



St. Clare of Assisi

**ALTAR SERVER
TRAINING BOOKLET**



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ALTAR SERVER'S PRAYER

Loving Father, Creator of the universe, you call your people to worship, to be with you and each other at Mass. Help me, for you have called me also. Keep me prayerful and alert. Help me to help others in prayer. Thank you for the trust you've placed in me. Keep me true to that trust. I make my prayer in Jesus' name, who is with us in the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DEFINITION OF ALTAR SERVER

It is a great privilege to serve at the Altar of our God. Our loving Savior becomes present on the Altar, just as He was at the Last Supper. Therefore, servers have a solemn responsibility to do their assigned duties with dignity and reverence.

Our parish has Altar Servers (boys and girls), who start after their first communion and continue for as long as we can keep them. All people of good faith are welcome and those who think they may desire to serve are encouraged to do so. All that is required is a desire to serve at the Altar of Our Lord.

DRESS CODE FOR ALTAR SERVERS

- **SHOES** – dress shoes (preferably black or brown shoes for boys and brown, black or white for girls) should be worn. No open toe shoes.
- **HAIR** – Hair should be neat and trimmed, appropriate for boys and girls. Girls should have their hair tied back so that it is not in their face.
- **JEWELRY** – Do not wear anything that will make noise or will be distracting, or that will cause you to have problems serving. Girls may wear “appropriate” earrings to serve.
- **VESTMENTS** – The servers wear white Albs. Please make sure to wear solid tops and bottoms under the Albs.

ALTAR SERVER ROLES

- **CRUCIFIX** – This person carries in the crucifix at the beginning of mass, takes the crucifix to go get the gifts and carries the crucifix out at the end of mass.
- **BOOK / CANDLE** – This person carries a candle in at the beginning of mass, holds the book for Father to read the opening and closing prayers and removes it from the altar during communion.
- **BELLS / CANDLE** – This person carries a candle in at the beginning of mass and rings the bells at the elevation of the body and blood. This person also pours the water over Father's hands prior to communion.
- **CREDENCE** – This person holds the lavabo (bowl) and towel that Father washes his hands in prior to communion and assists in taking items to and from the credence table to the altar.
- **INCENSOR (THURIBLE)** – Only used on special occasions. This person carries the incensor in at the beginning of mass and brings it to Father when needed during mass.
- **INCENSE BOAT** – Only used on special occasions. This person stays with the altar server who is carrying the incensor and has the container (boat) that contains the incense.

ALTAR SERVER RULES

- Attend Altar Server Training Classes
- Altar Servers should not leave the sanctuary after the start of Mass for any reason except bathroom emergencies, illness, or when directed to do so by the priest.
- Serve at every mass that you scheduled for, or make arrangements to have someone cover the mass.
- Arrive at least 15 minutes before the Mass starts to get dressed and make sure that the Altar is prepared.
- Make sure the candles are lit, bread, wine, water, towels, bowl, prayer book, and any other sacramentals are in their proper place.
- Perform the duties assigned during the mass in the prescribed orderly manner.
- Maintain a prayerful posture during all times in the Sacristy (if you are not doing something your hands should be folded in your lap).
- After the mass, return to the Sanctuary and preparation areas to ensure that everything is set up for the next mass.
- Be quiet and respectful when on the Altar, you are role models.
- Be attentive and respond immediately when the priest asks for help.
- Make sure that your alb is returned the way you found it or better.
- Pay attention.

ALTAR SERVERS STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

BEFORE MASS:

1. Arrive and be dressed 15 minutes before the Mass begins. Make sure the alb is the RIGHT SIZE, the bottom of the alb should be about 2-3 inches above the tops of the shoes.
2. Check to make sure that everything is set up, on the altar, for the mass (If there is a visiting priest, talk to him ahead of time to see if you need to do anything differently for him).
3. Get vested and proceed to the Narthex and WELCOME the Congregation. Decide with other servers who will be doing which jobs. At 5 minutes prior to mass start, proceed to the Narthex (lobby).
3. Stay close to the priest, lectors, and anyone else who will be in the entrance procession.

