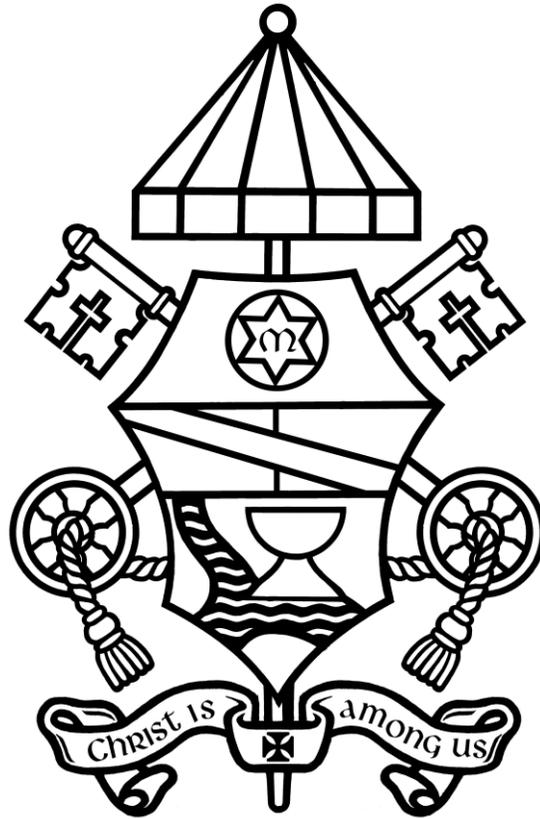


THE BASILICA OF
SAINT MARY
OF THE ASSUMPTION



LITURGICAL MINISTRY HANDBOOK

Sunday Youth Altar Servers

Guidelines for Level 3 (Advanced)

May 2014
Marietta, Ohio

REVIEW

The Treasure of the Mass:

The Mass is the **GREATEST PRAYER** of the Church! Through the Mass our prayers are offered through Jesus to God the Father, and Jesus comes to us **FULLY** (Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity) in the Eucharist. And **YOU** help make it happen as an Altar Server!

Server Levels:

- **Level 1 (Novice)** = Students in their first year of serving on Sundays.
- **Level 2 (Experienced)** = Students who have completed their first year of serving on Sundays.
- **Level 3 (Advanced)** = This level will be open to students in grades 8 - 12 who have completed at least 2 years of serving on Sundays and have attended an Advanced Altar Servers training session. (Advanced Altar Servers will be given first preference to assist with our MOST SOLEMN MASSES, such as during Holy Week, Christmas Masses, etc.)

Please remember to:

1. Attend Mass every Sunday and holy day of obligation. (This is a requirement for ALL CATHOLICS!)
2. Be present when scheduled, or find a sub.
3. Follow the dress code:
 - ☑ Girls should wear either skirts or slacks with a blouse or another nice shirt.
 - ☑ Boys should wear slacks all year round with either golf or oxford style shirt.
 - ☑ **PLEASE: NO gym shoes, NO flip flops, NO shorts.**

THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT RULES OF SERVING

#1 Be reverent.

Everything that you do as an altar server should show your love and devotion to Jesus and the Church.

#2 Don't draw attention to yourself.

Sit, stand and walk in calm and respectful ways. Don't act in ways that will distract the people at Mass. If you make a mistake, don't distract the people by smiling, giggling, rolling your eyes or shrugging your shoulders. Just correct your mistake and continue as if nothing happened.

In other words...always act like you know what you are doing!

#3 Pay attention and watch the priest.

You are there mainly to assist the priest. Every priest does things a little differently.

