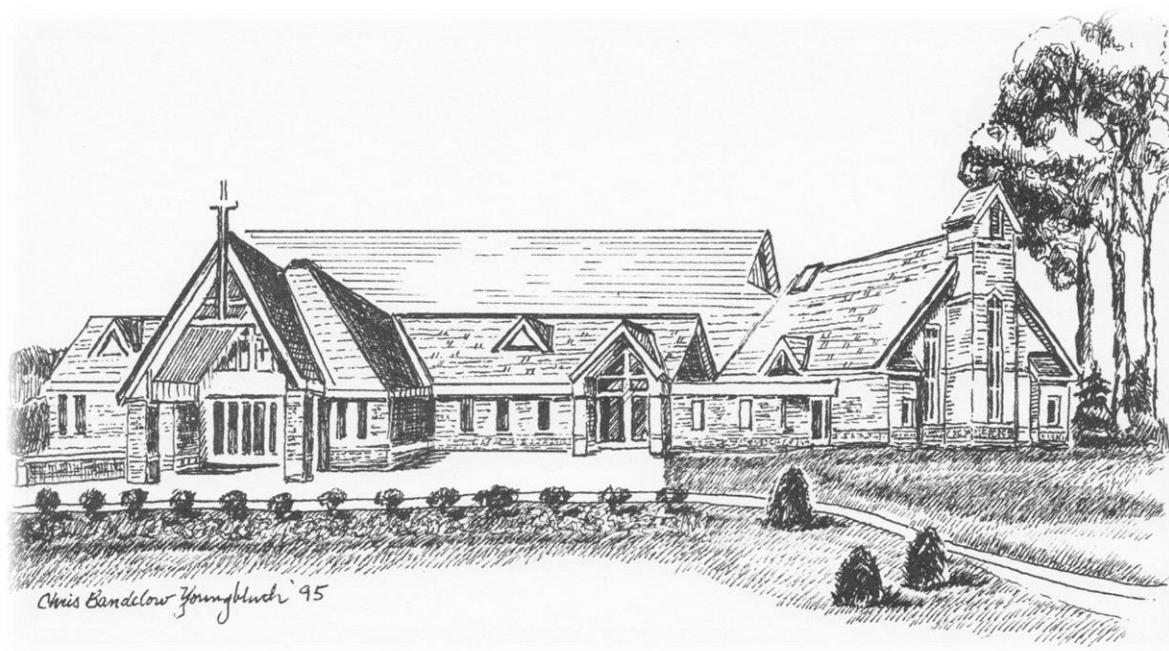


# Altar Server Manual



***St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church***  
*Lake Ridge, Virginia*

*(Revised September 22, 2023)*

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# *Welcome*

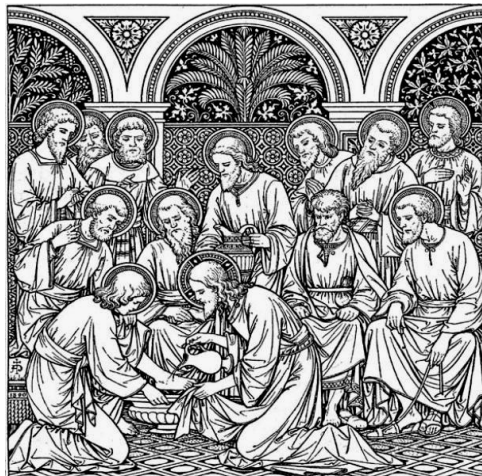
Welcome to the **St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish Altar Server Program**. Thank you for offering your time and talent to God and His Church as a server at His Holy Altar!

You are standing at the doorway to one of the greatest and most important experiences you can imagine; serving our Lord Jesus Christ at Holy Mass. As a young servant of the Lord, you'll find yourself in liturgical processions and carrying the sacred vessels that contain the bread and wine that will become the very Body and Blood of Christ. You may be asked to carry the processional cross or to serve as a thurifer at special Masses or other liturgies. As you gain more knowledge and experience, you may be asked to guide others and teach them what you know, or even to serve at the Easter Vigil Mass, the Christmas Midnight Mass, or at a Mass celebrated by the Bishop.

Now that you have responded to God's call in a special way, you will begin a process of spiritual and liturgical growth that is special to those who serve Him at His Holy Altar. Although your parents will contribute greatly, ultimately it is up to you how far you progress in the program. You will have many opportunities to learn the proper liturgical terms, gestures, and postures. You will learn the importance of practicing the virtue of reverence as a means for spiritual growth for yourself and for those who observe you. The call to serve at God's Altar is an awesome privilege and responsibility that is not for everyone. Thank you for responding to God's call.

## *Altar Server's Prayer*

**Loving Father, Creator of the universe,  
You call Your people to worship,  
to be with You and 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 You Son,  
our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and  
reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,  
One God, forever and ever. Amen.**



# *Becoming a Server at God's Holy Altar*

More than anything else, the server is a prayer leader. Servers help people to pray. So, all servers must ask themselves, ***"What is prayer?"*** To begin, prayer is listening, listening to God. During Mass, there's much to listen to. There's music, the Priest's prayers, the people's prayers, and especially there are the words of Sacred Scripture. All the things' servers have to do during Mass cannot be a distraction to their listening. Remember, the server is a part of the celebration. The server is not like a waiter in a restaurant who stands off to the side and only helps out occasionally. A waiter is not usually a part of the dinner celebration, but the server is; the server is a part of the celebration, listening all the time. This is one way you pray: by listening.

Another part of prayer is, of course, responding. At Mass the community responds in prayer and song. In our prayers and songs, praise and thanks are given to God for all the great things He has done. So, unless you are doing something that prevents you from doing so, you should be praying and singing when the people are praying and singing. People will see you participating through your listening, praying and singing and will follow your lead! Remember you are a leader and this is your first leadership job, to be a prayer leader.

Our worship at Holy Mass is to be centered on God, the Creator of the universe. We are called to worship the Lord *"in spirit and in truth"* (John 4.23). Your reverent and knowledgeable service at the *altar* of God should help everyone at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton to worship in such a way that their prayers rise from their hearts *"like fragrant incense before the Lord"*. Therefore, your growth as an altar server must include two basic components – spiritual growth and growth of knowledge and skill.

## ***Spiritual Growth***

The prophet Isaiah warns that if a desire for personal holiness does not accompany a person's service to God, then all one's acts of worship are hollow. *"Trample my courts no more! Bring no more worthless offerings; your incense is loathsome to me."* (Is. 1.13)

However, you will grow spiritually if you:

- Are reverent
- Are praying daily
- Are motivated in all that you do by love of God and neighbor, and
- Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confession regularly.

You will not be coming to Mass merely to perform mechanical actions. Instead, you will come to serve Mass with the same spirit as the palmist who proclaims *"Praise the name of the Lord, praise Him, servants of the Lord, who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God!"* (Psalms 135.1-2) It is with that spirit and in that "court" of God's house that altar servers are called to serve, and by their humble service, to witness to others their faith in, and faithfulness to, Jesus Christ.

## ***Growth of Knowledge and Skill***

An altar server's usefulness to the people of God increases as they gain more liturgical knowledge and skill. You will be asked to:

- Learn the centuries-old biblical names for sacred vessels, objects, and gestures used at Mass. Just as a surgeon in an operating room would never refer to a scalpel as a “thing”, you must learn the proper name and gesture required for each object and act of worship.
- Know what sacred vessel or object is required at a particular moment of worship.
- Pay close attention to such details as your arrival time at Mass, the type of shoes and clothes you wear while serving, and the importance of moving in harmony with the other servers.

## ***Criteria to be an Altar Server***

- 1) Be in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade or above.
- 2) Have received your First Penance and First Holy Communion.
- 3) Have the sincere desire to serve at God's Holy Altar.
- 4) Have attended one of the required altar server training sessions.
- 5) Have read, studied, and become familiar with this *Altar Server Manual*.
- 6) Be committed to review (in a timely manner) all altar server related material either emailed or sent via email and attend any future “updating training sessions” that may take place on an as needed basis.
- 7) Have the commitment to treat the *Cassock* and *Surplice*; *Alb*, *Cincture* and *Scapular* as the sacred vestments they are by wearing the correct size, and properly hanging them up after each Mass.

## ***Levels of Servers***

- 1) **JUNIOR SERVER (J)**: Must be in or the 5<sup>th</sup> grade or above
- 2) **SENIOR SERVER (S)**: Must be in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade or above, and have been a server at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton for at least one full year. While all ‘Senior Servers’ are expected to guide and mentor the ‘Junior Servers’, some ‘Senior Servers’ will be assuming the responsibility of training and practicing with the younger/newer servers.

## ***Number of Servers at Mass***

Unless otherwise instructed, all Sunday Masses (5:00 p.m. Vigil Saturday Evening; 7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 10:45 a.m., and 12:30 p.m. Sunday) will have **four servers** scheduled with at least one Senior Server. Senior Servers will normally be designated and scheduled for special Masses i.e., Christmas, Easter, Confirmation, etc.).

