

Altar Server Manual

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Introduction

This manual was originally written, edited and published for the instruction of the altar servers over a

decade ago. Since its first publication to the internet it has been used by many parishes worldwide for their own training programs. Consequently updates were undertaken several times as different parishes suggested additions and changes.

This manual is not a theological study course or a substitute for the Catechism of the Catholic Church. It is a manual for the training of altar servers. After saying that, I have included some theological information found fruitful in aiding trainees with the reasons why they are expected to perform in special liturgical ways.

This manual is limited in scope to the servers duties during Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church. This manual is intended as a general guide. Your pastor may require different procedures.

Since its publication on the internet is has been modified by other parishes and Rites of the Catholic Church to suite parish, diocese and Rites to be useful in their needs.

Altar servers perform most of the functions of the former minor order of ordained clerics known as acolytes from the Greek word *akolouthos* (attendant). Church writings from the second and third centuries discuss the role of acolytes, giving the office great importance and honor in the history of the Church. Although institution into the ministry of acolyte is reserved to lay men, the diocesan bishop may permit the liturgical functions of the instituted acolyte to be carried out by altar servers, men and women, boys and girls. Altar servers are not ordained, they are commissioned by their parish priest. The determination that women and girls may function as servers in the liturgy should be made by the bishop on the diocesan level so that there might be a uniform diocesan policy.

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 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.

Altar servers are chosen from among the faithful who display a desire to participate in an intimate way during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is an extreme privilege to kneel so close to the altar as our loving Savior, Jesus Christ, becomes truly present, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity upon the altar.

A server is uniquely joined in the Heavenly Supper of the Lamb of God and serves in the company of myriads of angles eternally singing "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

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Requirements

I General Requirements

When Serving in the presence of Our Savior and surrounded by His Heavenly Host it is both wise and necessary for a server to perform all assigned duties with attention, dignity and reverence. Just as Jesus “emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant . . .” servers should set aside their own preferences and attend to every action of the Divine Liturgy as a team, all rehearsing the Divine Celebration in the same manner and style as directed by the parish priest and performed by their companion servers.

The server, participating as instructed, will enter into a fuller participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass while assisting the priests and deacons as the mysteries of the Upper Room and Calvary are represented to God’s people. All actions of the server are woven from signs and symbols whose meaning is rooted in the works of creation and in human culture, specified by events in the Old Testament and fully revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is imperative that all servers do their assigned tasks in the prescribed form and manner.

The Sanctuary is holy, and access to it is restricted to a very few men. Do not abuse the privilege you have been given to enter the sanctuary for service by being disrespectful or entering the holy place unnecessarily

1. Servers will be required to vest in either cassock with surplice or alb and cincture as directed by the parish priest.
2. Close worn under an alb should be such that they do not have patterns, pictures, stripes, checks or any other design which will show through the alb.
3. Dress shoes and appropriate socks or stockings must be worn. The sanctuary is no place for sneakers, running shoes, or any other sports footwear.
4. Servers carry the cross, the processional candle(s), hold 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 during the preparation of the gifts or assist him when he receives the gifts from the people, wash the hands of the priest, hold the Communion patten and assist the priest celebrant and deacon as necessary.

II Specifics

Who may serve?

A server can be any person who has received first confession and Holy Communion. Each bishop and each parish may have additional requirements but basically there are no other universal restriction about age or sex.

Why serve?

The leader of the server training should discern the reasons why a candidate wishes to serve and be reasonably certain that the candidate, and not parental pressures, are the main motivation. A reluctant or disinterested server is a distraction to the priest, parishioners and fellow servers. A poor attitude can have a negative effect on the overall parish faithful. It is not uncommon for a parent to want a child to be a server but the child has no desire and this is a disaster.

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 and Holy, Holy, Holy. If they cannot take the time to memorize these basic prayers they may be demonstrating a lack of sufficient interest in being a good server. Not knowing these prayers usually results in a server who just stands there looking out of touch and in ignorance of our most sacred act of worship.