PERFECTING YOUR TECHNIQUE

You have already learned the basics of serving. Advanced Servers are asked to perfect the techniques they have learned in these ways:

- **Chalice veil** – The Chalice should always be positioned so that the veil is facing forward – toward the front of the altar or the credence table.
- **Acts of reverence** – Remember these acts of reverence:
 - Genuflect when passing in front of the tabernacle (before and after Mass only)
 - Bow to the altar when passing in front or behind, or before leaving the altar
 - Bow to the presider before returning to one's seat
- **Folded Hands** – Always keep your hands folded correctly (with your fingers pressed together and pointing up) whenever you are standing or processing and you are not holding something.
- **Posture** – When seated please sit up straight, with your feet resting flat on the floor directly in front of your seat. (Don't cross your legs or sit with your legs stretched out.) When standing please stand up straight and remain still.
- **Facial expressions and gestures** – Be aware of what you are communicating with your body language (giggles, yawning, looking around, etc.)
- **Patience and confidence** – All of your movements should be calm and deliberate. You should never act rushed or frantic. You should walk in a slow and steady pace for all processions.
- **Being alert** – Be sure to keep an eye on the priest in case he wants to give you any extra directions or needs anything.

NEW SKILLS – PART ONE (INCENSE)

Approximately 10 minutes before Mass begins, light 2-3 charcoals in the thurible.

Opening Procession

The order is always: Incense, Boat*, Cross, Candles, Lector (or Deacon), Priest. Do not begin the procession until the people **start singing**.

*If there is not a Boat Bearer, the Thurifer handles the Boat.

Stop and bow to the altar at the base of the steps. Then, walking around to the back of the altar, wait by the back corner of the rug. After he reverences the altar, the priest will incense the altar. Hand the boat to the priest (or deacon if he is present). Once the priest has put some incense in, stand off to the side (close to your seat) and wait. (If a Boat Bearer is assisting, he can simply return the boat to the stand once the priest has placed incense in the thurible, and go to his seat.)

Once he is finished, the priest will return the thurifer to you. Bow to the priest, return the thurifer to the stand and go to your seat.

Gospel

(Optional, but preferable: During the second reading, walk around the back hallway to the chapel entrance.) Just as the music begins for the Alleluia, take the thurible and boat to the priest. Hand the boat to the priest (or deacon if he is present).

Once the priest has put some incense in, stand off to the **side of the altar** and wait. (If a Boat Bearer is assisting, he can simply return the boat to the stand once the priest has placed incense in the thurible, then return to his seat.)

The Candle Bearers will stand by the altar as the priest (or deacon) comes to the altar. The priest (or deacon) will pick up the Book of the Gospels, pause, and then turn to begin the procession. At that point, the Incense leads the procession around to the ambo.

Station yourself about 3 feet behind the ambo. After he introduces the Gospel, the priest (or deacon) will take the thurible and incense the Book of the Gospels, and then return it to you. Remain standing about 3 feet behind the ambo while the Gospel is read. After the Gospel is finished, put the incense away. **Add one more charcoal before you take your seat.**

Preparation of the Altar

Get the thurible and boat. Stand back by the doorway to the sacristy and be ready.

After the prayer for the cup, the priest will bow to the altar. That is your signal to move to the corner of the rug. Hand the boat to the priest (or deacon if he is present). Stand back while he incenses the altar. (If a Boat Bearer is assisting, he can simply return the boat to the stand once the priest has placed incense in the thurible, then return to his seat.)

If the deacon is present, he will incense the priest and people himself. If no deacon is present, when the priest returns the incense to you, bow to him and incense him (**with three double swings**). Then walk around the altar to the top of the steps. Bow to the people and incense them (**with three single swings**). Put the incense away and stand by your seat.

Final Procession

After the final prayer and blessing, line up in the main aisle facing the altar. The priest will come to the base of the steps and genuflect to the tabernacle. When the priest stands up, turn and process back to the sacristy.

Once you have returned to the sacristy, simply put the thurible back on the stand.

NEW SKILLS – PART TWO

Below are additional new skills that Advanced Altar Servers need to learn.

