

Altar Server Instructions

- 1) Arrive at Church **at least 10 minutes** before Mass begins. Please be respectful of the Eucharist by your appearance. Dress neatly and avoid wearing sneakers.
- 2) Go directly to the sacristy, sign in at the book, and put on your alb and cross.
- 3) Decide among the other altar servers who will do what, (the choices being the cross-bearer, the book-bearer, or the assistant.).
 - The **cross-bearer** leads the entrance procession. He or she also leads the offertory procession and the recession. Hold the cross with your hands at least six inches apart for the most stability
 - The **book-bearer** holds the book for the priest during the opening prayer, and closing prayer.
 - The **assistant** prepares the altar.

Procession at beginning of Mass

- 4) Wait until the priest is ready. If there is time, most of the priests lead the liturgical ministers in prayer in the sacristy before proceeding through the vestibule to the back of the church.
- 5) **The cross-bearer takes the cross and leads the procession up the center aisle, with the book-bearer and the assistant immediately following behind him/her.** The book-bearer and assistant should have songbooks and should sing the entrance song with the congregation. Begin walking up as soon as the priest (not the lector or anyone else) gives the signal, which usually is after the first verse of the song is sung.
- 6) When the altar servers reach the altar-area, they line up across the front, just below the sanctuary step. They part slightly to make room for the priest, then wait until all the other people in the procession have reached the area. All the people then bow together towards the altar with the priest, except for the Cross-bearer, who brings the cross to the holder behind the organ area.
- 7) The book-bearer goes to his/her place next to the priest's chair (organ side). The assistant sits next to the priest on the other side unless there is a deacon or another priest present. The cross-bearer sits in the first lower-level seat.
- 8) **Whenever the priest has to read anything from the Roman Missal, the book-bearer holds it for him**, standing in front of him. The priest usually gives the book-bearer a cue for when a book has to be held. The usual cue for holding the book is when the priest says, "Let us pray".
- 9) All the altar servers listen to the proclamation of the Word and sit in a comfortable and dignified position.

Preparation of the Gifts

- 10) Immediately after the Prayer of the Faithful, the assistant does three things in this order:
 - removes the clear plastic Gospel stand and places it on the credence table.
 - Takes the larger Roman Missal from the credence table and places it on the altar to the left of the corporal (square white cloth).
 - places the purificator(s) [small white towel(s)] to the right of the corporal.
- If there is no assistant, the book bearer does these things.

- 11) When the ushers start taking up the collection, this is the cue for the cross-bearer to get the cross and bring it to the back of the church. The cross bearer leads the Offertory Procession to the altar when the priest gets up from his chair.

As explained below, the altar servers do not place the chalice, wine flask or water flask on the altar, but instead hand them directly to the priest.

- 12) When the priest stands in front of the altar and receives the bread and wine from the people in the Offertory procession, the book-bearer stands beside him, receives the wine cruet (flask) from him and places it on the credence table where he/she **removes the stopper from the cruet.**
- 13) While the priest is holding up the bread and offering the prayer, the servers bring the chalices, the wine cruet and the water cruet from the credence table and bring them to the priest. *Give them to the priest. Do not place them on the altar.* If there are two servers, one brings the chalices; the other brings the water and wine cruets, **stoppers out** and **handles facing the priest.**
[If there is only one server, first bring the chalices. Then bring the wine and water.]
- 14) **Next present the glass bowl and large white towel to the priest.** One server holds each item. One holds the water bowl for the priest while he dips his hands in the water. The other server *grasps two corners of the towel* so that it hangs down in front of him/her for the priest to dry his hands.
[If you are serving alone then drape the towel over your arm as you hold the bowl.]
- 15) After this, the servers stand just below the step next to the altar, and they kneel with the people during the Eucharistic prayer.
- 16) **After the priest goes to distribute Communion, the altar servers remove all the items from the altar and put them on the credence table. The large Roman Missal is placed by the book-bearer on the credence table.**
- 17) All servers return to their seats, and join in the communion prayer or song.
- 18) The book-bearer holds the book for the priest during the closing prayers.
- 19) The cross-bearer, before the closing song, gets the cross and waits with it on the side.
- 20) **During the closing song, all of the altar servers line up just below the step in front of the sanctuary with the priest, with their back to the congregation. Following the priest's cue, they bow together toward the altar.**
- 21) The cross-bearer leads the recession towards the back of the church.

TIPS: Be reverent during Mass. Move slowly and solemnly in all that you do. Also, pay close attention to the priest in case he makes any cues for you to do something different.

Thank you for all that you do to make the celebration of the Eucharist prayerful!