Altar Server Prayer

Loving God, creator of the universe, you call your people to gather as one in order that we may praise you and give you thanks. I thank you for having called me to become an Altar Server so I can help others in their prayer and worship of you. Help make me worthy of the trust that has been placed in me and through my example bring others closer to you. I ask this in the name of Jesus your Son, who is Lord forever and ever.

Amen.
In the liturgy, you are much more than simple ‘helpers of the parish priest.’ Above all, you are Servers of Jesus Christ, and thus called to friendship with Jesus. You will discover that in Jesus you have found a true friend for life.

— St. Pope John Paul II, 2001

The Altar Server Ministry is a way for you to grow closer to Jesus and to learn about the Mass. Your role is very important; you assist the celebrant at Mass and serve as a role model to help others participate and pray well. It is very important that, as an Altar Server, you are on time, helpful and reverent.

Dress Code
You must dress appropriately for Mass. Clothing items not permitted include: gym shoes, flip-flops, high-heeled shoes, jeans and t-shirts of any kind. Since the Alb is made of heavy material, we recommend that you wear lightweight clothing. Please avoid very bright colors because they will show through the Alb. Your hair should be dry and need no attention during Mass.

In summer, knee length shorts and clean Sperrys® are permitted.

Arrival/Pre-Mass Activities
You should:
- Arrive 15 min before weekend Masses.
- Arrive 10 min before weekday Masses.
- Leave your coat on a hook outside the sacristy.
- Sign in on the Altar Server schedule sheets found on the sacristy counter.
- Adjust your Server cross so that it sits underneath the collar of alb.
- Offer assistance to the Sacristan by placing the gifts on the table, placing other items on the Server table, and lighting the Altar Candles.
- Along with the Sacristan, decide who will serve as Cross-bearer and Candle-bearers. The Cross-bearer is usually an experienced Altar Server. Ask the Sacristan any questions you may have before Mass.
- Wait quietly inside the sacristy for Mass to start.

The Order (Parts) of Mass

- Introductory Rites
- Entrance Procession
- Penitential Act
- Gloria (not during Advent or Lent)
- Collect (Opening Prayer)
- Liturgy of the Word (includes Gospel Procession)
- Liturgy of the Eucharist
- Preparation of the Altar and the Presentation of Gifts
- Eucharistic Prayer
- Lord’s Prayer
- Exchange of Peace
- Lamb of God
- Communion Rite
- Concluding Rites
- Prayer after Communion (After announcements)
- Recessional
Helpful Hints

- Memorize the flow of the Mass and the terms used at Mass.

- When you forget something or make a mistake, improvise. Don't panic; look calm. For example, if you forget to remove the tray with the wine decanter from the Altar, remove it after you receive Communion.

- If you are unsure about something, don't hesitate to ask the Sacristan. They are always available to help.

- Refrain from talking and laughing during Mass. Always be attentive to the Presider. He may signal to you for something he needs.

General Overview

It is extremely important to be focused and alert on what is happening throughout the Mass. If you are yawning, looking for someone you know, fidgeting with your cross or playing with your hair, you send a clear message to others that you do not take your service seriously. By sitting and standing straight and participating in the Mass you are encouraging others to do the same without saying a word!

Scheduling

Scheduling is managed through Ministry Scheduler Pro©. Your parents will receive an email that will guide you (and them) through the online scheduling process.

If you are unable to serve when you are scheduled, it is your responsibility to find a sub. Use Ministry Scheduling Pro© or ask someone directly.

If you become sick and cannot fulfill your scheduled time to serve, and it is too late to find a sub, call the sacristy and be sure to leave a message. (708-246-4404 x141)

If you are not scheduled to serve at a Mass you attend, please stop into the sacristy and check with the Sacristan to see if a sub is needed.

Resources & Review Videos

A series of videos that demonstrates an Altar Servers responsibilities during each of the parts of the Mass will be available on the SJC webpage under Altar Serving. To access these videos go to the SJC homepage. Click on the Liturgy tab at the top of page. Then click the Liturgical Ministries tab and scroll down to Altar Servers. Videos will be listed.

