped) to hold the water and wine used during the Mass.

**decanter** – see FLAGON

**Eucharistic Prayer** – the main prayer of the Mass. It is a prayer of blessing and thanksgiving that the priest offers in the person of Christ the Head of the Body. He offers it to God the Father on behalf of all the people, those present at Mass as well as all the dead.

**evangelary** – also called GOSPEL BOOK – this is a special book which contains only the readings of the Gospel, the most important part of the Bible where we learn about Jesus’ life on earth and the promises He made to us. (It comes from a word meaning “Gospel” or “Good news”, because of the good news that Jesus saves us from our sins). Because the Gospel is so important in our lives, and so precious to us, it is often covered with precious metals such as silver, and jewels or other decorations. At Sunday Mass, the deacon usually carries it up in the entrance procession.

**extraordinary minister of Holy Communion (EMHC)** – lay people who are authorized by the pastor to assist the priest and deacon in distributing the precious Body and Blood of Christ if there are too many people for the priest and deacon to do so alone or if the priest is handicapped.

**finger bowl\*** – this is the small bowl used to catch the water when you are washing the priest’s hands. (See also “WATER PITCHER”)

**finger towel\*** – A folded rectangular cloth or linen towel the priest uses to dry his hands after they are washed after the presentation of the gifts.

**flagon\*** – also called DECANTER, or wine pitcher – A large pitcher (sometimes made of glass or crystal) containing wine to be consecrated. At Sunday Mass, it is carried up by members of the parish to the altar in the OFFERTORY PROCESSION, where the deacon or priest distribute it into CHALICES.

**genuflection** – A gesture of reverence and love given to Our Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament. To genuflect, keep the body (and back) straight, as you bend down on the right knee and touch it briefly to the floor before getting up again. See also BOW.

**host\*** – A piece of unleavened bread pressed flat and usually round. (“Unleavened” means there is yeast in it to make it rise. This reminds us of the Jewish Passover when they did not have time to wait for the bread to rise as they fled from Egypt.). Hosts often have a cross stamped into them, to remind us of Jesus’ Paschal mystery (His suffering, death and Resurrection). This is the special bread used for CONSECRATION, which becomes Jesus’ own Body. These hosts are kept in a CIBORIUM or on a PATEN. Most of them are small, but the priest uses a larger one at Mass. The priest breaks his consecration host at the Agnus Dei (Lamb of God) prayer, reminding us how Jesus took bread and broke it to share among His disciples.

**humeral veil** – a special long thin veil that goes over the shoulders of the priest before he gives BENEDICTION, or before he handles the Blessed Sacrament. It has hand pockets for him to place his hands inside it. It is a reminder that the blessing of benediction comes from Christ Himself in the Eucharist, and not from the priest.

**lectern** – See AMBO

**lectionary\*** – the book of Bible readings used at the Mass, by the priest, deacon and lectors.

**lector** – the person from the assembly at Mass who is assigned and trained to read the Word of God—God’s message of His love for us.

**lunette** – also called *luna* -- A thin circular receptacle, usually made of brass, with a glass face that holds the consecrated HOST used during ADORATION and BENEDICTION. It is designed to fit into the MONSTRANCE. (It usually has a square tongue to fit into the groove of the monstrance.) [Comes from the Latin word for “moon,” because it is shaped like the moon]

**Mass\*** – also called – Holy Communion, the Lord’s Supper, the Eucharist. The perfect prayer of the Church, in which we enter into Communion with Christ and each other, and are united with all of the angels and saints in Heaven. The Mass is the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary, and through the power of Christ, we share in His Resurrection from the dead. We are closer to Heaven during the Mass than at any other time in our lives.

**missal\*** – the book of prayers for the Mass which the priest reads from. (You may sometimes hear the old name, “sacramentary.” The one for Sunday Mass is a large red book. (There may be other special missals, for example a blue one used for Masses for Mary on Saturdays). The priest may put the missal on a BOOK STAND or MISSAL STAND.

**monstrance** – A large, ornate vessel, shaped like a Cross and usually made of gold or some precious metal, sometimes with jewels on it. Designed to hold the Blessed Sacrament (HOST) in a see-through glass case, so we can see Our Lord in His sacramental form (really present in what looks like bread). This ceremony is called “ADORATION.” When the priest or deacon blesses us with Our Lord in the monstrance, that is called “BENEDICTION.” The monstrance is made beautiful because it is fitting that anything that contains Christ should be beautiful.