In addition have servers memorize three passages from scripture to help them appreciate the Sacrificial nature of the Eucharist. These are the ones I use but there are many others which can be used to start a discussion about why we have the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Exodus 12:21-24. ***“Then Moses called all the elders of Israel, and said to them, “Select lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood which is in the basin; and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. For the Lord will pass through to slay the Egyptians; and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to slay you. You shall observe this rite as an ordinance for you and for your sons for ever.”***

John 1:36 ***“Behold the Lamb of God.”***

John 6: 51-59 ***“I AM the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh. The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat? So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever. This he said in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.”*** Remember it was Judas Iscariot who Jesus referred to at the end of this chapter.

1 Corinthians 11:26-31 ***“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we should not be judged.”***

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, preparation of credence table, chalice, mass colors, etc. On the job training is very important. New servers should not be allowed to be alone without the guidance of experienced servers for several masses.
2. All server candidates must be able to demonstrate their ability to genuflect, bow and make the sign of the cross. It is an eyeopener to see that many candidates never heard of the sign of the cross or genuflection.
3. They must understand genuflecting is reserved for and to the Real Presence of the Lord Jesus Christ whether on exposed on the altar or reserved in the tabernacle. Genuflecting is a form of

worship of our God and should only be done to Him alone. It would be a grave mistake to genuflect to any altar, cross, picture or crucifix. Catholics do not worship (latria) anyone but the ONE TRIUNE GOD, Father Son and Holy Spirit. Praise be God forever.

4. 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 propitiation of our sins.

Sometimes servers are very young and must be shown the proper way to genuflect, bow, kneel, stand, hold and care for the Communion patten and sit during Mass. They should be required to demonstrate sufficient form and dexterity in the these motions before being commissioned as servers.

Duties

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

1. The servers first duty is to prepare for the Mass. The server should arrive at the Church early, usually 15 to 20 minutes before Mass, to perform the appropriate setup for their parish.
2. The Server must also stay after Mass to return the Church to its non service condition.
3. Servers should not handle any consecrated bread or wine unless specifically directed by the priest or deacon in an emergency situation. If the server suspects any consecrated fragments or wine remain on the sacred vessels they must inform the priest or deacon immediately.
4. 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. Altar servers are on duty from the time they enter the sanctuary at the start of Mass until the priest exits at the end of Mass. Thirst, itches, and the like are not a bodily necessities and therefore are never an excuse for leaving the sanctuary before the final procession.
5. Servers have many specific duties depending on the parish priest. These duties include serving the wine and water to the priest or deacon, washing the priests hands, ringing bells, using the patten at communion time, standing, sitting and kneeling. Depending on the parish they may also be required to prepare the ciborii, chalice, credence table and cleaning up after Mass. In any of these positions they should maintain a straight formal posture. If you have never seen a formal posture look to the military for an example of how to sit, stand and kneel. If you have a free hand while holding some object you should place the other hand in the military attention position or place it across your heart. Pastor's choice.
6. In the standing position hands should be held in the praying position as seen in most Christian artwork. Never hold hands in any position which would be more appropriate at a bus stop or on a corner.
7. In the kneeling position hands should be held as in the standing position. You must kneel upright, not slouching or sitting on your heels.
8. When sitting the hands should be held on the lap or at the sides. Never slouch. Never play with your cinctures, pick your nose or otherwise cause a public reason to take notice of you. You are not on stage; you are serving at the altar of Our God. Note: Holding hands in the prayer position was a medieval sign of submission to a manner lord and its very appropriate to signify submission to our Divine Lord. Clasping hands and kneeling may be difficult due to arthritis or other physical limitations should be the only reason to excuse these activities. Remember, you are seen by all the parishioners and how you conduct yourself is important to their understanding of the eternal Lamb's Supper and His Sacrificial Act being represented for us in time.

9. When assisting the priest with the Communion patten during Holy Communion the server must always hold the patten level from the time it is picked up from its storage place until it is returned to the priest or deacon after all have received. It must never be tilted or turned so as to spill any fragments of the Body of Jesus which may have been caught by it. It is the responsibility of the server holding the patten to protect the Body of Jesus from falling on the floor. A new server should practice using the patten with another server till proficiency is obtained. They must be instructed in how to hold a patten properly during communion in order to catch any fragment of the Host that may fall. This should be practiced until there is no hesitation even when people receive in the hand.
10. Every altar server must attend every Mass they are scheduled for. When a server cannot be present, that server must arrange for a replacement.

