



St. Matthias
CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Ministry of Altar Server

Guidelines and Commonly Used Terms

Dear Altar Server,

Thank you for your willingness to be an Altar Server! You are undertaking an important role at the liturgy. As an Altar Server, you will be up in the sanctuary helping the priest. Also, you will be responsible for setting a good example for the congregation. We pray that God may bless you abundantly through this ministry.

Sincerely,
Fr. Tony Davis

Scheduling

To get on the schedule, please fill out the Altar Server Application form available from the Parish Offices or in the vestibule. Training is required prior to starting. You must be an active Weekend Mass server to be eligible to serve All School Masses, Holiday Masses, Weddings, and Funerals.

On the days that you are scheduled, please show up! If you cannot attend, please find a replacement. If you need help finding a replacement, please contact the Parish Offices in advance at (614) 267-3406

If you are a trained Altar Server attending mass and you realize that there are not 3 Altar Servers present, please come back to the sacristy to help.

Before Mass

A lot of the work for Mass is done before it even starts. Because of this, please be especially attentive before mass to make sure everything is in place. Here are a few points to consider:

- 1) Be in the sacristy at least 10 minutes before Mass.
- 2) Put on your alb and cincture.

- 3) Take all the Mass items out to the credence table.
- 4) Light the candles around the sanctuary. The lighter is under the credence table.
- 5) Decide who will be holding the book (Roman Missal) for the priest during mass.
- 6) Be ready to start when the priest is ready.

During Mass

- 1) **Entrance:** One server carries the cross and the other two carry candles behind the cross. The procession starts when the words of the entrance song or antiphon begins. When the servers reach the bottom step of the sanctuary, they line up and bow together. The servers with the candles move up the steps and place the candles on the stained-glass window ledges. The server with the cross moves to the right to put the cross on the holder near the tabernacle. All servers go to their seats and stay standing.
- 2) **Opening Prayer:** The server who will be holding the book (Roman Missal) for the priest should be listening for the words "Let us pray." As soon as he or she hears these words, they are to pick up the book off the stand and take it to the priest at his chair. The priest will open the book to the proper page. Please hold it open with both hands and let the top part rest against you. Remain standing in front of the priest until he says, "Through Christ our Lord" and the congregation says "Amen."
- 3) **Setting the Altar:** After the scripture readings, the homily, and the prayers of the faithful, the priest or deacon sets the altar. This is the busiest time for the servers. It involves the following steps:
 - 1) Book (Roman Missal) and Chalice to altar
 - 2) Any patens or extra communion cups to altar (plus purificators)
 - 3) If there is a gift procession, go with the priest down to the center aisle. After the priest bows to the people bringing up the gifts:
 - 1) If the priest gave you the bread, take it directly to the altar
 - 2) If the priest gave you the wine, take it to the credence table
 - 3) If the priest gave you the petition binder, put it on the stand in front of the altar
 - 4) Water and wine to altar (please have the tops removed with the handles facing toward the priest or deacon)
 - 5) Water and bowl/towel to altar for the handwashing
- 4) **Eucharistic Prayer:** After the 'Holy, Holy, Holy,' move down the steps on the side of the sanctuary. When the congregation kneels, kneel on the bottom step.

- 5) **Communion:** Remaining kneeling until the Eucharistic Ministers have received communion and move to their communion station. Altar Servers will be first in line from the Eucharistic Minister near the baptismal font. After receiving communion, the server who held the book (Roman Missal) goes to the altar and carefully removes the book from the altar and puts it back on its stand. All the other servers go back to their seats and sit.
- 6) **After Communion:** As soon as the priest returns to the altar after giving communion, all servers stand and get ready to help clear the altar. One server will take bring the water cruet to the altar. The other servers should watch the priest or deacon. Anytime he sets anything on the edge of the altar closest to the servers, that is your sign to go up, get it, and take it back to the credence table.
- 7) **Prayer After Communion:** After a moment of silence, the priest stands and says, "Let us pray." As soon as the server who is in charge of the book (Roman Missal) hears this, he or she takes it to the priest at his chair and holds the book open for the prayer. After the prayer ends, the server takes the book back to the stand. The priest may then make some announcements.
- 8) **Recessional:** As soon as the priest blesses the people and dismisses the congregation, all the servers grab the cross and candles and move to the center aisle. Please take a few steps into the aisle and turn around to face the altar. Once in place, wait for the priest to kiss the altar then meet you in the center. Once he gets to the bottom, he will turn towards the altar and bow. Please bow with the priest and then turn and lead him out.

After Mass

- 1) Extinguish the altar candles with the candle snuffer. Be careful not to spill hot wax! Extinguish the processional candles.
- 2) Bring everything on the credence table (except the book) back to the sacristy.
- 3) Neatly hang up your alb.

Things to Remember

- Everyone makes mistakes
- Walk slowly while in the sanctuary
- Be reverent at all times
- Do not look out into the congregation
- Bow only when you move across the sanctuary

COMMONLY USED TERMS

Alb: a long white garment

Altar: main table where the consecration takes place

Ambo: place where the scripture readings are read

Boat: little gold bowl which holds the incense

Book of the Gospels: book which contains the Gospel readings

Candle Snuffer: instrument used to light and extinguish altar candles

Cantor: someone who leads the congregation in song

Chalice: main Communion cup used by the priest at mass

Charcoal: black coals which go in the thurible for incense

Ciboria/Communion Patens: extra Communion plates

Communion Cups: extra cups for the people to receive the Blood of Christ

Credence Table: side table where all the items used for Mass are kept

Cruets: glass bottles for the water and wine

Eucharistic Minister: someone who helps the priest distribute communion to the congregation

Funeral Pall: large white cloth that covers the casket

Incense: rocks placed on the charcoal which add the fragrance

Lectionary: book with the scripture readings for Mass

Lector: someone who reads at Mass

Monstrance: big gold stand which displays the consecrated host

Pall: stiff square cloth placed over the chalice

Paten: main Communion dish used by the priest

Prayers of the Faithful: prayers after the homily and before setting the altar in which we pray for the Church and world

Presider's Chair: place where the priest sits at mass

Processional Candles: 2 candles carried by the servers in and out of Mass

Processional Cross: cross which is carried in and out of Mass

Purificator: white cloth used to wipe the chalice or communion cups

Pyx: little gold container which holds a few hosts

Roman Missal: big red book with all the priest's prayers

Sacristy: place where the priest and servers prepare for Mass

Sanctuary: elevated section in the front of the Church

Tabernacle: place where extra consecrated hosts are stored

Tabernacle Key: key to unlock tabernacle

Thurible: metal censer suspended from chains