As knowledge and experience increase, one may advance in leadership responsibilities. But just as it is with music or sports, the more you practice, the better you get. The more “sanctuary time” you have, the more serving knowledge and experience you will gain.

Most servers are scheduled to serve weekend Masses at least two times per month. However, there are many other opportunities to “get sanctuary time” if you look for them. Being willing to volunteer to serve at Masses where there is no server signed up or the scheduled server does not show up, are all wonderful ways to further develop your skills. But, if all scheduled servers show up and you can’t serve at an additional Mass, don’t get discouraged. Practice serving at home! You can even get your family involved. The support of your family is important to your growth as an altar server.

## ***Attire and Attendance***

### ***What to wear when you come to serve***

- 1) Please wear dark shoes and dark socks. Dress shoes are preferred, solid black sneakers or dark leather sandals are acceptable provided they are also worn with solid, dark colored socks.
- 2) Wear dark long pants (no shorts) and collared shirt (no t-shirts)
- 3) Always come to Mass properly dressed, even when you are not signed up or scheduled to serve. Besides showing respect, you will be properly dressed if you are invited to serve.

### ***When you arrive***

- 1) Arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass begins. (30 minutes for special Masses, i.e., Christmas, Easter, Confirmation, etc.).
- 2) Make sure you sign-in on iPad MSP Kiosk in the *Lay Sacristy*. Each page has a date on it for weekdays and weekends. If you are not scheduled to server but are substituting for someone else write the letters “SUB” after your name.

## ***Criteria to Defer Altar Service***

If, while serving as an altar server the serving needs of the parish place too much of a strain or difficulty on the server and/or their family where they are not able to properly assist the parish at a given time, the server will be asked to return to the program at a later time when altar service will be mutually conducive to the server, the server’s family, and the larger parish family. Three specific criteria that may indicate a need to defer altar service for at least six months from the time the service discontinues are as follows:

- 1) **“NO SHOW STATUS”** (3) or more times within one year’s time (September until August of the following year) without attempting to secure a substitution. Note that if after all attempts to secure a substitute have failed, and the Altar Server Coordinator is notified by e-mail at [altarserver@setonlakeridge.org](mailto:altarserver@setonlakeridge.org), or the Parochial Vicar is notified of this at the parish office, 703-494-4008 prior to the scheduled serving time, then the “NO SHOW” status will not count against the scheduled server as one of the (3) unexcused absences.
- 2) **SHOWING UP TO SERVE MASS LATE** (3) or more times within one year’s time (September until August of the following year) without a good reason. Note that late is defined here as not having checked in at least 10 minutes prior to the start of Mass. Within 10 minutes before Mass begins the sacristan, Deacon or Priest will attempt to

secure a substitute server from the congregation. Any late server may serve if there is still a need but must understand that they forfeit their privilege to serve if they are late, regardless of the reason. Parents may call the Parochial Vicar at the parish office to discuss any unforeseen circumstances that caused the delay, and the "LATE" status will not count as one of a scheduled server's (3) late arrivals.

- 3) NOT WEARING THE PROPER CLOTHING AND/OR FOOTWEAR** (3) or more times within one year's time (September until August of the following year) when one is scheduled to serve i.e., no white shoes, shorts or T-shirts while serving.

The decision to defer will normally be made by the Parochial Vicar using this manual as a guide, and particularly following the three points listed above and after consultations with the altar server, their parents/guardians as well as the Pastor.



## ***Appreciation Activities***

Throughout the year activities are planned to express the Church's appreciation for the dedication and hard work undertaken by those associated with the SEAS Altar Server Program. Some of these anticipated activities include:

- September Server Training
- Mini Golf (November)
- Christmas, Epiphany, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Feast Day Celebration (January 6th)
- Laser Tag Team Tactics (March)
- Graduating Senior Altar Servers Appreciation Mass and Dinner (June)
- Annual Diocesan Altar Server Picnic (July) *Note: This event is highly encouraged. Please mark your calendars once the specific date is provided by the diocese.*



## ***Parents/Guardians Section***

As every Lector and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion knows, worshiping at Holy Mass is different from the viewpoint of the sanctuary. Unlike worshiping from the pew, your child's movements, gestures, and sacred actions can publicly reflect their faith in God and speak to others of God. Their reverence draws the faithful into a deeper experience of their Creator and the awesome gift He gives us in His Son, the "Bread of Life".

As parents, you are cooperating with God the Holy Spirit; the source of your child's calling to serve. The Lord will reward the many sacrifices you offer in order to make sure your child:

- 1) Attends all required training sessions.
- 2) Serves when signed-up for his/her assignment or gets a substitute when they cannot serve.
- 3) Takes advantage of the opportunities to volunteer at other Masses.
- 4) Arrives at least 15 minutes before Mass begins. (30 minutes for certain Masses, such as Christmas, Easter, Confirmation, etc.)

By your good example and loving support, your child will be encouraged to imitate the love and humble obedience of Christ in the way they conduct themselves both on and off the *altar*.

### ***Server Levels***

As any parent or teacher knows, there is a big difference in the learning ability and skill level between youth in the fourth grade and those in high school. The ranks of altar servers simply reflect this and are helpful distinctions in organizing and scheduling servers so that each group of servers includes a balance of experience. This facilitates the spiritual growth and increased knowledge of the youngest and least experienced servers. The goal is to help the confidence of these younger servers to grow as the older, more experienced "Senior Servers" train, guide and mentor them. The rate of advancement depends not only upon your child's interest, ability, and grade level, but is also determined by the overall family commitment to this special calling to be a server at God's Holy Altar. Parents should encourage their child to challenge themselves to achieve higher levels of skill, reverence, and faithful service. These levels should reflect the achievement of a certain level of proficiency as well as a true desire to offer a higher level of service for our Lord and His Church.

### ***What can I do at home?***

In the "domestic church" of your home, your help and encouragement in doing what it takes for your child to master the requirements for altar service are most welcomed by the Priests, Deacons and really everyone at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. This may mean quizzing your child in



their required liturgical terminology or helping them “serve Mass” at home. The important factor is displaying personal interest through example. Such details as availability, punctuality, cleanliness, proper attire, etc., are requirements that no manual can teach. Your role as parent is therefore indispensable. With your help, this sacred duty will become for your child an ever more grace-filled and fruitful experience as they grow in “wisdom and grace before God and His people.”

## ***Scheduling***

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton uses an online system called Ministry Scheduler Pro (MSP). It allows you to input your date preferences and your non-available dates prior to composing the schedules. You can track your schedule online or on the APP. You will be able to check the schedule from anywhere and easily find a substitute when you can't make your scheduled dates. For issues concerning registration or technical difficulties please contact MSP Admin by simply replying to any MSP email.

At St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, a parish that is growing each month, we are blessed with a good number of servers. This makes serving at weekend Masses a very special privilege even with five weekend Masses. However, many of those interested in serving more often are unable to do so because they limit their availability to only one or two Sunday Mass times. It has always been particularly challenging to have servers at the 7:30 a.m. Sunday Masses where the frequency and opportunities to serve are much greater.

Please seriously consider that the opportunities to serve will greatly increase if a server is available for more Mass times. To become an altar server as well as a Lector or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion can be one of the most rewarding aspects of anyone's faith journey, but as we well know that journey will necessarily involve some sacrifices along the way. To rearrange schedules or to be present to the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton community at a Mass that the family may not normally attend can be a sacrifice even if this occurs only once every three to four weeks. However, if embraced, this sacrifice can become a beautiful witness to the primary purpose of Mass; to place our sacrifices before God our Father in union with the perfect sacrifice of His Son who made His sacrifice, the means of our salvation.

To be an altar server means to be a person of service. To be a person of service ultimately means to place oneself at the service of the parish community, especially when and where that service is most needed by the community.

## ***Photo Release***

The word 'Liturgy' itself comes from the Greek word */leitourgia*, a term which in the ancient world had a secular meaning. It originally referred to "a service undertaken by a citizen... an individual who performed a public duty."

This definition gives us some helpful insights as to why the Church has given this once secular term a new spiritual meaning. Our liturgical celebrations are public acts of worship indeed! We

want all to experience Christ in His Holy Mysteries! And as part of our evangelization efforts, we employ modern means to call people into the fullness of God's life and love so that they too might discover the life- giving Wellspring of Worship that gushes forth into this world in every liturgy.

For this reason, as servers, you should be aware that you may be photographed or videotaped. We routinely live stream liturgies for the homebound, post pictures of parish events on our web site, and post videos of the priest's recorded Sunday homilies. In light of this, please see the ***"Photo, Press, Audio, And Electronic Media Release"*** form from the Diocese of Arlington that ***all servers are required to sign and turn in to the Altar Server Coordinator or the Parochial Vicar.*** (See Appendix)

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let us know. As mentioned above, the liturgy is by nature a 'public act of worship', however, if you are not comfortable with this and are unable to complete this form, you may want to reconsider whether or not this ministry is what the Lord is calling you too. There are other less public forms of ministry that might better suit your desire for service.

