

St Paul Catholic Church - Altar Server Guide

Daily Mass Duties of the Altar Servers

(Significant Changes in Red)

The Daily Mass or Special Masses without a Deacon and often without a Youth Altar Server present a few timing challenges for those assisting the Celebrant. The following is a summation of those changes.

Sacristan Preparation

The way the Sacristan prepares the Sacred Objects is slightly different manner for a Daily Mass.

The Corporal is opened and placed on the Altar **prior** to the beginning of the Daily Mass.

The gifts to be presented are put on the small table which is placed in the center aisle (about four pews back).

The gifts include the **Small Wine Cruet** and the **Priest's Paten** with unconsecrated hosts and the Celebrant's (Priest) larger host.

1) **INTRODUCTORY RITES**

- a) **Entrance Procession** – For the Daily Mass there is no formal entrance procession from the back of the Church down the main aisle.
 - a. When the Celebrant is ready, the Altar Server(s) rings the **Sacristy Bells** (on the wall by the processional candles) and leads the celebrant by the Altar Servers Chairs' to the foot of the Sanctuary.
 - b. The Celebrant(s) and Altar Server(s) stop in the center to genuflect.
 - c. The Celebrant(s) goes up to reverence the altar.
 - d. The Altar Server moves to and stands by one of the Altar Server(s) chairs.

- b) The Celebrant greets the people. All (to include the Altar Servers) bless themselves with the Sign of the Cross.
- c) **Penitential Rite** - The Altar Server(s) should memorize the appropriate responses and say them clearly.
- d) **Kyrie** (Lord Have Mercy) - Said or sung unless used in one of the Penitential Rites.
- e) **Gloria** – **NOT** normally said during the Daily Mass.
- f) **Collect (Opening Prayer)** -
 - (1) **The Altar Server picks up the Roman Missal and proceed to the Celebrant (stopping to face the Altar and bow).** The Celebrant will opens the **Roman Missal** to the correct prayer. The **Altar Server stands with the Roman Missal opened in front of the Celebrant.**
 - (2) At the end of the Collect, the Celebrant may close the **Roman Missal.** **However, the Altar Server remains in place until the Celebrant sits down.**
 - (3) The Altar Server then moves back to his/her chair (**stopping to face the Altar and bow**) and places the Roman Missal on the small table.

2) LITURGY OF THE WORD

- a) **First Reading** - Read by the Lector. **Altar Server(s) remains seated during the first reading.**
- b) **Responsorial Psalm** - Usually led by the **Lector.** **Altar Server(s) remains seated and respond with the people.**
- c) **Second Reading** - During most weekday Masses, there is NO second reading. **Altar Server(s) remains seated during the second reading.**
- d) **Gospel Acclamation** - An “Alleluia” is sung during most of the year as a preparation for the Gospel. During Lent, “Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ” is sung. When the Acclamation is not sung, it is omitted.
- e) **Gospel Reading** -

Note - Daily Mass uses the Lectionary (not the Book of Gospels); therefore, does NOT have the Processional Candles flank the Celebrant/Deacon at the Ambo for the Gospel Reading. Likewise, on Wednesdays, while the Lectionary Processes, it does NOT have the Candle Bears escorting.

- a. Everyone stands for the proclamation of the Gospel.
 - (1) Once the Gospel has been proclaimed, the Celebrant leaves the Lectionary on the Ambo to serve as a reference during the Homily.
 - f) **Homily** - Explanation of the Sacred Readings and application to the experiences of today. **Altar Server(s) sit with his/her hands in his/her lap or on his/her legs during the homily. Do NOT cross your legs, slouch, or look at the congregation during the Homily. Your focus is on the Celebrant/Deacon giving the Homily.**
 - g) **Profession of Faith (Creed)** - The Creed is usually **NOT** recited at Daily Mass (However, it is an obligation to be said on Sundays and Solemnities.)
 - h) **Prayers of the Faithful (General Intercessions)** The Celebrant will say the **Prayers of the Faithful from the Ambo.**
- 3) **LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST** Immediately after the Prayers of the Faithful, the Celebrant and Altar **Server(s)** move to the foot of the Sanctuary to receive the gifts.
- a. **Reception of the Gifts**
 1. **Normally**, the Celebrant receives the gifts and passes them directly to an Altar Server. As the gifts are handed to you, **hold them until the Celebrant has received them all.** At which time all will bow. Following the Celebrant to the Altar, **hand the gifts to the Celebrant (He will place them on the Altar).**
 2. **If the Altar Server is handed the Wine Flagon/Wine Cruet - it is taken back to the Credence Table.**
 - b. **Preparation of the Altar** - The Altar Server will **(in order)**:

(1) Carry the **Roman Missal** and **its stand** from the **side table** to the Altar and place it on the left-hand side of the Altar (as you face the congregation).

