



Church of St. Casimir Altar Server Manual



GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- Serving the Mass is a very special privilege in which you assist the priest in the celebration of the Eucharist. During every single Mass, all the saints and angels are present, adoring and reverencing our Lord. Altar servers have a solemn duty to be an example to all the faithful gathered in the church, showing reverence and love for Christ. Mass is a solemn occasion that brings us such great joy in remembering that our Lord died on the cross to redeem us.
 - Serve at every mass that you are scheduled for, or make arrangements to have someone cover the mass for you.
 - Make sure the alb is the RIGHT SIZE; the bottom should come to your ankles.
 - WASH YOUR HANDS – altar servers handle candles, the cross, and sacred vessels, clean hands are critical to maintain an unblemished finish.
 - All coughs, sneezes, and yawns should be covered with your elbow.
 - Wear dress pants (or skirt) and dress shoes to serve. Black is preferable. Do not wear heels, flip-flops, or tennis shoes. Wear a white or solid-colored shirt; patterns and stripes can show through the alb. Remember, you are serving the holy sacrifice of the Mass so you should wear your Sunday best.
 - Hair should be clean and combed. Preferably, long hair should be put up or tied back.
 - If you are sick, please get a substitute altar server.
- **Remain reverent for the entirety of the Mass. Reverence is conveyed by your appearance, actions, and attention toward the Mass and Tabernacle.** You are not only a servant of the Mass, but model of posture for parishioners.
 - Be quiet, and pay attention to what Father or the deacon is doing when sitting or standing. Do not look around at the congregation, fidget, play with your cincture or cross, etc. Many people can see you, so do not fool around.
 - Servers follow along with the people during Mass (sit, stand, kneel) unless they are performing an altar serving task.
 - **Hands: While walking, standing, or kneeling, keep hands together in the praying position at 45°, with the right thumb crossed over the left. While sitting, place hands flat on your thighs.**
 - While carrying an object in your right hand (such as the water cruet), place your left hand flat on your chest over your heart.
 - It is okay to open the hymnal and sing along with the congregation when you do not have server duties to perform (such as after communion).
 - Enter into prayer during the Mass, but remain attentive to the priest.
 - The priest or deacon may need a server for a special task at any point during the Mass. If they signal to you, go to them and they will tell you what they need. You may need to retrieve Father's homily, bring new batteries for the microphone, grab additional purificators, or get forgotten items, etc.
 - 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.
 - When turning always toward the center.
 - PAY ATTENTION, watch the priest.



- The crucifer (cross-bearer) is also the Missal-bearer. The Roman Missal (or Missal) is the book of prayers. The crucifer is always in the center of the aisle whenever processing.
- Walk with a slow, dignified pace when moving about performing your duties during the Mass. Do not rush.
- If a server makes a mistake or forgets what to do, it is okay. Help the server in a friendly way, or perform the task for them. It is okay to whisper how to complete the task. The priest or deacon can always help you as well.
- If a server does your duty by mistake, you should simply do his duty without comment or commotion.
- Act like you know what you are doing, even if you are unsure. Make your actions look confident and you will not cause distraction.
- In the sanctuary, during Mass, bow to the Tabernacle, unless the vessels are on the altar; then bow to the altar, since Jesus has come into the species of bread and wine, and so the altar is 'hot'. (Where the action is).

BEFORE MASS:

- **Arrive 15 minutes before Mass. Scheduled servers may be replaced if not in the sacristy 10 minutes before Mass. Early arrival is important to prepare for Mass and to learn of special Instructions for that Mass.**
- Select an alb that fits; there's a good chance you are growing and will need to move up in size. The alb should come to your ankle. Only servers and other Mass participants should be in the server sacristy getting ready for Mass.
- Tie the cincture (rope belt) around the waist with two knots. Move the knot to your right side. Make sure it does not drag.
- Raise the alb hood over your head and put a cross around your neck and under the alb hood. Then replace the hood, down on your back.
- Light the processional and altar candles for the Mass.
- The priest has several prayers to say while he vests, so do not speak to him unless he is looking at you.
- The priest will say a short prayer before leaving the sacristy. Line up side-by-side in front of the priest, with the cross and candles, for the prayer.
- If incense will be used, light the charcoal 5-10 minutes before Mass. Talk to Father about when to get it.
- If you have time, double-check that the server patens, the vessels, and linens for Mass are set out, etc.



THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

I. Introductory Rites

A. Entrance Procession

1. When the priest indicates, leave the sacristy and line up in the nave of the church for the entrance procession. Stand at the back.
2. The altar servers lead the procession with the cross bearer in the front. The candle-bearers follow side by side about one pew behind the cross-bearer.
3. When the people start singing the entrance song, begin walking to the front of church. Walk slower than a normal walk.
4. Stop at the first step. Pause for two seconds and bow to reverence Jesus in the Tabernacle.
5. The cross-bearer walks to the right of the altar, placing the cross in the stand, making sure that it faces out, toward the congregation.
6. The first set of candle-bearers enter the sanctuary to the left of the altar to place their candles in the sacristy.
7. The second set of candle-bearers enter the sanctuary to the right of the altar to place their candles in the server sacristy.
8. All servers go to the seating area but remain standing with the congregation. The cross-bearer should sit closest to the auxiliary credence table (with the Roman Missal).
9. Bow toward the Tabernacle if you cross between the Tabernacle and the altar, unless the vessels are on the altar; then bow to the altar.

B. Greeting - begins with the sign of the cross

C. Penitential Rite - the people acknowledge their sins and repent

D. Kyrie – “Lord have mercy / Christ have mercy / Lord have mercy,” or “Kyrie eleison / Christe eleison / Kyrie eleison”

E. Gloria - sing or say “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people...”

F. Opening Prayer

1. When the “Amen” is sung near the end of the Gloria, the Missal-bearer brings the Missal to the priest for the opening prayer. The goal is to have the Missal to the priest before he says “Let us pray.” (Note: during the seasons of Advent and Lent the Gloria is omitted. After the Penitential Rite, when the second “Lord have mercy (Kyrie eleison)” is sung (spoken), the Missal-bearer brings the Missal to the priest).
2. Hold the Missal upright and on your fingers straight out when. If you are taller than the priest, hold it off to your right side so you are not between the priest and the congregation. Do not open the book while you are walking. Hold the book at chest height. Do not curl your fingers up, preventing the priest from turning the pages.
3. After the prayer, the server replaces the Missal on the stand and returns to his seat.



II. Liturgy of the Word

A. First Reading

B. Responsorial Psalm

C. Second Reading

D. Alleluia or Gospel Acclamation



1. When the Alleluia begins, the Marian side candle-bearers get their candles (note: the 'Alleluia' is replaced with a Gospel Acclamation during Lent.)
2. The priest or deacon will be approaching the ambo too, so do not delay.
3. Take positions on either side of the ambo, about 6 inches away, facing the priest or deacon. Hold the candles straight up and down, at the same height. Stand straight and still. Do not tip or play with the candles.

E. Gospel

1. After the Gospel, both servers return their candles to the sacristy and go to their seats. Both servers should move and sit at the same time.

F. Homily - The priest or deacon delivers the Homily



G. Creed / Profession of Faith - "I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth..." **Make a profound bow during the words, "... and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man."**

H. Prayers of the Faithful - "... Lord, hear our prayer"

III. Liturgy of the Eucharist

A. Preparation of the Altar - Offertory song begins and gifts are brought forward

1. When the priest or deacon rises to prepare the altar, servers on the Marian side rise and head toward the credence table.
2. The cross-bearer brings the Missal and stand to the altar and hands it to the deacon or priest, then gets the cross and joins the candle-bearers at the first pew for the gifts procession.
3. The servers on the Sacred Heart side meanwhile, get the processional candles and wait at the first pew for the cross-bearer. When ready, bow then turn to go to the back of the church to escort the gifts up to the priest.
4. Servers on the Marian side bring the items from the credence table to the priest or deacon; do not set them on the altar. The items should be brought in this order:
 - a) *Principal Chalice (with burse, veil, and key on top.) Always using two hands.*
 - b) *Pyxes, if there are any*
 - c) *Chalices*
 - d) *Ciboria (remove lids first)*
 - e) *Purificators*
5. Servers on the Marian side follow the priest to the bottom step to wait for the gifts. The priest will receive the gifts and hand them to the servers.