ALTAR SERVERS STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

ENTRANCE PROCESSION:

1. After prayer, the altar servers will line up in the following order:
 - a. Incensor and Incensor Boat – only used on special occasions and when used, these altar servers will line up side by side and **in front of** the crucifix. When used, these altar servers will start the procession.
 - b. Crucifix – most often the first altar server to start the procession.
 - c. Candles – walk directly behind the Crucifix and walk side by side of each other.
 - d. Other altar servers – if there are other altar servers, then they will walk together in pairs behind the candles.
 - i. If there is only one server, the person will carry in the crucifix.
 - ii. If there are only two servers, then the first will carry the crucifix and no candles will be carried. The second server will line up behind the crucifix.
2. Once the choir has begun to sing, the altar servers will begin the procession. Walk at a normal speed; do not rush or run down the aisle.
3. All servers will stop in front of the altar and line up next to one another and wait for Father to arrive. When Father bows, all altar servers bow with him. Then proceed up the stairs.
4. The Crucifix will go in the stand. The candles will be placed on the front corners of the altar. The servers will go to their chairs on the left, and stay standing.

ALTAR SERVERS STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

GREETING:

1. The priest begins the mass with the Sign of the Cross.
2. The priest then has an introduction explaining the readings, or welcoming people to the mass.
3. Penitential Rite-the priest asks us to recall our sins and ask God for forgiveness, we then respond with the “Lord Have Mercy, Christ Have Mercy, Lord Have Mercy,” which could be sung.
4. The Gloria will then be recited or sung. When the words, “**For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord...**” are said/sung, the Book server should walk towards the priest or deacon to hold the book.
5. After the Gloria, the priest will say, “**Let us pray...**” and read the opening prayer. Stand on the left side of the priest (in between the priest and the deacon, so that the priest can look out at the whole congregation).
6. After the priest is done with the prayer, the server will close the book and give it to the deacon or place it on the table next to the priest. Everyone will be seated to listen to the first reading, the psalm, and the second reading.

ALTAR SERVERS STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

LITURGY OF THE WORD:

1. First Reading – The Lector will come forward to read the First Reading (No action is required by the altar servers).
2. The psalm will be recited or sung (No action is required by the altar servers).
3. Second Reading – The Lector will come forward to read the Second Reading (No action is required by the altar servers).
4. Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia) – When the choir begins to sing the Alleluia, the deacon or priest will move towards the ambo (lecturn) to proclaim the Gospel reading. **Servers should stay in place and turn their body towards the ambo.**
5. The priest or deacon will then perform his Homily.
6. After the Homily, the priest or deacon will go back to their seat, then the priest will stand for the Profession of Faith. Everyone stands to recite the Nicene Creed.
7. The priest will start the Prayers of the Faithful, and the priest or deacon will read the petitions of the church (Everyone responds “Lord, hear our prayer”). After the priest or deacon has finished the petitions, the priest will say a prayer. All will respond with “Amen,” and the congregation will sit down.

ALTAR SERVERS STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST:

1. **OFFERTORY COLLECTION** – After everyone has been seated, the ushers will walk forward with the baskets to collect money.
 - a. The crucifix server will take the crucifix to the back of the church to lead the procession of the gifts.
 - b. While the crucifix is going to the back of the church, one of the other servers will bring forward the chalice set and put it on the altar. Another server will bring forward a ciborium and give it to the Deacon/Priest. Another server will bring the Roman Missal to the altar. Then, the servers will sit down and wait for the priest to stand and walk to accept the gifts.
 - c. The servers will walk down the stairs before the deacon and priest, so the priest can receive the gifts.
 - i. The servers will stand closest to the stairs next to the priest or deacon.
 - ii. The crucifix server will then be instructed (the priest will normally gesture for the crucifix to come forward) to lead the gifts. The crucifix server will walk slowly forward, bow his/her head when they get in front of the priest and then proceed up the steps and put the crucifix back. S/he will then help prepare the altar.
 - iii. The servers standing next to the priest or deacon will take the gifts after the priest accepts them.
 1. The server with the bread will take it to the altar and wait for the Deacon/Priest to take it from the server. Once given, proceed to the Credence Table.
 2. The server with the cruets (water and wine) will take it to the altar and wait for the priest or deacon to use it. Once used, proceed to the Credence Table with the cruets.
2. **PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS**
 - a. After the server brings the cruets to the Credence Table.
 - b. Two (2) servers will then bring forward the small pitcher of water (pitcher), the bowl (lavabo), and the towel. The server closest to the people will pour a small amount of water onto the hands of the priest.