## ***Planning Center***

Planning Center will be used to give your sons and daughters opportunities to participate in appreciation events. Please pay attention to e-mails that will be sent periodically by the Altar Server Coordinator for upcoming altar server appreciation events. Planning Center is easy to use and is accessible through links in e- mails sent by our Altar Server Coordinator and our parish website <https://setonlakeridge.org/liturgy- sacraments/altar-servers/>



## *The Mass*

For Catholics, nothing is more important than the Mass. It is the heart and soul of our worshiping God. It is the celebration that gives us the strength we need to live a Christian life. Because of its importance, the Church places a serious obligation on all its members to take part in the Mass each Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation. Therefore, every Sunday the Christian community comes together to give joint worship to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Of all things Christians do, nothing is more important than celebrating Mass together. In your call to ministry, you may assist at other services, but none is as important as your service at Mass. The Mass is a re-presentation of Christ's sacrifice on Mount Calvary, which really began at the Last Supper when Jesus instituted the Eucharist and told His followers *"Do this in memory of Me."* Although the Mass is a mystery, we accept the fact that bread and wine actually become the Body and Blood of Jesus because Jesus told us this is so. Some of the following descriptions may help to better understand the Mass and its prominence in our Christian journey of faith.

First and foremost, the Mass is a Sacrifice. The idea of sacrifice to God is at the very heart of religion. The Bible tells us how Abel and Cain, the sons of Adam, offered sacrifice to God. Abraham, whom the liturgy calls *"our father in faith,"* was prepared to offer to God his only son, Isaac. The Old Testament Jews through their Priests sacrificed lambs and goats to God. Jesus offered His Father a sacrifice, namely Himself. Jesus promised us that *"when we eat this bread and drink this cup"* He would continue His great sacrifice until He comes again.

The Mass is a Memorial. It is an event that helps people to remember. The most important event, the one remembered at every Mass, is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We also remember, through the readings from Sacred Scripture, the other great deeds God has done for us, His people.

The Mass is also a Sacred Meal called the *Eucharist* (from the Greek word "eucharistia", meaning "thanksgiving"). In the Mass we give thanks for all that God has done for us, and we all eat the same food *"the bread of life and the cup of eternal salvation."* Jesus has told us that this bread and wine are His Body and Blood (*John 6:53-55*), so in this sacred meal we *Catholics* believe that Jesus' life, death, and resurrection are continued for all of us through our celebration of this Holy Meal, begun at the Last Supper.

## *The Order of Mass*

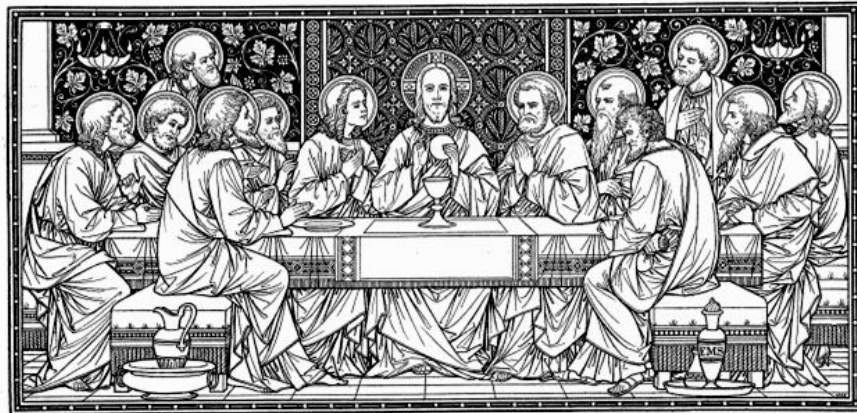
### INTRODUCTORY RITES

**Procession** Begins from the back of the church down the center aisle. Usual participants: crucifer (cross-bearer), other servers, possibly a Deacon and the Priest.

<b>Greeting</b>	By the Priest celebrant.
<b>Penitential Rite</b>	This can be done in various ways. Blessing and Sprinkling Holy Water (this is not normally done) may be done depending on the feast and preference of the Priest celebrant. When it is done, the penitential rite is omitted.
<b>Lord, Have Mercy</b>	Said or sung unless used in one of the penitential rites.
<b>Gloria</b>	This hymn is said or sung on all Sundays and some special feast days, except during Lent and Advent.
<b>Opening Prayer</b>	By the Priest celebrant.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

<b>First Reading</b>	Read by the Lector (Reader) usually from the Old Testament.
<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	Usually led by the cantor and sung by the choir and congregation but it may be recited.
<b>Second Reading</b>	Also read by the Lector (Reader) usually from the New Testament. On weekdays there is normally not a second reading.
<b>Gospel Acclamation</b>	The choir or cantor sings it first and the congregation repeats. It may be omitted when not sung.
<b>Gospel</b>	Taken from one of the four Gospels, it is read by either a Deacon or the Priest.
<b>Homily</b>	Given by either a Priest or a Deacon, explaining the Scriptures that were just proclaimed and how these relate to our everyday lives to grow as faithful Disciples of Christ.
<b>Profession of Faith</b>	Said at all Sunday Masses and on certain special feasts. All join in reciting this declaration of what we believe as Catholic Christians.
<b>General Intercessions</b>	Also called the “Prayers of the Faithful”. The response is normally, “ <i>Lord here our prayer.</i> ”



## LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

**Preparation of the Gifts** This is also called the offertory. At this time the *cross-bearer* goes to the rear of the church and leads the people bearing the gifts to the *altar*. The other servers prepare the altar and then proceed to the back of the church to accompany the crucifer in the offertory procession. These servers then stand next to the Priest to assist him in receiving the offertory gifts from the people.

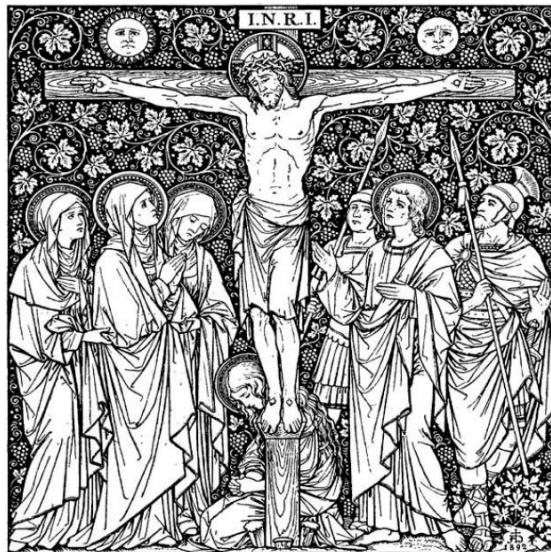
**Eucharistic Prayer** There are various Eucharistic Prayers, but the responses you need to know are usually the same for each. Here are parts of the Eucharistic Prayer you should know: the *Preface*; the *Holy, Holy, Holy*, the *Institution* (also called the *Consecration*); the *Memorial Acclamation*; and the *Great Amen*.

**Communion Rite** This part begins with the *Our Father*, followed by the *Sign of Peace*, the *Lamb of God (Agnus Dei)* and then *Distribution of Holy Communion*. After Communion the *altar* is cleared. The rite ends with the *Prayer after Communion*.

## CONCLUDING RITE

**Closing Prayer & Blessing** By the Priest celebrant.

**Dismissal** The Priest or Deacon sends the congregation out to serve God and His people. The ministers leave in procession, departing the altar area in the order in which they entered.





## *Customary Actions & Postures*

Beginning golfers have a lot of things to worry about. They must be concerned with how their feet are placed, how straight their arm is on their back swing, whether or not their head is down, and eyes are on the ball. A professional golfer does not have to think of these things. Through practice, good posture and swing a professional has mastered these skills that now come naturally.

It should be similar with serving Mass. The various actions we do may be a bit forced and stiff at first, but by doing them correctly each time and practicing them, they should become second nature and therefore become things that are done naturally and easily without thinking. Remember, all altar servers are “public people”, in other words, they are seen. Your actions should be neither sloppy nor rigid.

### **A. Folded Hands**

Teachers of public speaking say that one of the most difficult things to teach students is what to do with their hands. The more a speaker becomes conscious of their hands, the bigger the problem can become. Servers shouldn't have this worry. They have one simple rule to follow. When hands are not in use, they should be folded-except when the server is seated (See section on sitting)

To bring about a more consistent look all servers should fold their hands by:

- Putting palm against palm
- Putting the left thumb over the right knuckle
- Putting the right thumb over the left thumb to form an “X”
- Keep elbows near the body, making sure the hands are held in front with fingers pointing slightly upward.

### **B. Sign of the Cross**

The story is told that when the 4<sup>th</sup> century Roman Emperor, Constantine the Great was preparing to go into battle, he had a vision of a flaming cross in the sky with the words: “*In this sign you shall conquer.*” He had the shields of his soldiers painted with a cross, won the battle, and made Christianity an official religion of the empire. He himself later became a Christian. The sign of the cross is the most frequently used sign in the Church. For most children, it is the first religious act they learn. It is a summary of Christian belief, the sign of our salvation. Therefore, it should be made reverently and thoughtfully. The sign of the cross is made during Mass at the beginning (after the entrance song) and again during the blessing at the end.