[On the following pages are overviews of duties for Weekend and Weekday Masses. Make sure to familiarize yourself with all the duties of each Altar Server position.]
**Weekend Mass Duties**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cross-bearer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entrance Procession</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the Opening hymn begins, lead entrance procession with cross at a slow pace. Place cross in stand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Collect) Opening Prayer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go up to Presider during the Gloria at the words: &quot;For you alone are the Holy One.&quot; with the Excerpt for Roman Missal. During Advent and Lent, come up after the Penitential Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gospel Procession</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the Offertory hymn begins, place the Roman Missal on the center of the Altar. Return to pew. For Fr. Peter—Place the book stand and Roman Missal on the left of the center corporal on Altar. You may need to make two trips from credence table to/from Altar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation of Altar</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the Offertory hymn begins, place the Roman Missal on the center of the Altar. Return to pew. For Fr. Peter—Place the book stand and Roman Missal on the left of the center corporal on Altar. You may need to make two trips from credence table to/from Altar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation &amp; Preparation of Gifts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With the other Servers, follow the Presider and/or Deacon when he goes to receive the gifts with the other Servers. Place the ciborium on the choir side and the decanter on the Server side. (You may need to make more than one trip)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Handshake of Peace</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer hand sanitizer to Communion Ministers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>After receiving Holy Communion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After receiving Communion, remove Roman Missal and book stand (if necessary) from Altar and place on Server table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prayer after Communion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When Presider says “Let us pray,” go up with Excerpt for Roman Missal and stand in front of him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closing Procession</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the Closing hymn is announced, take the cross and line up in the center aisle facing Altar, waiting for the Presider to reverence the Altar and turn toward you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Terms You Should Know**

- **Lectionary**: large book from which the Old and New Testament readings are proclaimed
- **Lector**: The man or woman who proclaims the Old and New Testament readings at Mass that are not the Gospel
- **Liturgy**: means ‘work of the people’ and is used interchangeably to refer to the Mass or a prayer service
- **Presider**: term used to denote male or female leader of a service but also the priest
- **Presider’s binder**: The green, white, purple or red folder that has the prayers for the Liturgy on Sundays
- **Purificator**: white cloth used to wipe the chalice or communion cups that hold the Blood of Christ
- **Roman Missal**: Large red book that contains the official prayers used by Presider during Mass (Excerpts for Roman Missal—thinner red book)
- **Sacristy**: room or space where priest vestments for Mass and where items used at Mass are stored
- **Sanctuary**: sacred space that surrounds the Altar, ambo and Presider’s chair
- **Stole**: long narrow vestment worn by Presider or deacon and is symbolic of a servant
- **Tabernacle**: sacred container that holds consecrated hosts that will be taken to the sick and homebound
- **Thurible**: vessel or pot for holding burning charcoal and incense
- **Thurifer**: minister who carries the thurible
**Terms You Should Know**

*acolyte*: another name for Altar Server  
*alb*: white robe worn by Servers and Presiders  
*altar*: stone or wooden table where gifts are consecrated  
*ambo*: lectern where the scriptures are proclaimed  
*ambry*: cabinet that holds sacred oils used at baptisms, funerals and the Easter Vigil  
*aspergillum*: metal instrument used to sprinkle holy water  
*assembly*: people gathered to celebrate Mass; congregation  
*baptismal font*: pool of water used for sacrament of Baptism  
*boat*: small bowl that hold incense  
*Book of the Gospels*: Large ornate book from which celebrant or deacon proclaims the Gospel; carried in procession by lector  
*celebrant*: Priest or minister who leads the assembly  
*chasuble*: outer colored garment worn by celebrant or Presider  
*ciborium*: metal bowl that holds bread/hosts become Body of Christ  
*ciboria*: more than one ciborium  
*corporal*: square cloth on the Altar upon which the bread and wine are placed  
*credence table*: Servers' table where Roman Missal, tray with chalices and purificators, pitcher of water, lavabo bowl, and towel are placed  
*cruet*: small glass container that carries holds water  
*deacon*: ordained minister who assists priest at Mass  
*finger towel*: towel used to dry Presider's hands  
*flagon/decanter*: large glass vessel used to hold wine  
*gift table*: table on which bread and wine are placed before Mass in back of church on weekends and in the center aisle on weekdays  
*lavabo bowl*: bowl used when washing Presider's hands