**nave** – the main floor area of the church, where the pews are located.

**offertory** – See “preparation of the gifts”

**pall\*** – This word has two meanings. (1) First, it is used to refer to the stiff square white cover that is placed over the top of the priest’s CHALICE and PURIFICATOR. It is used to make sure that nothing gets into the Precious Blood (dust, insects, etc.) It is usually made out of cardboard with a linen covering. (2) A second meaning is used for the large rectangular white cloth that is folded over the CASKET at a funeral Mass to cover the casket. This white cloth is a reminder of the baptism of the deceased person (same reason you wear an alb at Mass).

**paten\*** – see CIBORIUM. A shallow dish or plate made out of precious metal, which holds the hosts. The smaller paten is designed to fit over the top of the priest’s chalice.

**preparation of the gifts** – also called “offertory” – the time of the Mass when the altar is prepared to receive the gifts of the people: Bread and wine representing their work and their livelihood that they offer to God.

**procession** – the line of people participating in a part of the Mass, moving to or from the altar. The *entrance procession* is at the beginning of Mass, the *offertory procession* is during the Mass, and the *recessional* is at the end of Mass. The entrance procession usually consists of the servers, deacon and priest (but may have others included); the offertory procession usually consists of the servers and the people bringing up the gifts.

**candles, processional (processional candles)\*** – these are carried in the entrance procession (see PROCESSION)

**processional Cross\*** – also called processional crucifix – See CRUCIFIX.

**pulpit** – See AMBO

**purify** – the action taken by the priest or deacon to cleanse the Communion vessels and consume any remaining small particles of the host or the precious blood.

**purificator\*** – a triple-folded white rectangular white cloth, usually made out of linen and marked with an embroidered red cross. It is used to wipe the precious blood from the chalice, and to wipe crumbs of the Precious Body of Christ from the priest’s fingers. It is also used to PURIFY the chalice. In setting up the priest’s chalice for use at Mass, the purificator is placed over the top of the chalice, and the pall goes on top of it.

**purify** – the process of cleansing the sacred vessels (ciborium, paten, chalice) with water and linen cloths after use. Because Christ is present in even small amounts of the Precious Body and Blood, these are usually consumed by the priest immediately after Communion is distributed.

**reverence the altar** – the action taken by the priest (and deacon) during the Mass to show love for Christ. The altar is a symbol of Christ’s presence. The priest will stoop down and kiss the altar where the sacred action of the Mass takes place, near the beginning and end of Mass.

**sacristy** – the room used to hold vessels and vestments (special clothes) used during the Mass, and to prepare items needed for Mass.

**sanctuary** – the area of the Church reserved for the sacrifice of the Mass, containing the altar, the ambo, and the priest’s chair. It is traditionally raised three steps from the NAVE, the place where the people sit in their pews.

**side chalices\*** – See also CHALICE. These are kept on the credence table and brought to the altar during the preparation of the gifts (“offertory”) so that the priest or deacon can pour wine into them from the FLAGON, to distribute the Precious Blood to the people at Mass. There may be a different number of them depending on whether Communion is distributed under both forms, or just the host.

**species** – the “form” under which the Blessed Sacrament is distributed. The Blessed Sacrament is usually distributed as a host (consecrated bread) and sometimes also as the Precious Blood (consecrated wine). Both species are the Body and Blood Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, in sacramental form.

**Solemnity** – also called “solemn feast day” – the days of the Church year are ranked according to the importance of the celebration. The “highest rank” feast days are called “solemnities.” There are usually special procedures at Mass to highlight their importance.

**sprinkler** – See ASPERGILLUM.

**stole** – the long scarf-shaped neck garment worn by the priest during Mass, confession, baptism, and other sacraments, symbolizing the authority that Christ has given Him to bring His Body and Blood present, to forgive sins in the name and person of Christ, and to baptize new members into the Church.

