



OUR LADY
of MERCY

ALTAR SERVERS

TRAINING MANUAL

ALTAR SERVER TRAINING

OUR LADY OF MERCY CHURCH



INTRODUCTION

- **These guidelines are intended to assist both new and experienced altar servers in understanding the important role that the altar server plays in the holy celebration of the Mass. The duties and responsibilities of the server must be taken seriously. Servers must pay close attention during the service so that steps are not missed.**
- **Servers are expected to wear appropriate shoes and “Sunday Dress” for Mass and to locate a vestment that is long enough for the server. Vestments should hang near the server’s ankle and should not drag the floor.**
- **When vesting, servers must silently pray the “Prayer Before Mass”.**
- **Before Mass, the servers will join the Priest and other adult ministers in prayer at the 5-minute bells.**
- **Servers must always be reverent, sit and kneel upright, use “prayer hands” when standing, and maintain an overall posture that reflects the significance of the Lord’s Supper.**

INTRODUCTION

CONTINUED

- **Once the Mass starts, you should only leave the altar if it is essential to do so or if the Priest/Deacon directs you to go to the sacristy for something.**
- **Always sit and stand with the Priest. If the Priest sits, you sit; if the Priest stands you stand.**
- **Stand at the Gospel reading, turn slightly facing the ambo (where the Priest/Deacon reads the Gospel); sit at the conclusion of the Gospel. Remain seated and attentive throughout the homily.**

TWO OR THREE ALTAR SERVERS?

- We hope to have three altar servers at each Mass. If someone is less experienced, let him or her serve as the third server and observe what is performed from the third seat in the Sanctuary. This person can assist in the entrance procession, moving items to the altar, and in the recessional procession and will receive Holy Communion with the other servers.
- If we have only two servers, an adult will be asked to carry the Cross in our procession and recession. The servers may need to make more than one trip to the credence table at the offertory.

ROOM WITH SERVER VESTMENTS – IF AN INEXPERIENCED SERVER NEEDS ASSISTANCE, THE MASS SACRISTAN CAN HELP.

ALWAYS SAY THE SERVER’S PRAYER BEFORE MASS TO YOURSELF AS YOU DRESS.



Prayers to
say
before
and after
Mass

TYPICAL CREDESCENCE TABLE SETUP

CHALICE WITH PALL AND PURIFICATOR, CIBORIA (3), WATER PITCHER WITH BOWL, WHITE PURIFICATOR (TOWEL), GLASS WATER CRUET WITH TOP, ABLUTION CUP OF WATER WITH GOLD TOP. NOTE: (AT 9:00AM SUNDAY MASS, THE WATER CRUET IS BROUGHT UP AS PART OF THE GIFTS SO IT WILL NOT BE ON THE CREDESCENCE TABLE)



**CREDESCENCE
TABLE**



WATER CRUET



CHALICE AND CIBORIA

- *The chalice has a white purificator (towel) draped inside of it for the Priest or Deacon to use. There is a square fabric covered piece on top called the pall. Under the pall is a gold metal plate that supports the large host elevated by the Priest at the consecration. This metal plate is called the paten. When carrying the chalice, use one hand around the neck of the chalice and use the fingers of your other hand to press down on the pall to hold everything in place. It takes both hands to carry. **Carry the chalice carefully.***
- *The gold ciboria have a small handle on them that is used by the minister of communion to hold the ciborium. The ciboria contain hosts that have not as yet been consecrated. The ciboria are stacked. **When you carry the ciboria, carry them carefully and with both hands.***

CROSS AND CANDLES

- ***The cross and two candles that are carried into the church during the entrance procession are located against the wall to the rear of the altar – Mary’s chapel side. Each is secured in a floor stand.***
- ***Place your foot on the floor stand to remove it or to replace it in the stand.***
- ***The Mass sacristan will light the candles in the sacristy before proceeding to the front of the church for the entrance procession.***
- ***Those servers carrying candles should carry them upright so they stay lit when walking to the front of the church.***
- ***During the processional, the cross and the candles should be held up high so that the congregation can see the entrance.***

ALTAR SERVER POSITIONS FOR OPENING PROCESSION WITH THREE SERVERS



ENTRANCE PROCESSION

***CROSS BEARER GOES FIRST FOLLOWED BY CANDLES – SPACE YOURSELF –
WALK SLOWLY***



AT THE STEPS

PAUSE AT THE STEPS – DO NOT BOW – TURN TO THE LEFT AND WALK AROUND TO THE REAR OF THE ALTAR – SECURE THE CROSS IN THE FLOOR HOLDER.

