

St. Maria Goretti Altar Server Manual

Founded: 2007

St. Maria Goretti Parish

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A Parish of The Roman Catholic Diocese of Sacramento CA

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Mission Statement

"We, the People of St. Maria Goretti Catholic parish are called by Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God through prayer, praise, sacraments and education in order to share the message of love, justice, forgiveness in service to all, and to build the Church."

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General

- Arrive **15 minutes early** to leave plenty of time to get ready and perform the following quick checks:
 - Gifts table (carafe of wine and ciborium of unconsecrated host are present)
 - Credence table (ensure all altar items are present including the large host).
 - Ensure the sacristy door is closed.
 - **Greet parishioners: "Hello, welcome to St. Maria Goretti."**
 - Pray the Altar Server Prayer
- The cassock (black robe) should reach down to the ankle. Take note of the size that fits best. The cassock and surplice sizes should match or be within 1 size of each other.
- Use the SignUpGenius website to add/delete/change an altar server appointment.
- If scheduled to serve but cannot, you must find a replacement. The altar server contact list was provided.
- Up to 6 altar servers will be scheduled for each mass.
- **Behavior.** Please be respectful while serving at the Altar of God. **Go to Holy Confession at least once a month.**
- After mass, return the cassock and surplice to a hanger and place on the rack according to the size order from least to greatest.
- If there are 2 or less altar servers at the start of mass, please help out by dressing and joining the other altar servers.
- If you are not scheduled to serve a mass but want to serve, please do so. But please let the assigned servers have 1st choice of duties (cross bearer, candle holder, bells, etc.)

Genuflecting

- Genuflect when crossing between the altar and the Tabernacle and always face the Tabernacle when genuflecting. Example – when all servers move to the credence table to prepare the altar (at start of collection), the servers will stop in front of the tabernacle together, genuflect together, and then proceed to the credence table. Genuflecting is always with the right knee to the floor.
- Candle holders should also come together and genuflect after returning the candles to the stands after the Gospel reading.
- Servers **do not** genuflect when they have the Crucifix or candle in their hands.

Procession

- Procession order:

Crucifix holder → candle holders side by side → additional servers (if present) → Deacon (if present) → Priest → Bishop (if present).

Entrance

- **Be inside the church and ready to proceed two minutes before mass**

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- The Crucifix & candle holders will walk to the altar and turn around facing the congregation. After Priest genuflects and makes his way to the altar, place the Crucifix and candles in the holder and move to the seats.

Collection

- **When the ushers are at the second to the last row**, the Crucifix & candle holders will go to the back of the church and wait until the ushers are ready to bring up the gifts. The remaining servers will sit and wait with Priest.
- Processing order for gifts:

Crucifix holder → candle holder's side by side → gift presenter's → collection. The Crucifix and candle holders will return them to the holders and return to assist Priest with gifts if needed.

Conclusion

- When mass is concluded, the Crucifix & candle holders will meet in front of the altar facing the congregation and wait until Priest genuflects. They will then proceed to the back of the church.

Candles during Gospel

- When Priest stands and walks to the altar to get the Book of Gospels, the candle holders should retrieve the candles from the front of the Altar and follow Priest to the ambo (lectern) in a **"S" formation**, with the lead candle holder proceeding behind the ambo. Do not go down and up the steps in front of the ambo. Do not cross between the Tabernacle and Altar to get the candle. The candle holders will face each other on each side of the ambo.
- Return the candles to the holder in an **"S" formation**, come together and genuflect prior to returning to the seats.

Preparing the Altar (see picture)

When the collection begins, all servers will **immediately** proceed to the credence table (table holding water, chalice, ciborium, communion cups and other items) and bring them to the altar. Make sure the following is done:

1. The corporal (square cloth) is spread out on the altar first. Make sure the back end of the corporal is even with the back of the altar.
2. Place the chalice (heavy gold cup) towards the **right** side of the corporal.
3. Place the paten (gold plate) towards the **middle** of the corporal.
4. **Line the communion cups and ciboriums next to the right side of the corporal side-by-side.**