- (1) The collection basket should be placed at the foot of the altar.
- (2) The lid of the ciborium should be removed and set on the credence table, then bring it to the priest at the altar.

B. Preparation of the gifts

1. Marian servers get the wine and water cruets, holding them with the handles facing out, in their right hand while their left hand is on their chest. The server with the wine should be on the congregation side when they approach the priest. The servers move together to the altar, stopping at the edge of the altar.
2. Once the comingling (drop of water added to wine in the chalice) is complete, bow together to the priest, then turn and return to the credence table together.
3. The server who had the wine cruet picks up the ablution bowl and holds it in his left hand. Then picks up the water cruet and holds it in his right hand so that he is able to pour.
4. The server who had water cruet picks up the ablution towel from the credence table and holds it opened up, held with both hands.
5. The servers return to the altar, stopping at the edge of the altar. The towel should be offered to the priest after he washes his hands. Bow to the priest and returns water and towel to the credence table.
6. Servers return to their seats and remain standing.

C. Sanctus - *"Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts..."*

D. Eucharistic Prayer - *kneeling, await the consecration of the Body and Blood of Christ*

1. Watch the priest!
2. Bells are rung during the Epiclesis and consecration to remind us of the awesome work of God in the transformation of simple bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. (See Appendix A for the texts of each Eucharistic Prayer.)



3. At the Epiclesis, as the priest extends his hands over the gifts, the server closest to the bells rings them firmly, 'once' (for a count of 3). Let the bells ring out until the priest pulls his hands back, then put the bells down.



4. After the words of consecration, the same server rings the bells three times. The priest elevates the bread and the wine above his head after they have been consecrated. Begin the first ring right after the words of consecration have ended, before the priest elevates the species. Ring the bells firmly for a count of 3; pause 2 seconds; ring the bells again for a count of 3; pause 2 seconds; ring the bells a third time for a count of 3. The bells are rung for the consecration of both the bread into the Body of Christ and the wine into the Blood of Christ. Let the bells ring out until the priest sets down the paten and chalice, then stifle them by placing them back on the floor.



IV. Communion Rite

A. Lord's Prayer - *"Our Father, who art in heaven..." Servers do not hold hands or extend their arms during the Lord's Prayer; this posture is reserved to the priest during the Mass. Keep your hands folded in prayer.*

B. Sign of Peace - *"Peace be with you: and with your spirit"*

C. Breaking of the Bread / Agnus Dei / Lamb of God

D. Communion - reception of the Body of Christ by the faithful

1. Communion will be brought to servers at their kneelers. Servers receive communion kneeling either on the tongue or in the hand. If in the hand, take care to check for any particles of the Host remaining on your hands, if so, consume all particles.
2. The servers sitting closest to the altar on each side, after receiving communion, get up and get the server paten from their credence table.
3. During Holy Communion, hold the server paten under the chin or hands of each communicant. The server paten is to catch any particles or dropped Hosts. **It is very important that you keep the paten level, and not tipping it, so that no particles will fall off.** The paten follows Jesus! There is a \$10 reward for catching any hosts that fall.
4. After the distribution of Communion, return the paten to the Priest so that he may purify it. When the Priest returns the purified Paten to you, return it to the credence table.
5. After the distribution of Communion, while the priest is returning to the altar, the kneeling server on the Marian side gets the water cruet, holding it with the handle facing out, in his right hand while their left hand is on their chest, approaches the altar and waits until the priest needs it.
6. When the priest gets to the Tabernacle, opens it and bows, ALL servers should be facing the Tabernacle and bowing at the same time (kneeling or standing).
7. After the priest descends from the high altar, the two Marian side servers line up, single file, to receive the vessels as they are purified. Bowing each time they leave. (The other servers remain kneeling in prayer.)
8. Meanwhile, the Missal-bearer approaches the altar to wait for the Roman Missal and stand, to put it back on the auxiliary credence table.
9. When almost all vessels are purified, bring the burse and veil back to the altar and hand it to the priest or deacon.
10. The principal chalice will be the last vessel to be purified.
11. Servers returns to their seat. The priest will sit for a while to pray. The Missal-bearer should be prepared for the priest to move, and to be ready to get the Missal promptly for the closing prayer.