Proper Dress

At home the server should dress in the proper clothes and footwear for Mass. If albs are your liturgical uniform, remember what you wear underneath an alb will show through. For this reason, the server should be sure to avoid bold stripes and designs of any kind which may show thru their alb. It is recommended that you wear solid colors, but white would be the most appropriate choice of shirts and blouses. Likewise pants, dresses and skirts should also be of some solid color.

Dress shoes should be worn. Sneakers, no matter how expensive, are for casual dress and sporting events and have no place at the Altar of Our God. Servers must show respect for the Mass they attend at. Here in the U.S.A., where money is available for proper shoes the wearing of old, unpolished or tattered footwear is not tolerated.

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. *“O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker!”* and *“At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bend.”*

Genuflecting to the tabernacle is required; bowing is not an option to genuflecting. Latin Rite Catholics genuflect to Our Lord alone. In all Catholic churches, once the consecration of the bread and wine take place and the actual substance of the bread and wine (that which makes bread and wine what it is) is transposed with the actual substantial and real presence of Jesus the God-Man Jesus, thus making it no longer bread and wine but just the appearance of bread and wine. While the appearance of the bread and wine remain it is actually the real and true Body and Blood of the Risen Lord, Jesus. While His presence is truly present within the Sacred Scriptures and whenever two or more are gathered in His Name, that presence is subordinate to the actual and real presence in the consecrated Eucharist and we owe our worship to Him.

Catholics never genuflect to the bible or to a group of people meeting in the Name of Jesus be we do genuflect to the Person Jesus present in the Eucharist.

All Catholics should be aware of whenever He is present on the altar after the Consecration, during Eucharistic Adoration or is reserved in the tabernacle everyone, servers included, 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.

Bowing of the head is done for a priest after presenting the wine and water and after washing his hands, the altar or in some circumstances a crucifix, never to the deacon. We bow to the altar because it is the table of the Christ's Saving Sacrifice as The Lamb of God.

We bow to the priest because he offers the Body and Blood of Our Savior to the Father in the Person of Jesus and therefore should shown honor.

When the tabernacle is not centrally aligned to the altar, one should bow to the altar when passing in front of it. If entering the sanctuary in procession and all genuflect be sure to realize you are know you are genuflecting to the Real Presence of Jesus in the tabernacle not the altar you may be facing. I have noticed many people genuflecting to the altar or crucifix when the tabernacle is removed to a side altar - this is not appropriate and should never be done know what you are doing homage to - God not wood, metal or stone. Catholics as well as all our Christian brothers should only kneel and genuflect to God.

When He is reserved in the tabernacle He is just as present as when He is present in Heaven, on the Altar or in the monstrance. Servers should make frequent visits to Him in the tabernacle and spend some time with Him. This is especially helpful when done before Mass.

The church sanctuary light, hanging by the tabernacle, will indicate when Jesus is reserved in the tabernacle. When it is not lit, the tabernacle is empty as on Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Usually it is lighted at all other times since Jesus is reserved there. If this is hard to understand, so is gravity so ask Him when you see Him.

Servers should remember that there is an exception to genuflecting. Whenever they are carrying things like crosses, sacred vessels, books, candles or other object you should not genuflect.

How to Genuflect

There are two prescribed methods of genuflection.

1. Then 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 determination is made by the parish priest
 - 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.

Every action of the server has an effect on the parishioners' faith. What would someone think if they saw an altar server genuflecting to a cross or statue? Would they think you a wood worshiper? Or would you just be written off as idiot?

Preparation for Mass

The wine and wine cruets to be used at the service must be rinsed with clean water before filling. The sacrarium (piscina) is not to be used to dispose of the rinse water. Use a normal sink for washing out the cruets.

Fill one cruet with wine from the altar wine supply. This is usually a bottle with a label stating it is altar wine and most probably 18% alcohol. It is not for drinking by altar servers.

Fill the other cruet with cold fresh water from the tap or a water supply designated for this purpose.

Ask the priest or deacon how many hosts are required and place them in the number of ciboriums required.