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5. Place four of the purificators (rectangular cloth) between the corporal and the communion cups.
6. Place one of the purificators to the left of the corporal.
7. Place the carafe of wine and the water cruets to the right of the ciborium.
8. When complete and the ushers are at the second to the last row, the Crucifix & candle holders will proceed to the back of the church and other servers will return to their seats. Don't forget to genuflect when passing between the altar and the Tabernacle.
9. When the gifts are brought up, place the carafe of wine to the right of the ciborium and the large ciborium in the left of corner of the corporal.
10. After Priest empties the carafe and pours a little water in the chalice, return both to the credence table.
11. The servers will then bring the small water pitcher, bowl, and finger towel to the altar so Priest can wash his hands. When finished, return the water, bowl, and towel to the credence table and return to the seats.



Ring of the Bells (except during Lent)

- After reciting or singing the Acclamation "Holy, Holy, Holy", kneel quickly and get ready to ring the bells. Priest will begin the Eucharistic prayer. The bells are rung at the following times as follows:

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- When Priest places his hands over the chalice: rung **ONCE ONLY** 
- When Priest elevates the consecrated host: rung **THREE** sharp times. 
- When Priest elevates the consecrated chalice of the blood of Christ: rung **THREE** sharp times. 

Sign of Peace

Altar servers exchange the sign of peace with the Priest (In persona Christi or Person of Christ) first, then with one another.

Communion

- When Priest drinks from the cup, **STAND AND WAIT** to receive communion. Then kneel while congregation receives communion.
- In cases where Our Blessed Lord Jesus falls to the ground (Consecrated Host or Wine), place a purificator on top of the spot and leave it for the Altar Society member to properly purify the location.
- When Priest completes communion and returns to the altar, proceed to the credence table and bring the cruet of water to him. Assist Priest with returning the cups, chalice, etc. to the credence table. When done return to the seat.
- The altar server to Priest's right should retrieve the Sacramentary (book of prayers) from the altar and hold open for Priest. Return the Sacramentary to the altar when done.

Concluding Rite

- After Priest gives the final blessing and dismisses the congregation, retrieve the Crucifix and candles and meet in front of the altar facing the congregation. After Priest genuflects, proceed to the back of the church.

Thank You for your dedicated service!

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Altar Items

The Cassock – The Cassock is the principal vestment used by members of the clergy.

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The Surplice - It is a liturgical garment worn by all, clergy to altar servers, during processions, and when administering the sacraments

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Corporal - The Corporal is a square piece of cloth. In size and appearance it resembles a small napkin. It is spread out on the altar, and the chalice is placed upon it. Its purpose is to ensure that any small particles or crumbs from the Sacred Host can be cleaned easily.

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Purificator- This is a cloth used for wiping the chalice, and the fingers and mouth of the celebrant after Communion.

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Aspersory and Aspergillum - The Aspersory is a container for holding holy water. The Aspergillum, the holy water sprinkler, is a stick-shaped implement with holes in it to dip into the Aspersory and catch the holy water for sprinkling the people and things

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Thurible & Incense Boat and Stand – The thurible is a metal vessel in the shape of a vase or cup, with cover suspended by chains. It is used for burning incense. The incense boat is a small metal container that holds the incense to be placed into the thurible. The boat has a cover and a spoon.

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Ciborium – The ciborium is a vessel which contains the small Hosts used for the Communion of the faithful. It can look like a chalice with a large top and cover or a large bowl with a cover.

3

Paten – Paten is Latin meaning “plate.” This is a plate of gold or silver upon which the large bread for consecration rests.

4

Chalice – Chalice is Latin meaning “cup.” This is a consecrated cup made of gold or silver, and if silver, the interior must be of gold.

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Cruets, Bowl and Finger Towel – The cruets, the pitcher-like vessels, containing the water and the wine, the bowl and finger towel are to be used during the Preparation of the gifts.

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Credence Tables- Small areas on either side of our sanctuary for the purpose of holding the cruets, bowl, Sacramentary, chalice, ciboria, and other items required for the celebration of Mass.

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Pyx- The pyx is a smaller vessel in which the Sacred Host is either preserved or carried. A pyx should have a hinged lid and a small carrying pouch called a "bursa."

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Ambo (Pulpit/Lectern) – This is the place from which the sacred readings and homily are given.

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