THE CANDLE BEARERS SHOULD BE FAR ENOUGH BEHIND THE CROSS BEARER TO ALLOW THE CROSS BEARER TO CLEAR OUT OF THE WAY BEFORE MOVING TO THE STEPS. THE CANDLE BEARERS SHOULD FOLLOW THE CROSS BEARER IN THE SAME FASHION.



PLACEMENT OF CROSS AND CANDLES - REAR OF THE ALTAR

AFTER PLACING THE CROSS AND CANDLES IN THE FLOOR HOLDERS, THE ALTAR SERVERS SHOULD QUICKLY WALK UP ON THE ALTAR AND TAKE YOUR POSITION IN FRONT OF YOUR CHAIR. NOTICE THE “PRAYER HANDS”?



MISSAL BEARER ALTAR SERVER

- ***Always sits to the left of the Priest.***
- ***The red Missal will be on your seat***
- ***It should be open to the Collect (opening prayer) of the day.***
- ***When the Priest says, “**let us pray**” – turn and pick up the Missal and hold it so that that Priest can read the opening prayer. The Priest will locate the proper reading and may further position the Missal for the reading. Try to keep the Missal from moving while the Priest is reading.***
- ***See next slide picture “B”.***

IN THE SANCTUARY

SLIDE A – TYPICAL POSITIONS. IF A DEACON IS PRESENT, THEN THE SECOND SERVER SITS IN THE SECOND CHAIR TO THE RIGHT OF THE PRIEST AND ANY THIRD SERVER WOULD SIT IN THE PEW FARTHER TO THE RIGHT. THE MISSAL BEARER SERVER ALWAYS SITS TO THE LEFT OF THE PRIEST
SLIDE B – THE PROPER MANNER IN WHICH TO HOLD THE MISSAL FOR THE PRIEST.



THE MISSAL BEARER SERVER BRINGS THE RED MISSAL TO THE ALTAR AFTER THE OPENING PRAYER AND PLACES IT AS SHOWN. DIFFERENT PRIESTS PREFER THE MISSAL IN DIFFERENT PLACES. FATHER CLEO PREFERS THE MISSAL TO BE LEFT OPEN AND CENTERED JUST IN FRONT OF THE SMALL CRUCIFIX (LEFT) AND FATHER NUTAN PREFERS THE MISSAL TO BE OPEN AND CENTERED ON THE FRONT EDGE (RIGHT).



CREDENCE TABLE

***CARRY THE GOLD CHALICE, THE ROUND GOLD CIBORIA WITH LIDS AND THE GLASS WATER CRUET (NO TOP) TO THE ALTAR FOR THE OFFERTORY.
(THERE WILL BE 1 – 4 CIBORIA STACKED ON THE TABLE!)***



MOVING TO THE CREDENCE TABLE

- ***After the homily and as soon as the “prayers of the faithful” are finished, the Priest moves to the altar. The altar servers should move quickly to the credence table to begin to move the chalice, ciboria, and water cruet to the altar.***
- ***All ciboria must be moved to the altar (an adult minister will also come up and move the tray of cups to the altar).***
- ***After this is done, two servers must move quickly to the front steps to assist the Priest with the gifts.***

CARRY THE VESSELS TO THE ALTAR CAREFULLY USING BOTH HANDS. A SERVER WILL ALSO CARRY THE WATER CRUET (NOT SHOWN). IF ONLY TWO SERVERS ARE PRESENT, YOU MAY HAVE TO MAKE TWO TRIPS TO THE CREDENCE TABLE.



