



Altar Servers

Saint William's Parish
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DEFINITION OF ALTAR SERVER

It is a great privilege to serve at the Altar of our God and therefore Servers are chosen from those who display a desire for a more intimate union with our Lord and God, Jesus Christ. Our loving Savior becomes present on the Altar, just as He was at the Last Supper and Calvary. Accordingly, Servers have a solemn responsibility to do their assigned duties with dignity, reverence and respect.

REQUIREMENTS

At St. Williams, our Altar Servers (boys and girls), may train to serve our Lord once in the 4th grade and have been baptized and made their first communion. You must be able to maintain dignity, reverence and respect in the sanctuary. You must attend training, both before you begin and ongoing training throughout your ministry. You need to know the various functions of the altar server during the Mass. Altar servers should also be active and full participants in the Mass by praying the prayers, singing at Mass, and attending mass regularly.

ALTAR SERVER RESPONSIBILITIES

- An altar server's primary role is to assist the priest or deacon in the celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy.
- The roles include cross bearer, server who holds the Roman Missal; and for special liturgies, incense bearer and assisting the Bishop when he comes.
- Attend Altar Server Training Classes before beginning Altar Serving and ongoing throughout your ministry.
- Altar Servers should not leave the Sanctuary after the start of Mass for any reason except bathroom emergencies, illness, or when directed to do so by the priest or deacon (*this includes during the sign of peace and Communion*).
- Serve at every mass that you are scheduled for, or make arrangements to have someone cover the mass, please do not assume someone will sub in for you when you haven't made the arrangements to do so; a listing of servers and their numbers will be given to all servers.
- Arrive at least 20 minutes before the Mass starts to get dressed and be sure you have everything you need to serve.
- Make sure the candles are lit.
- Ask Father or the deacon if there are any special instructions for the Mass.
- Perform the duties assigned during the mass.
- Maintain a prayerful posture during all times in the Sanctuary. If you are seated your hands should be folded in your lap, if you are standing they should be folded in front of you.
- After mass, return to the Sanctuary, Sacristy, and preparation areas to ensure that everything that you are responsible for is put away.
- Be quiet and respectful when in the Sanctuary, you are role models.
- Be attentive and respond immediately (but never in a rushed way, no running in the Sanctuary) when the priest or deacon asks for help.
- Make sure that your alb and cincture are returned the way you found them, hung up on the hanger and in the proper size slot.
- Always remember, the most important thing that an Altar Server does is participate in the mass – it requires “Our full, conscious, active participation.”

ALTAR SERVERS STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

PREPARATION BEFORE MASS:

1. Arrive 20 minutes before the Mass begins
2. Be sure you have gone to the restroom if necessary.
3. Wash your hands.
4. Get dressed:
 - a. Make sure the alb (white gown) is the RIGHT SIZE, the bottom of the alb should be right above the tops of the shoes (not too long that you trip, and not too short that your legs are visible)
 - b. Check the calendar on the closet door to make sure the cincture (waist tie) is the right color for the season or feast (each day shows what color is appropriate for the day). Remember to check the color for the Sunday – our Saturday Vigil Mass at 4:30 PM is considered the first Sunday Mass, so wear the color for that Sunday.
5. If there is a visiting priest or deacon, talk to him ahead of time to see if you need to do anything differently for him and if not a visiting priest, ask our pastor if he has any special instructions.
6. Light the altar and ambo candles.
7. Make sure the Roman Missal Book is on table next to Father's seat
8. Cross Bearer retrieves the Processional Cross, and both servers gather in the front of the church with the priest, deacon, lectors, Communion ministers, and anyone else who will be in the entrance procession.
 - a. Cross bearer is the altar server listed as #1 (mentor) on the schedule.



ENTRANCE PROCESSION:

1. Line up in the following order:
 - a. Thurifer if incense is being used
 - b. Cross Bearer (Altar Server #1)
 - c. Remaining Altar Server(s), side by side if more than one
 - d. Communion Ministers
 - e. Lector (carries in Gospel Book if there isn't a Deacon)
 - f. Deacon (carries in Gospel Book)
 - g. Priest
 - h. Bishop (if Bishop is there)
2. Once the choir has begun to sing, begin to process in.
3. When you reach the altar steps, the Cross Bearer will step to the left of the center of the aisle, and the other altar server will step to the right. Be sure to leave enough space in between for Father and any other ordained ministers (Deacon, Bishop).
4. Any others processing in (lectors, Communion Ministers, etc...) will continue to stand at the bottom of the steps in a semi-circle.
5. All servers except the Cross Bearer bow when Father bows - Cross Bearer does not bow, and stand at steps until Father proceeds forward.
6. Cross Bearer proceeds to the left to place the Processional Cross on its stand behind the wall behind the altar.
7. Altar server #2/3 proceeds to his/her chair and remains standing.
8. The Cross Bearer proceeds to his/her chair after placing the Processional Cross on its stand, and remains standing.
 - a. Altar server #2 will be responsible for the Roman Missal.