- i. One server will hold the bowl (lavabo) and towel (Carry the towel on your left arm).
 - ii. The other server will hold the pitcher.
 - iii. BOW after washing hands of the priest/bishop.
- c. The servers will then return their seats and remain standing, because the priest will then invite the congregation to stand as well to enter into the Eucharistic prayer.

ALTAR SERVERS STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER:

1. The priest then begins with the preface and then will enter the congregation into the HOLY HOLY, which will be sung or recited.
2. The altar servers will move to the bottom step in front of the altar and split, equal number of servers on each site and kneel at the completion of the **Holy Holy Holy**.
3. The priest will first pick up the host, to be consecrated, by saying “...**take this, all of you and eat it; this is my body which will be given up for you.**” The priest will raise the Body of Christ above his head, and the server will ring the bells three (3) times.
4. The priest will genuflect and then pick up the chalice and say, “...**take this and drink from it, this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven, do this in memory of me.**” The priest will raise the chalice above his head, and the server will ring the bells three (3) times. Once complete, the bells will be placed back on the pillow.
5. The priest will then proclaim the mystery of faith, which will be sung or recited.
6. The priest will then finish up the prayer by remembering the saints, all those who have departed before us, and chant or recite, “Through Him, with Him, and in Him...”
7. The Great Amen will be sung or recited.
8. After the **Our Father** prayer, the servers will share the Sign of Peace and all servers are to form a line at the bottom step.

ALTAR SERVERS STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

COMMUNION:

1. The Lamb of God will either be sung by the choir or recited by the priest, and the congregation will join in.
2. The congregation may kneel, while the servers and Eucharistic ministers will be lined up to receive communion. Return to your chairs once you receive Communion.
3. The priest will distribute the Body and Blood of Christ.
4. Return to your chairs once you receive Communion. Stand up once any of the Priest/Deacon/Eucharistic ministers return to the sanctuary.
5. Once the Eucharistic ministers, Deacon or Priest brings the ciborium which has carried the body of Christ back to the sanctuary, all altar servers will stand. Then altar servers will bring one (1) ciborium lid and the cruet of water to the altar.
6. The Priest or Deacon will combine all of the body into one (1) ciborium if there are extras. The lid will go on top and the Priest or Deacon will take it to the tabernacle. An altar server needs to light the candle on top of the tabernacle if not already lit. All servers will bow with the Priest or Deacon towards the tabernacle.
7. The priest will purify at the altar (The servers will line up to receive items. When a server takes something back to the Credence table, the next server will move forward to receive the next item, and this will continue until the altar has been cleared.).
8. If priest is NOT purifying at the altar. The deacon and servers go to the altar. The deacon will hand you items to take to the Credence Table. DO NOT place items on top of each other. The deacon will then purify items at the Credence Table.

ALTAR SERVERS STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

CONCLUDING RITE:

1. Then, the priest will ask everyone to stand and pray (the closing prayer). The priest will say, "**Let us pray...**" which is the cue for the book server to bring the book over, if no deacon is present, for the priest to read the closing prayer. Stand on the left side of the priest (in between the priest's chair and the deacon's chair, so that the priest can look out at the whole congregation).
2. The priest will then stand, and then present the announcements.
3. The priest will then conclude the mass with the Sign of the Cross and the Go Forth.
4. When the St. Michael prayer begins, the crucifix server will go get the crucifix and leave the sanctuary.
5. The other servers will follow the crucifix. Leave the candles on the altar. All process down the stairs and stand in front of the altar and wait for the priest and deacon.
6. The choir will then start the final song..
7. When the priest and deacon come down and line up with the servers and lectors, the priest will bow and turn (the servers will bow at the same time as the priest and turn right to process out).
8. The servers will walk out of the church and gather in the lobby. The priest will say a blessing, "**Prosit**" (Translation – May it benefit us) and the servers will respond "**Pro omnibus et singulis.**" (Translation – For each and for all)
9. The servers can then put back the crucifix and hang up the albs in **smallest to largest** size order.