Prepare the chalice as follows:

- Consult with either the priest or deacon as to the mass colors or look in the ordo to determine the colors for yourself. The information in the ordo will usually be correct unless it is a special mass, e.g., a funeral mass.
- Place the chalice on the preparation table with the cross on the base of the chalice facing you.
- Open the Purificator and place it over the chalice so the ends hang down to the left and right and the cross on the Purificator is aligned with the cross on the chalice.
- Place the paten on top of the Purificator.
- Place a large host in the center of the paten with the impressed cross (if on the host) aligned with the cross on the base of the chalice.
- Cover the paten and large host with the pall.
- With a chalice veil of the proper color (see above) cover the chalice as directed by local customs.
- Take a Burse of the appropriate color (see above) and insert a clean corporal inside. If the Burse already contains a corporal do not replace it with a new one. Place the Burse on top of the chalice veil aligned with the veil.

Place the prepared chalice, ciborium if required, filled cruets, washing bowl, towels and any extra chalices required on the credence table. Some parishes that have a procession may wish the wine and ciborium or filled paten to be placed on a table at the entrance of the church for use in the offertory

procession.

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.

If a small prayer book is used for the opening prayer, a server should prepare the book containing the opening and closing prayers and check with the priest or deacon to make sure that the place marker is in the pages for the days Mass. Return the prayer book to its place.

If candles are used in an offertory procession, ask the priest or your parents how many collections there will be and inform the other servers.

Duties During Mass

The cross-bearers will lead the procession into and from the sanctuary. After entering the sanctuary the cross-bearer will bow to the tabernacle (altar if tabernacle is at a side altar) and then proceed to place the cross in its stand, normally facing the priest as the people can all see the central crucifix behind the altar. Never genuflect when carrying anything, including the procession cross.

The candle-bearers follow the cross-bearer in procession and bow to the tabernacle (altar, if tabernacle is at a side altar). Place the procession candles on or as near to the altar steps as possible.

All servers will then proceed to their assigned locations genuflect facing the tabernacle (from their assigned positions) with the priest (and the deacon). If the tabernacle is on a side altar face the tabernacle when genuflecting.

During the *Glory to God in the Highest (Lord have mercy . . . during lent)*, the appointed server may be required to pick up the small sacramentary and wait for the priest to say, *Let us pray*. When the priest says, *Let us pray*, server three will proceed directly in front of the priest and open the book to the pre-marked position. Hold the book open so the priest can read the prayer. Keep the pages flat, your fingers out of the text and do not move about while the priest is reading. When the priest is finished, close the sacramentary and return it to its place. Sit down in your chair for the readings.

At the end of the second reading, during the Alleluia the candle bearers, if used during the gospel reading, should get up and walk to the procession candles on or near the altar steps. The servers should genuflect to the tabernacle if behind the altar (or bow to the altar if the tabernacle is on a side altar) and then pick up their candles. They should stand facing the altar with their candles and wait for the priest or deacon.

The candle bearers (if used during the gospel reading) should then bow with the deacon or priest, do not genuflect with candles, and then proceed to your stations in front of the pulpit or ambo when the priest or deacon move to it. The other servers should stand at their normal positions and stand as the people stand. The candle bearers should stand at the gospel positions, facing the reader of the Gospel for it is the Word of God. All servers should pay very close attention to the words of the gospel and homily. The arm that is holding the upper part of the candle should point toward the people. Maintain these positions during the gospel and then return the candles to altar step again when the Gospel is over, Genuflect to the tabernacle, and return to your seats. Sit down and listen to the homily.

All servers sit with the people during the collection.

If the candle-bearers are used in the procession of the gifts they should, during the last collection, when the ushers are 3/4 of the way down the middle aisle, stand up. Genuflect to the tabernacle. Walk to procession candles. Genuflect to the tabernacle. Pick up your candles and turn toward the people. Walk to the back of the church and wait for the rest of the gift procession. When the ushers have the procession ready, turn toward the altar and lead the gift procession to the priest.

- The candle-bearers should walk slowly together (starting on your left foot) toward the sanctuary. When walking hold the candle underneath with your inside hand and grasp the candle stick with your outside hand, holding your elbow out toward the people. If you are a very young server it may help to loop your thumb of your inside hand in your cincture to help hold up the candle.
- Never carry anything but your candle!
- When you reach the sanctuary, pass around the priest and deacon and proceed to the front of the altar.
- Set down your candles and genuflect to the tabernacle if it is behind the altar, bow to the altar if the tabernacle is on a side altar. Move to your positions at the credence table or assist the priest in accepting the gifts if no other server is available..