**surplice\*** – the white top worn by a priest (or altar boy) over his CASSOCK. It symbolizes baptism.

**thurible** – also called a CENSER – the metal container extended from a single chain (or three chains) in which charcoal and incense are burned for the Mass and other ceremonies. It has a lid that can be raised and lowered to add the incense. This is used during more solemn Masses, to incense the CASKET at funerals, and during ADORATION. The smoke rising from the incense is a sign of our prayers rising up to heaven

**thurifer** – the server who carries the THURIBLE (CENSER) at Mass

**undertaker** – also called funeral director. The representative of the funeral home who helps the family through the funeral process. He or she will usually be present at the funeral Mass to help you with the pall and other duties.

**water pitcher** – the pitcher used to wash the priest’s hands during the Mass. (See also “FINGER BOWL.”)

**Pictures of vocabulary items**

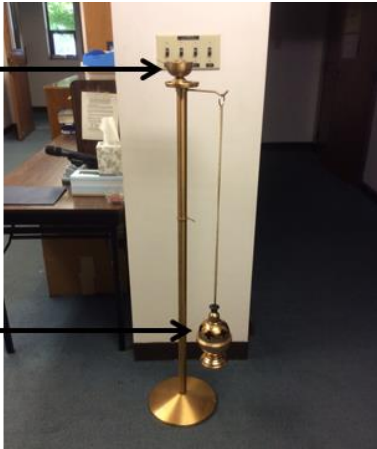


**ALB**



**ASPERGILLUM  
(SPRINKLER)**

**ASPERSORIUM**



**BOAT**

**THURIBLE  
(CENSER)**



**CANDLE LIGHTER  
(SNUFFER OR  
EXTINGUISHER)**



**CASSOCK**



**CHALICE**

**CIBORIUM**



**CINCTURE**



**CONSECRATION  
BELLS**



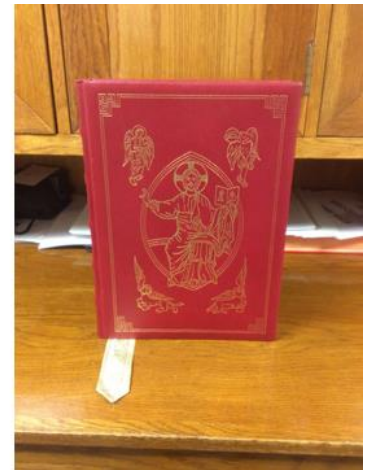
**CORPORAL**



**CRUETS**



**EVANGELIARY  
(GOSPEL BOOK)**

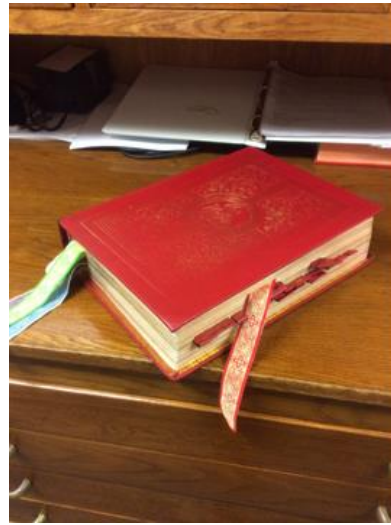




**WATER  
PITCHER**

**FINGER  
TOWEL**

**FINGER  
BOWL**



**MISSAL**

**PALL**



**PATEN**



**PROCESSIONAL CROSS  
(CRUCIFIX)**



**PURIFICATOR**





**SIDE CHALICE**



**SURPLICE**



## ***Some tips, tricks and details***

- Whenever you present the wine and water cruets to the priest or deacon, make sure the caps are off.
- When you give him the cruet, turn the handle to him so he can reach it easily.
- When you pour water on his hands, make sure you position the bowl so that water does not spill on the carpet. You should aim the water right for the center. (Imagine there is a bull's-eye painted right in the middle of the finger bowl).
- When you wash the priest's hands, you should be waiting for him a few steps away, so that when he turns to you, you are already there.
- When you hold the missal or other book for the priest or deacon to read, use common sense to put it in a position where he can easily see it. The priest may adjust the height to get it at the correct reading position. Stand a little bit to his left, instead of directly in front of him, so you are not blocking his view, or the view of the people in the pews to see him.
- When you use the candle lighter, make sure that you have enough wick exposed so that the flame will not go out until all the candles are lit. (Keep at least a couple of inches exposed). If you do not do this, the wick will get stuck inside the lighter. Once all the candles are lit, use the tab on the lighter to quickly retract the wick inside the tube just long enough to extinguish the flame, and then immediately advance the wick again using the tab so that the wick is exposed. If you do not do this, the wick may get stuck inside.