BE CAREFUL CARRYING THE VESSELS FROM THE CREDENCE TABLE TO THE ALTAR. THE LARGE HOST IS UNDER THE PALL (WHITE FABRIC SQUARE – SO IT IS BEST TO KEEP ONE HAND ON TOP OF IT) SEE THE PICTURE.



RELATIVE PLACEMENT OF VESSELS ON ALTAR

THE CIBORIA SHOULD BE PLACED OVER ON THE LEFT SIDE. SEE PICTURE. THE CHALICE SHOULD BE PLACED ON THE RIGHT SIDE. SEE PICTURE. THE WATER CRUET, NOT SHOWN, SHOULD BE PLACED NEAR THE CHALICE.



DELIVERY OF THE GIFTS

WHEN THE GIFTS ARE BROUGHT TO THE ALTAR BY THE GIFT BEARERS, THE ALTAR SERVERS STAND ON EITHER SIDE OF THE PRIEST. THE PRIEST MAY HAND YOU THE LARGE CHALICE OR THE WINE CRUET. SEE PICTURE. (NOTE: AT 9:00AM SUNDAY MASS, THE WATER CRUET IS ALSO BROUGHT FORWARD AS PART OF THE GIFTS.)



PRIEST

**PRIEST STANDS
HERE**

AFTER RECEIVING THE GIFTS



- ***If you are given the large chalice - place it on the altar as depicted here.***
- ***If you are given the wine cruet, bring it to the altar and stand holding it on the other side of the altar and wait to be joined by the other server who will present the water cruet that is already on the altar.***

WATER AND WINE CRUETS

THE WATER CRUET WILL NOW BE BROUGHT TO THE ALTAR ALONG WITH THE CHALICE AND CIBORIA. ONCE THE ALTAR SERVERS RECEIVE THE WINE CRUET AND CARRY IT TO THE ALTAR, EVERYTHING REQUIRED FOR THE OFFERTORY WILL BE PRESENT. SEE THE RESPECTIVE POSITIONS OF THE SERVERS WHEN PRESENTING THE WATER AND WINE TO THE PRIEST/DEACON. THE HANDLES OF THE CRUETS ARE FACING TOWARD THE PRIEST/DEACON TO MAKE IT EASIER TO TAKE AND POUR.



AFTER POURING THE WATER AND WINE

- ***The altar servers should bring the wine and water cruets back to the credence table placing them over on the left side out of the way of the pitcher and bowl. Leave the top off of the water cruet because it will be needed after communion.***
- ***The altar servers should immediately begin preparations for the hand washing.***

WASHING OF THE HANDS

- *One server should pick up the pitcher and bowl while the other server carries the white purificator. Turn and walk together to the Priest. See picture next slide.*
- *The Priest will extend his hands. Father Milano will insert his thumb into the pouring spout of the pitcher to help you pour the proper amount of water. A lot of water is not necessary.*
- *Make sure the Priest's hands are over the bowl and pour over the hands and into the bowl.*
- *The other server hands the Priest the open purificator for hand drying.*
- *Both servers should bow and return the vessels and purificator to the credence table placing them there as before. Be careful not to spill the water in the bowl. Place the folded purificator to the right side by the ablution cup of water. Do not put purificator in the bowl full of water!*

**ONE SERVER PICKS UP THE PITCHER AND BOWL; THE OTHER SERVER HOLDS THE TOWEL – BE CAREFUL NOT TO CLANG THE VESSELS ; WALK FORWARD TO THE ALTAR TO MEET THE PRIEST.
POUR ONLY A LITTLE WATER ON THE PRIEST’S FINGERS.
PLACE THE WET PURIFICATOR USED TO DRY THE PRIEST’S FINGERS BY THE ABLUTION CUP.**



THREE ALTAR SERVERS

RELATIVE POSITIONS DURING THE CONSECRATION

ONCE THE HAND WASHING IS COMPLETE, THE ALTAR SERVERS ASSUME A STANDING POSITION BY THE CUSHIONS AND AT THE PROPER TIME KNEEL AS SHOWN.



