
Altar Servers

Requirements

At Sacred Heart Cathedral, the Altar Server is a representative of the parish family who has completed the sacraments of Baptism and First Eucharist and is a fourth grader or older. As a Server you have a special ministry in the Church. It is your privilege to assist the priest at Mass. What you do and how you do it can help others to understand the Mass better and make their love for God stronger.

Before You Come to Church

1. If you are unable to serve as assigned, it is your responsibility to find a substitute.
2. Get a good night's sleep before you serve.
3. An altar server's shoes should be clean and quiet: squeaky shoes or hard heels can be a distraction to everyone at Mass. Dirty shoes show that the server does not respect the important role servers have at the altar.
4. Please wear your best clothes to church. It is preferred that you do not wear sneakers to Mass.
5. Hands, including fingernails, and face should also be clean. The sacristy has a sink if last minute clean-up is necessary.

Before Mass:

1. Arrive 15 minutes before the start of Mass and check in with the Mass Coordinator in the vestibule.
2. Pick up a copy of the bulletin and a hymnal and place them on your seat before Mass. You will need these to participate fully in the celebration of the Eucharist.
3. Go to the sacristy and put on alb (and cincture, if necessary). Put on a clean, unwrinkled alb. Be sure that the alb is not too long or too short. The alb should come to the top of your shoes and never touch the floor.

4. Return to the vestibule to wait quietly for the start of Mass.

At Mass:

The Gathering Rite

- Cross-bearer leads the two Servers, the lector and the priest to the altar. The Servers should walk behind the Cross-bearer, shoulder-to-shoulder, with hands folded in front of their chests unless they are carrying candles.
Note: the Cross-bearer carries the cross high enough to be seen by the assembly but not so high that it becomes difficult to balance. The Cross-bearer never genuflects or bows when carrying the cross.
- Arriving at the altar, the Cross-bearer moves to the processional cross stand and places the cross in the holder while the Servers separate to allow the lector and then the priest to walk between them.
- The Servers bow when the priest bows, allows him to pass between them, and then move to their chairs on the Blessed Mother's side of the sanctuary. They remain standing at their seats with the Cross-bearer.
- Open your hymnal and join in the Processional Hymn.

The Penitential Rite and Gloria

- The priest moves to the presider's chair and all gathered join in the Prayers of the Penitential Rite with which Mass begins.
- When the priest finishes the sign of the cross, the greeting, the penitential rite and usually the Gloria, the Opening Prayer follows. Server 1 brings the red Sacramentary to the priest for the Opening Prayer. After the priest finishes the Opening Prayer and the people answer AMEN, the Server carries the Sacramentary back to his or her seat. The Cross-bearer and Servers, along with the assembly, sit and listen to the readings.
- Your posture while seated is important. Sit down in your place carefully. Once you are seated, sit tall without slouching. Place your hands in your lap in a relaxed manner.

Liturgy of the Word

- The Servers sit quietly during the proclamation of the Word. Be attentive to what the lector is saying. Always look at the reader. The readings are the Word of God. God is speaking to us here and now.
- Pick up the bulletin and use it for the Responsorial Psalm.
- When the gospel acclamation begins, the priest will stand. The Servers and the people also stand and join in the acclamation.
- At the end of the Gospel, the Servers and people answer: “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.”
- While the priest gives the homily, all sit and listen attentively.
- For the Profession of Faith and the Prayers of the Faithful, the Servers stand and respond with the congregation.
- Remember that, at all times, you are a part of the congregation even if you are sitting in a different place from them. It is important that you participate in all of the prayers, singing and responses.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Part 1: Preparation of the Altar and Presentation of the Bread and Wine

Once all are seated following the Prayer of the Faithful, the assembly and the priest will be seated.

- Server 1 moves to the credence table by the Blessed Mother and retrieves the corporal and the Sacramentary. The corporal is placed in the center of the altar, even with the edge of the altar. The book is placed above the upper left corner of the corporal – on the altar. Server 1 returns to the credence table and brings the chalice and a purificator over to the altar, placing them in the center of the corporal.
- Server 2 moves to the credence table at St. Joseph – walking in front of the altar and bowing when even with the mosaic. He or she retrieves the tray with the communion cups and purificators on it and brings it to the altar, resting it on the corner. The cups are placed on the right edge of the corporal in a single row. Purificators may be

placed beside the corporal. *See diagram at the end of the manual.* The empty tray is then delivered to the sacristy. Server 2 returns immediately to credence table by the Blessed Mother.

