

**Mary Mother of God Parish
Altar Server Ministry - 2012**

Duties and Responsibilities

Altar Servers are members of the parish who choose to honor Our Lord by assisting at Mass and special liturgies. In this ministry, you are often asked to sacrifice some of your free time in order to participate. Our Lord remembers these sacrifices and will reward you in many ways both in this life and the next for all your efforts.

SCHEDULES

Schedules are prepared every 3 months by Mrs. DeLuca for the Altar Servers, the Readers and the Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist. Masses for Sunday and Holy Days are on a rotating schedule. Each Mass should have 2 servers. The number of servers controls how often you will be scheduled to serve but please volunteer for as many as you can.

For Sunday masses and special liturgies such as Christmas, Holy Week and Easter, you will be asked to log on to the Ministry website or email Mrs. DeLuca to let us know when you can serve.

Once you are assigned or volunteer, if you cannot make an assigned Mass, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE to find a substitute (except in the case of a family emergency.) Mrs. DeLuca will give you access to the scheduling website so you can see the list of all servers and their phone numbers.

Unless it is a family emergency, please do not wait until the last minute to make phone calls if you know in advance that you cannot attend a scheduled Mass. If you find that you are having too many conflicts with the schedule, then this may not be the best Ministry for you. Please call Deacon Conroy if you'd like to talk about this or if you have a family emergency.

PROPER DRESS

The Mass is the highest form of community prayer we share with each other. All who assist Father are expected to be properly dressed so everyone attending Mass may pray and listen to Our Lord's teaching without distraction.

Servers always wear an Alb and Cincture over their regular clothes at Mass and other liturgical ceremonies. What you wear under the Alb is very important both for your own comfort and so as not to distract from the Mass.

It can get WARM with the Alb on even in the winter so sweaters and heavy shirts or blouses are not recommended. What you wear to a nice social event is appropriate for Mass.

For young men, casual slacks and a dress or pull over (golf) shirt with collar work fine. For young women, slacks, skirt or dress also work well. Shoes for both men and women should be a dress or casual shoe. **NO STREET SNEAKERS, ATHLETIC SHOES OR JEANS ARE PERMITTED!!** If you are dressed ready to slide into third base or defend a goal you are not properly dressed for Mass!! The only exception would be a last minute request from Father to serve once you are in church. If you have a question about what is appropriate dress, call Deacon Chris or ask Father Sean.

BEFORE MASS DUTIES

Please arrive at Church 15 minutes before Mass; you need this much time to prepare. Go to the flex room and vest in an Alb that comes close to the top of your shoes but not so long that you will trip. Select the correct color cincture for the day. The color is the same as the color of Father's vestments. If you are not sure of the color, ask Father. The loose ends of the cincture should hang down on your **LEFT** side.

- Check with the other server to decide who will carry the processional crucifix, who will hold the Roman Missal if Father wants you to hold it, who will ring the bells and who will pour the water at the washing of hands.
- CAREFULLY light the Altar candles. If you are not allowed to use matches or if you have any problems, ask any usher or any adult for help.
- Bring the processional crucifix from the sanctuary to the gathering area at the back of the Church in front of the rear (outer) sacristy.
- Ask Father if he wants you to hold the Roman Missal for the opening and closing prayers. If yes, ask Father if you should sit on his left or right in the sanctuary.

MASS BEGINS

Before we start, we all say a short prayer together with Father. Then line up with the Reader, Extraordinary ministers and Father inside the doors of the nave. Father will say “OK” or “Time to go” or give a signal to the cantor or choir to start the entrance hymn. Three simple rules as you process to the Altar:

1. Stay together, Cross Bearer in the middle of the aisle with the other server to his/her left and one or two steps behind.
2. If you are not the cross bearer, **keep your hands folded and above your waist!**
3. **WALK SLOW!!!** This is a solemn procession not a race and the other ministers are behind you. If you walk too fast there is a gap in the procession.

When you reach the Sanctuary, **Left Server stands on Father’s left, Cross Bearer stands on Father’s Right.** If the Deacon is also serving, left server stands to the left of the Deacon. Remain where you are while Father (and the Deacon) go up the sanctuary steps. When Father kisses the Altar, **go up the sanctuary steps on the right side** of the altar. The Cross Bearer will place the processional cross in the stand before moving to his/her seat. Remain standing at your seat.