General Rule #5 - The Roman Missal and its stand (with one exception below) are the only items that an Altar Server places (and later removes) from the Altar WITHOUT handing (or being handed) it from the Celebrant/Deacon.

(2) The **Corporal** is generally already on the Altar; **if not**, bring it from the credence table and **hand it to the Celebrant/Deacon.**

(3) Bring the **Celebrant's Chalice, Purificator and Paten** set to the Altar and **hand them to the Celebrant.**

(4) Bring the other **Chalices/Communion Cups** (usually one, [1]) to the Altar and **hand them to the Celebrant.**

(5) Bring the **Purificators** (usually one (1) – one for each Chalice) to the Altar and **hand them to the Celebrant.**

(6) **LEAVE the Cruet containing water on the Credence Table.**

Once all the other gifts are on the Altar, the Altar Server immediately goes to the **Credence Table**, **removes the stoppers** from the **Water Cruet and the Wine Flagon/Cruet**. Then he/she returns to the Altar together with the **Water Cruet and the Wine Flagon**. The **Water Cruet and the Wine Flagon** are held in the palms of the hand with the handle facing the Celebrant.

General Rule #6 – “The Handle is not Yours!”

3. If only one Altar Server, the Celebrant may direct you to place the Wine Cruet/Flagon on the Altar or do it himself.

4. If both the Water and Wine Cruets are on the Credence Table, a single Altar Server will remove the stoppers and make one trip to the Altar. When the Deacon/Celebrant is finished, return the Water and the Wine Cruets to the Credence Table and replace their stoppers.

5. The Celebrant pours unconsecrated wine from the **Cruet/Flagon** into the **Chalice/Communion Cups**. Normally, he hands the empty **Flagon** back to the Altar Server. **If he sets the empty Cruet/Flagon on the Altar you may pick it up.** Note: On occasion the Celebrant may NOT use all the wine in the Cruet/Flagon – as such it remains unconsecrated - return it back to the Credence Table.
 6. Then, the Celebrant takes the **Water Cruet** from the Altar Server, adds water to the **Chalice** and returns the **Water Cruet** to the Altar Server. The server then bows to the Celebrant and returns the **Water Cruet** and **Wine Flagon** to the **Credence Table**.
 7. At the end of the Preparation, **the Altar Server** returns to the **Credence Table**.
- c. Washing of Hands:
- (1) With one (1) Altar Server, he/she picks up the **Finger Towel** and places it over his/her left forearm.
 - (2) Next, picking up the **Lavabo Bowl** in one hand and the **Water Cruet/Pitcher** in the other and moves to the Altar.
 - (3) At the end of the Preparation of the Altar, the Celebrant turns to face the Altar Server(s). He places his hands over the **Lavabo Bowl** and the Altar Server pours a small amount of water over his fingers. Then the Altar Server turns slightly to offer the **Finger Towel** to the Celebrant.
 - (4) When the Celebrant's fingers are dry, he returns the **Finger Towel** to the Altar Server's forearm.
 - (5) The Altar Server bows and returns these items to the **Credence table**.
 - (6) After which he/she moves to his or her chair.
- d. **Eucharistic Prayer –**
- (1) **Preface of the Eucharistic Prayer - All are Standing with hands folded.**

(2) **Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy) – The Sanctus is sung or said. After the Sanctus The Altar Server(s) kneels with hands folded in prayer.**

Note – **Altar Bells** - If they are not already in position, the Altar Server who will ring the bells moves them, with the cushion they rest on, next to him/her.

(3) **Consecration** - The Altar Server with the bells needs to be especially observant of the Celebrant. The ringing of bells occurs at different times depending on which of the four (4) Eucharistic Prayers is used.

(a) The first ringing (single ring) of bells occurs when the Celebrant extends his hands, palms down, over the unconsecrated bread and wine. **Note – be careful, the bells are NOT rung when the Celebrant makes the sign of the cross over the bread and wine.**

(b) The second and third ringing of the **Altar Bells** is when the Celebrant elevates (raises) the Host and Chalice. **The Altar Server rings the bells three short times at the top of the elevation, NOT while the Celebrant is in the process of raising the host or chalice.**

(4) The Mystery of Faith

(5) Amen

e. **Communion Rite –**

(1) **Lord’s Prayer** - All (Altar Servers) stand with hands folded. It begins with the **Our Father (Lord’s Prayer)**. **Altar Servers DO NOT HOLD HANDS during the “Our Father” - they fold their hands for the entire Our Father.**

(2) **Exchange of Peace** The “Our Father” is followed by the **Exchange of Peace (The Sign of Peace)** – where the people greet each other in the Lord’s name.