E. Closing Prayer

1. When the priest says 'Let us pray' the Missal-bearer brings the Roman Missal to the priest for the Closing Prayer. Hold the Missal so that the priest can open the Missal to the closing prayer. After the prayer, the server returns the Missal to the stand and goes to his seat.



V. Concluding Rite

A. Blessing - "... may almighty God bless you, the Father the Son, and the Holy Spirit"

1. Bow your heads and make the sign of the cross; we are receiving a blessing.

B. Dismissal - "... go in peace... Thanks be to God"

C. Recessional

1. **When the recessional music begins**, the cross-bearer gets the cross and the other servers get their candles.

2. All servers proceed to the center aisle. The cross-bearer should go to the 3rd pew, then turn and face the altar; the next two servers should go to the 2nd pew; and the last two to the 1st pew, turning to face the altar (Always turning toward the middle).
3. When the priest genuflects in front of the altar, the servers bow with him. The cross-bearer bows without tipping the cross. The candle-bearers bow without tipping the candles. (Servers not carrying anything genuflect). Turn towards the back to process to the back of the church.
4. When you reach the back of the church, turn around to face the priest. He will say "**Pro sit**" (*May it be to your benefit*). Servers respond: "**Pro omnibus et singulis**" (Pronunciation: Pro ohmneeboos et singoolees (*For all and for each*)).

AFTER MASS:

- Place the crucifix in its holder.
- Extinguish altar candles using the emunctorium (candle snuffer) by hovering over the flame to snuff out the flame. Do not touch it to the brass candle followers. (You want to stop the airflow to the flame.)
- (optional) Help the sacristan by returning vessels and linens to the sacristy.
- Remove your cincture and cross and hang them in the closet.
- Remove your alb and carefully hang it in the closet. Make sure your alb it does not fall off the hanger. Pick up any other albs/crosses that have fallen off their hangers.
- (optional) Discuss how the Mass went: were there any server tasks you were unsure of how to perform? Did you have any other questions?

Prayer Positions

Bows



Shoulder bow Deep bow

Shoulder Bow - Use when you are carrying the processional cross or candle; hold it away from your body so that it stays straight up while you bow.

Deep Bow - Use when you are not carrying anything *during* Mass. Genuflect when you are not carrying anything during the processional and recessional.

Hands



Your hands are folded, palms laid flat against each other, with your fingers extending from the chest at a 45 degree angle.

Your hands are not to be too high or low. Don't let them droop or go near your mouth.

Your right thumb is to be "crossed" over your left thumb, or placed on top of it to make what looks like an "X".

WHY? The thumb cross is a sign of reverence. Servers should be constantly meditating on the Crucifix/Eucharist while they are serving.

APPENDIX A - EUCHARISTIC PRAYERS

Bells have been rung as part of the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the church for more than 800 years. Sounding the bells is an audible sign of our joyous praise and thanksgiving. In the Epiclesis, the priest invokes the Holy Spirit to descend upon the gifts of bread and wine. During the Institution Narrative, the bread and wine are consecrated into the Body and Blood of Christ.

Epiclesis (part 1):

Eucharistic Prayer 1 (usually only at Easter and very important Solemnities)

The portion of this prayer before the Epiclesis is very long; the Epiclesis is *not* when the priest makes the Sign of the Cross over the gifts near the beginning of the prayer, but much later, when he extends two hands over the gifts and says:

*“Be pleased, O God, we pray, to bless, acknowledge, and approve this offering in every respect; **make it spiritual and acceptable**, so that it may become for us the Body and Blood of your most beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Eucharistic Prayer II

*“Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray, by sending down your Spirit upon them like the **dewfall**, so that they may become for us the Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ.”*

Eucharistic Prayer III (most common option on Sundays)

*“Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you: by the same Spirit graciously make holy these gifts we have brought to you for consecration, that they may become the Body and Blood of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ **at whose command** we celebrate these mysteries.”*

Eucharistic Prayer IV

*“Therefore, O Lord, we pray: may this same Holy Spirit graciously sanctify these offerings, that they may become the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ for the celebration of this great mystery, **which he himself** left us as an eternal covenant.”*

Server Duty: The priest will use one of these four Eucharistic prayers. Ring the Sanctus bells firmly ONCE for a count of 3 during the Epiclesis when the priest extends his hands over the gifts (the bread and wine on the altar). Ringing the bells “once” consists of shaking the bells with a twist of the wrist approximately 3 times. For some of these Eucharistic prayers (such as number II), the Epiclesis occurs only seconds after kneeling at the conclusion of the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy...), so you must be paying attention!

Institution Narrative (part II):

Consecration of the Body of Christ:

“Take this, all of you, and eat of it: for this is my Body which will be given up for you.”  3X

Consecration of the Blood of Christ:

“Take this, all of you, and drink from it: for this is the chalice of my Blood, the Blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me.”

 3X

Server Duty: Ring the Sanctus bells firmly THREE times, for a count of 3 each time, when the priest finishes saying the words of consecration. Pause for 2 seconds between each ring.



APPENDIX C - GLOSSARY:

Ambo: the stand where the readings, and Gospel are read.

Aspergillum: Holy water sprinkler.

Aspersorium: Holy water bucket.

Auxiliary Credence Table: Table behind the sedilia.

Boat: Oblong vessel in which incense is kept and transferred to a thurible by means of a spoon.

Book of Gospels: A special edition of the Lectionary, containing only the gospel readings for Mass. It is carried in procession. The Book of Gospels is often more decorated than the lectionary.

Chalices: the other cups used to distribute the Blood of Christ

Cope: A cape-like vestment that is put on over the shoulders and hangs to the ankles, it is open in the front and clasped at the neck. The priest frequently wears it in processions, at Benediction, and in other services.

Corporal: the folded square white cloth that is spread out on the altar to collect any particles of Christ and goes under the paten and chalice.

Credence Table: Small side table in the sanctuary near the ambo covered with a fine linen cloth.

Cruet: the small glass containers that hold water and wine.

Genuflect: a sign of reverence to God where you kneel on your right knee only.

Humeral Veil: Liturgical vestment draped over the shoulders of the priest and down the front, made of silk and gold. At the ends there are pockets for hands to go into so that the priest's hands do not touch the monstrance as a mark of respect for the sacred vessel and as an indication that it is Jesus who blesses the people and not the priest.

Lavabo: Bowl used to catch water when the priest washes his hands.

Lectionary: The book of Scriptures from which the First and Second reading, the Psalms, and usually the Gospel are read.

Nave: the part of the church where the congregation sits.

Pall: a square of stiffened linen used to cover the principal chalice at the Eucharist

Paten: the small plate that holds the Body of Christ (specifically the large host)

Principal Chalice: the priest's cup that holds the Blood of Christ

Profound Bow: A sign of reverence to God where you bend at the waist, making a right angle between your body and your legs.

Purificators: Folded cloths that are used to wipe the chalices.

Pyx: Small round container to carry the consecrated host (Eucharist), to the sick or those otherwise unable to come to a Mass in order to receive Holy Communion.

Roman Missal, Missal, or Sacramentary: the big red book that contains all the prayers of the Mass.

Sacrarium: Special sink in the sacristy with a locking cover.

Sanctuary: The raised area at the front of the church where the altar and Tabernacle are located.

Sedilia or Presider's Bench: Three seated bench where the priest and deacon sit.

Tabernacle: The golden box that retains the unconsumed consecrated hosts from Mass.

Thurible or Censer : Metal container on a chain in which incense is burned.