The cross bearer and remaining optional server may stand when the priest and deacon stand and follow them to the assigned positions. Servers should wait at the left side, and behind, the priest. One server should take the water and wine cruets from the priest and place them on the credence table. If there is no deacon. Another server should take anything else brought up in the procession and place it on the credence table.

Remove the tops from the wine and water cruets and stand with toes touching the altar step and hand the deacon or priest the wine or water as he directs. Some parishes have the server pour the water and wine instead of handing on the cruets in which case you will pour until signaled to stop by the priest or deacon. Stand until the deacon or priest is finished. If it is the priest who you hand to or pour the water and wine, bow to the priest and then return to the credence table and recap the wine cruet and place it on the credence table. Remember not to bow to the deacon. We bow to the priest because he acts in the person of Christ during the consecration of the Mass.

After the offering,

- With a single server - Unfold the wash towel and place it over your less used arm. With your good arm hold the water cruet. Pick up the washing bowl and hold it with your towel arm. Approach the Altar again and pour the water over the priest's hands, collecting the water in the bowl. Let the priest take the towel and when he has placed the towel back on your arm bow to him and return to the credence table. Neatly arrange the

cruets, towel, and bowl on the table.

- With several servers - Servers should return to the altar step and stand there with your toes touching the step. When the priest comes to you, one server holding the bowl and water should pour 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 cruets, towel, and bowl on the table.
- No one is to sit down at this time. All servers should return to the altar and remain standing there until all kneel.

All servers return to their assigned positions 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 in your parish. Typical times for ringing the bell are:

- Once, when the priest makes the sign of the cross over the gifts and calls on the Holy Spirit to come upon the gifts.
- Once at the elevation of the Consecrated Host.
- Once at the elevation of the Consecrated Wine.
- Once when the priest drinks the Precious Blood of Jesus.

Sometimes the bell(s) are rung three times in some parishes in honor of the Trinity; bells rung three distinct times for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But this is up to the parish priest.

Because the elevation of the Body and Blood of Jesus are solemn times, (the bread and wine we offered just before has now become the real BODY and BLOOD of our God, Jesus Christ) we should ring the bells reverently. At these times it is proper to look at the elevated Jesus and say to yourself "*My Lord and my God.*" following the example of Thomas the Apostle when he met the Resurrected Jesus.

After Communion of Faithful - After the priest or deacon returns to the altar the appointed server should remove the covers from the water (and wine in some parishes) cruet(s) and carry them to the altar for use in the purification of the Chalice, Ciboria, Ciborium, and paten. Pour the water over the priest's or deacon's fingers as directed and offer to pour the wine if used. If attending a priest, bow to him when done and return to the credence table and cover the cruets.

Server should assist the deacon or priest in removing all objects from the altar after the purification and prior to the Closing Prayer.

Closing Prayers - All sit until the priest says: "Let us pray." If a server is assigned to hold the prayer book, the server will proceed directly in front of the priest and open the prayer book to the proper page, hold the book for the priest as with the opening prayer. When the priest finishes, close the sacramentary and return it to its stand.

Exit Procession - When the priest kisses the altar, the candle bearers should proceed to the front of the altar, genuflect to the tabernacle, pick up the candles, and return to their standard positions. Cross-bearer should pick up the processional cross.

When the priest and deacon genuflect, all servers not carrying anything should genuflect also. Those carrying things should just bow. All servers then turn and proceed quickly to their procession positions.

All processions are always in order of rank. Cross bearer first, then candle bearers, other servers, lector, extra-ordinary ministers, deacons, priests, bishops, cardinals, the pope.

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 - you will get soot on altar and floor. If you use your fingers like some older people do not complain about getting burnt.

Remove Chalice and Ciboria from the credence table and place them on the preparation table or where directed.

Place used Purificator in the appropriate linen bag.

Return chalice veil to its storage place.

Place corporal and purse to their storage place.

Place chalice and gold paten in their place.

Place linen covered paten in its place.

Remove cruets from credence table. Pour any remaining wine back into the wine bottle and pour any unused water in the washing sink

Rinse the cruets with clean water and place them on the drying rack if available.