(a) The Celebrant exchanges the **Sign of Peace** with the **Altar Server(s)**.

- f. **The Lamb of God - The Sign of Peace** ends when **The Lamb of God** begins. **After the Lamb of God all (Altar Server(s)) kneel.**
- (a) While the **Lamb of God** is being sung or recited, the Celebrant/Deacon goes to the **Tabernacle** to retrieve the main **Ciborium**.
- g. **Holy Communion** - After the **Celebrant** communicates, the **Altar Server** should move to a position on the side of the **Altar** to receive **Holy Communion**. The Celebrant distributes the Eucharist to the **Altar Server(s)** and the **Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Communion (EMHC)**.
- (a) **Once the Celebrant and the EMHCs' have moved to distribute the Eucharist to the congregation, the Altar Server removes the Roman Missal and its stand from the Altar. They are returned to the small table next to the Altar Server Chair.**
- (b) **Do NOT** remove the Corporal or Celebrant Chalice/Paten set.
- (c) **Altar Servers** return to their places and kneel with hands folded.
- (d) **During Daily Mass WITHOUT a youth Altar Server, the Adult Altar Server may also serve as an EMHC. If so, after receiving communion – the Celebrant will hand you the Chalice to distribute the Precious Blood to the communicants.**
- h. **Post Communion Responsibilities** - When the Celebrant returns to the Sanctuary after distribution of Holy Communion, he returns the **Ciborium** to the **Tabernacle**, **opens the door**, **Genuflects** and closes the door.
- (1) At this point the **Altar Server(s)** should stand **with hands folded** and be ready to assist with the removal of items from the altar.
- (2) **For the Daily Mass the Celebrant normally purifies the Sacred Objects at the Altar.**

- (3) The **Altar Server** immediately goes to the **Credence table**, removes the stopper from the **Water Cruet**, and returns to the Altar with the **Water Cruet**. The Altar Server stands at the side of the Altar. The water is needed for the purification (cleaning) process of the **Sacred Vessels**. The Celebrant may have you pour water into the Celebrant's **Chalice**.
- (4) Return the **Water Cruet** to the **Credence Table** and replace the **stopper**.
- (5) Then the **Altar Server(s)** should stand at the side of the Altar and, if more than one Altar Server, working as a team, accept the items that the Celebrant hands you and return them to the **Credence Table**. Do not remove items from the altar unless they are handed to you or you are instructed to do so.
- (6) Normally, the last items to be removed from the Altar will be the **Celebrant's Chalice, Purificator, Paten, Pall and Corporal**. The **Altar Server** should step forward and take them from the Celebrant. Hold them with one hand by the node on the **Chalice** and place your other hand flat on the **Corporal** (so the stack of **Sacred Objects** is secure). Return them to the **Credence Table** and take your seat.
 - i. **Prayer after Communion** – When the Celebrant stands for the Prayer after Communion, the Altar Server closest to the **Roman Missal** brings the **Roman Missal (stopping to face the Altar and bowing)** to the Celebrant and holds it while the Celebrant reads the Closing Prayer. **All are standing.**
 - (1) **When the Celebrant is done (he will generally close the Roman Missal), return to your seat (stopping to face the Altar and bowing enroute)** and place the **Roman Missal** on its stand on the small table.

4) CONCLUDING RITES

- a) Any general announcements are made by the Lector or Celebrant at this time.

- b) **Final Blessing** - This may be simple or solemn. If simple, the Celebrant may elect NOT to use the Roman Missal. If solemn, the Altar Server will be asked to continue holding the **Roman Missal**. Respond to the blessings with "Amen".
- c) **Dismissal** - The Celebrant dismisses the congregation.
- d) **Recessional** –
- (1) The **Altar Server(s)** and the Celebrant move to the front of the Altar at the foot of the Sanctuary.
 - (2) **The Recessional Hymn** - The Celebrant generally waits for the first verse of the Recessional Hymn to conclude before he genuflects. The Altar Server genuflects, and they move back to the Sacristy.
 - (3) The Celebrant will say "**Pro sit...**" in Latin ("**May it [the Mass] be for your benefit**").
 - (4) The servers respond in Latin "**Et Omnibus et singulis.**" ("**For all and each [person]**".) (et OM-nee-boos et SING-oo-lees).
- (a) The **Altar Server(s)** enters the Sacristy and picks up the candle extinguisher from the closet and extinguishes the candles (See Order of Mass for details).
 - (b) Remember this is AFTER the Mass has ended, therefore you should bow when passing in front of the **Tabernacle** when extinguishing the candles.
 - (c) Return to the Altar Server vestment room and NEATLY hang up your **Cassock** and **Surplice** on the hangers.
 - (d) Depart the Sanctuary - remembering to **Genuflect** as you depart.