GREETING:

1. The singing of the last verse of the Gloria (follow on the card if you don't know the Gloria by heart) is the cue for Altar Server #2 to bring the Roman Missal over for the priest to read the opening prayer. If there is a deacon, the deacon will open the Roman Missal and hand it to the altar server, if there is not a deacon, the altar server will open the Roman Missal.
2. Stand in front of Father, holding the Roman Missal by the bottom, with the top of the book leaning against your chest. Have the Roman Missal in front of Father before he says "Let us pray".
3. After the priest is done with the prayer, the server will close the book and hand it to the deacon or place it on the table next to the priest's chair.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Be attentive to the readings and the homily.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST ~ *PREPARATION OF GIFTS*

1. As soon as Father sits after the Prayers of the Faithful, the Cross Bearer quietly proceeds to collect the Processional Cross and walks down the main aisle to the front of the church to lead the Procession of gifts.

As soon as the Collection begins, Altar Server #2/3 assists the deacon by bringing the items needed to him, if there is no deacon the server prepares the following:

- a. Place book stand on the left side of the altar and put the Roman Missal on it.
- b. Bring the Chalice with the Purificator and Corporal to the deacon if there is a deacon, otherwise place on the altar and set up the altar. (Always use two hands to carry the Chalice, place one on top and one holding the bottom). Leave the wine cups, if there are any, on the credence table until the Sign of Peace.
- c. Bring the small water pitcher to the altar and place it near the Chalice

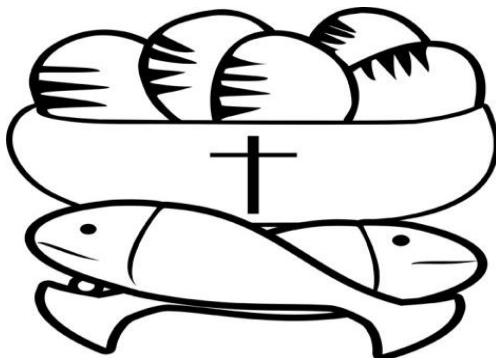
Setting up the altar if there isn't a deacon:

1. Lay the Corporal on the center of the altar, close to where Father would stand, and open the Corporal following the folds.

2. Place the Chalice with the Purificator on top of the Corporal in the center. You may either leave the Purificator on top of the Chalice or place it next to the Chalice. (Be sure not to shake the Corporal, only can be folded and unfolded carefully along the creases) Then sit and wait for Father to proceed to collect the gifts

3. When the Priest and deacon gets up to collect the gifts:

- a. Altar server #2/3 follows him, and #2 stands to his left, #3 stands to his right, waiting to assist carrying the gifts to the altar. Walk around the altar, on the side that has the Tabernacle to meet Father at the steps.
- b. Cross Bearer begins the Offertory Procession, walking slowly. Once at the steps, proceed to the left of the altar and place the Processional Cross back in its stand. You don't need to stay at the steps. Join the other altar server with server duties.



PREPARATION OF GIFTS

1. If there is a Wine Flagon, the server will take the wine Flagon and give it to deacon, if the deacon is not present it should be given to Father.
2. Father or the Deacon will mix water with the wine, and then the water will be handed back to the server..
3. Get the Lavabo(hand-washing bowl) from the Credence Table, one server holds the bowl and places the towel on his/her left arm, and the other server gets the water from Deacon or off the altar. The server will pour a small amount of water onto Father's hands
4. Once Father's hands are washed, take the lavabo and water back to the Credence Table.
5. As soon as you finish washing Father's hands and put the items back on the credence table, the Altar servers stand on the top step of the Altar nearest the Credence Table where the kneelers have been placed.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

1. The priest then begins with the Preface and then will enter the congregation into the HOLY HOLY, which will be sung or recited; At the end of the Holy Holy the Altar Servers kneel.
2. The Altar Servers should kneel on the top step of the Altar. The priest will continue with the Eucharist prayer by recalling the Last Supper. The Altar servers need to be sure to kneel on BOTH knees, without leaning back and sitting on your heels. Hands should be in prayer form.
3. Once the Great Amen is finished, all stand. The Altar servers remain standing at the same location they kneeled.
4. After the altar server has shared the Sign of Peace with the priest or deacon, they need to go over and get the tray with the cups or chalices and the purificators (if the Precious Blood is being distributed) and place them to the right of Father.
5. The Altar servers line up next to the Communion Ministers to prepare to receive Communion, and then proceed to their chairs and remain standing.