SACRAMENTALS & DEFINITIONS

Items in RED not pictured



Alb – An alb is what a server wears. It should come to about 2-3 inches above the top of your shoes. Make sure to fix the collar. All albs should be in size order, from smallest to largest, when you take them off and hang them back up.



Altar – the table in the sanctuary where the sacrifice of the mass occurs, in which the bread and wine are prepared and transformed into the body and blood of Christ.

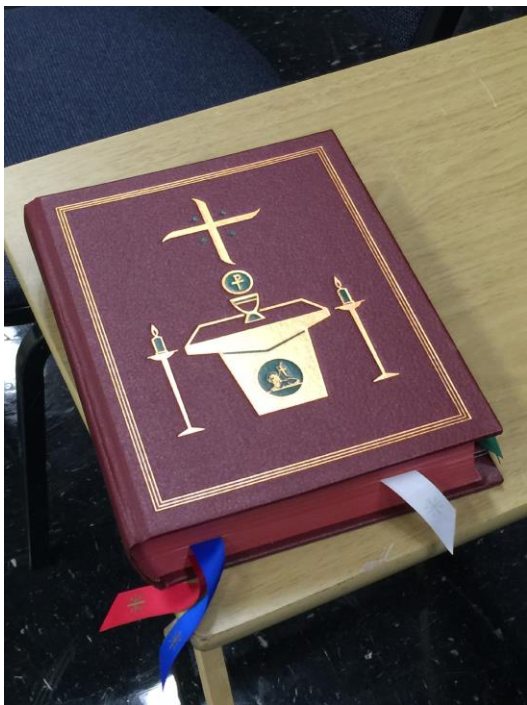
Altar Candles or Candles – candles that are placed on the altar.

Ambo (Lectern/Pulpit) – The platform where the readings and homily take place.

Baptismal Font – A stand with a basin or pool containing water in the area of church where Baptism takes place.



Bells – rung three (3) times each when the body and blood are elevated by the priest. Works best when both wrist and arm are used to shake them. They sit on a foam pad, to eliminate excess sound. Be careful not to kick or move them during mass as it becomes a distraction.



Book – also known as the “Roman Missal” (it used to be known as the “Sacramental.”) It is a book that contains the order of the mass and the prayers that the priest uses during mass.



Chalice Set – contains the chalice, purificator, paten, pall and corporal.

Chalice – the metal cup, usually brass or silver, used to hold the wine that will be changed to the blood of Christ and distributed.

Corporal – the large, white cloth which is placed on the altar underneath the chalice and paten.

Paten – the plate used to hold the large host which the priest elevates and will become the body of Jesus.

Pall – piece of cardboard or plastic which is covered in cloth used to cover the chalice.

Purificator – a long, narrow piece of folded cloth, used by the priest, deacon and Eucharistic ministers to wipe the chalice after a person takes a drink or used to clean up spills.



Ciborium – a metal container with a lid used to distribute the body of Christ at communion or used to store the consecrated hosts in the tabernacle.



Credence Table – the table located behind and to the left of the altar that contains items needed for the eucharist, such as purificators, ciboriums, the chalice set, pitcher, lavabo, cruets, lids, lighter, and towels.



