



# THE ALTAR SERVER COMMITMENT

The Altar Server's Ministry is a unique one in the Catholic Church. Other than priests and deacons, no one else is allowed to so closely play a part in the preparation of the Eucharist. Your participation as an Altar Server is special. When you serve the priests and deacons, you serve the people of God, and above all, you serve Christ. Altar Servers must take on this serious responsibility with commitment of devotion, dedication and discipline:

## **DEVOTION: A COMMITMENT TO WHAT WE BELIEVE**

- A love of God and the Catholic Faith
- A strong desire to do God's work and serve his people
- A willingness to conduct yourself in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord

Even if they are not serving, anytime an Altar Server is in the church their actions should be an example to the rest of the people at Mass. Altar Servers wearing vestments are an extension of the clergy.

Devoted Altar Servers know that their service is important to the whole faith community. Through their service at the Altar, others are able to grow in their love of the Lord.

## **DEDICATION: A COMMITMENT TO HOW WE ACT**

- The commitment to fully meet the requirements of the service for which you have been chosen
- The commitment to fulfill your duties when you are scheduled
- The commitment to help the entire altar server team to do well. Dedication to service comes from our love and Devotion to the Lord. Dedicated Altar Servers know that others are counting on them. They help less skilled servers when needed, and they never say "That's not my job."

## **DISCIPLINE: A COMMITMENT TO HOW WE SERVE**

- The self-control that allows Altar Servers to carry out their duties with precision
- The determination to do what needs to be done, the right way every time
- The desire to be prepared, to arrive early to help prepare for Mass, and to ensure that the rest of the Altar Server Team is prepared
- The initiative to pay attention and think about what they will do next
- The ambition to improve each time they serve. Asking at the end of each Mass, "What could I have done better?"
- The motivation to listen to coaching with an open mind and a willing heart



# GENERAL CONDUCT

## STATE OF GRACE

Servers must be in a state of grace to serve at mass, meaning they should attend mass each weekend and receive reconciliation on a regular basis.

Altar Servers should come to Mass prepared to meet the Lord at His Holy Communion. They should consider whether they ought to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation ahead of time, and, if needed, make appropriate arrangements.

Once an Altar Server puts on the alb and cincture, their conduct always must be professional and reverent. From the time they put on the Alb before Mass until the time they take it off after Mass, an Altar Server is "on duty".

Altar Servers must always show respect for the sanctity of the church and the sacred vessels. The care of the vessels and vestments is a primary responsibility of the Altar Server.

## APPEARANCE AND DRESS

- All servers are expected to wear "Sunday clothes" at the weekend Masses.
- Shoes must be clean dress-style shoes.
- Servers should refrain from excessive or flashy jewelry or accessories, so not a distraction.
- Watch alarms must be silenced.
- Cell phones are not allowed while serving.
- Short hair is strongly preferred for boys. Long hair for boys or girls must be very neatly presented so as not to fall into or on any sacramental.

## POSTURES

The posture of the Altar Server should be one of near invisibility. If people are paying attention at Mass, they should not even notice you. **If someone looks at you, they should see a server who is reverent and paying attention. It should remind them that they, too, should be paying attention to the Mass, and not to you.**

In general, your posture should be confident, but calm. You should look reverent and prayerful, but comfortable. Move smoothly, but deliberately, not slowly.

**Always look "where the action is".** When someone is speaking or reading part of the Mass, you are listening to them. When the Eucharist is being consecrated, you are looking at it. When the choir is singing, you are singing with them.

**Make no distracting motions or noises.** Do not wave, smile, or wink at people. Friends and family will be very proud of you. They may smile or even wave at you. Impress them further by attending to your duties at Mass without acknowledging them. You will have time to visit with them after Mass.

**Standing** – When standing, stand up straight. Balance your weight evenly on both feet, but do not lock your knees. Anytime you are not holding anything, place your hands with palms together, in the "prayer position".



**Processing** - The procession is a sacred act. It is more than just a way for the priest to get to the altar. It is a very formal way of welcoming and glorifying Christ himself into our presence.

**Walk. Never, run.** When you process, walk at a deliberate, but respectful pace. It should be just slower than you normally walk. If you are not the lead in the procession, keep pace with the lead – do not pass.

When carrying something while processing, hold it reverently with both hands and slightly in front of you, not resting on your chest.



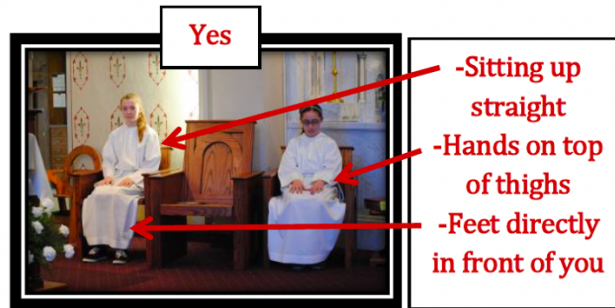
**Cross Bearer**

-Top hand at chin level

-Low hand at waist level

**Sitting** – While sitting, sit up straight, not slouching. Feet should be directly in front of you. **Legs should never be crossed.** Keep your legs and feet still. Hands are placed on top of thighs.

Respond to prayers and sing songs deliberately, and fully participate in the Mass.



**Kneeling** - While kneeling, keep your torso up straight, not slouching or resting on feet. **If kneeling behind a chair or pew, do not lean over it, do not rest your head.** Feet should be directly behind you. Keep your legs and feet still. Hands are folded prayerfully.



**Bowing** - **Never bow when carrying the cross or candle.** There are two types of bows:

- The bow of the head (chin to chest): Lower your chin to your chest and hold it there briefly. There are several times in the Mass when this is done. Also, anytime a priest bows to you, return the bow with a brief head bow
- The profound bow (bend at waist): Bend at the waist and bow forward. This is used during the Profession of Faith and a few other times.



Chin to chest



Bend at waist