

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

These are the places and things you most need to know about as a Server.

Altar Server Vocabulary

Narthex – The gathering space in the main church. It is the large open area inside the main church doors and the glass walls of the church proper or nave.

Nave – the main part of the church where the worshipers sit.

Sanctuary – The raised area in front of and on each side of the altar.

Altar – The large table which Father stands behind during Mass. Father consecrates the bread and wine on the altar.

Celebrant's chair – Chair behind the altar in which Father sits.

Deacon and servers chairs – the seats on either side of and behind the celebrant's chair.

Sacristy - Rooms where Father, the Deacon and the sacristan prepare for mass. In our parish, there are two sacristies. The outer or rear sacristy is used by the priest and deacon to vest before Sunday and Holy Day masses. The working or inner sacristy contains the vestments that the priest uses for daily mass. It also contains chalices, cruets, un-consecrated hosts, the tabernacle key, purificators, finger towels and many of the books which are used at mass.

Flex room – In our church, it is a multi-purpose meeting room. It is where the altar server vestments, the albs and the cinctures are kept.

Gift table – a small table just inside the doors into the nave. The gifts of bread and wine in the ciboria and flagon or wine cruet are placed on this table before mass.

Chalice - The cup containing the wine which is consecrated by the priest.

Purificator - Linen Cloth which covers the chalice. It is used by the priest as a napkin and towel to clean and dry the chalice. It looks a lot like the finger towel but it has a small red or white cross on it.

Corporal – Used as a big napkin or placemat on the altar. The chalice and paten are placed on it during Mass.

Paten - gold or silver plate which is used to hold the large Host. When brought to the altar, it is placed on top of the purificator, on top of the chalice.

Bowl paten – some priests use a bowl shaped paten instead of the paten plate. If used, it usually replaces one ciborium as it will contain some small hosts as well as the large host.

Pall - a stiff piece of cardboard or plastic, covered by linen cloth which is used as a cover for the chalice. It covers the Host and paten on top of the chalice.

Ciborium - gold container with a lid used to hold the small hosts.

Ciboria - More than one ciborium!

Cruets – Little pitchers with stoppers. One holds the wine to be consecrated and one hold the water. Either the wine cruet or the flagon is used to hold the wine but not both.

Flagon – Fancy name for the big pitcher that holds the wine used at some Sunday Masses.

Communion Cups – Gold cups used by the ministers to share the Blood of Christ (the consecrated wine) with those who wish to receive it at communion.

Tabernacle - Place where the Blessed Sacrament in the form of the consecrated hosts is kept.

Pulpit or Ambo - Place where the priest or deacon reads the Gospel and preach the homily. The Readers read the other readings of the day and the cantor sings the psalm from the pulpit or ambo as well.

Lectionary – The book containing the Sacred Scriptures. It is used by readers.

Book of the Gospels – This book has the gospel readings used on Sundays and Holy Days. It is only used by the Deacon. It is carried by the Deacon and placed on the altar at the beginning of the Mass.

Roman Missal – The book containing the prayers of the mass. It is always on the altar during Mass. There may also be another copy on the side table next to the Deacon's chair. Some priests will ask the altar server to hold it for them during the opening prayers of the mass.

Processional Crucifix - The cross carried by the server at the beginning and end of mass.

Finger towel - A linen towel which Father uses to dry his hands after you pour water on them. It looks like the purificator but has no little cross on it.

Credence table – the preparation and storage table behind the tabernacle. It contains the cruets and/or flagon, finger washing dish, finger towel, chalice, cups, purificators and empty ciborium. It is used as a place of preparation and clean-up.

Pyx - a small round container containing several small hosts. It is used by the Eucharistic ministers to bring communion to the sick. At the 9am Mass, several pyx are brought up on a tray with the other gifts and are to be placed on the altar.

Baptismal font - Large basin usually encased in wood or marble used at Baptism to catch the holy water poured over the forehead. In our church it is to the left of the sanctuary.

Easter or Pascal candle – Very large single candle which remains in the sanctuary during the Easter season. It is also used throughout the year at baptisms and funerals

Holy Water sprinkler and bucket - A short, stick shaped instrument with a round top containing holes and matching bucket. Used during special liturgical ceremonies by Father to sprinkle holy water.

Thurible or Censer - The container with chain used to spread incensed smoke during special liturgical functions. A specially shaped piece of charcoal and incense are used to create the smoke.

Thurifer – This is the altar server who carries the thurible and incenses Father while he carries the Blessed Sacrament in procession on Holy Thursday or any other special liturgy.

Boat - A small container with a small spoon in which the incense is kept.

Alb - white vestment worn by the altar server and Father and the Deacon.

Cincture - colored rope, similar to a belt, worn around the waist by the altar server, Father and the Deacon. For servers, the colors change with the liturgical season of the Church year and usually matches the color of the priest's outer garment, the chasuble.

Candle Lighting Torch – A long wood and brass stick with a curved top which is used to light the Altar candles.