



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CHURCH

ALTAR SERVER PROTOCOLS AND  
GUIDELINES

2013

# **PROTOCOLS FOR ALTAR SERVERS**

These are standard procedures for Sunday Masses; depending on circumstances, the celebrant may change them for a particular Mass:

- 1 Assigned servers should arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass. If servers arrive later and someone has volunteered, the late assigned server is to give way to the volunteer
- 2 Scapulars, in the liturgical color of the season, should be worn over the alb and cincture and should come half-way between the knee and the ankle.
- 3 High school servers wear the hooded albs and crucifixes which are hanging in the Sacristy closet. The cross is worn outside, over the scapular
- 4 **Candle lighting:** If the candle is too tall for you to see the wick and reach it comfortably, please have a taller server light the candle, or get the step stool from the sacristy. This will insure that the candle is lit properly and will not burn down unevenly. Candles should be lit no more than 5

minutes before Mass. The candles should be extinguished after each Mass

- 5 Before going to the back of the church, the servers should check to make sure that there are hymnals in the servers' pews. For the processional, the tallest server should carry the cross; the two acolytes (candles) should be the same or similar height, and should follow close behind the cross. The other servers should form in pairs and come behind the acolytes.
- 6 If incense is used the thurifer (the server carrying the censer) will process first ahead of the cross, gently swinging the censer at his or her side.
- 7 On the altar, the Book bearer sits in the larger chair behind the celebrant and deacon. As a rule, servers should not sit in the chair next to the celebrant even if the deacon or a concelebrating priest is not present.
- 8 The servers sit in the back pew, on the Joseph side of the sanctuary. There should be no more than 4 servers in the pew – the Cross bearer, two acolytes and the book bearer. If there are five servers at Mass, three servers – the Book bearer and the two Acolytes will sit on the Joseph side,

the servers who will assist with setting the altar should sit in the pew on the Mary side of the sanctuary.

- 9 The Book bearer should pay attention and watch for the priest's signal to come forward for the book
- 10 At the gospel, the two acolytes take the candles and come behind the altar (between the altar and the tabernacle) and wait for the priest (or deacon with the Book of the Gospels) to come to the altar. The acolytes, on either side of the priest/deacon. The priest/deacon will bow for a short prayer, but the servers do not. When the priest/deacon turns, the acolytes process slowly, side by side, to the ambo. The acolytes will take position on either side of the ambo while the gospel is read. After the gospel, the acolytes should turn in slow procession, bow at the altar, and return to the pew.
11. At Masses where incense is used, at the Gospel, the thurifer will take the censer and the incense boat to the celebrant. After the celebrant places incense in the censer, the thurifer proceeds ahead of the celebrant or deacon to the altar and stands between, but slightly in front of, the acolytes. The thurifer bows with the acolytes and priest and then slowly processes to the ambo ahead of the acolytes;

the thurifer stands behind and to the right of the celebrant or deacon ready to hand the censer over or take it back; during the reading of the gospel, the thurifer should let the censer swing slowly at his or her side. After the gospel is read, the thurifer slowly leads the acolytes back to the pew.

- 12 At the Offertory procession, ***if there are 4 or more servers***, the cross bearer and two acolytes will process to the back of the church to accompany the gift bearers to the altar; ***if there are 3 or fewer servers***, only the cross bearer will process with the gift bearers
  - a. When the cross and acolytes reach the altar, they return to their seats while the priest accepts the gifts.
- 13 **Setting the Altar:** servers not involved in the Offertory procession will work ***as a team*** to set or assist in setting the altar.
  - a. The ***Sacramentary*** (the red book) should be taken from the credence table and placed on the left side of the altar. From there the priest will place it where he wants it.
  - b. The ***corporal*** should be unfolded (not flipped) and placed at the center of the altar with the embroidered cross (red or white) facing the

priest. On Sunday there should be one very large corporal or two other corporals which should be placed side-by-side.