### **C. Small Sign of the Cross**

The small sign of the cross is made at the announcement of the Gospel and should follow the

same action done by the Priest or Deacon. To make it, the right hand is closed loosely in a fist, thumb on top. The thumb traces the sign of the cross on the forehead, the lips and the chest.

#### **D. Genuflections**

The word “genuflection” comes from two Latin words: “genu” (meaning knee) and “flectere” (meaning to bend). It means to touch the knee to the ground in worship. The custom of making a genuflection to show respect is very ancient and has existed among many different cultures. All *Catholics* are taught to genuflect to the Blessed Sacrament when entering or leaving a church or chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved.

This is how a proper genuflection is made:

- Genuflections always begin in a standing position facing the tabernacle. You do not genuflect while you are still walking.
- With hands folded, eyes looking at the tabernacle, bring your right leg back about half a step, then bend your right knee to the floor even with the heel of your left foot.
- Pause briefly. Then rise to the original standing position.
- With the exception of someone who is holding something, like the *Cross-Bearer* or *Thurifer*, all ministers and servers are to genuflect when entering or leaving the church.

#### **E. Bowing**

Bowing is a lesser form of reverence than genuflecting. There are two kinds of bows, a bow of the head (simple bow) and a bow of the body (profound bow).

1. **Bow of the Head (Simple Bow):** This bow is a slow nod. It is made when the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are named together and at the name of Jesus, Mary, or the saint in whose honor the Mass is celebrated. As a courtesy, simple bows of the head are made whenever the server leaves the immediate presence of the Priest or Deacon. For example, when the server leaves the Priest or Deacon after bringing him the wine and water or after the washing of the Priest’s hands. In this situation simple bows are made by the server(s) and the Priest or Deacon to each other.
2. **Bow of the Body (Profound Bow):** A body bow is made from the waist with hands folded. In this bow the shoulders and head are bent forward at about a 30-degree angle. It should be made slowly and reverently. A body bow is made: (1) Before crossing in front of the *altar* and (2) In the Profession of Faith (Creed) at the words, “*and by the power of the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man,*”

#### **F. Walking**

Walking should be done with dignity and in a slow and smooth manner. When ministers are walking together, a uniform pace should be maintained, i.e., stay together. The pace should not be rushed but deliberate. Hands should be folded.

#### **G. Carrying the Cross**

The *Cross-Bearer* must remember that they set the pace for all that follow. It is best to be

neither too slow nor too fast. The bottom of the cross itself should be carried about (2) feet above your head, with the corpus (figure of Christ) always facing directly forward and the pole perpendicular to the ground. When carrying the cross, the *Cross-Bearer* bows either to the *tabernacle* or *altar*, and never genuflects while holding the cross.

## **H. Silence**

Except when making the proper responses, silence is kept at all times. Nothing is more distracting to the Priest or to the congregation than to see altar servers whispering together. An occasional whisper is understandable when giving each other assistance or direction. The arrangement of the Mass is such that silence is specifically observed at designated times as part of the celebration (at the penitential rite, after the invitation to pray at certain prayers, and following the readings, Gospel and homily). Each period of silence should become a time to reflect on what was just said or to prepare to listen to what is about to be said. After receiving Holy Communion, the servers should praise and thank God within their hearts in a spirit of quiet prayer, and then giving communal thanks and praise to God by joining the congregation in singing the communion hymn(s).

## **I. Sitting and Standing**

While seated, sit straight up with the palms of your hands flat against the top of your legs (or) folded in your lap. While standing, hands should be properly folded (See sections on folding hands). No crossing of arms or legs, tapping of feet or fingers, slouching, cracking of knuckles or biting of nails while seated or standing.

## **J. Kneeling**

While kneeling your hands should be properly folded (See sections on folding hands). No swaying, looking around, slouching, cracking of knuckles or biting of nails, etc. while kneeling.

CAUTION: Because the postures at Mass are somewhat formal and a bit strange for some, individuals may at times become tense. This could possibly lead to feeling faint. If you should ever feel strange, sick, or faint, go immediately (you do not need the Priest's permission) to the sacristy and notify an adult and sit down so you may be helped.





# *Altar Server Instructions*

## ***I. Attire and Attendance***

### **A. What to wear when you come to serve:**

1. Please wear dark shoes and dark socks. Dress shoes are preferred, solid black sneakers or dark leather sandals are acceptable provided they are also worn with solid, dark colored socks.
2. Wear long pants (no shorts) and collared shirt (no t-shirts)
3. Always come to Mass properly dressed, even when you are not scheduled to serve. Besides showing respect, you will be properly dressed if you are invited to serve.

### **B. When you arrive in the altar server's sacristy:**

1. Arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass begins. (30 minutes for special Masses, i.e., Christmas, Easter, Confirmation, etc.).
2. Make sure you sign-in on the iPad MSP Kiosk located in the *Lay Sacristy*. Each page has a date on it for weekdays and weekends. If you are not scheduled to server but are substituting for someone else write the letters "SUB" after your name.

## ***II. Before Mass Begins***

### **1) Find the *Alb* (or *Cassock* and *Surplice*) in the closet that is your size.**

1. If you are a young lady, wear an *alb* (the long white robe) and *cincture* (the rope that acts as a belt.), and *scapular*. The *cincture* should be in the color of the Mass. If you see the *chalice*, the veil over the *chalice* will be the color of the Mass. If it is not clear which color is to be used, please ask the Priest.
2. If you are a young gentleman, wear a *cassock* and *surplice*. Make sure that the *surplice* is on straight, that is, the right and left sides and back and front are balanced.
3. The *alb* or *cassock* should go down to about the top of your shoes. If you have grown such that the *alb* or *cassock* is getting higher, above the shoes, switch to the next largest size. The *alb* or *cassock* of each size should be next to the number of that size. However, still check the number at the top of the garment to be sure.

### **2) Place the veiled *Chalice* (found in the Priest Sacristy), on the *Credence Table* in the church next to the statue of Mary.**

1. Carry the *chalice* very, very carefully, with one hand on the narrow stem and one hand on top, and keep it even. When you place it on the *credence table*, the front side of the

*chalice veil* (which completely covers that side of the *chalice* and often has a sign, such as a cross) should face the front of the church. That side of the *chalice veil* should be straightened and in the shape of a trapezoid.

### **C. Bring out the *Ciboria* and the *Cruets***

1. For a Sunday or Saturday evening Mass place the *cruet* with water and the tray on the credence table. All but one of the *ciboria* also go on the credence table. Then bring the *cruet* with wine and the other *ciborium* to the gift table inside the main church.
2. For a weekday or Saturday morning Mass, place the tray with both the water and wine *cruet* on the credence table; and do the same with all of the *ciboria*.

### **D. Light the *Candles***

1. Behind the wall on the table, there are long poles, with wax tapers at the end. Light the tapers with the matches or lighter. After lighting the taper, *place the match in the clay bowl*.
2. Light the candles that are on the candlesticks next to the altar. Sometimes there will be other candles to light, such as the Paschal candle (the tall white candle lit during the Easter season and for funerals and baptisms) or the Advent candles.
3. When carrying the taper, walk very slowly so that the fire does not go out. Also, keep a small but clear amount of wax (about a half inch) above the funnel so that the fire can burn, but not too high.

### **E. Put out additional chairs (if needed)**

1. If, during special Masses, there are more than five servers or a Deacon or acolyte and more than four servers, get enough additional chairs for everyone and place them next to the chairs behind the one that the Priest will be using.

### **F. Work out ahead of time who will be doing what**

1. **One-Cross Bearer:** Carries the processional crucifix;
2. **One-Book Bearer:** Holds the book and possibly assists with bringing the sacred vessels to the altar)
3. **Two-Servers:** Carry candles in the procession (if used), brings the sacred vessels to the altar, assists with the wine and bread at the offertory, brings up the wine and water for consecration, and the water, bowl and finger towel for the washing of Priest's hands.
4. For special Masses all the above plus additional Servers as needed and **One-Thurifer:** Carries the censor and boat with incense. Please see the appendix for additional information on the *thurifer* and incense used at Mass.

### **G. Prayer before Mass begins**

1. Recite the **Altar Server's Prayer** before Mass posted on the wall in the servers' sacristy with the Priest and/or Deacon just prior to the beginning of Mass.

### ***III. Entrance Procession***

#### **A. Starting point and order of the procession**

1. After we pray in the sacristy, we all proceed to the narthex of the church to form the procession, which will begin in the back of the church, just inside the inner church doors. The servers will line up in front of the priest and deacon and precede them down the aisle.
2. The Cross Bearer is in front unless there is incense. In that case, the server carrying the incense (Thurifer) is in front. Behind the Cross Bearer, servers would be lined up in groups of two. If there are an odd numbers of servers, there would be one directly in front of the Priest. If there are candles in the procession, the servers with candles would be immediately behind the Cross Bearer.
3. On a Sunday Mass, when the singing begins (after the announcements and a short amount of music with the instruments alone), the Cross Bearer starts and everyone processes after him. At a weekday Mass, everyone starts after the announcements are over.