When you extinguish the candles, you need to hold the snuffer over the flame for several seconds. Do **not** mash down on the candle. Just hold it over the top.

- To light the candles, you might have to take the glass "follower" (protective cap) off before you light the candles.
- Watch where you are standing. Make sure that you are not in the priest's or deacon's way or blocking the path they will have to take.
- When you bring over the ciboria at the Lamb of God, take only two at a time.
- When you are lining up for the closing procession, you should go before the priest. For example, as soon as he starts moving after Mass to the bottom of the altar, you should move *immediately* so you are waiting for him at the foot of the altar by the time he gets there.
- If using incense, always bring over the thurible and the boat together.

## ***Sunday Mass procedures***

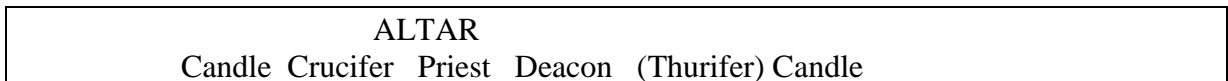
### **Before Mass**

- Light the candles
- Place the following on the credence table:
  - Water cruet
  - Missal
  - Finger bowl, water pitcher, and finger towel
  - Ciboria
  - Side chalices for the Precious Blood (on a tray)
- Place the following on the offertory table (table in back of Church)
  - Flagon with wine
  - Large ciborium with hosts

### **Mass procedures**

#### ***Entrance procession procedure***

- One server carries the processional crucifix. (He or she is called the “crucifer” or cross-bearer.) Two servers carry lighted processional candles.
- The three lead the priest and deacon down the aisle. The crucifer goes first in front of the rest. The candle-bearers go side by side next. Priest and deacon go last. Walk slowly here, do not rush. Start walking when people start singing.
- When you reach the front of the Church, go to the front of the altar, on the floor level. Step all the way up to the bottom of the step, and make room for the priest and deacon to get in the middle. You should stand fairly close together so that the whole procession is directly in front of the altar. The candle bearers will be on the outside, the crucifer to the left of the priest and deacon, thurifer (if any) to their right:



- The priest and deacon will genuflect. Watch the priest out of the corner of your eye, so you are ready to act when he does. If you are carrying something besides a hymn book, bow your head when he genuflects. If not, genuflect with him..

- Then proceed immediately to your places. All three of you should walk to your right up the steps on the St. Joseph side of the sanctuary, leading the priest and deacon. The crucifer should be in the front, candles side by side. (The candle bearers will have to wait to let him pass and line up shoulder to shoulder). Crucifer puts the crucifix in its stand, candle bearers put candles on the credence table. Servers stand at their chairs near the credence table as Mass begins.

### ***Opening Prayer/Gloria***

- As soon as you have put the PROCESSIONAL CROSS in its stand, bring the missal to Father for the introductory prayers, the Gloria (if said) and the collect prayer. Wait until he gives you the signal to return to the credence table (for example, tap the book or a head nod). If you know where the introductory rites are, open it to that page. (In some missals, this is marked with the tab with a cross on it.)
- Keep the book right in front of him (where he can see it). He may move you a little bit to get in better position. Unless you are very short, stand a little bit to the priest's side, so the priest can see the people and they can see him. Do not leave until he finishes with "...through Christ Our Lord" or gives you the signal to go.

### ***Offertory ("Preparation of the Gifts")***

- After the deacon/lector reads the petitions, you will see the deacon move into place near the altar and the ushers beginning to collect money. That is your cue to begin your trips to prepare the altar.
- **Trip #1 (Setting the altar):** Three servers come up *together* and side by side. One brings the MISSAL book and STAND, another brings the priest's CHALICE, and the third brings the SMALL CHALICE(S) (they may be on a tray with corporeal). The priest's chalice has a PATEN, consecration HOST and PALL on top of it. Make sure to hold this with one hand on top to steady it, so these do not slide off. Sometimes the chalice, paten and pall might all be covered with a colored CHALICE VEIL, matching the priest's CHASUBLE)..
- The server with the missal and stand should go *behind* the priest and deacon and place it on the right side of the altar. Place the "kick stand" flap of the missal stand up. If you know where it is, you can open the book to the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist (sometimes marked on a tab with a picture of a chalice and host).
- The servers with the priest's chalice and small chalice(s) stand there waiting for the deacon or priest to take them from you. (He may give you the signal to place them on the altar if his hands are not free. If so, just set them down there on the close side of the altar. Wait for trays return to go back to servers table
- After the altar is set, two serves go down to escort the giftbearers up with water and wine. (Walk side by side, together, down the main aisle to the back of the church). Another server is in standby by the credence table. He takes the cap off the water cruet and has it ready.

