
SACRED HEART PARISH

New Smyrna Beach, Florida

General Guidelines

for

Altar Servers

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for volunteering to be an altar server. The clergy and community of Sacred Heart Parish are grateful for your service to the Church. It is important for you to realize that you are a very special minister in the celebration of the Eucharist. The entire community at Sacred Heart is depending on you to perform your duties as an altar server with dignity. May God bless you for your time and efforts to serve the Lord and the people of our parish.

This document contains all the information needed to fulfill your role as altar server. Keep these Guidelines handy and use them as a reference when you are uncertain about any rules or procedures. You will be contacted if there are any changes made to the procedures.

We are in the process of recruiting new members to the altar server team. It's our goal to have enough servers so that individuals do not have to serve every week. However, in some cases, if a scheduled server does not show up, you may be asked to serve in his/her place at the last minute. For that reason please dress appropriately when you come to Mass (*Servers not scheduled, but present at Mass are expected to serve if a replacement is needed. Please be attentive to servers not showing up!*).

A reasonable attempt is made to schedule you for your preferred Masses. However, due to scheduling needs, you may occasionally be scheduled for any Mass, except for those at which you specifically indicate you **cannot** serve.

If you are not able to serve at your scheduled Mass, **you are responsible** for finding a substitute **ahead of time**. Refer to the phone list that comes with the schedule to find another server who will fill in for you. **Please call, text or e mail Sylvia Roy McCormick at 386-679-4422 or sroy7@outlook.com** for any of the following reasons:

- If you will be away and/or unable to serve on specific dates
- If you want to serve in another liturgical ministry (e.g., reader, choir, etc.) at particular Masses
- If your Mass preference changes
- If your phone number or address changes
- If you would like to serve at a specific holy day/holiday Mass

Remember: You are working together as a team for the greater glory of God.

VOCABULARY

There are special names for many of the items used during the Mass. You need to know and use their proper names. Pronunciation help is provided within parentheses.

Service Clothing

Alb – the long, white garment used to cover street clothing and worn by the priest, deacon, and altar servers.

Cassock – a long garment, usually black, which snaps down the front, worn with surplice

Cincture – (SINK chir) – the rope used to tie the alb in place around the waist.

Symbolism...Cord that bound Jesus to the pillar, also symbolizes modesty.

Vestments – the clothing worn during the Mass by the priest, deacon, and altar servers.

Stole – A long band of material draped over the shoulders of the priest and deacon.

Symbolizes religious authority but also a reminder of the cross Jesus carried on his shoulder.

Surplice – A short white garment worn over a cassock.

Chasuble – the outer and chief vestment of the priest worn while celebrating Mass.

Humeral Veil – garment used by the priest or deacon for benediction services.

Areas within the Church

Altar – the large table on which the Mass is celebrated.

Ambo – the lectern where the Word of God and sermon are proclaimed.

Credence Table – the small table at the side of the sanctuary holding the chalice, paten and host, corporal, purificators, communion cups, pitcher, lavabo bowl, towel and cruets.

Narthex – the area inside the front door before entering the nave.

Nave – the main portion of the church where the pews and sanctuary are located.

Sacristy – (SACK ris tee) – the room where the vestments and sacred vessels are kept and the ordained ministers prepare for Mass.

Sanctuary (SANK chew air e) – the raised platform area in the nave where the altar and ambo are located.

Tabernacle – the ornamental, locked box where the Blessed Sacrament, the consecrated Eucharist is kept.

Stations of the Cross – fourteen different pictures or paintings or carvings placed throughout the church depicting the life of Christ.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Shrine – the 'shrine' or place of devotion in our church dedicated to Mary of Mother of Perpetual Help.

Service Books

Book of the Gospels – the book used to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Lectionary – (LEK shun air e) – the book from which the lectors (readers) proclaim the Word of God.

Roman Missal – the book containing all the prayers used for the Mass.

VOCABULARY

Sacred Vessels

Chalice (CHAL liss) – the large cup holding the wine that becomes the Blood of Christ.

Ciborium (sih BORE e um) {singular}, Ciboria (sih BORE e uh) {plural} – the small, round, container/s holding the hosts to be consecrated during the Mass; they are carried to the altar for the preparation of the gifts; the ones holding the Blessed Sacrament (consecrated hosts) are kept in the tabernacle.

Communion Cup – any of the cups from which the congregation receives the Blood of Christ.

Cruets (CREW et) – the small containers holding the water and wine used during the consecration of the Mass.

Paten (PAT en) – the round, shallow dish that fits on top of the chalice and has the large host that the priest consecrates during the Mass.

Miscellaneous Objects

Altar Cloth – the large white cloth covering the top of the altar.

Bucket – used to hold holy water to be sprinkled on the faithful or articles to be blessed.

Aspergillum (ass per JILL um) – the holy water sprinkler, a perforated metal ball or tube on a handle.

Boat – the small metal container that holds the incense to be put into the thurible.

Thurible (THIR ih bull) – the metal container in which charcoal and incense are burned for liturgical ceremonies.

Corporal (CORE pore uhl) – the long linen cloth placed on the middle of the altar before the consecration.