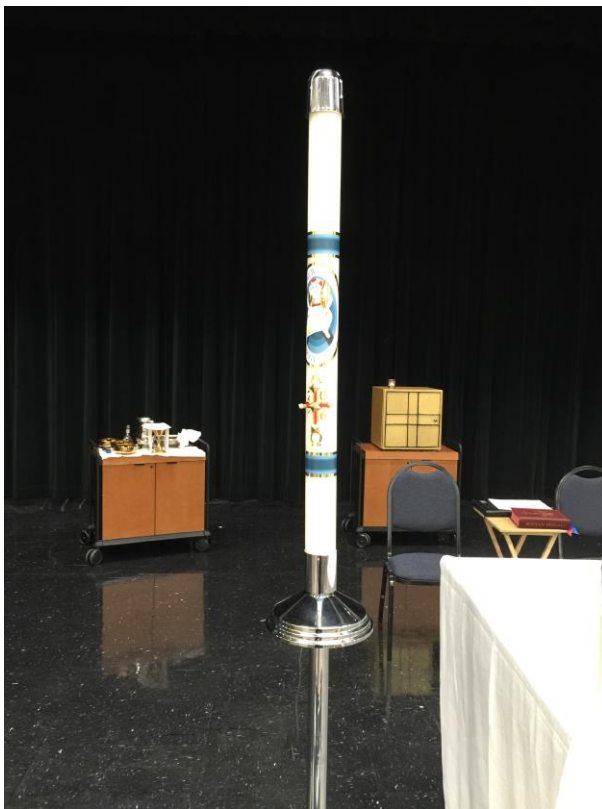
Cruets – water and wine containers



Lavabo – bowl that catches the water which is poured over the priests hands.

Towel – towel used for the priest to dry his hands. It goes on the altar server's left arm.

These are paired with the pitcher, which is pictured later.



Paschal Candle – the tall candle that is blessed and used during the Easter season, baptisms, and funerals.



Pitcher – container of water used to pour over the priest's hands. Remember the pourer is closest to the people.

Flagon – is pitcher used to hold the wine which will become the Blood of Christ during the consecration.

Always check to see what is inside the pitcher.



Processional Cross or Crucifix – the crucifix carried in and out of mass.

Presider's Chair (Celebrant Chair) – The chair in which the priest sits.



Purificator – a long, narrow piece of folded cloth, used by the priest, deacon and Eucharistic ministers to wipe the chalice after a person takes a drink or used to clean up spills.



Tabernacle – sacred vessel that holds the body of Jesus Christ.

Tabernacle Candle – this candle is lit when Jesus is inside the tabernacle.

Pyx – The small metal container which is used to hold consecrated host(s) when visiting the sick or homebound.

Sanctuary - The raised area in the front of the church. It is considered a holy and special area because this is where the sacrifice of the Mass is offered and where the word of God is read. It should be approached with great respect.

Items Used for Special Celebrations

Thurible/Censer – The metal container that holds the hot coals, air vents and a long chain in which incense is placed.

Incense Boat – The container that holds the unburned incense and scoop.

The Monstrance - The Monstrance looks like a sun burst with a glass center. The back of the Monstrance has a small door. The inside holds a glass container called the Luna. The priest puts a consecrated host in the Luna, and places the Luna in the Monstrance. The Monstrance is then placed on the Altar for Benediction or Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

The Aspergillum and Container - the Aspergillum, or sprinkler, usually looks like a ball on a handle. The priest puts the Aspergillum in a container of Holy Water, so that water will get inside the Aspergillum through little holes. The priest then walks through the church and blesses everyone by sprinkling them using the Aspergillum. This is used on special celebrations.

THE MINISTERS AT MASS & DEFINITIONS

Priest – Specially ordained men who consecrate and offer the Body and Blood of Jesus at Mass. They forgive sins, perform baptisms, marriages, funerals, run the parish and lead the people closer to God. Their ordination to the priesthood can be traced to the Apostles who were the first priests after Jesus.

Deacon – A Deacon is like a priest in training. He can assist in preaching, perform baptism, marriages, and help run the parish. He does not offer mass or hear confessions.

Altar Servers – A young boy or girl, or an adult who is specially trained to assist the priest at mass.

Eucharistic Minister – A person who is specially conferred by the Bishop to assist the priest in giving communion. They also can bring communion to people who are sick at home or in the hospital.

Lector – The person who reads the Epistles (first and second readings) and the Prayers of the Faithful at mass.

Sacristan – The person whose ministry is the care of the sacristy, sanctuary, vestments, sacred vessels, etc.

Bishop – A Bishop is higher than a priest, he's like their boss. He has the authority to ordain priests. This authority is given to him by the Pope.

Cardinal – A Cardinal is a high church official ranking next in line to the Pope. He assists and advises the Pope, consecrates Bishops and elects the Pope.

Pope – The Pope is the supreme authority of the Catholic Church. He is sometime called "Pontiff" and "Holy See", and will be the leader of the church until he dies.