- When you come to the head of the aisle, step to the side of the priest and deacon, facing sideways. Be prepared to take whatever they give you (wine flagon, ciborium, or money basket). The one who takes the money basket proceeds immediately to place it on the second highest step (not the altar level) in the middle (lined up with the center of the altar) and then join other servers. If you have the bread or wine, proceed immediately to the sanctuary, and line up with the other servers. The idea is that all three servers converge in a line to let the priest and deacon go by. You should stand about four feet from the altar, with plenty of room for them to pass by.
- **Trip #2: Bread / wine / water.** The third server who was in standby with the water brings that water cruet toward the side of the altar, joining the other two in a line. The three of you should now be together, side by side, at the priest and deacon's left side of the altar. Wait for the deacon's cue. The deacon will take first the bread, then the wine flagon, then the water from you.
- All three servers return to the credence table *together*. (One is now carrying the water cruet, the other two are empty handed.
- Server puts down the water cruet on the credence table.

• Note: If incense is being used, there is an extra step before Trip #3, hand washing. For Masses without incense, go on to Trip #3.

Incense Sequence is: Thurifer comes over with the THURIBLE and the BOAT, and helps deacon and priest with the incense. He or she steps out of the way as soon as priest is finished with it, steps up again when priest is done going around the altar, to take it from him and hang it back up on the incense stand. Immediately after this, the two hand washers step forward. They are waiting several steps away from the altar, with the pitcher and towel ready. The thurifer will return to the altar after he has hung up the thurible, ready to take the empty wine flagon from the deacon. [See below]

- **Trip #3: Hand Washing.** All three servers now return immediately together to the altar (do not wait). Two bring the finger bowl /water pitcher; and the finger towel; the third comes up empty handed. Stay a few steps behind the deacon so you are out of the way while he finishes pouring the wine. As soon as the priest is done blessing the bread and the wine, he will bow in front of the altar. Next, he will turn toward the servers to have you wash his hands (You should already be waiting for him at this time. Make sure you place the finger bowl under his hands, where it will catch the water.
- At about the same time, the deacon should be finished pouring the wine flagon into the side chalices. Wait for him to return the empty flagon to you. All three servers are still together.
- The priest now bows to the servers, and you bow to him at the same time.

### ***Communion Procedures***

- At the CONSECRATION (when the priest lifts up the bread, saying “This is my body...” and lifts up the chalice saying “This is the cup of my blood”) he may ask you before Mass to ring the CONSECRATION BELLS, to highlight the importance of what is happening here. The bells should be rung after the words “Do this in memory of me” after the priest has raised the ciborium, and the chalice to show them to the people. Bells should be rung three times in short succession. The priest will also ask you to ring the bells *once* earlier, at the *epiclesis*, the time when the priest stretches his hands out over the gifts asking God to send His Holy Spirit down upon them.
- At the Sign of Peace (when the priest or deacon says, “Let us offer each other the sign of peace,” you should take several steps forward to approach the priest to offer him the sign of peace. Out of respect for the office of the priest, you offer him the sign of peace *before* you offer it to your fellow servers. As always, you do not keep him waiting.
- Next, the three servers come up together: two servers bring up all of the empty ciboria (but no more than 2 at a time) to the priest’s **left side** of the altar (closest to you). One might be empty handed. As soon as you are done placing the ciboria on the altar, return to your place and kneel until you receive Communion.
- Wait until you see the priest give Communion to Himself. As soon as he does this, the three of you should come up together and wait a few steps away from the altar to receive.
- Immediately after receiving Communion, step back completely out of the way to let the Communion ministers go down the steps. As soon as the people in the pews begin to receive Communion, one server (the book bearer) should bring back the MISSAL and stand from the altar. The other servers will return to their seats. Everything else should be left on the altar for the priest and deacon to purify after Communion. As soon as you arrive at your seat, kneel or be seated in prayer while the people are receiving Communion.

