

# Our Lady of Perpetual Help

## Altar Server Training

### Overview

The general responsibility of the altar server is **service at the altar** and **assistance to the priest**. The act of altar serving is a service to God (*in worship and thanksgiving*) and to the priest and congregation (*in generosity*). The altar server has a special and specific role in the mass and is an important participant.

### Before Mass

An altar server should arrive 10 to 15 minutes prior to the beginning of mass. Once in the altar server area:

- Please vest immediately for mass
- The lead server should distribute the responsibilities for mass (cross, candles, book). If you have any questions, now is a good time to ask
- Retrieve the cross and candles and light the candles in the altar server area
- Wait quietly until the priest leads you to the entrance of the church

*Note: Please leave cell phones with your family in the congregation. If your family is not in the congregation, please make sure your cell phone is completely off for the duration of mass.*

In the sanctuary, always show reverence for the mass:

- Walk, don't run or speed walk
- Hands together or resting, avoid fidgeting
- Eyes on the priest and the action of the mass
- Actively participate in mass through singing and prayer
- Be sure to reverence the altar anytime you cross in front of it; make a full bow if your hands are empty or a bow with your head if you are carrying an item

## Entrance Procession

Procession order: Cross bearer, candle bearers, book bearer, additional servers in pairs of two.

Begin processing when the cantor sings the first lyrics of the hymn.

All servers are to continue processing with the proper reverence, place the cross and candles in the appropriate stands, and go to their seat. There is no need to pause or wait for the celebrant.

After processing with the proper reverence, the book bearer is to wait on the right side of the priests' chair until the celebrant has kissed the altar. Once the priest is standing at his chair, the book bearer should move to the front of the priest's chair.

*Note: if the book bearer is as tall or taller than the priest, the book bearer should stand to the side of the priest and extend the book out to their side.*

In general, the cross bearer and book bear should sit to the right side of the altar (closer to the statue of Mother Mary) and the candle bearers should sit to the left side (closer to the statue of Father Joseph and the child Jesus).

*Note: in this manual, "right" and "left" designations of the altar are made from the perspective of the celebrant, looking out into the congregation.*

## Liturgy of the Word

During the readings you should remain seated and attentive.

After the second reading, once the lector walks from the ambo, the candle bearers immediately go to their candles and wait for the priest. Once he begins processing with the Book of the Gospels, the candle bearers should process to either side of the ambo and remain standing with the candles through the reading of the Gospel.

At the conclusion of the Gospel reading, the candle bearers will return their candles to their stands, observing the proper reverence.

Immediately after the homily, the book bearer will bring the book to the priest's chair for the reciting of the creed.

## Liturgy of the Eucharist

*Note: Any time an item is placed on or removed from the altar, make a full bow*

After the Prayers of the Faithful, the book bearer shall place the book on the altar and the cross bearer shall place the chalice on the altar.

When the ushers are almost finished with the collection, the cross bearer will process straight to the back of the church. *Do not reverence the altar at this time.* Once the gifts are ready, the cross bearer will process back to the altar and return the cross to its stand.

When the priest stands up to receive the gifts, two servers (typically the candle bearers) should accompany him to the front of the altar, one on each side. After the priest hands you a gift, proceed immediately to the right side of the altar near the credence table. The server holding the bread should wait at the altar until Father receives the offering, while the server holding the wine should proceed to the credence table, remove the stopper and place it on the table, and wait until the bread has been received.

After the bread is placed on the altar, another server carrying the water (with the stopper removed) shall accompany the wine to the altar. Both servers shall step up together and wait for the priest *with the handles facing out*. Once the priest has taken and returned BOTH to the servers, bow together and return the vessels to the credence table and replace the stoppers.

After the water and wine are brought to the credence table, the water for washing, bowl, and towel shall be brought to the altar for the washing of the hands. Once the priest has blessed the chalice and bowed to the altar, step up together. After the washing, bow together and return to the credence table.

Following the washing of the hands, the candle bearers shall return to their seats on the left side of the altar.

During the consecration, the bells are rung at 3 different moments:

- At the Imposition of the hands – 1 long continuous ring
- At the raising of the Precious Body of Christ – 3 short distinct rings
- At the raising of the Precious Blood of Christ – 3 short distinct rings

At the Lamb of God, the rest of the vessels are brought to the altar.

Once the priest is distributing the Eucharist, the book bearer may retrieve the book and bookstand and return to their seat. If the book and bookstand are too heavy to carry together, make two trips observing the proper reverence.

**After communion, when the priest goes to place the consecrated hosts in the tabernacle, the servers shall stand up and genuflect along with the priest.**

Once the tabernacle is closed, a single server will bring the water to the altar for the priest to purify the vessels. That same server will retrieve each purified vessel in turn (along with the water) and return it to the credence table.

When the priest returns to his chair, the book bearer shall bring the book and stand to the side of the priest's chair.

### Concluding Rite

Immediately after the final blessing the altar servers shall retrieve the cross and candles and take their place in reverse order in front of the altar, facing the altar (the cross will be farthest from the altar, the candles second farthest, and the rest closest to the altar). Make the proper reverence along with the priest and turn and process out the front doors of the church.

### After Mass

Return the cross and candles to their stands. Extinguish the candles using the candle snuffer in the sacristy.

Please make sure to hang up your vestments in an orderly fashion. Please be quiet and respectful of anyone who remains in the sanctuary after mass to pray.