Corpus – the figure of Christ (on the front of the procession cross).

Pitcher – the small container holding the water used to wash the priests hands.

Lavabo (luh VAW bo) **Bowl** – the small bowl over which the priest's hands are washed.

Towel – used to dry the priest's hands.

Pall (PAUL) – the stiff white square that sits on top of the paten.

Purificator (PURE if ih kate er) – each of the cloths used to wipe the chalice and communion cups after receiving the Blood of Christ.

Taper – used to light the candles.

Procession Cross – the cross carried at the head of the procession.

Procession Candle – each of the candles carried during the procession and recession and when leading the gifts to the altar.

STANDARDS OF APPEARANCE

BE NEATLY GROOMED AND DRESSED:

- Hair: Neatly combed and a natural color. Long hair should be pinned or pulled back so as not to hang in front of or fall in the face.
- Face: No excessive amount of facial makeup.
- Ears: Stud earrings only for girls.
- Neck: If necklaces worn, be sure to tuck inside of cassock.
- Fingernails: No loud fingernail polish.
- Clothing: Modest dress.

FOOTWEAR:

- Boys: Black Shoes and black socks (There are socks in the altar server vesting room.
- Girls: Black flats
- PLEASE: No flipflops

Please dress appropriately at every Mass you attend since you may be called on to replace someone.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

Do's

- Move with dignity.
- Handle objects solemnly and with reverence.
- Pay very close attention to what is going on in the sanctuary.
- Focus your attention on the priest.
- Participate in all the prayers, responses, and songs.

Do Not's

- Talk to each other, unless to give necessary direction.
- Goof off or joke around.
- Stare out into the congregation.
- Play with your clothing, hair, or vestments.
- Fidget while seated or standing.
- Yawn without covering your mouth.

Posture

Standing

- Stand up straight and still.
- Do not rock or sway.
- When not holding something, keep your hands folded, with the palms and outstretched fingers together at chest level.

Sitting

- Sit up straight and still, your knees bent, and your feet flat on the floor.
- Do not slouch or fidget.
- Do not swing or cross your legs or stretch them out in front of you.
- Keep your hands unfolded, with the palms flat against your upper legs, on top of your lap.

Kneeling

- Kneeling on the pad straight and still, with your upper legs vertical and perpendicular to the floor.
- Do not lean backward to rest against the chair or on your lower legs or heels.
- Keep your hands folded at chest level.

Position of Hands

- When standing and not holding something, fold your hands, with the palms and outstretched fingers together, at chest level.
- When kneeling, fold your hands the same as when standing.
- When seated, place the palms of your hands flat against your upper legs, on top of the alb.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR, cont'd

Bowing and Genuflecting

There are 2 types of bows:

1. The *simple bow* (of the head only - no shoulder or back movement)
2. The *profound bow* (from the waist at a 30 degree angle)

Genuflection is made with the right leg moving straight back, behind the body so that the right knee touches the floor briefly.

These are specific motions required at certain times during the Mass.

- During the procession and recession, when the priest bows in front of the altar, you are to do a *profound bow* providing you are not carrying anything (cross, candles, etc.)
- When passing in front of the tabernacle, genuflect. If holding something, do a *simple head bow*.
- During the Profession of Faith/Nicene Creed, give a *simple bow* of the head: *"By the power of Holy Spirit, he was born of the Virgin Mary and became man."*
- When stopped in front of the altar, both before and while leading the gifts, only *bow your head* if not carrying the cross or candles.
- Whenever you pass in front of the altar give a *profound bow* (altar of sacrifice).
- After the priest hands you the water cruet, *bow your head* to him.
- After the priest hands back the towel, *bow your head* to him.
- Before receiving the Body of Christ, *bow your head* and say, Amen.
- Before receiving the Blood of Christ, *bow your head* and say, Amen.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Three Servers

Altar Server 1 – processional cross, cruet of water

- Carries the *processional cross* in the procession.
- The *cross* should not touch the floor and the figure of Christ should always face outward.
- Care and reverence should be given to the *cross*.
- Leads the procession: at the beginning of Mass, during the Offertory procession and at the end of Mass.
- Presents the *cruet of water* to the priest when there are less than 4 servers.
- The *cruet* should be presented with the handle facing out and slightly to the left.
- Carries the *procession cross* in the recession.

Altar Server 2 – Carries procession candle, book, bowl, and water

- Presents the *book* to the celebrant for the opening prayer.
- The altar server in charge of the *book* processes with the *candle* at the offertory.
- Places the *book* on the altar when the collection begins and removes it from the altar right after communion.
- Pours *water* over the celebrant's hands.