#### **• Mass with a priest and a deacon**

- After people have finished receiving Communion, the servers line up by the side of the altar, as soon as you see the deacon put the sacred Hosts back in the tabernacle.
- At Masses where there is more than one chalice, one server will bring the tray and set it out on the altar.
- Wait for the deacon to assemble things together, and then carry back whatever he gives you to the credence table.
- Never carry anything in addition to the priest’s chalice.
- You will need 3 or 4 servers depending on how many vessels there are.

- **Mass with a Priest and no deacon**
- After people have finished receiving Communion, the servers line up by the side of the servers table, as soon as you see the priest put the sacred Hosts back in the tabernacle.
- One server only will bring the water cruet, uncapped, over to the priest (standby mode). Wait for him to pour the water into the chalice(s) and then give it back to you.
- Return to the credence table to put the water cruet away, and then come back with your partners.
- At Masses where there is more than one chalice, one server will bring the tray and set it out on the altar for the priest.
- All three or four servers should come, depending on how many vessels there are to return.
- Never carry anything in addition to the priest's chalice.

- Walk quickly and efficiently. If you do have to take two trips, then only the number of servers come up on the second trip who are needed. You will have to look at the altar and calculate that number. (Example: two items left, only two servers come up; one item left only one server comes up).
- Be prepared to bring the missal book right away as soon as you have cleared the altar, anticipating the priest standing and saying "Let us pray." If you have to take two trips to clear the altar, and one server is left behind, then he should be the one to get the book ready so the priest is not kept waiting.

### ***End of Mass and Closing Prayer***

- After Communion and Purification, you should be prepared to move into action as soon as the priest begins the closing prayer (the "Let us pray") If there is time after clearing the altar, the crucifer/book bearer might already have the missal book in his lap (even better: open to the right page where the ribbon is marked to the closing prayer).
- When the priest says or chants "Let us pray", the book-bearer brings the missal to the priest. The other servers remain standing at your seats. When he finishes the prayer, book-bearer brings the book directly back to the credence table. As the priest says the final greeting and blessing ("the Lord be with you!"), the candle bearers should get the candles, and the crucifer should get the processional Cross. Stand in front of your seats waiting.

- As soon as priest and deacon REVERENCES THE ALTAR (stoop down to kiss it) the three servers proceed down the step with the Cross and candles. **Do not wait. You should already be waiting in position at the foot of the altar by the time the priest and deacon get down the steps.** Line up in front of the altar the same way you stood at the beginning of Mass: directly in front and centered around it, with the candles on the outside, leaving room for the priest and deacon in the middle.

ALTAR
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candle crucifer deacon priest (thurifer) candle
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- You will be watching the priest and deacon out of the corner of your eye. When the priest and deacon genuflect to the tabernacle, you just bow your head at the same time if you are carrying something. (If you are not carrying anything, genuflect with them).
- Then crucifer leads the procession out, followed by candles. Priest and deacon are behind you. Walk a little faster than when you came in, but don't run.

## **Quick Reference Guides (Crib sheets)**

### **Sunday Mass Offertory**

1. Priest's Chalice, Side Chalices, Missal & Stand
2. Crucifer takes Evangeliary stand off altar, steps back to prepare water
3. Two servers lead offertory
4. Three servers join in line, with wide aisle for priest
5. Give gifts to priest & deacon
6. Crucifer waits for empties
7. Two return to credence table. Get pitcher and hand towel
8. (At incense Mass, give priest incense)
9. Wash hands
10. Three return together

### **Weekday Chapel Offertory**

1. Chalice and Book (B&C)
2. Bread and Chalices (B&C)
3. Water & Wine (W&W)
4. Hand washing

### **Weekday Church Offertory (School Mass, Lent)**

1. Missal Book & Priest's Chalice
2. Side chalice(s) & Water Cruet
3. Lead offertory (school Mass)
4. Gifts to priest
5. return to credence table, then altar to wash hands
6. **Return for empties**



## ***Sunday Mass Offertory summary***

There are three trips to the altar for the offertory part of Mass

- **Trip #1:**

Bring up: (Standing your left to right)

Tray of **side chalices, Priest's chalice; Missal and Stand**

Bring back: EVANGLIARY stand

Other notes: Don't forget. You separate. Server on left to credence table for water, other two right down the steps to lead offertory procession (bread, wine, money)

- **Trip #2:**

Bring up: **Bread** (hosts in ciborium) or **Wine** (in flagon); **water cruet**;

Bring back: two are empty-handed, one has water cruet

Other notes: The three of you have to join together in a line before you make the trip. (You are coming from three different places: from credence table with water, from side of altar (where placed money); and from the steps (with bread or wine). The priest might give you the bread or the wine. Be prepared to take whatever he gives you.

