

# Altar Server Guide – A Typical Mass

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Altar Servers are expected to serve on the day scheduled and if unable to attend Mass on the scheduled date, the server is expected to arrange for another server to serve that day. **It is important for servers to be at church, in the sacristy, at least 15 minutes before the start of Mass.** Ten minutes before Mass is scheduled any server not scheduled may, and should, volunteer to fill a position if all assigned servers are not present. If a scheduled server arrives late and a substitute has volunteered to serve, the volunteer will serve, not the scheduled server.

For a picture dictionary to the technical terms used in this please see [http://www.catholicdeacon.org/mass\\_objects.htm](http://www.catholicdeacon.org/mass_objects.htm)

## Entrance Procession

- Altar servers form up in front of Priest and Deacon at the rear of the church. **Senior server** is first in the middle followed by the two **Junior Servers** side by side, one on right, the other on the left.
- Process to the front of the church during entrance Hymn. **Junior Server #1** goes to the left corner of the altar steps, **Senior Server** and **Junior Server #2** go to the right corner of the altar steps. Pause there while the Priest and Deacon ascend the altar.
- Bow in conjunction with the Priest and deacon kissing the altar and then ascend the altar and proceed to the altar server chairs.

Opening of Mass proceeds as usual. Servers should participate by reciting the prayer responses and singing with the congregation while standing with hands folded.

## The Collect - opening prayer that occurs after the Gloria

- In the final “Glory to God in the Highest...” refrain in the Gloria, **Junior Server #1** should proceed to collect the Holy Roman Missal from the credence table and bring it to the deacon. The deacon will open the Missal to the correct page and then **Junior Server #1** will present the open book to the priest; the Priest will begin “Let us Pray...”
- Hold the Missal at an appropriate height for the Priest to read the Collect. Be flexible and move easily if the Priest adjusts the book’s location while you are holding it.
- At the conclusion of the prayer **Junior Server #1** returns the book to the Credence table and proceeds back to his/her seat.

## Liturgy of the Word - Readings, Gospel, Homily, Profession of Faith and Prayer of the Faithful

Servers are seated with hands on lap or folded and listen intently to the lectors as the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> readings are read, sing (or recite) the responsorial responses. When the Alleluia begins, stand with hands folded and remain standing while the Gospel is proclaimed. After the Gospel is proclaimed, sit

and listen intently to the homily (even if it is boring, pretend to be interested) – keep hands on lap or folded and try not to yawn or fall asleep.

## Liturgy of the Eucharist

Starts immediately after the Prayer of the Faithful. This is the busiest portion of the Mass for the Altar Servers.

- All three servers will proceed to the credence table and begin preparing the Altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
- **Senior Server** should lead by taking the Chalice (with the Pall) and Corporal to the Altar, then return to the credence table to get the Missal and place it with the stand on the left side of the Altar.
- Once the Corporal has been opened on the altar by the deacon, the **Junior Servers** can begin bringing the Communion Cups (filled with wine, be careful) and the Ciboria (with the hosts to be consecrated) to the altar. These will be placed on the Corporal with the cups arranged in rows of two on the upper right portion of the Corporal, and the Ciboria placed in the top-left area of the Corporal (on the other side of the Cups). Generally the Deacon or **Senior Server** will assist with the placement of items on the Corporal.
- The **Senior Server** should retrieve the stack of Purificators from the Credence table and place the stack to the right of the Corporal on the altar.
- At this point the Altar is set and the servers should return to their chairs for a short period until the offertory procession is ready.
- When the Priest and Deacon rise for the Offertory procession the servers follow them to receive the gifts. **Senior Server** should stand ahead of the **Junior Servers** on the steps to the right of the Priest and Deacon.
- The collection basket is received and placed in front of the Altar (usually by the Deacon or, in the absence of the deacon, by the **Senior Server**)
- The Priest or deacon will hand the Paten with the host to the **Senior Server** who immediately proceeds to place the Paten in the center of the Corporal on the altar. Sometimes the priest will hand the water and wine first and in this case the **Senior Server** hands the vessels, one to each server, and then turns back to receive the Paten with the host.
- When the **Senior Server** receives the paten first, the **Junior Servers** should step down to the level previously occupied by the Senior Server.
- The Priest or deacon will receive the vessels containing the water and wine and hand one vessel to each of the **Junior Servers**.
- After receiving the vessels the servers should ascend the steps and line up on the right side of the altar (looking at the Altar as you face the congregation). The servers should hold the vessels and await the Deacon.

