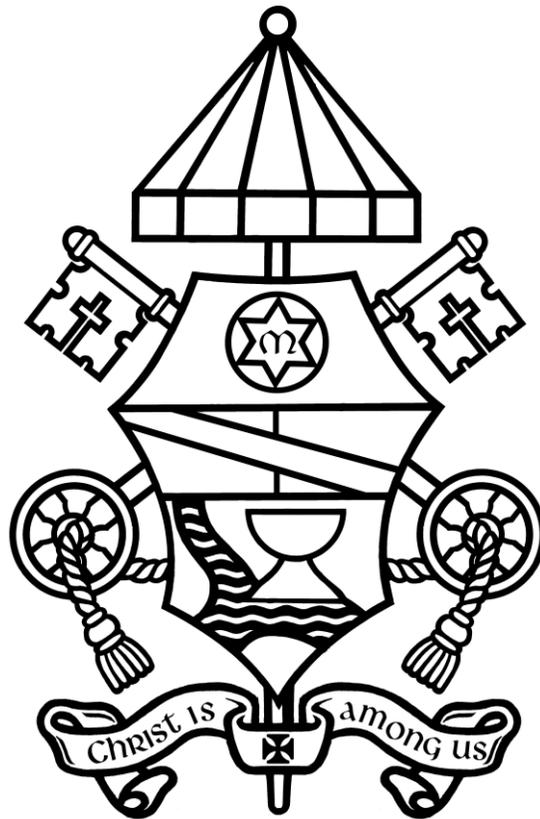


THE BASILICA OF
SAINT MARY
OF THE ASSUMPTION



LITURGICAL MINISTRY HANDBOOK

Sunday Youth Altar Servers

Guidelines for Level 1 (Novice)
and Level 2 (Experienced)

June 2015
Marietta, Ohio

WHY IS THE MASS SO IMPORTANT?

Think about it...

- ☑ Jesus told His followers, "Do this in memory of Me." We obey Jesus' command when we celebrate the Mass.
- ☑ Jesus comes to us - Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity - in the Eucharist.
- ☑ When we celebrate the Mass, we join together with the **WHOLE CHURCH**:
 - The Pope;
 - Bishops and priests from around the world;
 - Hundreds of millions of Catholics;
 - And even the Saints in Heaven!
- ☑ The Mass is the greatest prayer we can ever offer.

And YOU help make it happen as an Altar Server!

QUALIFICATIONS & DRESS CODE

To be an Altar Server on Sundays at St. Mary's, you must...

1. Be Baptized and Registered in the parish.
2. Have received First Holy Communion.
3. Attend Mass every Sunday and holy day of obligation.
4. Be in grades 5-12.
5. Be present when scheduled, or find a sub.
6. Be reverent and respectful in church.
7. Follow the dress code below.

The way you dress for an event communicates the importance of it. Everyone who has a special role in the Mass – Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Lectors, Altar Servers, etc – is required to dress up. Altar Servers need to follow these simple rules:

- ☑ 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.**

Even though Altar Servers wear albs, **people can still tell if they are not dressed appropriately to serve.**

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.)

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.

#3 Pay attention and watch the priest.

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

WHEN YOU ARRIVE

Sign in and put on an alb. Talk to the other servers and figure out which role you will take: **CROSS OR CANDLE**.

CROSS: Make sure the Roman Missal and bookstand are on the shelf by your seat.

CANDLES: Light the candles. Make sure the credence table has the water cruet, empty bowls, veiled chalice, water basin, pitcher and towel.

PROCEDURE FOR SERVING

Opening Procession

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

Once in the sanctuary, put everything away and stand by your seats.

Opening Prayer

CROSS: When the priest says, "Let us pray," bring the book (the Roman Missal) to him and hold it open for him. Return to your seat when the prayer is finished.

Gospel

CANDLES: As the music begins for the Alleluia, get your candles, walk to the altar and stand at the corners of the rug **facing each other**. (The server closest to the tabernacle walks to the far side of the altar.) The priest (or deacon) will pick up the Book of the Gospels and stand in place holding it up for the people to see. **When the priest (or deacon) turns**, the server on the sacristy side walks over to meet the other server and they both walk around the altar. Follow the mosaic line in front of the altar up to the pillar. The server walking along the outside edge simply goes down the steps; the server walking along the inside (closest to the altar) walks around the ambo and goes down to the steps. The candle bearers stand on the first step on either side of the ambo **facing each other**. After the Gospel, both servers walk straight up the steps, put their candles away and sit down.

Homily

ALL SERVERS: Be respectful. Pay attention. Don't be distracting to other people.

Preparation of the Altar

When **the people sit down for the collection**, the cross bearer and candle bearers begin to prepare the altar.

CROSS: Place the Roman Missal and the bookstand on the altar.

