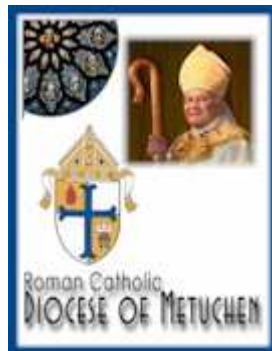


St Rose of Lima

Oxford, New Jersey

Altar Servers Handbook



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Introduction

To be an altar server is a special honor and a great privilege in the Catholic Church. Altar servers today can trace their roots or genealogy to the order of Acolyte, a ministry that once was reserved only for those who were going to be ordained priests. One can look upon being an altar server as a special and unique ministry by which you, a young person, can help to spread the word and the love of Christ through your actions and words. It is not difficult to be an altar server, but there are some things that you must know and remember.

The diocesan bishop may permit the liturgical functions of the instituted acolyte to be carried out by altar servers, men and women, boys and girls. Altar servers are not ordained, they are commissioned by their parish priest. The determination that women and girls may function as servers in the liturgy should be made by the bishop on the diocesan level so that there might be a uniform diocesan policy.

The primary role of the altar server is to assist the priest in the celebration of the liturgy during Mass. This is done through specific actions and by setting an example to the congregation by active participation in the liturgy by their actions, singing of hymns, responses of the people, looking alert and sitting or standing at the appropriate times.

General Requirements

Servers will be required to vest in alb and cincture as directed.

Close worn under an alb should be such that they do not have patterns, pictures, stripes, checks or any other design which will show through the alb.

Required Basic Knowledge of the Mass

A server candidate is required to know the principal prayers of the Mass: The Gloria, Our Father, Nicene Creed, Lamb of God, Lord, I am not worthy and Holy, Holy, Holy.

All candidates should be able to recite the basic flow of the mass. They must learn this so as to later perform their tasks at the proper times. They should be taught the use of all the liturgical items they will be handling and the purpose of each item.

All candidates must demonstrate their ability to make use of the “*tools of the trade*” such as matches, candle lighters, books and candles, processional cross, preparation of credence table, chalice, mass colors, etc.

ALTAR SERVER'S DUTIES -- ORDINARY SUNDAY MASSES

I. PREPARATION

- A. Arrive for your scheduled Mass 15 minutes prior to the start of the Mass.
- B. Wear clean shoes, black shoes preferred. If you wear sandals wear them with socks never bare feet.
- C. Select your alb. The alb should be long enough to come to the top of your shoes. Remember your alb is a sacred vestment and should be treated as such..
- D. Make sure these items are in place for Mass.
 - 1. Sacramentary.
 - 2. Water pitcher, bowl and hand towel on the table
 - 3. Cruet of water on table.

II. POSTURE AND REVERENCES

- A. The role of the Altar Server is to assist the Priest and the whole community in the celebration of the Mass. Posture and attitude are very important.
- B. Hold your hands together unless you are carrying something or sitting.
- C. Stand with your weight evenly placed on both feet.
- D. Sit straight.
- E. Pay attention to the Priest and the flow of the Mass..

III. THE MASS

PART 1

BE WAITING AT THE FRONT OF THE CHURCH WITH CROSS AND CANDLES FIVE MINUTES PRIOR TO MASS STARTING

- A. The Procession
 - 1. Cross and candle bearers. (If Available)
 - 2. Lector
 - 3. Concelebrating Priests
 - 4 Principal Celebrant
- B. As the procession enters the sanctuary, the Cross Bearer places the Cross in its stand on the altar. The candle bearers walk behind the Cross Bearer and place their candles next to the Ambo and then proceed to their seats and stand in front of their seats.

PART 2

START THESE DUTIES WHEN THE COLLECTION BEGINS

- C. Offertory (After the General Intercessions when everyone sits down.)
 - 1. Place the Sacramentary on the altar.
 - 2. Remove the bookstand from the altar.
 - 3. Bring the Chalice to the altar.
 - 4. Go with the Celebrant to receive the gifts..
 - 5. Bring the cruet of water to the Celebrant (or the Deacon).
 - 6. Bring the water pitcher, bowl, and towel to wash the Celebrant's hands.
 - 7. Go to your seat .
 - 8. Stand after the Amen.
 - 9. Join hands with each other and the celebrant for the Our Father.

PART 3

CLOSING OF MASS

- D. Bring the sacramentary to the Celebrant when he says "Let us pray". (Hold the sacramentary so that the Celebrant can read it. (Not Done in St. Rose)
- E. Close the sacramentary and return to your seat when the Celebrant makes the Sign of the Cross. (Not Done in St. Rose)
- F. When the closing hymn begins, the Cross bearer should get the Cross, candle bearers should get the candles, and all servers should go to their places in the church aisle.
- G. Turn and face the Altar.
- H. When the Celebrant, Priests, and Deacons enter the aisle, turn and process at a normal walking pace to the back of the church.

IV. AFTER MASS (CLEANING UP)

- A. Take the washbowl to the Sacristy and empty water into the sink, wipe the bowl dry, and return it to the table.
- B. Extinguish the candles.
- C. Hang up your alb (neatly) and any others that may have fallen to the floor of the closet.