- c. The **chalice and cups** should be placed on the right hand side of the altar. The cups should be placed at the front edge of the corporal with the ciboria filled with the unconsecrated hosts next.
- d. Any empty ciboria on the credence table should not be placed on the altar until after the Lord's Prayer and the Sign of Peace.
- e. **If incense is used**, after the gifts are brought to the altar, the thurifer will bring the censer and incense boat to the celebrant. After the celebrant places incense in the censer, the thurifer should stand to the Joseph side of the altar while the priest incenses the altar and gifts. When the priest returns to the altar, if there is no deacon, the thurifer takes the censer from the priest, bows, and incenses the priest three times; then, going to the front of the altar, the thurifer signals the people to stand bows and incenses the people three times, once to the center, once to the right, and once to the left. The censer is then returned to

the stand. If a deacon is present, the thurifer remains standing to the Joseph side of the altar until the deacon has incensed the priest and people, then takes the censer from the deacon and returns it to the stand.

- f. While the deacon or thurifer is incensing the people, two servers will take the pitcher, bowl and towel to the celebrant at the side of the altar for the washing of hands.
  - g. Once the altar has been set, the priest has washed his hands, (and the people incensed, if incense is used), the servers should return to their pew.
- 14 At the consecration, the server on the bells should give three, strong, distinct rings at the elevation of the Host and at the elevation of the Chalice. Do not ring the bells continuously.
- 15 At the Sign of Peace, the servers should come out from the pew in a single line to take the priest's hand, then return to the pew in the same way.
- 16 At communion, servers should remain in the pew; an extraordinary minister (EM) will bring communion to the servers. After all have received Communion and the priests and EMs have left the

altar, a server should remove the Sacramentary from the altar and return it to the credence table.

17 At the end of Mass, the Cross bearer, acolytes, and other servers should not leave the altar until the Recessional hymn has been announced and singing starts. All servers should proceed down the altar steps to the top of the white rose, stop and face the altar. Servers should wait for the priest to come down the steps of the altar. When the priest turns, the servers should turn and begin to recess down the center aisle.

18 After Mass make sure to extinguish all candles on the altar and the Easter Candle if it is on the altar.



## Liturgical Books, Vessels and Articles



### **Sacramentary**

Contains the opening prayer, prayer over the gifts, prayer after communion, and solemn blessings, Eucharistic prayers and prefaces for all of the Masses, including special occasions.



### **Book of the Gospels**

This book contains the gospel reading for each Sunday of the three-year cycle, plus all solemnities, feasts, and ritual Masses that are celebrated throughout the liturgical year. Carried in procession by the deacon if it is used.



**Lectionary** Contains the scripture readings for Mass. It is carried in the procession by the lector and placed on the ambo.



**Hymnal/Missalette** Contains all the parts of the Mass for a specific season in the liturgical year including instructions on when to stand, sit, or kneel.



**Chalice** (CHAL-is) The large cup used at Mass used to hold the wine which becomes the Blood of Christ.



**Paten** (PAT-en) A saucer-like disk which holds the bread which becomes the Body of Christ.



**Ciborium** (si-BORE-ee-um) A vessel used to hold the Hosts which will be used for

communion. They are also used to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.



**Corporal** A white linen cloth on which are placed the vessels containing the bread and wine during Mass which will become the Body and Blood of Christ.



**Communion Cups** Chalice like vessels used at communion when the people receive from the cup. They are kept on the Credence Table and brought to the Altar at communion time.



**Purificator**

A white cloth use to cleanse the chalice. It resembles a napkin.



**Pall (PAHL)**

The stiff, square, white cover that is placed over the paten when it is on the chalice.



**Tabernacle**

The shrine that serves as a place for the exclusive reservation of the Blessed Sacrament.



**Censor & Boat**

The Censor, also known as the Thurible, is used on

solemn occasions to incense the gifts after the offertory, the priest, and people. The Boat holds the incense



**Monstrance**

A sacred vessel designed to expose the consecrated Host to the congregation either for adoration in church or carrying in procession, particularly on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ.



### **Sanctuary Lamp**

An oil lamp or wax candle that burns near the tabernacle. It is always lit whenever the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in churches or chapels as a sign of honor shown to the Lord.

## **Vestments**



### **Alb**

A long white garment which can be used by all liturgical ministers. It is a reminder of the baptismal garment worn when the new Christian "Put on Christ."