Altar Server 3 – Carries procession candle, chalice, bells and towel

- Places the *chalice* on the altar during the collection.
- The altar server in charge of the *chalice* processes with the *candle* and *cross* at the Offertory. (**Not done at this time**)
- Carries an *offertory candle* with the other *candle* and the *cross* leading the gifts to the altar. (**Not done at this time**)
- Removes the *chalice, corporal, purificator, paten* and *pall* from the altar right after Communion; returns these sacred items to the credence table.
- Presents the *towel* to the priest at the washing of hands.
- Rings the bells during the Eucharistic Prayer (See handout)

Four Servers

Altar Server 4 – cruet and bells

- When the priest gets up to receive the gifts, move to the foot of the altar and stand near the priest while the other servers are processing down the aisle.
- Hands the *cruet of water* to the priest at the altar.
Remember the *cruet* should be held with handle facing out toward the priest.
- Rings the bells during the Eucharistic Prayer (See handout)

RESPONSIBILITIES, cont'd

Two Servers

When only Two altar servers are present:

Summary of differences from 3 to 2 servers:

- **AS2** – when there are at least 2 servers, **AS2** always has the *book and bowl*
- **AS1** – *the processional cross, chalice, towel, & cruet*

Altar Server 1 – *processional cross, chalice, towel, cruet of water*

- Carries the processional *cross* in the procession
- Takes the *chalice* and *paten* and places on the altar
- Carries the processional *cross* to get the gifts
- Presents the *cruet of water* to the priest with handle facing out and slightly to the left
- Presents the *towel* to the priest at the washing of hands
- Carries the processional *cross* in the recession
- Leads the way *in front* of **AS2** during the procession and recession with *cross*

Altar Server 2 – *Book, bowl, basket, bells & pitcher*

- Opens the *book* and takes it to the priest for the opening prayer
- Place the *book* on the altar before the offertory procession
- Takes the gifts from the priest at offertory procession and places them on the altar.
- *Does not* go down with **AS1** to lead gifts to the altar!
- Holds the *pitcher* and *lavabo bowl* for the washing of the priest's hands
- Removes the *book* from the altar during communion and places on table by priest
- Rings the bells during the Eucharistic Prayer (See handout)
- Holds the *book* for the priest for the closing prayer
- Follows behind **AS1** during the procession and recession
- Is responsible for taking collection *basket* to the back of the Church (give to the ushers)

RESPONSIBILITIES, cont'd

One Server

When only One altar server is present:

Summary of differences from 3 to 1 server:

- **AS1 does not carry the cross during the Offertory Procession**
- **AS1 leads the gifts up alone and does not bow**
- **AS1 has everything**

Altar Server – offertory *cross, book, chalice, pitcher & bowl*, and *towel*

- Carries the *processional cross* in the procession
- Holds the *book* for the priest for the opening prayer
- Takes the *book* to the altar before offertory procession
- Takes the *chalice* and *paten* to the altar
- Leads the gifts to the altar **without** the *offertory cross*
- Takes the gifts from the priest and places them on the altar
- Holds the *cruet* and waits at the back corner of the altar for the priest
- Holds the *pitcher* (water) and *bowl*, and *towel* for the washing of the priest's hands
- Make sure *towel* is placed on left arm for priest to grab
- Removes the *book* from the altar during communion and places on table near priest
- Rings the bells during the Eucharistic Prayer (See handout)
- Hold the *book* for the priest for the closing prayer
- Carries the *procession cross* in recession

BEFORE MASS

Arrive at least fifteen (15) minutes before the beginning of each Mass.

1. **Go to the schedule posted in the server's room and mark a check next to your name.** If substituting for another server, replace that server's name with yours.
2. Put on your cassock and surplice.
 - The cassock should reach the top of your shoe
 - Choose a surplice that reaches top of thigh.
3. The captain (AS 1) makes sure that everyone is present
4. **Light the candles in the sanctuary on either side of the altar.**
5. Stand quietly in the narthex until the pre-Mass prayer.
6. Before the opening prayer of the Mass:

ASI: Carefully take the *processional cross* off its base. Hold it upright so that it does not bump into anyone or anything. Always hold the cross so that the corpus (figure of Christ) is facing in the same direction you are facing. Don't elevate the *cross* until right before the procession. During the procession, hold the *cross* upright and high enough so that the entire corpus can be clearly seen by the entire congregation.

AFTER MASS

1. When you have processed to the rear of the church:
ASI: Carefully, put the *processional cross* back on its base.
2. Remove your vestments and neatly put them back where you found them (in their proper place).

Remember: You are working together as a team for the greater glory of God.

When to Stand, Sit, and Kneel at Mass

During the:	You should:
INTRODUCTORY RITES	
Sign of the Cross	STAND
Greeting	STAND
Introduction	STAND
Penitential Act or Sprinkling	STAND
“Glory to God in the Highest”	STAND
Collect	STAND

LITURGY OF THE WORD	
First Reading	SIT
Responsorial Psalm	SIT
Second Reading	SIT
Gospel Acclamation	STAND
Gospel Reading	STAND
Homily	SIT
Profession of Faith (Creed)	STAND
Prayer of the Faithful	STAND

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST	
Preparation of the Gifts	STAND
Prayer over the offerings	STAND
Preface	STAND
Eucharistic Prayer	KNEEL
Lord’s Prayer	STAND
Sign of Peace	STAND
“Lamb of God”	STAND
Communion	STAND
Prayer after Communion	STAND

CONCLUDING RITES	
Final Blessing	STAND
Dismissal	STAND