#### **B. Arrival at the Sanctuary and seating**

1. The procession continues at a normal pace until we get to the front of the sanctuary. At that point the Cross Bearer goes a little to the left of the center in front of the sanctuary. The servers after him would then go to each side, the first one to the right, the second one to the left, the third to the right, etc. Leave enough room for the Priest in the center, and for the Deacon (if one is present) to the right of the Priest.
2. When the Priest gets to the center in front of the sanctuary, he will genuflect. Everyone except the cross bearer (and candle bearers and the server with incense if present) will genuflect when the Priest does.
3. Then the Cross Bearer goes behind the wall to place the crucifix back on its stand. If any of the Acolytes are bearing candles, they go to the sacristy as well, put out the candles, and place the candles on their stand.

### ***IV. Introductory Rites and Liturgy of the Word***

#### **A. Prayers at the chair**

1. The Priest may want the Missal (the smaller red book for the Mass) at the beginning before the Sign of the Cross, or may only want it when he says, "Let us pray." At that point, the Book Bearer brings the Missal to him.

#### **B. Readings, Gospel and Homily**

1. After the opening prayer, everyone sits down for the readings. Be attentive to the readings and the homily after the Gospel. As noted before, everyone is able to see what you are doing.

### **C. Creed and Prayers of the Faithful**

1. After the homily, the Priest will go back to his chair. On Sundays and other Holy Days, he will then stand for the Creed and then lead the intercessions (prayers of the faithful.) On Sundays, there will be a colored binder with the intercessions. When the Priest gets back to the chair after the homily, the Book Bearer brings the colored binder to him and offers to hold it open for him.
2. At the conclusion of the Prayers of the Faithful, the Book Bearer hands the binder to the priest, who will place it on the little table next to his chair.

## ***V. Offertory and Preparation of the Altar***

### **A. Placing the Sacred Vessels**

1. After the intercessions, the Priest will either sit down or go to the altar. If there is a Deacon, he goes up the altar and the Priest remains at the chair.
2. One or two of the Servers or Book Bearer (not the cross bearer) will go to the credence table to get the chalice, large Roman Missal with bookstand, and ciboria and place them on the altar.
3. If there is only the chalice, then only one Server gets up. If there are ciboria, then both Acolytes will bring one or two of the ciboria to the altar.
4. Place the chalice on the right side of the altar (that is the side closest to the chairs.) Be very careful in carrying the chalice and place it at least a few inches from the edge so that it will not fall off. Keep the paten centered on the chalice. The part of the chalice veil that completely covers the chalice should be facing forward toward the congregation. Place the ciboria next to the chalice, but again at least six inches away from the edge.

### **B. Presentation of the Gifts (Offertory)**

1. If it is a Sunday or any other high Mass, the bread and wine will be in the back. If that is the case, the Cross Bearer goes behind the wall at this time to get the crucifix. He then goes sanctuary and down the center aisle toward the back of the church, where the people bringing the ciborium of bread and the cruet of wine are. Two other servers proceed down behind him.
2. When the Cross Bearer and the two other servers get to the table in the back, wait there until the people who are bringing up the gifts are there and the Priest (and Deacon) is to go to the center of the altar
3. The procession of the gifts then goes up the aisle to the front of the sanctuary step. As with the opening procession, the Cross Bearer is in front, with the two servers next to each other behind him. The gift bearers will process behind the servers.
4. When the procession arrives at the front of the sanctuary, the Cross Bearer goes to his left (the Priest's right) and waits as the Priest receives the bread and wine. The other two

servers stand on either side of the Priest, facing the congregation.

5. The Server who is setting up the altar (while the other servers have gone up the aisle), comes to front step with the Priest to receive the gifts while the others are coming down the aisle. Then the Priest gives that one server the wine, while the Priest takes the ciborium to the altar. Note, if the Deacon is present he will hand him the wine to give to the Server and the Deacon will be handed the ciboria.

### **C. Preparation of the Altar**

1. After the Priest has received the bread and the wine and has given them to the servers, the Cross Bearer goes behind the wall and places the crucifix back on its stand.
2. The server carrying the ciborium with the bread hands it to the Priest, or Deacon (if present) to be placed on the altar. The server with the cruet of wine goes to the credence table.
3. At the credence table, one server will pick up the cruet with water and another server will pick up the cruet with wine. They take the lids off of the cruets and place the lids on the credence table. Cruets need to be placed in the palm of the right hand with the loop handle facing away from the server. The server's other hand should rest on their chest with fingers closed.
4. After the Priest lifts up the paten to offer the bread, the servers with the cruets go and stand next to the altar, at the edge of carpet on which the Priest is standing. The Priest will first take the cruet of wine and then the cruet of water.
5. When the Priest has poured the water and wine into the chalice and has given the cruets back to the servers, together the servers make a slight bow to the Priest and then go back to the credence table.
6. The server with the cruet of water grasps the cruet loop handle with their right fingers and picks up the finger bowl resting it in the palm of their left hand. Meanwhile the other server takes the finger towel, unfolds it and grasps it by the two top corners letting it hang vertically in front of them.
7. These two servers go and stand next to the altar, at the edge of carpet on which the Priest is standing. The server with the water pours a small amount of water over the Priest's fingers and into the bowl. The other server offers the Priest the finger towel and then folds his hands in a prayer posture. After the Priest dries his fingers, he refolds the towel and gives it back to the altar boy, usually placing it over his folded hands.
8. These servers then return to the credence table and place the water on the tray and the finger bowl and towel next to it.

## **VI. Preface and Eucharistic Prayer**

### **A. Position in front of the Altar**

1. After the Priest has offered the bread and wine, washed hands, then all of the servers stand in front of the steps near the credence table; the places are marked by cushions on the ground. One server will be where the bells are located.
2. At the end of the Sanctus (the time when everyone says or sings “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts, . . .”), the servers kneel with everyone else.

### **B. Ringing of the Altar Bells**

1. When the Priest places his hands over the gifts (not when he is making the sign of the cross, but rather when he has his hands outstretched over the bread and wine), the server who has the bells will ring them once. This motion and the words attached are called the epiclesis, the invocation of the Holy Spirit over the bread and wine. This time may be shortly after the Sanctus, or about a minute and a half later, so pay attention to the Priest’s movements. If there is a pall (a square with cloth over it) over the paten, the Priest will take the pall off just before the epiclesis.
2. Shortly thereafter, the Priest leans forward and says the words of consecration over the bread, i.e. “*This is my Body...*”, he will then hold up the large host (which is now the Eucharist under the appearance of bread). When the Priest does so, the server who has the bells rings them three times.
3. Shortly after, the Priest leans forward and says the words of consecration over the wine, i.e. “*This is my Blood...*”, he will then hold up the chalice (which now has the Eucharist under the appearance of wine). When the Priest does so, the server who has the bells rings them three times.

### **C. Focus on Who you are kneeling before**

1. During the Eucharistic Prayer, all of the Altar Servers should be paying careful attention to the altar, where the King whom you are serving is coming to us. The words of Sacred Scripture are once again fulfilled by the invisible company of angels and saints that are with us; “*Thousands of thousands, myriads of myriads called out in thundering voice, ‘Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and wealth, and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.’*” Rev. 5:11-12.
2. After the Priest says or sings, “*Through Him, and with Him, and in Him, O God Almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is Yours, for ever and ever*” and the people respond, “*Amen,*” all of the servers stand with the rest of the congregation.

## **VII. Communion Rite**

### **A. “Our Father”, Sign of Peace and Communion Patens**

1. The Priest will then lead everyone in praying the Our Father. Afterward there will be some things the Priest says and responses by the people.
2. When the Priest says, “*Let us offer each other the sign of peace*”, the servers move to the left from their positions in front of the altar along the front step. When they get to a position just past the edge of the altar, they come up to the priest in a single file, exchange the sign of the peace with the priest and then proceed to their positions behind the server chairs, where they may exchange the sign of peace with each other.
3. Then one of the servers goes over to the patens and takes them out of their vinyl coverings. If there are four or more servers, at least two of them should retrieve the patens. The server(s) who has retrieved the patens, then gives it to the other server(s).
4. Continue from this point on to hold the paten straight and parallel to the ground.
5. Meanwhile the Priest (or Deacon) will be placing ciboria from the tabernacle on the altar.
6. After the “*Lamb of God*” acclamation, everyone kneels except the Priest and Deacon.

### **B. Receiving Communion and Communion Stations**

1. After the Priest has received Communion, stand up and get into a line facing your right (i.e., in the direction of the tabernacle.) The Priest will go over to the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to give them Communion. He will then come to you and give you Communion as you proceed up to him in line.
2. When receiving Communion, hold the paten under your chin and receive Communion on the tongue.
3. After you receive Communion, go to one of the Communion stations.
  - a. If there are one or two servers, they should go to the center stations in front of the sanctuary first.
  - b. After the altar servers needed at the front center have gone there, the rest go to the other stations.
4. When you get to the Communion station, stand to the outside of the Priest, Deacon, or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. That is, if the Priest, Deacon or Extraordinary Minister is on the right side of the center aisle, stand to their right; and if they are on the left side, stand to his left.

### **C. Distribution of Communion**

1. When people are receiving Communion, hold the paten completely level to the ground

and: (1) if the person is receiving Communion on the tongue, hold the paten a little under their chin; (2) if the person is receiving Communion on the hand, hold the paten slightly under their hand.