### **Cincture**

A long cord used for fastening albs at the waist. It holds the loose-fitting type of alb in place and is used to adjust it to proper length. It is usually white, although the liturgical color of the day may be used.



### Scapular

An outer garment about the width of the chest, from shoulder to shoulder. It is worn over the alb and hangs down in the front and back between the knee and the ankle. The server scapular matches the liturgical color for each Sunday.

## Liturgical Colors for Vestments

- Green - Worn during "Ordinary Time." Ordinary does not mean ordinary in the sense of common or normal. Ordinary means counting, as in the 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time.
- Red - Worn on Passion (Palm) Sunday, Good Friday, Pentecost Sunday, and on the Feast Days of Martyrs including the Apostles and Evangelists.
- Violet - Worn during Advent and Lent.
- White - Worn during the Christmas, Easter seasons and celebrations of Mary, as well as Funeral Masses and weddings.
- Rose - Worn on the 3rd Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) and the 4th Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday).



**Chasuble**  
(CHAZ-uh-buhl)  
The sleeveless outer garment, slipped over the head, hanging down from the shoulders covering the alb and stole of the priest. It is the proper Mass vestment for the main celebrant

and its color varies according to the feast.



**Dalmatic** (dahl-MAT-ik)  
A loose-fitting robe with open sides and wide sleeves worn by a deacon on more solemn feasts. It takes its color from the liturgical feast as listed above.



**Priest Stole**

The long cloth scarf worn by the priest around his neck.



**Deacon Stole**

The long cloth scarf worn by the deacon over his left shoulder and fasten at his right side.

## Responses

*Servers should lead all responses at Mass in loud clear voices:*

*Introductory Rite*

*The Lord be with you.*

**And with your spirit.**

*Penitential Rite:*

*You were sent to heal the contrite of heart. Lord, have mercy.*

**Lord, have mercy.**

*You came to call sinners. Christ, have mercy.*

**Christ, have mercy.**

*You are seated at the right hand of the father to intercede for us. Lord, have mercy.*

**Lord, have mercy.**

*The “Gloria” will be either said or sung as follows:*

**Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.**

**We praise you,**

**we bless you,**

**we adore you,**

**we glorify you,**

**we give you thanks for your great glory,**

**Lord God, heavenly King,**

**O God, almighty Father.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.  
For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.**

*The new version of the Creed is as follows:*

**I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.  
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the  
Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,**



*At the words that follow up to and including and became man, all bow.*

**and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate  
of the Virgin Mary, and became man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.  
And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored and  
glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
And one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.  
I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

*Liturgy of the Eucharist*

*After the Priest says the following at the beginning of the  
Liturgy of the Eucharist:  
Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters),  
that my sacrifice and yours  
may be acceptable to God,  
the almighty Father.*

**May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands  
for the praise and glory of his name,  
for our good  
and the good of all his holy Church.**

*The responses at the Preface of the Eucharistic Prayer*

*The Lord be with you.*  
**And with your spirit.**

*Lift up your hearts.*  
**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right and just.**

*After the Preface:*

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

*After the consecration*

The mystery of faith.

**We proclaim your death, O Lord,  
and profess your Resurrection  
until you come again. *Or:*  
When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,  
we proclaim your death, O Lord,  
until you come again. *Or:***

**Save us, Savior of the world,  
for by your Cross and Resurrection  
you have set us free.**

*At the Sign of Peace:*

*The peace of the Lord be with you always.*  
**And with your spirit.**

*Response before the Eucharist:*

*The Priest says aloud:*

*Behold the Lamb of God,*

*behold him who takes away the sins of the world.*

*Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.*

**Lord, I am not worthy  
that you should enter under my roof,  
but only say the word  
and my soul shall be healed.**

*The Dismissal from Mass:*

*The Lord be with you.*

**And with your spirit.**

*May almighty God bless you:*

*the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.*

**Amen.**

*Then the deacon, or the Priest himself:*

*Go forth, the Mass is ended. Or:*

*Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord. Or:*

*Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life. Or:*

*Go in peace.*

**Thanks be to God.**

NOTES: