



MINISTRY OF ALTAR SERVERS

The Church of Saint Ann – Lawrenceville, New Jersey



Altar Server Instructions

Updated September 2008

1. Arriving at Church

- When you are scheduled to serve Mass, please be present at church **at least 10 minutes** before Mass is scheduled to begin
- If you are not scheduled to serve Mass, please stop into the sacristy before going into church to check if there are enough servers – *WE ALWAYS NEED AT LEAST FOUR SERVERS FOR EACH MASS.*
- Foot wear: Please **do not wear sneakers** when you are scheduled to serve Mass; sandals are acceptable.
- Use the vestment closet in the sacristy to dress in a white altar server's *alb* (robe) with *cincture* (belt) tied around your waist. Please be sure to return alb to hanger after mass (and fasten top button).

2. Preparing the Altar for Mass

- Once vested in your alb, please check the altar to see if everything is prepared for Mass (or, if there are other servers who arrived before you, ask them if they've already checked/prepared the altar).
- When you approach the altar to check if everything is in place, and when you leave the altar, **please remember to stop at the foot of the altar and reverently bow your head.**
- Following is a checklist for preparing the altar for Mass:
 - ✓ Light the two altar candles (and paschal candle if it isn't already lit) using the special candle ignighter next to the credence table
 - ✓ Place *sacramentary* (red mass book, sometimes has a seasonal color) on Server 1 (cross-bearer)'s chair – to right of priest's chair when facing altar from pews; be sure that the first ribbon is marking the correct page for the opening prayer (you can check the Sunday by looking at the current parish bulletin)
 - ✓ Check credence table at rear of church (just inside main entrance) for large bread plate with hosts (and one large host) and full wine decanter
 - ✓ Check credence table to right of altar (next to choir section) for the following:
 - Four cups and four *purificators* (small cloths)
 - Pitcher of water, bowl and towel (for washing priest's hands)
 - Small cruet of water (for priest to mix with wine)
 - *Burse* (square cloth-covered folder) with *corporal* (white altar cloth) and crucifix
- If you are not scheduled to serve Mass, please stop into the sacristy before going into church to check if there are enough servers – *WE ALWAYS NEED AT LEAST FOUR SERVERS FOR EACH MASS.*

Serving Mass During Ordinary Time/Easter (i.e., not Advent, Lent or special masses such as baptisms)

3. Altar Server 1 – Cross-Bearer

- Entrance Procession

- ✓ Carry the cross and lead opening procession. Start moving down the aisle at the beginning of the second verse of the entrance hymn (or at priest's instruction if no opening hymn). Process slowly and reverently.
- ✓ Proceed up steps of sanctuary to left of altar and place cross in stand, then move to chair to right of priest (organ/choir side) and stand facing the congregation.

- Opening Prayer from Sacramentary

- ✓ Hold the sacramentary and check to see if first ribbon is at correct page. When priest says, "Let us Pray", step down but not in front of priest, face the priest and open the sacramentary to the first ribbon. Hold the sacramentary in front of priest with arms outstretched, so as not to block the priest from the view of the congregation. The priest will raise or lower the sacramentary to a comfortable height for them to read.
- ✓ When the priest finishes the opening prayer and congregation responds, "Amen", return to your seat and place sacramentary on arm of your chair.

- Offertory

- ✓ *WHEN THERE ARE MORE THAN TWO SERVERS:*

- After the altar is prepared, wait until the servers have returned to their bench, then get the cross and lead the two torch-bearers to the rear of the church to lead the Offertory Procession. Stop at the front of the altar, turn and face the altar and bow together before proceeding to the rear of the church. When the priest is positioned in front of the altar, process slowly and reverently toward the priest and lead the procession. When you reach the priest, move left and up into the sanctuary and return the cross to its stand.
- Move to the credence table and get the water cruet and bring it to the priest; wait until the wine has been poured into each of the cups before stepping forward with the water cruet.
- If another server already brought the water cruet to the priest, then pick up the water pitcher/bowel or towel and wait for the priest's signal to approach him. If you are carrying the pitcher/bowl, pour a few drops of water on the priest's fingers, using the bowl to catch the water drippings. Hand the towel to the priest. If you are carrying the pitcher/bowel AND the towel – then drape the towel over your arm holding the bowl

- ✓ *WHEN THERE IS ONLY ONE OR TWO SERVERS:*

- After the Prayer of the Faithful and the priest says, "Our ushers will now receive your gifts" (on Sundays), go to the credence table and begin to prepare the altar for the Eucharistic celebration by doing the following:
 - Get the burse and small crucifix from the credence and spread out the corporal on the center of the altar; place the crucifix on the altar just above the corporal
 - Then bring the four cups and purificators from the credence table to the altar, carrying only two cups at a time; place the cups in a row, starting from the middle of the corporal and moving out to the side of the altar nearest the church organ/choir section
 - Last, bring the sacramentary to the altar and place in the center of the altar not on the corporal, open to the correct page for the Offertory prayers (second ribbon)

- After the altar is prepared, get the cross and walk to the rear of the church to lead the Offertory Procession. Face the altar and bow before proceeding to the rear of the church.
- When the priest is positioned in front of the altar, process slowly and reverently toward the priest and lead the procession. When you reach the priest, move left and up to the sanctuary and return the cross to its stand.
- Move to the credence table and get the water cruet and bring it to the priest; wait until the wine has been poured into each of the cups before stepping forward with the water cruet.
- If another server already brought the water cruet to the priest, then pick up the water pitcher/bowel or towel and wait for the priest's signal to approach him. If you are carrying the pitcher/bowl, pour a few drops of water on the priest's fingers, using the bowl to catch the water drippings. Hand the towel to the priest. If you are carrying the pitcher/bowel AND the towel – then drape the towel over your arm holding the bowl

- Communion

- ✓ After the Offertory, servers stand in a line facing the altar from the organ/choir side of the sanctuary; use pads for kneeling during the consecration of the bread and wine. When there are more than four altar servers, divide up and have several kneel next to the ambo (pulpit).
- ✓ After receiving communion, wait until the priest and Eucharistic ministers have left the altar and then return to your seat on the altar next to the priest's chair.
- ✓ After communion, Servers 3, 4 and 5 are responsible for removing the corporal from the altar. However, if there is only one or two servers, the cross-bearer will do the following:
 - When the priest and Eucharistic ministers have finished distributing communion, return the burse, corporal and crucifix to the credence table and return to your chair.

- Closing/Procession

- ✓ When the priest stands after communion and says, "Let us pray", open the sacramentary to the closing prayer and hold open for priest.
- ✓ After the blessing and the priest says, "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord", get the cross and walk with the torch bearers to the front of the altar and line up behind the priest facing the altar. The cross-bearer should be the furthest from the priest/altar followed by the torch-bearers and any extra servers then the priest.
- ✓ When the priest bows and turns toward the back of the church, turn and proceed slowly to the rear of the church and return the cross to the stand in the church lobby.

- After Mass

- ✓ After the closing hymn, extinguish the altar candles and check for anything else out of place on the altar. Then hang up your alb in the vestments closet in the sacristy and be sure to log your service credits in the logbook (be sure to fasten top button after placing on hanger). Always check to see if there are any special notices or sign-up sheets for holy day masses on the Server bulletin board.

4. Altar Servers 2,3 – Torch Bearers

- Entrance Procession

- ✓ Carry one of two torches in opening procession. Follow cross-bearer and start moving down the aisle at the beginning of the second verse of the entrance hymn (or at priest's instruction if no opening hymn). Process slowly and reverently.
- ✓ NOTE: If there are only two servers at a Mass, then the second server does NOT carry a torch but walks with hands folded behind the cross and in front of the priest.

- ✓ Proceed up steps of sanctuary to left of altar and place torch in stand, then move to either: 1) chair to left of priest (tabernacle side) and stand facing the congregation.; OR 2) if there is a deacon, then sit on the server bench (tabernacle side of altar)

- Offertory

- ✓ *WHEN THERE ARE MORE THAN TWO SERVERS:*

- After the altar is prepared by Servers 3/4/5, wait until the servers have returned to their bench, then get the torch and follow the cross-bearer to the rear of the church to lead the Offertory Procession. Stop at the front of the altar, turn and face the altar and bow together before proceeding to the rear of the church. When the priest is positioned in front of the altar, process slowly and reverently toward the priest. When you reach the priest, move left and up into the sanctuary and return the torch to its stand.
- Move to the credence table and get the water cruet and bring it to the priest; wait until the wine has been poured into each of the cups before stepping forward with the water cruet.
- If another server already brought the water cruet to the priest, then pick up the water pitcher/bowel or towel and wait for the priest's signal to approach him. If you are carrying the pitcher/bowl, pour a few drops of water on the priest's fingers, using the bowl to catch the water drippings. Hand the towel to the priest. If you are carrying the pitcher/bowel AND the towel – then drape the towel over your arm holding the bowl

- ✓ *WHEN THERE IS ONLY ONE OR TWO SERVERS:*

- After the Prayer of the Faithful and the priest says, "Our ushers will now receive your gifts" (on Sundays), go to the credence table and begin to prepare the altar for the Eucharistic celebration by doing the following:
 - Get the burse and small crucifix from the credence and spread out the corporal on the center of the altar; place the crucifix on the altar just above the corporal
 - Then bring the four cups and purificators from the credence table to the altar, carrying only two cups at a time; place the cups in a row, starting from the middle of the corporal and moving out to the side of the altar nearest the church organ/choir section
 - Last, bring the sacramentary to the altar and place in the center of the altar on the corporal, open to the correct page for the Offertory prayers (second ribbon)
- After the altar is prepared, get the torch and follow the cross-bearer to the rear of the church to lead the Offertory Procession. Face the altar and bow before moving to the rear of the church.
- When the priest is positioned in front of the altar, process slowly and reverently toward the priest. When you reach the priest, move left and up to the sanctuary and return the torch to its stand.
- Move to the credence table and get the water cruet and bring it to the priest; wait until the wine has been poured into each of the cups before stepping forward with the water cruet.
- If another server already brought the water cruet to the priest, then pick up the water pitcher/bowel or towel and wait for the priest's signal to approach him. If you are carrying the pitcher/bowl, pour a few drops of water on the priest's fingers, using the bowl to catch the water drippings. Hand the towel to the priest. If you are carrying the pitcher/bowel AND the towel – then drape the towel over your arm holding the bowl

- Communion

- ✓ After the Offertory, servers stand in a line facing the altar from the organ/choir side of the sanctuary; use pads for kneeling during the consecration of the bread and wine.