Mentoring and Assisting other servers

You are the most experienced Altar Servers in the parish. You are asked to help the less experienced Altar Servers in the following ways:

- **Modeling reverence** – The most important thing you can do for the other Altar Servers is to be a good example. Through your words and actions, you need to demonstrate a deep reverence for the Eucharist, the priest, and for the sacred actions of the Mass.
- **Demonstrating proper techniques** – You are also asked to help other servers by demonstrating proper serving techniques. The less experienced Altar Servers will learn the proper procedures by watching you.
- **Assisting servers** – Please be aware of the other servers you are working with and help them when they need guidance or assistance.

Offering the Precious Blood

The priest may ask you to distribute the Precious Blood to the other Altar Servers. The priest will give you the chalice and purificator. After drinking the Precious Blood yourself, offer the Precious Blood to the other servers as follows:

Hold the chalice at eye-level with the communicant and say: "The Blood of Christ." Gently hand the communicant the chalice, being sure not to let go until you are sure they have a firm grip on it. After they return the chalice to you, **wipe the rim** where the communicant's mouth touched the chalice and **turn the chalice** approximately one quarter of a turn before offering the Precious Blood to the next communicant.

When you have finished, simply place the chalice on the altar, bow and return to your seat.

Troubleshooting

Occasionally the priest may ask you (or signal to you) to get something that is missing. Or you may notice that something is missing yourself.

Do you know where to find the following items?

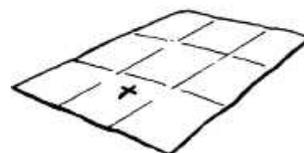
- Hosts
- Purificators
- Towels
- Patens
- Chalices
- Batteries
- Hand-held microphone
- Liturgical books
- Holy water pitcher and sprinkler
- Tabernacle key

Do you know how to do the following?

- Turn on the sound system
- Turn the chant music on and off
- Change the lights to different preset levels

GLOSSARY

- **Alb** – white robe worn by servers.
- **Altar Cloth** – large white cloth that covers the top of the altar.
- **Ambo (or Pulpit)** – place where the readings are proclaimed.
- **Boat** – vessel containing the incense to be burned.
- **Chalice** – special cup used by the priest at Mass.
- **Chalice Veil** – cover that goes over the chalice.
- **Ciborium** – container used to store the hosts in the tabernacle.
- **Corporal** – white cloth placed on the altar for Mass.
- **Credence Table** – table where vessels used during Mass are placed.
- **Cruets** – glass or crystal containers used for the water and wine.

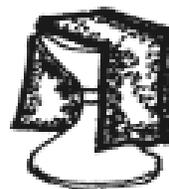


CORPORAL



CRUETS

- **Easter Candle** (also called Paschal Candle) – very large candle used during the Easter season, for baptisms and funerals.
- **Extinguisher** – metal pole used to light and extinguish the candles.
- **Book of the Gospels** – ornate book containing the Gospels.
- **Lectionary** – book that contains all the readings for Mass.
- **Pall** – stiff square card used to cover the chalice.
- **Paten** – bread plate used for Mass.
- **Purificator** – white cloth used to wipe the rim of the chalice.
- **Roman Missal** – book containing all the prayers for Mass.
- **Sacristy** – room where objects and vestments for Mass are stored, and where the priests and servers vest for Mass.
- **Sanctuary** – area at the top of the steps where the altar is located.
- **Tabernacle** – place the Eucharist is kept.
- **Thurible** - metal container on chain where incense is burned.
- **Thurifer** – server who handles the incense.



CHALICE &
PURIFICATOR



PALL



THURIBLE

A SERVER'S PRAYER*

The Mass is first and foremost a prayer. Each of us needs to prepare our hearts to enter into the prayer of the Mass before Mass begins. This is especially important for liturgical ministers who will be taking on a special role in the Mass. Here is one prayer that you could say before you serve at Mass:

***Loving Father, creator of the universe,
you call your people to worship,
to be with you and with one another at Mass.
I thank you for having called me to assist others
in their prayer to you.
May I be worthy of the trust placed in me
and through my example and service bring others closer to you.
I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,
who is Lord for ever and ever.
Amen.***

* From *Called to Serve: A Guidebook for Altar Servers* (Our Sunday Visitor).