- While the altar is being prepared by Servers 1 and 2, the Cross-bearer takes the processional cross from the stand down the main aisle to the vestibule. He or she waits there with the gift bearers until the priest moves from the chair to the front of the main aisle. Once the priest is in position, the Cross-bearer leads the people carrying the gifts up the aisle to where the priest and Servers are waiting. *At the 7:30am Mass, one of the ushers comes forward for the Cross. The Cross-bear remains at his/her chair.*
- The Cross-bearer places the cross in the stand and then waits at the credence table.
- The Servers go with the priest to the edge of the sanctuary in the main aisle to receive the gifts of bread and wine from the people. The priest will give the gifts to each Server; they follow him back to the altar, place the gifts on the corporal and move to the credence table.
- The Cross-bearer takes the small cruet to the side of the altar and waits. After the priest offers the bread, the Cross-bearer hands him the water cruet, with the handle facing the priest so that he can easily grasp it. After the priest has taken the water, he returns it to the Cross-bearer, who bows and then waits by the altar until the wine has been emptied into the communion cups and the empty decanter is placed on the edge of the altar. The Cross-bearer places the cruet on the credence table and carries the decanter to the sacristy.
- The Cross-bearer returns immediately to the sanctuary and stands at his/her chair.
- Server 1 places the towel over his/her arm and takes up the basin. Server 2 takes up the large pitcher of water. Both Servers move to the side of the altar and wait. When the priest is ready, he holds his hands over the bowl. Server 2 pours water over the priest's hands into the basin; Server 1, holding the basin, keeps the towel on his arm easily accessible to the priest. After the priest has dried his hands and replaced the towel onto the arm of Server 1, both Servers bow and

make their way to the credence table where they deposit the pitcher, basin and towel.

- They return to their seats.

Part II: The Eucharistic Prayer

- The Servers and Cross-bearer continue to participate fully in the prayers and acclamations.

Part III: The Communion Rite

- The Servers remain standing and join the people in saying the Lord's Prayer.
- The priest adds a prayer, to which the Servers and people respond by saying "FOR THE KINGDOM, THE POWER..."
- At the Sign of Peace, the priest may shake hands with the Servers. If he does this, the Servers then give the greeting to each other. They say: "PEACE BE WITH YOU," or some other appropriate greeting.
- The Servers join the people in praying: "LAMB OF GOD..." When the priest holds up the host, they join with the people in saying: "LORD, I AM NOT WORTHY..."
- If the Servers wish to receive Holy Communion, they leave the sanctuary and step into the communion procession with the people – following the directions of the Ushers. After receiving, the Cross-bearer and Server 2 return to their places, take up a hymnal and join in the singing of the Communion Hymn.
- Server 1 moves to the altar and carries away the Sacramentary to his/her place. The Server takes up a hymnal and joins in the singing.
- The chalice, large bowl, ciborium, and corporal are to remain on the altar.
- After the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest returns to the altar. Two extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion wait beside the altar along with the Cross-bearer who holds the cruet. After the ciborium and empty bowls have been taken away by the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, the Cross-bearer steps forward with

the handle of the cruet facing the priest, making it easy for him to grasp it.

- The priest uses the cruet and returns it to the Cross-bearer who bows to the priest and carries the cruet to the credence table. The Cross-bearer returns to the altar right away to collect the chalice and purificator once the priest has purified it. The Cross-bearer places them on the credence table and waits.
- As the Cross-bearer is assisting the priest with the cruet and the removal of the chalice, Server 1 and 2 move to the credence table. Server 1 places the towel over his/her arm and takes up the basin. Server 2 takes up the large pitcher of water. Both Servers move to the side of the altar and wait. When the priest is ready, he holds his hands over the bowl. Server 2 pours water over the priest's hands into the basin; Server 1, holding the basin, keeps the towel that is on his arm easily accessible to the priest. After the priest has dried his hands and replaced the towel onto the arm of Server 1, both Servers bow and make their way to the credence table, deposit the pitcher, basin and towel and move to their seats where they remain standing.
- The Cross-bearer goes to the altar and removes the corporal, placing it on the credence table. He/she returns to his/her chair and either sits or stands depending upon the action of the priest.
- After communion, the priest says "Let us pray" at which time, Server 1 carries the Sacramentary over and holds it for the Prayer after Communion.

The Concluding Rite

- The Server will, on occasion, continue to hold the Sacramentary for the final blessing.
- After the blessing, the Cross-bearer retrieves the processional cross from the base and moves into the center aisle several feet away from the step while the Servers move into position on the main floor in the center aisle allowing room for the priest in the center. All face the altar until the priest bows. Servers bow with the priest. When they turn, the Cross-bearer turns and leads them down the aisle and out the doors of the Cathedral.