**Weekend Mass Duties**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candle-bearer 1</th>
<th>Candle-bearer 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Follow cross in procession along with other Candle-bearer. Follow about 5 feet behind cross. Place candle in stand.</td>
<td>Follow cross in procession along with other Candle-bearer. Follow about 5 feet behind cross. Places candle in stand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When singing of the Gospel Acclamation begins, retrieve candle and line up with other Candle-bearer on your side of the sanctuary. Wait for Presider or deacon to stand behind them. Return to pew after Gospel at the Words: “Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.”</td>
<td>When singing of the Gospel Acclamation begins, retrieve candle and line up with other Candle-bearer on your side of the sanctuary. Wait for Presider or deacon to stand behind them. Return to pew after Gospel at the Words: “Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the Offertory hymn begins, take two communion cups and purificators and place them on the right side of Altar. Return to pew.</td>
<td>When the Offertory hymn begins, take Presider’s chalice and one communion cup and place them on the right side of the Altar. Return to pew.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With the other Servers, follow the Presider and/or Deacon when he goes to receive the gifts. Place the ciborium on the choir side and the decanter on the Server side. Ciboria with large presider host is placed in the center of Altar near Roman Missal. (You may need to make more than one trip.) Go to Server table to carry water pitcher, handle side out, back to the Presider. Return to Altar Server table.</td>
<td>With the other Servers, follow the Presider and/or Deacon when he goes to receive the gifts. Place the ciborium on the choir side and the decanter on the Server side. Ciboria with large presider host is placed in the center of Altar near Roman Missal. (You may need to make more than one trip) Go to Server table. Return to the Altar with Server carrying water pitcher to return empty decanter. Return to Altar Server table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carry water pitcher and lavabo bowl to Presider for washing of hands. Pour small amount of water over Presider’s fingers.</td>
<td>Unfold towel and hold horizontally, at corners. With Candle-bearer 1, carry to Presider.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow Cross-bearer in closing procession along with other Candle-bearer.</td>
<td>Follow Cross-bearer in closing procession along with other Candle-bearer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Weekday Mass Duties**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Server 1</th>
<th>Server 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set up before Mass</strong></td>
<td><em>Work together to:</em> Place Roman Missal in center of Altar and Intercession Book on Presider’s Chair. Light candles. Place gifts on Gift Table. Place chalices, hand towel, water pitcher, and lavabo bowl on Servers’ Table.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entrance Procession</strong></td>
<td>Walk in front of Presider with hands folded. On days with music, wait for singing to begin to start procession. On days without music, begin procession when Presider rings bell or tells you to begin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gospel Procession</strong></td>
<td><em>At Weekday Masses there is no Gospel procession.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation of Altar</strong></td>
<td>(Roman Missal already on Altar) Follow Presider to receive gifts. Place decanter on Server side of Altar. IF Presider hands you the ciborium, place it on center of Altar. Return to Altar Server table.</td>
<td>Carry both chalices to Altar and place them on right side of Altar. Return to Altar Server table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation &amp; Preparation of Gifts</strong></td>
<td>Carry the water pitcher handle side out to Presider. Together with other Server, return to Altar Server table.</td>
<td>Follow other Server to Altar. Presider will hand you the empty cruet that held wine. Together with other Server, return to Altar Server table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carry water pitcher and lavabo bowl to Presider for washing of hands. Pour small amount of water over Presider’s fingers.</td>
<td>With towel unfolded and held horizontally at the corners, carry to Presider.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closing Procession</strong></td>
<td>Hands folded.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>After Mass</strong></td>
<td><em>Work together to:</em> Extinguish candles and return the Roman Missal, Intercession Book, towel, water pitcher and lavabo bowl to sacristy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**General Instruction**

All liturgical items and books should be handled with care.

- Candle-bearers should walk side-by-side, carrying the candle at waist height. Do not tip the candle forward.
- When seated, the Cross-bearer should sit at the end of the pew, then Candle-bearer-1 and Candle-bearer-2 (in no particular order).
- When there are only two Servers at a Weekend Mass, you will need to decide who will be Cross-bearer and Candle-bearer. The Sacristan may ask you to bring the extra candle to place near the Server table for the Gospel procession.
- *When setting the Altar:* the Roman Missal is placed in the middle of the center corporal; the tray is placed on the Server side of the Altar.
- Three corporals (white cloths) are on the Altar. At the Offertory (when the gifts are placed on the Altar) the ciboria are placed on the choir side corporal. The ciborium with the large host is placed on the center corporal and the decanter of wine is placed on the Server-side corporal near the tray. Carry only two vessels at a time.
- During Mass, never cut across the Sanctuary from one side to the other.
- Take your time when serving. When you have nothing in your hands, always keep them folded reverently at your waist. Never rush up and down the Sanctuary steps.
- At the end of ALL Masses, all Servers assist the Sacristan by Extinguishing Candles and returning the Roman Missal, Intercession book, towel, water pitcher and lavabo bowl to sacristy.