- **Trip #3:**

Bring up: **water pitcher and finger bowl; finger towel; empty handed**

Bring back: **water pitcher and finger bowl; finger towel; empty wine flagon**

Other notes: Remember to hold the towel open. (Hold it by its corners, not folded up)

## **Beginning of Mass (reverencing altar)**

ALTAR

candle crucifer priest deacon (thurifer) candle

Priest will line up directly in the center of the altar. Servers should be on either side of him, flanking him and evenly spaced.

## ***Daily Mass procedures***

Daily Mass procedures are a lot like Sunday, but simpler. You might be in the main Church, or the Chapel, depending on time of year.

After Mass is over, you will bow to the Crucifix in the sacristy together with the priest.

When you are in the main church, it is almost exactly like Sunday Mass, with less parts. But Mass is a little different in the Chapel.

### **Procedures for the Chapel**

- Mass set up is the same as for Sunday Mass, except that there is no offertory procession . So in this case, put the ciborium with the bread on the credence table, together with the wine and water cruets.
- Before Mass, light the two candles on the altar.
- The procession is similar to the one for Sunday Mass, but simpler. You will not carry the candles or the Cross. You will lead the priest in. When you get to the altar, bow to the altar together with the priest.
- Go directly to your seats making sure that you do not get in the way of the priest.
- For the recessional at the end of Mass, the servers should go in front of the altar as soon as the priest begins moving and wait for him. Make sure to leave a space for the priest in the middle between you. You will bow together to the altar and then return to the sacristy by the back door.
- When the priest goes to distribute Communion, leave everything on the altar except the MISSAL and stand, and the tray for the chalices (if any). Take these back to the credence table.
- After the priest distributes Communion, one server brings him the water cruet (uncapped) and waits for him to pour into the chalice at the altar. Go back to your place as soon as he pours and returns the cruet to you.
- After the priest is finished purifying, both servers come up together to clear the vessels off the altar. You might need to take two trips.
- As soon as you have cleared the altar, one server gets the missal ready.

## ***Special procedures***

There are some special procedures at Mass, for example on SOLEMNITIES.

This section describes some of them.

### **Gospel Procession**

#### **Simple Gospel procession (candles alone)**

As soon as the second reading ends (“The word of the Lord” proclaimed by the lector), the people will stand for the Gospel. *Immediately* get up and get the candles from the credence table. (In advance, make sure they are still lit). Walk over side by side and wait for the priest to bless the deacon. Immediately walk over to the far end of the altar and wait for the deacon to raise the EVANGELIARY during the alleluia chant. As soon as he turns, continue walking to escort him over to the AMBO.

Stand facing each other on either side of the pulpit.

As soon as he finished, escort him back and return to your seats.

If there is no deacon, just get up and take candles to the far side of the altar as soon as see priest rising from his chair. Wait for him until he has turned after raising the EVANGELIARY.

#### **Gospel procession with incense**

The timing of this is very tricky. You have no time to waste, because there are only a few seconds to get ready.

Before the second reading ends, the thurifer should get up and pick up the thurible and boat and wait in standby. The candle bearers should also have their candles ready.

The instant people stand for the Gospel (priest will give the signal), the thurifer brings the thurible and boat over toward the priest and deacon. As soon as the priest has blessed the deacon, he will expect you to be ready to assist him with the incense. Hand the boat to the priest and raise the lid on the thurible. (You must do this quickly and safely).

The thurifer then leads the candlebearers over to the far side of the altar. (Stand with the thurifer in the middle, and the candle bearers side by side behind him. The thurifer should step forward far enough so that the candlebearers are just past the edge of the altar).

Thurifer goes behind the ambo, about three steps back from it (so deacon can get by). Candle bearers flank the ambo as above. After the deacon has announced the Gospel (“A reading from the Holy Gospel according to ...”) he will turn around. Thurifer steps up to meet him, handing him the thurible.