2. The purpose of the paten is: (1) to catch the Eucharist if it is dropped; and (2) the catch any particles of the Eucharist that may fall. Obviously, it can only accomplish these purposes if it is kept level to the ground throughout the Communion Rite. So keep the paten level to the ground.
3. If the Priest, Deacon, or Extraordinary Minister whom you are serving with no longer has anyone in line, look around to see if there are any other lines of people receiving Communion that need a server with a paten. If there is no need, return the paten to the altar.

#### **D. Returning the Patens and Sacred Vessels**

1. When you return to the altar after Communion, hold the paten you have been using and line up on the side of the altar closest to the pulpit.
2. At this point, servers should be ready for the patens to be purified.
3. The Priest or Deacon will come over to purify the patens and the chalice. After the Priest purifies each paten, each of the servers returns the paten to the table and places it in its cover. One of the servers puts them back in their place.
4. Once all of the patens are purified, one server brings the cruet of water over to the Priest or Deacon. The Priest will turn towards the altar server with the fingers of his right hand over the chalice or over a ciborium. The server will pour water over the Priest's (or Deacon's) fingers into the chalice. The idea is to catch any particles of the Eucharist that may be clinging to his fingers.
5. The Priest or Deacon then purifies the chalice and places the purificator, the pall, the corporal and the chalice veil over it. He then places the chalice on the side of the altar. One of the servers then takes the chalice back to the credence table and places it there, with the side facing the front of the church covered. Always be very, very careful when carrying the chalice.

### ***VIII. After Communion***

#### **A. Final Prayer after Communion and Dismissal**

1. Once the servers have finished assisting at the altar after Communion, they return to their chairs.
  - a. When the Priest says, "*Let us pray*" the Book Bearer brings the Missal to the Priest and holds it open for him".
2. After the prayer (or solemn blessing if there is one), the Book Bearer than closes the book and places it back on the credence table.



3. Immediately after this prayer, the Cross Bearer will retrieve the crucifix (if there are candle bearers, they get the lighted candles at this time as well)

## **B. Recessional**

1. Right after the Priest gives his blessing and concludes his words “*Go in the peace of Christ*”, (or similar dismissal), he will leave the chair for the altar. At that point all of the servers go back to the front of the altar and line up as they were at the beginning of Mass.
2. When the Priest genuflects, everyone else except the Cross Bearer (and Candle Bearers if they are there any) genuflect as well. Then everyone processes out in the same order that they processed in.
3. After you have left the church, the Priest may want you to stay for a prayer. If so, face the Cross Bearer. He turns around and everyone faces the Cross for that prayer.

## **C. Reverence the Cross**

1. Upon approaching the crucifix immediately after Mass, the Priest, along with the Altar Servers make a full bow (at the waist) while the Priest says: “***Prosit***” which basically means, “***May it (the Mass) be for your benefit***” The Altar Servers respond by saying: “***Pro omnibus et singulis***”, [pro OM-NE-boos et sing-goo-lees] which basically means, “***For all and for each***” This wonderful, little prayer captures succinctly the relationship at Mass between the individual, the community, and the world. The Mass transcends individual, it is 'for all and for each', faith is 'for all and for each', and the justice which faith calls for is, 'for all and for each'.

## **D. Returning to the Sacristy and Clean-up**

1. Then return to the sacristy.
  - a. If it is a weekday Mass, then the Priest, Deacon and servers say together the “Prayer after Mass” (which is located on the bulletin board) and, then, reverence the Cross (as noted above).
  - b. If it is a Sunday or Holy Day, while the Priest and Deacon are greeting the people out in the Narthex, then the servers alone say together the “Prayer after Mass”.
2. Retrieve all of the sacred vessels used for the Mass, except for the patens, which stay in the credence table. Place all the other sacred vessels back on the counter in the Priest’s Sacristy. Once again, be very careful with the chalice and paten, keeping the paten balanced on top of the chalice. Please use two hands when carrying the chalice: one hand to hold the chalice under the veil, and the other hand on the top to hold the chalice burse and veil steady.
3. Then take off the alb (or cassock and surplice) and hang them up on the hanger next to the number of their size. Hang them up carefully so that they do not fall off or get wrinkled and be careful to get them back on the hanger with the number for the size of the vestment.
4. Carefully place the cincture and scapulars in their proper place.

## **E. Junior Server (J) Final Responsibilities**

1. VERY IMPORTANT! In the sacristy, talk with your “Senior Servers” asking them “how things went” and receiving any feedback from them on what “went right” and on any suggested areas of improvement.
1. Check the *Altar Server Schedule* on MPS to see when you will be serving next and your email for any other important reminders.
2. Enjoy the rest of your day and be honored that you were able to serve at the altar of God.

## **F. Senior Server (S) Final Responsibilities**

1. VERY IMPORTANT! In the sacristy, the “Senior Server” gives any necessary feedback to their “Server Team”, first praising them for what “went right” and gently correcting and instructing any necessary areas of improvement.
2. Verify that all sacred vessels have been brought back to the sacristy and, if applicable, all candles have been properly extinguished.
3. Verify that all *albs*, *cassocks*, *surplices*, *cinctures* and *scapulars* have been properly hung-up and that all servers have properly checked-in on the iPad Kiosk with MSP.
4. Check the *Altar Server Schedule* on MPS to see when you will be serving next and your email for any other important reminders.
5. Enjoy the rest of your day and be honored that you were able to serve at the altar of God.

## **IX. It's All About Responsibility**

Now that you are a server (or soon will be one), remember this, there are people counting on you. First, the Priest depends on you. He needs to know that you will be there, and be there on time. He needs to know that you are prepared. You help him a great deal to ensure that things go smoothly. Also, remember that the congregation counts on you. Without you, an important part of prayer leadership is missing. Without you, things can get sloppy. And no celebration of the Mass, or any prayer event should be sloppy. A good server keeps things going smoothly.

No matter how well you are prepared, occasionally things go wrong. When something goes wrong, stay calm. Quick movements are more noticeable and can lead to other troublesome mistakes. If you stay calm and try to move smoothly, even if it was a “wrong move” chances are nobody will notice except you. When there is a problem, think about it for a moment, then, if possible, do what is necessary to correct the problem.

Remember, be responsible, and be calm. You have been called to serve at God's Holy Altar. The Priests, Deacons, and entire parish family of Seton Lake Ridge are eternally grateful that you have responded to this call with a real sense of dedication and service.

# Terms to Know

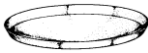
## Sanctuary Area

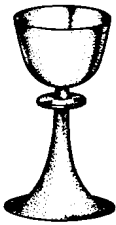
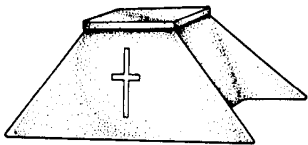


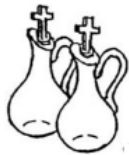


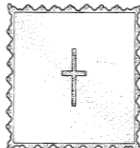
TERM	DEFINITION
Altar of Repose	Altar where the <i>tabernacle</i> is placed
Altar of Sacrifice	Altar at which the celebrant offers Mass.
Altar Candles	Must be white, which symbolizes of the purity of Christ. The flame represents Christ, our light and our life.
Credence Table	Table upon which items used for Mass are to be found <i>chalice, cruets, lavabo dish, finger towel, bowl patens, ciborium</i> , etc.
Lectern (Ambo)	Location where the readings and Gospel are proclaimed and the homily is delivered.
Paschal Candle	Used and lighted during all Masses from the Easter Vigil until Pentecost Sunday. It is also used at baptisms and funeral liturgies. When in use, it is normally placed near the ambo or baptismal font.
Presider's Chair	Chair or bench used by the Priest celebrant during Mass.
Sanctuary	The raised part of the Church where the <i>altar of sacrifice</i> is located.
Tabernacle	The gold metal "container/box" with doors where the Blessed Sacrament is kept.



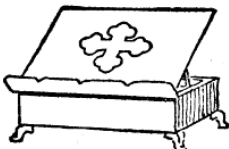
## Liturgical Books

TERM	DEFINITION
Roman Missal	"Red" book that contains the prayers, instructions and directions for celebrating the Mass.
Priest's Binder	This book or "binder" is kept on the credence table until the Priest needs it for the Creed and the Prayers of the Faithful, after which, it is kept on the small table next to the Priest's chair. The covering matches the liturgical color of the season.
Hymnals	These books contain the hymns and psalms for Mass. All servers should keep these books near them so they may fully participate and sing during Mass whenever their other duties will permit.
Lectionary	Book that contains the readings and Gospel that are read at Mass.