THIRD ALTAR SERVER POSITION DURING CONSECRATION

- **KNEEL WHEN THE CONGREGATION KNEELS.**
- **STAND AFTER THE “GREAT AMEN” WHEN THE CONGREGATION STANDS.**

RINGING OF THE BELLS

- ***You must be paying attention and be ready to ring the bells!***
- ***The altar servers kneeling on the cushions should have already decided which server would ring the bells. Do not wait until it is time to ring them to decide.***
- ***When the consecration begins, the Priest will call the Holy Spirit to come down upon the gifts to make them the Body and Blood of Jesus and will extend his hands over the gifts (you will see the Deacon, if present, kneel behind the Priest).***
- ***Ring the bells one time for 3 seconds!***
- ***The Priest will then offer the Sacred Host to the congregation and will elevate the Host. When the Host is fully elevated – ring the bells three distinct times in consecutive fashion, pausing just for a moment between each ring.***
- ***The Priest will then offer the Precious Blood to the congregation and will elevate the chalice. When the chalice is fully elevated – ring the bells three distinct times in consecutive fashion, pausing just for a moment between each ring.***

SIGN OF PEACE

- ***Move forward for the sign of peace***
- ***All altar servers should offer the Priest/Deacon the sign of peace and each other.***
- ***Then assume your position by the ambo, as shown in the next slide, for Holy Communion.***
- ***All of the other ministers will begin to assemble in the Sanctuary.***

AFTER THE SIGN OF PEACE ALTAR SERVER POSITIONS FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Ambo



MISSAL BEARER

DURING COMMUNION, MAKE SURE YOU REMOVE THE MISSAL FROM THE ALTAR AND BRING IT TO YOUR SEAT. THE PRIEST OR DEACON MAY HAND IT TO YOU. YOU WILL HAVE TO HOLD IT FOR THE PRIEST FOR THE PRAYER AT THE END OF MASS AS WAS DONE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MASS.



ALTAR SERVER POSITIONS DURING COMMUNION MISSAL BEARER IS HOLDING RED MISSAL



AFTER COMMUNION

- *The Priest/Deacon and all ministers will return to the altar. The ministers will be returning the ciboria to the tabernacle if they contain consecrated hosts. If they are empty, they will be returned to the sacristy for purification by the sacristan. Everything will be removed from the altar.*
- *The Priest/Deacon may purify the main chalice that you originally brought to the altar from the credence table. Purify means that the Priest/Deacon will need some additional water to do this.*
- *As soon as this entire process starts, the server sitting closest to the credence table should walk over and pick up the water cruet without the top, and carry it to the altar. Stand next to the altar and wait to see if water is needed. If so, the Priest/Deacon will turn to you and present the chalice for you to pour some water in it. Pour until the Priest/Deacon tells you that he has enough or nods that he has enough.*
- *Return the water cruet to the credence table and take your seat as before.*

AFTER MASS – AT RECESSIONAL HYMN



- ***When the Priest stands and the recessional hymn starts, the servers should move from their positions to retrieve the cross and candles from the holders.***
- ***Move to the front of the altar steps walking in single file as shown.***

MOVING TO THE FRONT OF THE ALTAR

- ***When you move to the front, all servers should turn and face the altar. When the Priest walks over and genuflects in front of the tabernacle, and walks to the steps, then turn and start walking out. Space yourself and walk slowly as was done during the entrance procession.***



AFTER MASS

- ***Walk completely out of the church doors and through the garden to the sacristy. In case of rain, walk down the inside, side aisle.***
- ***Return the cross and candles to the floor holders and blow out the candles.***
- ***Disrobe and neatly hang the vestments where you found them.***
- ***To yourself, pray the altar server's "prayer after Mass".***

VERY IMPORTANT ITEMS TO REMEMBER!

- Please arrive to church at least 15-minutes prior to the beginning of Mass.
- If you are not scheduled to serve, but would like to serve, please come to the sacristy before Mass to see if a server is needed.
- Dress appropriately for Mass ... “Sunday Best”!
- If you need to have your service hours form signed, please fill them out and bring them to Mass – they can be signed by a priest or a deacon.
- If you are scheduled to serve and cannot serve, a parent should assist you in securing a replacement. **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT!**