Remove bowl, towel, and dish from credence table. Dry bowl with towel. Place towel in used linen bag. Place bowl and dish in storage place.

Remove your liturgical clothing and hang it neatly in its proper place.

Clean up any messes you made on the credence and preparation tables.

Pick up the lectionary (book of readings) from the Sanctuary and place it closed on the pulpit.

Remove all notes and papers from the sanctuary and pulpit and place them where directed.

Definitions

Ablution cup - covered dish of water on the side of the tabernacle used by the priest, deacon or extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist to wash their fingers after distributing Communion.

Ambo - The platform, lectern or pulpit from which the reading and homily are given.

Burse - A square container for holding the corporal. It is selected for the liturgical color of the day. Used Corporals should always be placed in the proper container for sacred cloths after mass.

Cassock - A long tunic like garment which reaches from the neck to the heels which is worn by some servers and clergy.

Chalice - A cup of precious metal that holds the wine which becomes the Blood of Jesus after the consecration. All chalices should be placed in their places after Mass. If the Chalices were left unpurified by the priest or deacon for some reason they should be left out on the presentation table for purification by the priest or deacon. Never put an unpurified chalice away.

Chalice veil - A cloth covering used to hide the chalice and paten up to the offertory and after Communion. It is selected by the liturgical color for the service.

Ciborium - A large cup or container of precious metal with a cover of the same material which will hold the Body of Jesus after the consecration for distribution of Holy Communion to the faithful.

Communion Paten - A small saucer shaped plate of precious metal with a handle, usually wooden, used by the altar server to protect the Body of Jesus from falling to the ground if a minister or communicant accidentally drop a fragment of the Host.

Corporal - A white linen cloth, usually with a cross in the center, used to protect any particles of the Precious Body and Blood of Jesus from falling to the altar cloth. It is always folded and unfolded as to protect any particles from being lost. The corporal is like the body winding sheet used to hold the crucified body or Our Lord in the tomb.

Credence Table - The table in the sanctuary where the cruets, chalices and ciborium are kept before and after the Consecration.

IHS - the first three letters of Jesus's Name in Greek and often used to decorate the altar and other church facades.

Lunette - A thin, circular receptacle, having a glass face that holds the Consecrated Host used for Adoration and Benediction. It slides into the monstrance on a little track.

Lectiary - The book of reading used for the liturgy of the word. It usually contains all the biblical reading used for the three year Sunday cycle of reading and the two year daily Mass readings.

Monstrance - This is a large, ornate vessel used to hold the Blessed Sacrament for Adoration, Benediction and solemn Eucharistic processions.

Pall - A square piece of cardboard or plastic which is covered by linen and used to cover the chalice.

Paten - A small saucer shaped plate of precious metal that holds the Host. No layperson should ever touch the paten and servers should be very careful when they have to handle it their official duties. (See Communion Paten.)

Peplum - A cloth covering used to hide the chalice and paten up to the offertory and after Communion. It is selected by the liturgical color for the service.

Piscina - A sink with it drain going directly into the ground usually fitted with a cover and lock which is used for the disposal of the following: The sacred linen wash and rinse water, used holy water, used baptismal water and blessed ashes. No other use is allowed.

Purificator - A linen cloth used by the priest or deacon to dry the chalice after washing and purifying it. Used Purificators must always be placed in the proper container for sacred cloths.

Pyx - A case, about the size of a pocket watch, in which Communion is carried to those who are sick or unable to come to church.

Sacramentary - The book containing the prayers said by the priest during the Mass.

Sacrarium - A sink with it drain going directly into the ground usually fitted with a cover and lock which is used for the disposal of the following: The sacred linen wash and rinse water, used holy water, used baptismal water and blessed ashes. No other use is allowed.

Sepulcrum - The cavity on the altar in which the relic(s) of the patron saints of that church or chapel are incased.

Stock - The metal containers used to hold the oil of the catechumen, the oil of chrism and the oil for anointing the sick.

Stoup - The holy water fountains or bowls at the entrances of the church.

Surplice - A wide sleeved, linen worn over a cassock by clergy and altar servers in some parishes.

Tabernacle - The ornate stand used to support the Monstrance during exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.