Deacon incenses the Gospel book and then hands thurible back to thurifer. While he is proclaiming the Gospel, let the thurifer swing gently by your side like a pendulum.

After deacon finished proclaiming the Gospel, return to your seats in the same order you came.

## ***Funeral procedures***

The funeral Mass is similar to a Sunday Mass with these changes:

- The priest uses an additional book to read prayers from, in addition to the missal. This is usually a black book called an *ordo*.
- The Mass usually begins in the atrium, where the priest greets the family and the CASKET.
- One server stands to the priest's right holding the ASPERSORIUM and ASPERGILLUM (holy water materials).
- Another server stands to the priest's left, holding the PALL. He gives it to the undertaker after the priest has prayed over the casket and sprinkled it with holy water.
- Third server holds the cross near the casket while the prayers are being said.
- After the pall is placed, proceed to the aisle for the entrance procession (crucifer first) and begin the procession as usual.
- The COLLECT prayer ("let us pray") begins *immediately* after the priest REVERENCES THE ALTAR, so have the missal ready to bring over to him right away.
- Mass continues as usual.
- After Communion, the procedure is a little different.
  - At the *let us pray*, one server brings the MISSAL book as usual.
  - Immediately after the conclusion of the prayer, he goes back to get the crucifix.
  - In the meantime, two other servers come forward with the incense & boat and one empty handed, prepared to hold the black funeral book.
  - All three servers follow the priest down the steps in front of the casket.
  - The THURIFER stands to the priest's left. The server with the black book stands immediately to the priest's right.
  - The CRUCIFER goes to the top of the casket opposite the PASCHAL CANDLE, facing the casket.

- The priest will say prayers from the black book and then incense around the casket. The CRUCIFER should make sure he is not in the way. The book bearer just waits for the priest to return.
- After the priest returns from incensing, he reads a final prayer from the book.
- At the close of the Mass (with the prayer ‘In peace now, let us take our brother/sister to his/her place of rest.’) the servers who are now standing on the steps get ready to reverence the altar. This is a little different from Sunday Mass because the casket is in the middle.
- They should proceed as follows: Stand single file, with the thurifer furthest back, then the crucifer, then the book bearer.
- Turn to face the altar. When the priest genuflects, the book bearer will genuflect with him. The CRUCIFER and THURIFER will nod their head.
- Proceed down the aisle slowly and head into the atrium (not the sacristy). THURIFER should swing the THURIBLE while walking.
- Because this is a close and confined area, thurifer should try to step outside the doors or into the vestibule area.
- Other servers wait in the atrium, leaving a space for the casket in the center of the room. Book bearer should set down his book or give it to the adult funeral volunteers, and be ready to take the PALL from the undertaker after he uncovers the casket.
- After the pall is removed, you are finished and can return to the sacristy.

### ***Procedures for Adoration and Exposition***

On Monday morning, we combine Eucharistic adoration with Mass.

Here are the differences:

- When people start receiving Holy Communion, take the altar cross off the altar and bring it to the credence table. Then, take the MONSTRANCE off the credence table and carefully place it on the altar, in the center, sideways, with the “keyhole” opening to the right.
- After the closing prayer of the Mass, there is no final blessing.
- As soon as the closing prayer is completed, the book bearer should place the missal on the chair (don’t spend the extra time taking it back to the credence table) and proceed with his partner *immediately* to the front of the altar to wait for the priest. Make sure you leave him room to get in between the two of you.

- In front of the MONSTRANCE on the altar, you will kneel together (on both knees) together with the priest. As soon as he gets up, get up with him and then GENUFLECT together with him to the Blessed Sacrament.
- Then turn and lead the priest back into the sacristy.

### ***Prayers for Altar Servers***

Once you are finished setting up for Mass, you will have some time to pray.

There prayer books containing prayers and stories of the lives of the saints in the sacristy for you to read. It is also a good idea to pray the Rosary. (You should always carry a Rosary in your pocket).

### **Altar Servers' Prayer**

Loving Father, creator of the universe, you call your people to worship, to be with you and one another at Mass. I thank you for having called me to assist others in their prayer to you. May I be worthy of the trust placed in me and through my example and service bring others closer to you. I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who is Lord forever and ever. Amen.