## Altar Vessels and Linens

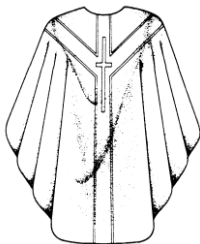

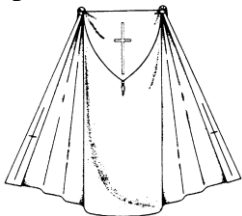


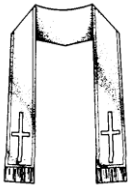
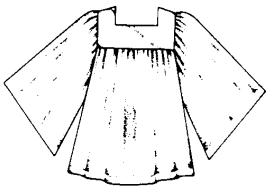
TERM	DEFINITION
Altar Cloth	This is the large white cloth that is placed over the main altar.
Paten 	A flat plate on which the large host, used by the Priest, is placed.

<p>Chalice</p> 	<p>The <i>chalice</i> is the most sacred of all the vessels. It is the cup that holds the wine before consecration and after consecration, the precious Blood of Christ. It should be made of precious metal. It represents the cup in which Christ, at the last Supper, first offered His Blood.</p>
<p>Chalice Veil</p> 	<p>Colored cloth (matching vestment of the season) that the Priest may use to cover the <i>chalice</i>. The unveiling of the <i>chalice</i> is meant to symbolize the transition between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.</p>
<p>Ciborium</p> 	<p>The name of the vessel which contains the Blessed Sacrament. This vessel always has a matching lid that is placed on top.</p>
<p>Corporal</p> 	<p>A square white cloth on which the <i>paten</i> and <i>chalice</i> are placed during Mass in order to collect and contain falling particles of the Body of Christ or drops of His Precious Blood.</p>
<p>Cruets</p> 	<p>The glass vessels containing the water and wine used at Mass.</p>
<p>Finger Towel</p> 	<p>Small white cloth that the celebrant uses during Mass to dry his hands.</p>
<p>Lavabo Bowl (or) Dish</p> 	<p>The vessel over which the Priest holds his hands over while water is poured over them. This act symbolizes a washing of the Priest's hands before consecration. In Latin, Lavabo means "<i>I wash</i>".</p>
<p>Pall</p> 	<p>Starched linen cloth around a cardboard insert that may be used by the Priest to cover the <i>chalice</i> during Mass.</p>




Purificator 	Small white cloth, marked with a cross. It is folded in three layers and used by the Priest or Deacon to purify the <i>chalice</i> and <i>paten(s)</i> after Holy Communion.
Pyx 	Small, round container used for taking the Eucharist to the sick and homebound members who could not be present with us that day at Mass.
Missal Stand 	Stand used to elevate the <i>Roman Missal</i> as it is placed on the <i>altar</i> . It should always accompany the <i>Missal</i> when it is either placed upon, or removed from the <i>altar</i> .


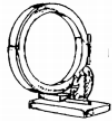


## Vestments

TERM	DEFINITION
Alb 	A full-length white garment secured with a <i>cincture (cord)</i> . Worn by Bishops, Priests, Deacons, and Servers.
Amice 	The <i>amice</i> is a short, oblong vestment of white linen, sometimes worn by the clergy beneath the alb to cover the top area of his clerics while celebrating Mass. It is now optional in the Latin rite.
Cassock 	The cassock is the principal vestment that may be worn by the clergy, and may at times be worn by servers for special celebrations. It is a robe reaching down to the feet, and buttoned in the front. For Priests, it is black; for Bishops, violet; for Cardinals, red; and for the Pope, white.



<p>Chasuble</p> 	<p>A sleeveless outer garment worn by the Priest at Mass. Comes from the Latin meaning “house”. It is intended to cover everything else worn by the Priest at Mass and symbolizes Christ’s charity.</p>
<p>Cincture</p> 	<p>A cord used to bind the alb at the waist.</p>
<p>Cope</p> 	<p>Worn by the Priest or Deacon for the solemn celebration of the various liturgies outside of Mass, for example: <i>Exposition</i>, <i>Benediction</i>, Communal Penance Services and the Liturgy of the Hours and Wake Services.</p>
<p>Dalmatic</p> 	<p>Deacon’s outer garment that may be worn by him during Mass. It is made of the same colored fabric as the celebrant’s <i>chasuble</i> to also reflect the color of the liturgical season.</p>
<p>Benediction Veil or Humeral Veil</p> 	<p>A white veil worn over the shoulders of a Priest or Deacon when giving <i>Eucharistic Benediction</i>.</p>
<p>Stole</p> 	<p>A liturgical vestment made of a strip of material, several inches wide, and worn around the neck by Priests and at the left shoulder by Deacons. It is the symbol of the Priests’ and Deacons’ office. It is also colored to reflect the color of the liturgical season.</p>
<p>Surplice</p> 	<p>A white, large-sleeved shirt of half-length that may be worn over the <i>cassock</i>.</p>

## Miscellaneous

TERM	DEFINITION
Alleluia	From the Hebrew Hallelujah, which means “praise Yahweh”. Yahweh is God’s name.
Aspergillum 	The aspergillum is a short rod with a perforated metal bulb at the end, used for sprinkling holy water on persons or things at the asperges and blessings. Asperges is a ceremony of sprinkling the people with holy water.
Aspersory 	The <i>aspersory</i> is the container used to carry holy water, into which the <i>aspergillum</i> is dipped.
Catholic	This word means “universal” or “general” and it applies to that which Christians have believed always, everywhere, and by all. The Catholic Church was founded by Jesus Christ. Not all Christians are Catholic, but all Catholics are Christians. Using the word Catholic to describe Christ’s Church was first done by St. Ignatius of Antioch (35-107 AD).
Clergy	Men ordained for service to God’s people as Deacons, Priests, or bishops.
Chrism	Olive oil mixed with balm, blessed by the Bishop and used at Confirmation, Baptism, Ordinations and at Consecrations of Altar Stones, <i>Chalices</i> , and Churches.
Crosier 	Pastoral staff, modeled on a shepherd’s crook, conferred upon Bishops and Abbots at their installation as a sign of their pastoral care of souls. At solemn liturgies celebrated by a Bishop, a server will be assigned to hold the Bishop’s <i>crosier</i> when not in use.
Cross Bearer	One who carries the processional cross in liturgical processions.
Eucharistic Fast	The one-hour period before receiving the Holy Eucharist in which a person abstains from food and drink (except water and medicine) in order to prepare for reception of the Body and Blood of Christ.
Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament	The liturgical ceremony in which a Priest or Deacon places the Blessed Sacrament (which is in a <i>lunette</i> ) into the <i>monstrance</i> and places it on the <i>altar</i> for adoration. After a period of time or prayers, the Priest or Deacon may bless the people with the <i>monstrance</i> . This is called <i>benediction</i> .

Holy Oils	There are three. They are consecrated by a Bishop on Holy Thursday. They are: (1) Oil of Catechumens; (2) Sacred Chrism; and (3) Oil of the Sick.
Incense	Fragrance particles that when placed on hot charcoal, create an aroma of smoke. May be used at all Masses, but normally only used during Funeral Masses and <i>Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament</i> . Used to symbolize our prayers rising up to God.
Incense Boat 	Container with small spoon used to hold the <i>incense</i> .
Liturgy	Any official public worship of the Church and is thus distinguished from private devotions. The most important liturgy is the Mass.
Lunette 	The round metal and glass case which contains the host. It slides into the <i>monstrance</i> .
Mitre 	Head-dress worn by the Bishop. It is a sign of his office. At solemn liturgies celebrated by a Bishop, a server a server will be assigned to hold the Bishop's <i>mitre</i> when not in use.
Monstrance 	The sacred vessel used to show the consecrated Host (Blessed Sacrament) during <i>Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament</i> . From the Latin meaning "to show".
Procession	The movement of Priests, Servers, and other Liturgical Ministers from the church entrance to the <i>sanctuary</i> at the start of Mass.
Purification	The proper cleansing of the sacred vessels that have been used at Mass.
Pyx Burse	Black pouch used to carry the <i>pyx</i> and is worn around the neck.
Relic	An object connected with a saint, e.g., part of the body or clothing or something the person had used or touched. They may not be bought or sold.



Reliquary	The vessel in which <i>relics</i> are sealed and kept. Most small <i>relics</i> are kept in a round case having a stem and stand, resembling a small monstrance. <i>Relics</i> may not be exposed for public veneration unless enclosed in <i>reliquaries</i> .
Sacristy	Room where the Priest, Deacons and altar servers vest for Mass. Also where the Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, Lectors and Sacristans prepare for their duties prior to Mass.
Taper-snuffer 	Normally used to light the candles before Mass and extinguish them after Mass.
Thurible 	Metal container with a chain used to hold charcoal and <i>incense</i> . It is one of the oldest vessels used at Mass.
Thurifer (Censer-bearer)	The server who carries the <i>thurible</i> during Mass.
Transubstantiation	The complete change of the substance of bread and wine into the substance of Christ's Body and Blood by a validly ordained Priest during the consecration at Mass. Only the appearances of bread and wine remain.

# *Appendix*

## *Other Liturgical Celebrations*

During your ministry as a server, you may have the opportunity to assist at other kinds of the Church's celebrations or liturgies, other than the Mass. These opportunities are on a COMPLETELY VOLUNTEER BASIS and are not a regular part of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton altar server scheduled responsibilities. However, you should be aware of them in case you are invited by a Priest or Deacon to participate in them. They include: **Funerals**, **Weddings**, **Holy Hours** and **Confirmations**.