After greeting everybody, Father will read the opening prayer from the Roman Missal. If he has asked a server to hold it for him, it is usually the server on his left who will hold the book. Father will open it up to the correct page. Just stand a bit to his left or right so he can see it.

Servers should always participate with the congregation in the responses. Be seated for the readings. During the Liturgy of the Word the server usually has no duties. If there is something special at a Mass, Father will tell you ahead of time. Special things like a Baptism or blessings usually take place right after the homily.

DUTIES DURING THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

When the Universal Prayer (prayers of the faithful) is finished, the congregation sits while the ushers take up the collection unless the Deacon is there. **This is the time to prepare the altar. Both servers go from their seats behind the tabernacle to the credence table. Bring out the chalice set-up, the communion cups and the extra purificators. If the Deacon is there, hand the items to the Deacon. If the Deacon is not there, place them on the altar.** When Father stands, **both servers walk with Father down the sanctuary steps in front of the altar to receive the gifts from the parishioners.** Father will take the ciboria and the wine flagon or cruet and hand them to the servers.

If there is no Deacon at the Mass, place the ciboria and wine flagon on the altar. If there is a Deacon, hand the items to him. Go to the credence table and bring out the water cruet and hand it to the Deacon. If he hands you anything, take it back and put it on the credence table. If there is no Deacon, hand the water cruet to Father.

Both servers should help with the washing of hands. **Bring the water cruet, dish and finger towel from the credence table.**

One server takes the water cruet and dish while the other takes the open towel and stands at the side of the altar. If you are the only server, place the folded towel over your arm. When father holds his fingers over the dish, pour a small amount of water over his fingers. Father will dry his hands, fold the towel and give it back to you. Bow together, put everything on the credence table and **return to your seats. Go from the credence table behind the tabernacle to your seats.**

Servers remain seated until the “Holy, Holy, Holy.” **When you hear the “Holy, Holy, Holy”, walk down the sanctuary steps and kneel on the kneeling pads on the first step, on either side of the altar.**

When Father extends both his hands over the chalice, asking the Holy Spirit to come down and bless these gifts, the server with the bells rings them one time. After Father consecrates the bread and raises it up for all to see, the server rings the bell one time. The server rings the bell again when Father raises the chalice.

As we BEGIN the Our Father, servers stand up and return to their seats, both going up the steps on the RIGHT side of the sanctuary.

At communion time, all Servers line up at the left side of the Altar with the Extraordinary Ministers. After receiving communion, return to your seat. It's ok to cross in front of the tabernacle at this time.

When **Father** returns to the Altar after giving communion to the congregation, go to the credence table again from your seats behind the tabernacle. **One server brings the water cruet to Father while the other server stands at his/her side to receive items and put them away on the credence table.** Father may or may not want to purify the chalice at this time. If he does, he will hold the chalice out to you. Pour water into it until Father lifts the chalice up or says “OK” or “That’s enough”. Return the cruet to the credence table. Servers should take the empty ciborium and chalice to the credence table as Father moves them to the side of the Altar toward you. **After everything is put away, return to your seat, going behind the tabernacle.**

After announcements and possibly a few words from Father, it is time for the Prayer After Communion. If he you held the Roman Missal at the beginning of Mass, you will hold it again.

The last prayer of the Mass is the Final Blessing and dismissal. After Father kisses the Altar, the Cross Bearer takes the Processional Cross out of the stand and both servers follow him out of the sanctuary to the area in front of the altar. **All stand at Father's side facing the Altar.**

Bow with Father (except the cross bearer). Turn and process down the aisle to the back of the church. The Cross Bearer goes first followed by the left server. The Eucharist Ministers and Reader come next with Father and the Deacon last. When you get to the back, proceed with after Mass duties.

AFTER MASS DUTIES

Remain vested in your Alb while you take care of after Mass duties. The following things need to be done:

- Place the processional cross back in the stand so the image of Jesus is facing the congregation seats.
- Extinguish the altar candles.
- Empty the dish from the washing of hands into the sink in the working sacristy and return it to the credence table. If the finger towel is very wrinkled or wet, put the soiled towel on the side of the laundry hamper in the sacristy.
- Remove your alb (be sure the sleeves are turned out) and **hang it up (not throw it over the rack or on the floor!)** near the proper size marker on the alb rack in the flex room. Cinctures are to be hung on the hooks on the alb rack.

Go home and relax! The Lord appreciates your assistance at the Altar!