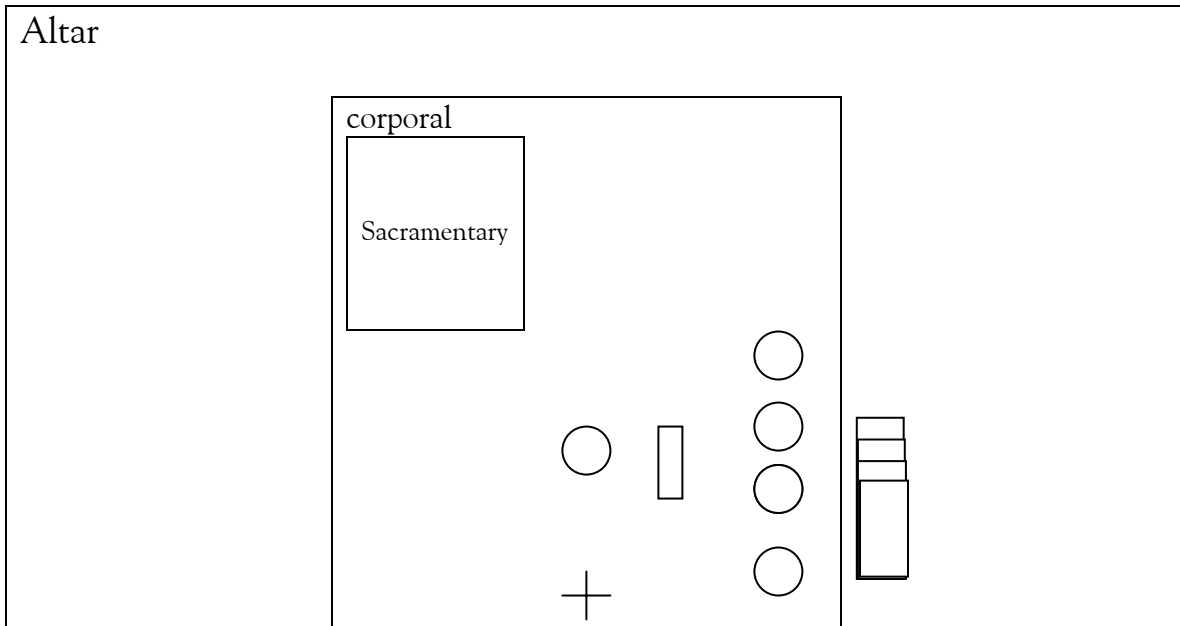
- The Cross-bearer and Servers come around the outside of the Cathedral and re-enter through the sacristy to return the cross to the stand, remove their albs, and hang them neatly in the cabinet.

When there is a baptism

- Baptism: A Server moves to the font and stands by the small credence table. While the baby is being baptized with water, have a small white towel ready. Hand the towel to the priest after the baptism and then pick up the oil of chrism – wait for the towel to be given back.
- Anointing: Keep the towel – the priest will need it again after the anointing. Hand the oil to the priest. Be prepared to receive it back from him and have the towel ready. When he has finished with both, the chrism and towel can be returned to the table.
- Clothing with White Garment: Retrieve the white garment and pass it to the priest.
- Lighted Candle: While the garment is being put on, return to the table and retrieve the baptism candle. Pass it to the priest when needed.

Preparation of the Altar and Presentation of the Gifts follow. Mass continues in the usual fashion.

What the Altar looks like when it is set correctly:



- The corporal is centered left to right on the altar and is even with the bottom edge of the altar.
- The Sacramentary is carried over with the corporal. The corporal is placed with the cross closest to the priest and once the corporal is in place, the Sacramentary can be set to the upper left upper corner of the corporal. The Sacramentary may not fit completely on the corporal – that is okay. Place it at an angle and slightly off of the edge of the corporal if necessary. The priest will adjust it when he comes to the altar. If the presider is Msgr. Jerry, he will want the small, wooden bookstand which can usually be found at the feet of the Blessed Mother by the credence table.
- The center circle is the chalice and the small rectangle is the purificator of the priest which you carry over from the credence table by the Blessed Mother.
- The four circles to the right and **ON** the corporal are the cups for communion. The four rectangles outside of the corporal on the right are the four purificators which you carry over on the tray with the cups – from the credence table by St. Joseph.

Server's Prayer Before Mass

Open my mouth, O Lord,
to bless your Holy Name.
Cleanse my heart from all
evil and distracting thoughts.
Enlighten my understanding,
in flame my will,
that I may serve worthily
at Your holy altar.

O Mary, Mother of Christ, the High Priest,
obtain for me the most important grace
of knowing my vocation in life.
Grant me a true spirit of faith
and humble obedience
so that I may ever behold the priest
as a representative of God
and willingly follow him in the Way, the Truth
and the Life of Christ. Amen.