The material contained in these appendices is not required study for St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Altar Server Program. However, it will become valuable knowledge, especially for Senior Servers (S) if you are ever asked to volunteer to serve for a special liturgy here at SEAS. All servers will benefit from at least having a general understanding of what is described below.

## *Incensation Instructions for Thurifers*

At St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, incense is normally used at the 12:30 pm Sunday Mass, Funeral Masses, and Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. In some of the other more solemn celebrations of the Church's liturgies, incense may also be used. The custom of using incense in religious ceremonies is an ancient one. The Old Testament describes it as a rich perfume used in sacrifices, and the Jews made it part of their temple worship. Incense is a symbol of our recognition of God's majesty. It also symbolizes our prayer rising to God.

The server who is in charge of the incense is called the *thurifer*. The *thurifer* carries the thurible and *boat* and has charge of these items during the liturgical service. The thurifer must arrive in the sacristy well in advance of the ceremony. It is their responsibility to light the charcoal and have it burn well in time for the ceremony.

To keep the charcoal burning, the thurifer swings the thurible back and forth, evenly and carefully so as not to distract others.

If incense is used during a regular Mass, there are four times where incense may be used:

1. In the procession at the beginning of Mass, the Thurifer will lead the procession followed by the Cross and the two Servers on either side of the cross. When the procession reaches the foot of the altar, the Thurifer will simply bow and take one step to the left, giving the Priest (and the Deacon if there is a Deacon) room. The Cross bearer will bow and immediately process to behind the wall and place the cross in the stand. After the genuflection, the Thurifer will stand at the edge of the carpet in the sanctuary on the side of the credence table. The priest will turn to the Thurifer after reverencing the Altar and the Thurifer will raise the Thurible lid as we practiced so that the priest can impose incense and bless the incense. Then the priest will process around the altar with the thurible blessing the altar. Then he will hand the thurible back to the Thurifer. The Thurifer will bow and takes the thurible to the stand next to the cross which will also be in the stand behind the wall in the back.

2. At the Gospel: During the 2nd reading, the Thurifer is to rise and make sure they are ready to go. Once the choir begins to sing the gospel acclamation, the ***Thurifer brings the thurible and the boat with the incense*** to the priest at which point the priest stands. The thurifer lifts the thurible as we practiced, and the priest again imposes incense with a blessing. Then the Thurifer goes to the middle of the altar, bowing at the center and processes and stands directly behind the ambo. Make sure to give the priest or deacon room. At the appropriate time, the Priest or Deacon will turn and take the thurible in hand to bless the book of the Gospels. After the Gospel has been proclaimed, the Thurifer receives the thurible from the Priest or Deacon and goes around the back of the sanctuary on the St Joseph side of the sanctuary and hangs the thurible on the stand. Then they return to their seat.
3. The next time the Thurifer will be needed is **at the Offertory**. ***After the priest has poured the water and the wine into the chalice but before the priest washes his hands***, the thurifer will approach the priest and stand at the edge of the carpet at the same spot the acolytes stand when they bring the water and the wine (cruets) to the Priest. The Thurifer lifts the thurible as we practiced, and the priest again imposes incense with a blessing. The priest processes around the altar again blessing the gifts and the Thurifer either accompanies the Priest (if the Priest so wishes) by holding the Priest's chasuble away from the thurible or simply waits there until the priest returns and hands the thurible back to him. Then the ***Thurifer incenses the priest*** with three single swings of the thurible, bows and processes to the front of the sanctuary in front of the Altar facing the people. Then the ***Thurifer incenses the people*** with three single swings and returns to his spot awaiting the "Holy, Holy, Holy." Then the acolytes come to wash the priests' hands.
4. The next time the Thurible will be used is **at the Sanctus (the "Holy, Holy, Holy")** at which point the Thurifer will lead the single filed line of servers out to kneel at the appropriate time. The Thurifer will kneel in the middle and incense the Blessed Sacrament with 3 sets of 2 swings. This will be synchronized with the ringing of the bells for the elevation of the host and the chalice. At the Sign of Peace, when the servers arise and go to get the patens, the Thurifer can leave the thurible on the stand behind the wall and then join the other servers with a paten.
5. Finally, the last time we use the Thurible is **on the procession out of the Church at the end of Mass**. The Thurifer will go to the center isle and face the Altar. The Cross bearer will follow and do likewise. After the genuflection, all will turn and process out, the Thurifer leading the way.

## **Carrying the Thurible and Boat**

The thurible is carried with the right hand around the chain just below the top. It is carried to the side so that your knees do not hit it while walking. It is swung gently back and forth to keep the charcoal burning. The boat is then carried in the left hand and given to the celebrant at the time of preparing the incense.

## **Presenting the Thurible**

As you approach the celebrant who will prepare the incense, firsthand him the boat. With your right hand on chain above raise the top of the thurible with your left hand about a foot so the

celebrant can put in incense. Do not touch the thurible itself, as it can get very hot and cause a burn. Hold the top in the raised position until the celebrant blesses the incense. Then close the lid and then receive the boat from the celebrant. Make a head bow after you hand the thurible to the celebrant and after receiving it back from him.

## **Incensing**

Depending on the ceremony and the number of people taking part, you may have to incense the celebrant, concelebrants, the congregation the Body and Blood of Christ at the elevations, or the Blessed Sacrament at Benediction. This is how you incense (practice this first with an empty thurible); (1) transfer the end of the thurible chain to your left hand; (2) take the chain of the thurible with your right about four inches above the thurible lid. Put your left hand on your breast; (3) Raise your right hand about chin high and about a foot from your body, allowing the chain to come over your index finger and be secured by your thumb; (4) Use your arm and hand to make the number of swings required.

Swings should be made as smoothly as possible. There are two kinds of swings, and after each one a slight pause should be made. A single swing is done by swinging the thurible with the right hand from the breast out to a full extension of the right arm and back. A double swing is done by swinging the thurible twice with the right wrist at the full extension of the single swing. Number of swings are carried out by the server for each of the following are:

***Celebrant:*** Three double swings, bowing with the head before and after. At Mass the celebrant is incensed after he has incensed the altar and before he washes his hands.

***Concelebrants:*** Three single swings

***Deacons, servers, and the congregation:*** Three single swings

***Elevation:*** Each elevation is incensed with three double swings while kneeling in front of the altar. After the elevation, rise and stand, then genuflect to the Blessed Sacrament on the altar and return the thurible to its stand. Then return to your places in the sanctuary.

***Benediction:*** After the celebrant has incensed the Sacrament and returns the thurible to you, place it directly in front of you and remain kneeling as the celebrant stands for a short prayer. After he kneels, following the prayer, stand and retrieve the benediction veil and place it carefully over the celebrant's shoulders. When the celebrant moves around the altar the server picks up the thurible and then kneels directly in front of the altar. When the celebrant raises the Blessed Sacrament in blessing, the thurifer makes three double swings, one double on the up and down motion of the monstrance, and one each on each side motion of the monstrance. The server then stands and moves slightly to the left placing the thurible in front of him. The server then removes the benediction veil from the celebrant placing it on the bench or chairs. The server then returns to the front of the altar and kneels to the left of the celebrant and remains there until the Blessed Sacrament is reposed.

## ***Instructions for Serving Funeral Masses***

When the Priest goes out to receive the remains and meet the family the server(s) processes out with him to the back of the church bringing the *aspergillum* and the *aspersory*, (if it is not already there) If there is more than one server, one acts as the Cross-Bearer and brings the processional cross. After the blessing of the casket or urn when the Priest turns, the server(s) turn and lead the procession into the church with the Cross-Bearer going first. The *aspergillum* and the *aspersory* may remain at the rear of the church. Mass then continues as normal with the opening prayer.

Following the prayer after communion, the Priest will incense the casket. If there is a Cross-Bearer after the prayer after communion he should retrieve the processional cross and stand at the foot of the casket or urn about 7 feet from it down the center aisle and facing toward the altar. In the meantime, the other server (*thurifer*) will retrieve the *thurible* and *boat*. This server will walk down to the front of the altar and meet the Priest at the front of the *sanctuary*. The Priest will then put *incense* in the *thurible* and receive it from the server. The Priest will then *incense* the casket or urn, the *paschal candle* and the processional cross (if applicable). After the incensing the server (*thurifer*) steps forward to receive the *thurible* from the Priest and then goes and stands at the foot of the casket or urn about 5 feet from it down the center aisle, facing toward the altar.

After the last prayer and the words, “*let us take our brother/sister to his/her place of rest*” the Priest will then come and stand directly in front of the *thurifer*. All should be facing the altar. When the Priest genuflects both the crucifer and thurifer bow (i.e., anyone holding liturgical items never genuflects, but makes a simple bow). After this sign of reverence is made all turn and process out. The funeral procession will follow. The servers should go out of the church, staying in formation. Once outside they should stand in a line facing the hearse, waiting for the body to pass. Servers may return to the sacristy.

*Credit Note:* Extensive use of the following was utilized in compiling Altar Server Manual.

**Nevins, Rev. Albert J., Called to Serve: A Guidebook for Altar Servers.  
Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1993.**

## Notes

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