

Serving Mass on Sunday Procedures and Guidelines for Altar Servers

ARRIVAL: Please arrive for Mass 15 minutes before the scheduled start.

ATTENDANCE: When arriving, please check to see if your services are needed even if you are not scheduled. Remember: if you cannot serve a Mass for which you are scheduled, it is **your** duty to find a replacement.

APPROPRIATE DRESS: Altar Servers are expected to dress in a manner befitting the solemnity of the celebration of the Mass. This means:

- Clean clothes
- Shirt with a collar
- Long pants are preferred
- Black dress shoes are preferred. Athletic shoes can be worn if they are not dirty, oversized, or loosely laced.

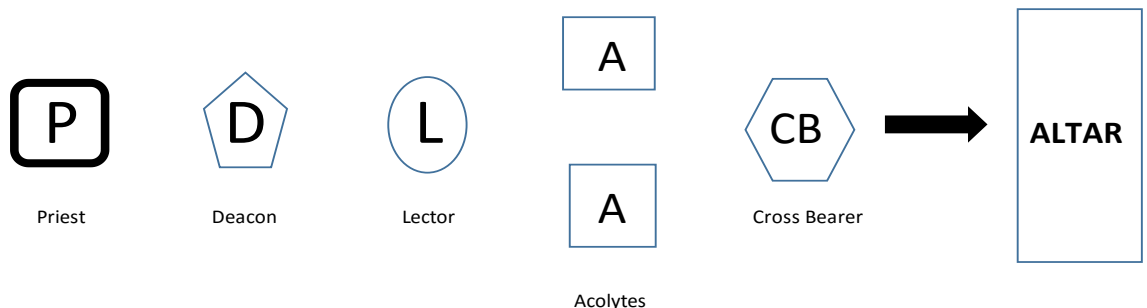
Sandals are not permitted.

POSTURE: Altar Servers should stand up straight and walk in a reverent, dignified manner. **Hands should be folded, with fingers pointing upward, above the stomach whenever standing or kneeling, except when carrying something.** When sitting, hands should be folded in the lap or placed palm down on the knees. Do not sit with legs crossed.

BEFORE MASS:

- Change into alb + cross and cincture (rope belt).
- Wash hands.
- Fill out the sign-in sheet.
- Light the Gospel candles.
- Make sure the Processional Cross is on its stand outside the Sacristy.
- Decide who will be the Crossbearer and the Acolytes (Crossbearer should be physically able to handle the Processional Cross carefully).

BEGINNING OF MASS: Servers will assemble at the Baptismal Font. When given the signal by the Celebrant, the Crossbearer will lead the procession down the center aisle arranged as below. Try to maintain an interval of approx. 4 feet.



At the foot of the Altar, the Crossbearer and Acolytes should pause for a second. The Crossbearer proceeds to his left and ascends the platform to put the Processional Cross on its stand. The Acolyte on the left follows the Crossbearer to the platform while the Acolyte on the right walks on the right side of the Altar to the platform. The Acolytes place the Gospel Candles on their stands and all three servers proceed to the servers' pew together.

DURING MASS: After the Penitential Rite and Gloria (in season) when the Celebrant begins the opening prayer (Collect) by saying "Let us pray", the Crossbearer will go to the celebrant and hold the binder until the prayer is finished, then return to the altar server's pew.

When the Lector finishes the second reading and steps down from the platform and the Celebrant (or Deacon) approaches the Altar to retrieve the Lectionary, the Acolytes will step up to the Ambo (one on either side) and remove the Gospel candles from their stands. They will rest the candles on the floor and face the Celebrant during the reading of the Gospel (stand at the edge of the carpet), after which they will replace the candles in their stands and return to the servers' pew together.

ALTAR SETUP: During the General Intercessions (Prayer of the Faithful) the Crossbearer should get the Roman Missal, chalice, and purificator and stand at the credence table with them. When the Celebrant or Deacon finishes the prayers and descends the steps, the server should follow him to the altar bringing the Missal, etc. In rare circumstances, the server may prepare the altar by setting the Missal, etc. in their proper places. (See photo below) and return to the servers' pew.

OFFERTORY: (refer to Figure 1 on Page 3). When the Celebrant descends the platform, all 3 servers will precede him to the main aisle at the foot of the Altar to assist in receiving the gifts, the Crossbearer on the Celebrant's left and the Acolytes on his right. The Celebrant will hand the paten with the hosts to the Crossbearer and the water and wine to the Acolytes. The Crossbearer will walk around and ascend to the left side of the altar followed by the Acolytes. The Acolyte with the wine cruet should stand closest to the altar. The Acolytes should hold the water and wine cruets in their right hand with the handle facing the celebrant. When the Deacon or Celebrant takes the paten from the Crossbearer, he/she will go to the credence table and return with the bowl and towel for washing the celebrant's hands. The Crossbearer with the bowl and towel over his/her arm will return and stand at the foot of the altar, behind the servers with the water and wine. The Deacon or Celebrant will then take the wine from the Acolyte and fill the chalice and then hand it back. When the Acolyte receives the wine cruet back, he/she should return it to the credence table and then return to the servers' pew. The Deacon or Celebrant will then take the water cruet from the other Acolyte and add water to the wine, then hand the water back. The Acolyte with the water cruet will step to the side and stand in the spot vacated by the Acolyte with the wine cruet. The server with the water bowl and towel will ascend the altar steps and stand next to the Acolyte with the water cruet. When the celebrant finishes washing his hands, they will return the water, bowl and hand towel to the credence table and take their places in the servers' pew. (When there is only 1 server, see photo.)



END OF MASS: After Communion, when the Celebrant or Deacon (Be ready as soon as the Eucharistic minister leaves the sanctuary with the ciborium.) either signals the servers or returns to the celebrant's chair, all 3 servers will clear the altar in a dignified and orderly manner, returning all items to the credence table. They will then take their places in the servers' pew.

When the Celebrant stands for the closing prayer and says "Let us pray", the Crossbearer will go to the celebrant and hold the binder until the prayer is finished, then return to the server's pew.

After the Celebrant gives the blessing and the Deacon says "The Mass is ended, go in peace", and the cantor sings the first words of the closing hymn, all 3 servers will walk up to the Ambo. The Crossbearer will remove the Processional Cross from its stand and the Acolytes will remove the Gospel candles. The Crossbearer will lead one Acolyte to the main aisle at the foot of the altar. The other Acolyte will descend the other side of the altar and join them. The Crossbearer will line up with the 4th row and the Acolytes will line up with the 2nd row. All 3 will face the Altar. When the Celebrant finishes reverencing the Altar and turns around, all 3 servers will turn around and the Crossbearer will lead the procession out of church. The Crossbearer will place the Processional Cross in its stand outside the Sacristy and the Acolytes will place the Gospel candles on their stands inside the Sacristy. They will then extinguish them with the candle snuffer.

Figure 1 - Offertory