- ✓ After receiving communion, wait until the priest and Eucharistic ministers have left the altar and then return to your seat on the altar or on the servers' bench.
- ✓ After communion, if there are only 2 or 3 servers, you are responsible for clearing the altar by doing the following:
 - When the priest and Eucharistic ministers have finished distributing communion, go to the altar and return the burse, corporal and crucifix to the credence table and then return to your chair/bench.
- Closing/Procession
 - ✓ After the blessing and the priest says, "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord", get the torch and walk with the other torch bearer behind the cross-bearer to the front of the altar and line up behind the priest facing the altar. The cross-bearer should be the furthest from the priest/altar followed by the torch-bearers and any extra servers then the priest.
 - ✓ When the priest bows and turns toward the back of the church, turn and proceed slowly to the rear of the church and return the torch to the stand in the church lobby.
- After Mass
 - ✓ After the closing hymn, extinguish the altar candles and check for anything else out of place on the altar. Then hang up your alb in the vestments closet in the sacristy and be sure to log your service credits in the logbook. Always check to see if there are any special notices or sign-up sheets for holy day masses on the Server bulletin board.

5. Altar Servers 4,5

- Entrance Procession
 - ✓ Walk behind the two torches in opening procession. You will start moving down the aisle at the beginning of the second verse of the entrance hymn (or at priest's instruction if no opening hymn). Process slowly and reverently.
 - ✓ Once you reach the altar, proceed directly to the servers bench to left front of altar (tabernacle side).
- Offertory
 - ✓ After the Prayer of the Faithful and the priest says, "Our ushers will now receive your gifts" (on Sundays), go to the credence table and begin to prepare the altar for the Eucharistic celebration by doing the following:
 - Get the burse and small crucifix from the credence and spread out the corporal on the center of the altar; place the crucifix on the altar just above the corporal
 - Then bring the four cups and purificators from the credence table to the altar, carrying only two cups at a time; place the cups in a row, starting from the middle of the corporal and moving out to the side of the altar nearest the church organ/choir section
 - Last, bring the sacramentary to the altar and place in the center of the altar on the corporal, open to the correct page for the Offertory prayers (second ribbon)
 - ✓ After the altar is prepared, return to your seat but remain standing until the priest moves to the front of the altar. Move to the priest's side, facing the congregation to greet those bringing up the gifts in the Offertory procession.
 - ✓ If you are the only server standing with the priest to greet the procession, then you will take the wine decanter and follow the priest to the altar. Stand on his left (organ/choir side) at the altar and remove the decanter top and hand the decanter to the priest. Once the cups are filled, the priest will return the decanter to you. Place the top on the bottle and take the decanter to the credence table.

- ✓ The other servers will bring the water cruet and wash the priests hands, so you can now get the kneeling pads at the credence table and set them out for the other servers (facing the altar on the right side of the altar (organ/choir side)).
- Communion
 - ✓ After the Offertory, servers stand in a line facing the altar from the organ/choir side of the sanctuary; use pads for kneeling during the consecration of the bread and wine.
 - ✓ After receiving communion, wait until the priest and Eucharistic ministers have left the altar and then return to your seat on the servers' bench.
 - ✓ After communion, you are responsible for clearing the altar by doing the following:
 - When the priest and Eucharistic ministers have finished distributing communion, go to the altar and return the burse, corporal and crucifix to the credence table and then return to your chair/bench.
- Closing/Procession
 - ✓ After the blessing and the priest says, "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord", wait until the other servers have lined up in the center aisle and then get between them and the priest/deacon.
 - ✓ When the priest bows, you bow and turn toward the back of the church, then proceed slowly to the rear of the church and into the lobby.
- After Mass
 - ✓ After the closing hymn, extinguish the altar candles and check for anything else out of place on the altar. Then hang up your alb in the vestments closet in the sacristy and be sure to log your service credits in the logbook. Always check to see if there are any special notices or sign-up sheets for holy day masses on the Server bulletin board.

If you have any questions about these instructions, please feel free to ask a fellow altar server or Father Vince, or contact Mr. Gene Lanzoni at (609) 530-1964

An 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 you have placed in me, and through my example and service today, help to bring others closer to you.

I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who is Lord forever and ever. Amen.

PLEASE KNOW THAT YOUR SERVICE IS GREATLY APPRECIATED BY THE COMMUNITY OF SAINT ANN CHURCH. YOUR REVERENT PARTICIPATION HELPS TO ENRICH OUR LITURGY.

THANK YOU!