COMMUNION

1. The Lamb of God will either be sung by the choir or recited by the priest, and the congregation will join in, remain standing after the Lamb of God, do not kneel or sit
2. The priest and deacon will distribute the Body and Blood of Christ
3. Once the altar server has received Communion, and the Communion ministers have gone to distribute Communion, get the empty tray (nothing else!) and take it to the credence table. Then go back to your seat and remain standing.
4. Once the priest is done distributing Communion, he and/or the deacon will return to the altar to purify and clear the altar.
5. One server goes back to the Credence Table to take the Cruet of water to father or the deacon (be sure to leave the top on the Credence Table). When the priest or deacon is done, the server will bow his head and take the cruet back and place the top on it
6. The other server will line up, like they did to receive Communion, to receive items from Father. When the priest gives you something, bow your head and then place it on the Credence table. Then return to the altar to receive the next item. When a server takes something back to the Credence table, the next server will slide over, and this will continue until the altar has been cleared.
7. Sit down at your seat



CONCLUDING RITE

1. When the priest stands, Altar server #2 retrieves the Roman Missal and stands in front of the priest, holding it in the same manner as before. If there is a deacon, the same procedure will be followed as before.
2. The priest will then conclude the mass with the Sign of the Cross. When Father stands for the final blessing, the Cross Bearer will then proceed quietly to retrieve the Processional Cross, heading back on the side of the Tabernacle. Bring the Processional Cross out on the choir side. Proceed to the center aisle facing the altar.
3. Altar servers proceed to stand in the center aisle, in front of the altar on each side of the cross bearer, facing the altar.
4. The priest and deacon will then bow and turn (the servers will bow at the same time as the priest and turn around and process out – the cross bearer, or any server carrying any liturgical item, does not need to bow).
5. The servers will walk out of the church in the same order as they entered.
6. The servers can then put back the Processional Cross, blow out the candles, and then hang back up their albs and cinctures properly
7. Be sure that everything is cleaned up and properly put away

****REMINDERS**

When you are standing or sitting, and not doing anything, keep your hands folded. Do not play with your cincture or do anything else

PAY ATTENTION, especially to the priest and deacon, you never know when they may call you over.

If you are assigned to serve, please follow the Dress Code



DRESS CODE FOR ALTAR SERVERS

- **SHOES** – no flip flops, distracting shoes (ie: shoes that light up, etc...)
- **HAIR** – Hair should be neat and trimmed and not in your face (being a distraction to the altar server).
- **JEWELRY** – Do not wear anything that will make noise and/or will be distracting, or that will cause you to have problems serving. Girls may wear “appropriate” earrings to serve.

• VESTMENTS

1. #1 Mentor Server – Alb, Cinture, Cross Necklace

2. #2/3 Server – Alb Cincture, Circular Necklace



Liturgical items you need to know (glossary)

Alb – The white gown (sign of your baptism) that you wear, like the priest and deacon does.

Altar – the Table of the Eucharist where the bread and wine are consecrated and become the Body and Blood of Christ.

Ambo – The Table of the Word, where the lector proclaims the readings, the cantor sings the psalm, and the deacon or priest proclaims the Gospel.

Aspergillum – The liturgical instrument used to sprinkle people and objects with holy water, for blessings.

Boat – the small liturgical vessel containing the incense that will be used with the thurible.

Book of the Gospels – large book, carried in procession by the deacon (or in his absence the lector), from which the Gospel is proclaimed.

Chalice – the cup that holds the wine that the priest consecrates into the Blood of Christ (can be gold or clear).

Ciborium – small bowl that holds the consecrated hosts for the Communion ministers to distribute during communion.

Cincture – colored rope worn around the waist of the altar server.

Corporal – square cloth (like a placemat) that sits on top of the altar cloth, where the chalices and ciboria are placed. Its purpose is to catch small crumbs of the Blessed Sacrament that may fall onto the altar.

Credence Table – the table that holds all the sacred vessels and other items needed for the Mass.

Cross Bearer – Carries the processional cross – we follow Jesus on the cross.

Cruets – little pitcher that holds the water used to put in the wine and to wash the priest's hands.

Finger towel – small white towel presider uses to dry his hands.

Flagon – large decanter that holds the wine used at Mass.

Lavabo – bowl used by Father to wash his hands.

Lectionary – book that the scripture is proclaimed from – separate from the Book of the Gospels.

Paten – small plate that is used to hold the host used at daily (not Sunday) Mass.

Pall - Covers the Precious Blood.

Purificator – small cloth used to clean the chalices during the distribution of the Precious Blood during communion (like a napkin).

Roman Missal – Book of prayers the Priest or Deacon reads from.

Sacristy- The portion of the Church building where the priests, deacons, servers, Communion ministers, and lectors vest and prepare themselves for Mass.

Sanctuary- The area of the Church that contains the altar, ambo and presiders chair.

Table of the gifts – located on both the annex and the main side of the church, to hold the gifts brought up at the Offertory time.

Tabernacle - Is where the consecrated body of Christ is kept to be taken to the sick.

Thurible – A metal vessel for the ceremonial burning of incense. Also known as a censor.

Thurifer – the one who carries the thurible and boat when needed.