NOTE: If you cannot serve the Mass to which you are assigned, you must arrange for your own substitute.

Revision 1/29/2009

MJT/mjt

What Certain Things Are Called: (things you need to know)

<i>Alb</i>	The white gown that you will wear just as the priest and deacons does.
<i>Ambo or Lectern</i>	Where the lector stands to read the Scripture readings and the priest or deacon proclaims the Gospel.
<i>Aspergillum</i>	The liturgical instrument used to sprinkle people and objects with holy water.
<i>Boat</i>	A small liturgical vessel containing the incense that will be used with the thurible.
<i>Chalice</i>	A cup that Father will use to consecrate the wine into the Blood of Christ.
<i>Ciborium</i>	A cup, which looks similar to a chalice, but is used to store consecrated hosts in the Tabernacle. A Ciborium has a lid where as a chalice does not.
<i>Cincture</i>	A belt made out of cloth worn around your waist; it acts like a belt.
<i>Corporal</i>	A small cloth that sits on top of the altar where Father places the chalice, paten, and flagon. Its purpose is to catch any small crumbs of the Blessed Sacrament that may fall onto the altar.
<i>Credence Table</i>	The table that has the chalices, Communion bowls or patens, finger bowl, water cruet and finger towel.
<i>Cruet</i>	The little pitcher that hold either water or wine for use during the Mass.
<i>Finger Towel</i>	A towel that Father will use to dry his hands.
<i>Flagon or Flask</i>	The large glass decanter that holds the wine at Mass.
<i>Lectionary (Book Gospels)</i>	A large red book that contains the Scripture readings from which of the contains only the Gospel readings.
<i>Offertory Table</i>	The table behind the last pew where the gifts are placed.
<i>Paten</i>	A small dish or bowl that holds the bread that will be used during Mass.
<i>Purificators</i>	The small towels that are used to clean the chalices during the distribution of the Precious Blood at communion
<i>Sacramentary</i>	The large red book from which Father prays during Mass.
<i>Sacristan</i>	The person who takes care of the sacred vessels and vestments used at Mass.
<i>Sacristy</i>	The portion of the Church building where the priests, deacons, servers, and lectors meet to vest and prepare themselves for Mass.
<i>Sanctuary</i>	The area of the Church that contains the altar and the ambo.

Thurible A metal vessel for the ceremonial burning of incense. The thurible is also known as a censer.

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

THANK YOU FOR ANSWERING GOD'S CALL TO SERVE AT MASS

Holy Mass Explained

The two most important parts of the Holy Mass are **the Consecration and the Communion**. But the Mass as we know is made up of two principal parts - the **liturgy of the Word** and the **liturgy of the Eucharist**, plus introductory and concluding rites.

1- Introductory Rites:

- Entrance Antiphon
- Greeting
- Penitential Rite (Penitential prayer, Rite of Blessing & Sprinkling)
- Kyrie (Lord, Have Mercy)
- Gloria (Glory to God)
- Opening Prayer

2- Liturgy of the Word:

- First Reading, from the Old Testament, and the Responsorial Psalm, usually by one or two Laymen, man or woman
- Second reading from a Letter (Epistle) of the New Testament, usually by a Layman, man or woman
- Third Reading, from the Gospels, usually by the Priest, which starts with the Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia)
- Homily, by the Priest,
- Silence
- Profession of Faith (Nicene Creed) or (Apostles' Creed - Children Only)
- General Intercessions (Prayer of the Faithful): For the Church, Public Authorities, Salvation of the World, Local Community... the sick, the poor...

3- Liturgy of the Eucharist:

Preparation of the Gifts (Presentation)

The priest prepares the altar and the gifts, prays over the bread and wine, and helps the assembly get ready for the tremendous Sacrifice that will take place in an unbloody manner.

Includes the following:

- **Offertory Song...**
- offering of the Bread and Wine,
- Preparation of the Altar
- Preparation of the Bread
- Preparation of the Wine
- Washing of Hands
- Invitation to Prayer
- Prayer over the Gifts

Eucharistic Prayer:

Introductory Dialogue

Preface

Sanctus

Roman Canon:

Eucharistic Prayer

Thanksgiving

Acclamation

Epiclesis - Invocation of the Holy Spirit to consecrate the Host & Wine

Consecration of the Bread... elevation of the Holy Host... adoration to the Holy Host

Consecration of the Wine... elevation of the Holy Cup... adoration to the Holy Cup

Offering

Intercessions

Final Doxology

Memorial Acclamation

Great Amen

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer

Rite of Peace (Sign of Peace)

Fraction Rite

Breaking of the Bread

Commingling: The priest places a small part of the Host into the Cup

Lamb of God (Agnus Dei)

Personal Prayer

Communion of the Priest

Communion of the Faithful

Silent Prayer

Prayer after Communion

4- Concluding Rite:

Immediately after the Communion Rite, should there be **any announcements**, these are made, but should be kept brief. Then just as the people were greeted at the beginning of the Mass, so now the presider greets the people again and blesses them in one of three forms, the simple one, or at his discretion a more solemn Blessing, particularly at various seasons or on specific feast days, or a Prayers over the people. Includes the following:

Blessing

Dismissal