- The Deacon will take the vessel holding the wine and pour it into the Chalice. He will then take the vessel holding the water and use it similarly. After both vessels have been returned to the **Junior Servers** the servers should bow to the Deacon (as the deacon bows to the servers) and proceed to return the vessels to the credence table. **Junior Server #1** can return to his/her chair.
- The **Senior Server** should collect the water pitcher and bowl from the Credence table. When **Junior Server #2** returns the vessel to the credence table s/he should pick up the towel and stand next to the **Senior Server**.
- After the Priest prepares the gifts the **Senior Server** and **Junior Server #2** should move into position at the side of the Altar (same location to the right of the Priest used with the vessels). The Priest will wash his hands. **Senior Server** pours water from pitcher over Priest's hands and into bowl. **Junior Server #2** holds towel up and makes it available to the Priest to dry his hands.
- After the Priest returns the towel to **Junior Server #2**, both servers bow to the priest and return their items to the Credence table.
- **Senior Server** and **Junior Server #2** return to their chairs.

Servers participate normally in the remaining portion of the Liturgy of the Eucharist and should kneel with folded hands along with the congregation. Servers should not raise hands during the acclamations, but rather keep hands folded.

## Chimes/Bells

- When the priest places his hands over the gifts, **Senior Server** rings the chimes one time, (another cue is when the deacon kneels).
- When the priest elevates the Body of Christ after saying "This is My Body", **Senior Server** rings the chimes three times
- When the priest elevates the Chalice with the Blood of Christ after saying "This is My Blood", **Senior Server** rings the chimes three times
- No further use of chimes during this Mass

## Communion

- Altar servers should fall into line behind the Eucharistic ministers as they receive Communion in the Altar Sanctuary.
- Altar servers should return to their chairs after receiving Communion.
- While Holy Communion is being distributed to the faithful, the **Senior Server** will remove the Roman Missal and stand from the Altar and place it on the credence table.
- After Communion has been completed the Deacon will organize the items on the Altar and return the remaining Hosts to the Tabernacle.
- After the Body of Christ is removed from the altar the **Junior Servers** remove any empty Ciboria from the Altar and place them on the open corporal on the Credence Table. The corporal on the Altar, paten and pall should be left in place.

- When the deacon returns from placing the reserve Hosts in the tabernacle, **All servers** will go to the Chapel to retrieve the cups and purificators and place them on the corporal on the credence table.

## Prayer after Communion

- After a moment of reflection at the completion of Communion, the Priest will rise for the Prayer after Communion. Usually there will be music during this time – be attentive and watch for cue from the deacon. Sometimes, the priest will not stand until the book is brought to the deacon to open to the correct page, so if not sure, look for a cue from the deacon.
- Junior **Server #2** will retrieve the Roman Missal from the Credence Table and bring it to the deacon. The deacon will open the Missal to the correct page and then **Junior Server #2** will present the open book to the priest; the Priest will begin “Let us Pray...”
- Hold the Roman Missal at an appropriate height for the Priest to read the prayer. Be flexible and move easily if the Priest adjusts the book’s location while you are holding it.
- At the conclusion of the prayer return the book to the Credence table and proceed back to your seat.
- Participate normally in the remainder of Mass.

## Consecration to Mary

- When the consecration song begins, turn around and face the Icon of Our Lady of Guadalupe that is on the wall above your chairs. Remain turned toward Our Blessed Mother throughout the song. After the song is ended turn back around for the final blessing and dismissal

## Closing Procession

- As the Recessional song begins, the priest and deacon will go to the Altar, reverence the Altar with a kiss, and proceed to the foot of the steps. After the priest and deacon have revered the Altar and begin to go down the steps the servers descend the Altar to the corners of the altar steps as they did in the entrance procession.
- When the Priest and Deacon bow to the Altar, the Altar Servers bow as well.
- After bowing the servers reform for the procession with the **Senior Server** in the center, followed by the **Junior Servers** side by side, one on the left, one on the right. The Altar Servers lead the Priest and Deacon to the back of the Church in the closing procession.