CANDLES: Place the veiled chalice, the other chalices, and the water cruet **on the side of the altar**. (If there is a bowl of hosts on the credence table, place that on the side of the altar as well.) Be sure to turn the veiled chalice so that the **veil faces the people**. Go to the back of the basilica, walking down the side aisle. When the gift bearers are ready, lead them to the sanctuary. Stand beside the priest. Take whatever the priest hands you. **When the priest turns**, you walk up to the side of the altar (on the sacristy side) and stand along the rug. If the priest hands you the collection basket, place it on the floor just behind the candles. If the priest hands you the bread wait for the priest to take it from you at the altar: **never place the paten on the altar yourself!**

After the priest takes the bread, pick up the water cruet. Hold cruets with **lids off, handles facing the priest**. After he pours water and wine in the chalice. (If the deacon is present he will prepare the chalice the same way as the priest.) Once you're finished, bow together to the priest and go back to the credence table. Pick up the water basin, pitcher and towel. If there is incense, just stand along the mosaic line and be ready; if there is no incense, go immediately back to the altar. Once the priest has finished washing and drying his hands, bow together, put your stuff away, and stand in front of your seats.

The Eucharistic Prayer

CANDLES: Ring the bells **ONE TIME** during the Epiclesis (when the priest holds his hands over the bread and wine and calls down the Holy Spirit upon them). After the priest consecrates the bread and the wine he will lift them up for people to see. Ring the bells **ONE TIME** as he lifts up each one.

At the sign of peace, bring the empty bowls to the altar.

Communion

After making the sign of peace, **ALL SERVERS** stand along the mosaic line behind the ambo for Communion. **Remember to bow before receiving the Eucharist**. Remain standing in place. Once the priest goes to minister Holy Communion to the people, kneel down to say your thanksgiving for receiving the Holy Eucharist. When you have finished praying you may be seated.

CROSS: Remove the Roman Missal and bookstand from the altar and place them on the shelf before kneeling down.

CANDLES: While Communion is being distributed to the people, pick up the collection baskets on the edge of the sanctuary steps, take them to the sacristy, and deposit the donations into the safe. Leave the empty baskets in the sacristy.

If there is a second collection, two smaller baskets will be sitting next to the large baskets for the ushers to use after Communion. Once all the ushers deposit the second collection into those baskets, the Candle Bearers pick them up, bring them into the sacristy and deposit the money into the briefcase on the counter top. Leave the empty baskets on the counter top.

Purifying the Vessels

CANDLES: After Communion, the priest (or deacon) will purify the vessels. (In other words, he'll clean up.)

Once the priest (or deacon) returns from the tabernacle, one of you gets the water cruet, comes to the altar and pours water into the chalice as the priest (or deacon) holds it out for you. Once you are finished, bow and return the water cruet to the table. Once the priest (or deacon) is finished cleaning everything, he will set the vessels off to the side of the altar. Both of you need to come to the altar. One of you should carefully pick up the chalice, the other should pick up the empty bowls. Bow to the altar and take everything back to the credence table. Stand in front of your seats.

Closing Prayer

CROSS: When the priest says, "Let us pray," bring the book to him and hold it open for him. After the prayer is completed, bow to the priest and return to your seat.

Final Procession

After the final prayer and blessing, line up in the main aisle facing the altar with your cross, candles and incense. The priest will come to the base of the steps and genuflect to the tabernacle. When the priest stands up, turn and lead him back to the sacristy.

AFTER MASS

CROSS: Put the cross back in the stand. Put your alb away.

CANDLES: Put the candles away. Extinguish all the candles. Put the cruets back in the refrigerator. Put your alb away.

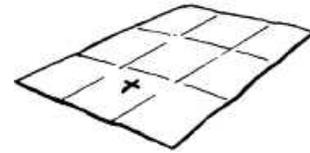
MAKING IT SIMPLE – HINTS TO REMEMBER

Here are a few key points to help you remember the serving procedures.

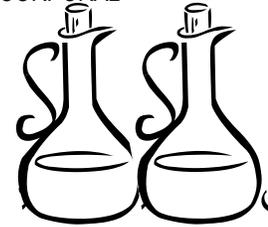
1. ***Incense first.*** Whenever incense is used, it always leads processions.
2. ***Do what the people do.*** Almost always servers will sit when the people sit and stand when they stand.
3. The preparation of the gifts is a key part for servers, and it's a little complicated. If you are doing Candles ***just think set – bring – wash:***
 - 1- Set the altar
 - 2- Bring the gifts
 - 3- Wash his hands
4. ***Wash hands last.*** The last thing the priest does when he prepares the altar is to wash his hands. If there's incense, you wash the priest's hand ***after he incenses the altar.***

GLOSSARY

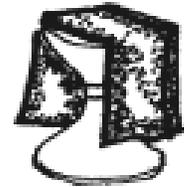
- **Alb** – white robe worn by servers.
- **Altar Cloth** – large white cloth that covers the top of the altar.
- **Ambo (or Pulpit)** – place where the readings are proclaimed.
- **Boat** – vessel containing the incense to be burned.
- **Chalice** – special cup used by the priest at Mass.
- **Chalice 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.
- **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.



CORPORAL



CRUETS



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

***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.***