

Altar Serving

Guidelines and Responsibilities

St Bartholomew Catholic Church

Thank you for your willingness to serve our parish community. As Catholics, nothing is more important than the Mass. It is the celebration that gives us the strength we need to live our Christian life. Your role is very important to the Mass.

Guidelines to be an Altar Server

- Altar servers 4th grade and older should be baptized Catholics who have received their first Holy Communion.
- Altar servers should be mature enough to understand their responsibilities and carry them out with appropriate reverence.
- Altar servers should be able to respond appropriately to the parts of the Mass, both recited prayers and various sung parts of the Mass.

Responsibilities of the Altar Server

- **Proper Clothing** - Servers should come to church wearing their Sunday best, and be neat and clean. Shoes should be dark and not flashy, preferably black. No wild hair or flashy earrings or hair accessories.
- **Vestments** - Black cassocks and white surplice are located in the sacristy. Please choose the appropriate size that is long enough to reach your ankles.
- **Arrival time** - Please arrive 15 minutes prior to Mass. This allows you enough time to pray, vest, and perform the pre-Mass duties of a server. (If you are attending Mass and you see that there are no servers at 5 minutes before, please step up and serve.)

Altar Server Procedures Before Mass

- Go to sacristy to put on cassock and surplice.
- Pray the server prayers inside the server closet.
- Candles should be lit at the altar and ambo 10 minutes before Mass begins.
- Check side credence table for Mass items.
- Go to Gathering Space to prepare for procession. One server brings back the crucifix.

Altar Server Procedures During Mass

The Introductory Rites

Entrance Procession

- Cross bearer leads with second server following, both walking a bit slower than a normal walk.
- The cross bearer proceeds to stand in front of the left altar candle and will not genuflect, but bow head. The second server proceeds to stand in front of the right altar candle and will genuflect with Father. (Genuflecting will happen after the Book of the Gospels is placed on the altar and Lector returns to front step.)
- After genuflecting, both servers proceed to the altar server chairs. Cross bearer hangs the crucifix on the wall before standing at their seat. (Remain standing until 1st reading.)

Opening Prayer - After the Gloria is sung, Father will say “Let us pray.” This is when you get the red book (Roman Missal) and bring it in front of Father.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First and Second Readings - be seated.

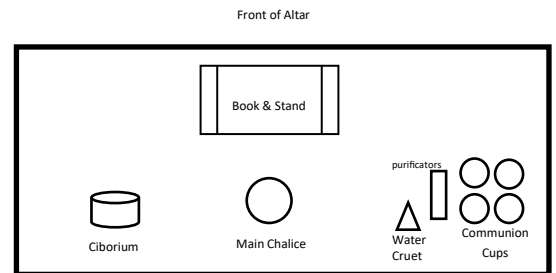
Gospel Acclamation and Gospel reading - Stand until the homily, then be seated.

Creed and Prayer of the Faithful - stand.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation of the Altar during the Offertory

1. Bring book and holder to altar and place it in the center.
2. Bring main chalice to altar and place in center.
3. Bring ciborium (golden bowl) to altar and place on the left side.
4. Bring 4 communion cups (two at a time) to altar and place them on the right side of the altar.
5. Bring water cruet and white purificators to altar and place near 4 communion cups.
6. After a slight bow to altar as you both leave the sanctuary, process to back of church to offertory table,
7. From the back, lead from all 3 offertory gift bearers to altar when the collection basket is ready.
8. Proceed to stand next to Father, one on each side.
9. Take ciborium or cruet of wine from Father. Father will give the gift bearers a blessing, Then servers proceed to side of Altar. Set the ciborium of bread on the left side of altar.
10. Remain at altar to give wine, and then receive the water and wine cruets, then take back to credence table.
11. Next, one server brings the glass bowl (lavabo) and water cruet, and the other server brings the finger towel to the side of the Altar. Walk over when Father bows. Pour water over Father’s hands and give him the towel. Bow and return these items to credence table.



Eucharistic Prayer

- Stand beside the Altar on lower step as the Priest begins: “The Lord be with you... Lift up your hearts...”
- After the “Holy, Holy, Holy”, kneel on step on side of Altar.
- Stand with prayer hands for the “Our Father”.

Sign of Peace

- Exchange the sign of peace with the other server and Father will walk towards you for the sign of peace.
- Slide over toward congregation to make room for extraordinary ministers. Remain standing.

Communion

- Receive the Eucharist from Father and return to your seats.
- During communion, place the water cruets on the right side of the altar, and then take the red book (Roman Missal) and holder from the altar to the credence table.
- After Father purifies the vessels and sets them on the far right side of the altar, first server waits for two items and walks to altar and takes the two items to the credence table. The second server will then take the next two items, each taking turns until the altar is clear. The last item is the main chalice, one server with two hands.
- Remain standing at chairs until Father takes his seat, then be seated.

Concluding Rites

Closing Prayer—Both servers stand when Father says “Let us pray”. One of the servers will bring the red book (Roman Missal) to Father.

Recessional Hymn—Remain in place until Father moves toward the altar. Then one server will get the cross and proceed to stand between the 3rd pews, and the second server will proceed directly to stand between the 1st pews. Both Servers are facing the altar, and when Father genuflects, all turn and process out to Gathering Space.

After Mass

- Cross bearer returns crucifix to wall stand.
- Other server extinguishes the altar and ambo candles with bell snuffer. (Extinguish any extra candles such as the Easter candle or Advent wreath candles)
- Remove your vestments and hang neatly in order and on correct hanger.

Tips for Altar Servers

- Always be reverent and respectful.
- Walk reverently.
- Have good posture and don't wiggle.
- Listen attentively and don't chit chat.
- Occasionally you might forget something or make a mistake. Remain calm and continue to serve in a dignified manner.

Definitions

ALTAR - the large table in the middle of the sanctuary on which the sacrifice of the Mass takes place.

AMBO - the special space set aside for Sacred Scripture reading and preaching.

CASSOCK - a long, black garment which reaches from the neck to the heels which is worn by some servers and clergy.

SURPLICE - a wide-sleeved white garment worn over a cassock by clergy and altar servers.

CHASUBLE - the outer garment the priest wears whose color corresponds to the liturgical season.

CHALICE - a cup made of precious metal that holds the wine which becomes the Blood of Christ after the consecration.

COMMUNION CUPS- smaller chalice-looking cups containing the Precious Blood of Jesus used at communion.

CIBORIUM - a large cup or container made of precious metal with a cover of the same material which will hold The Body of Christ in the Tabernacle. This same vessel may be used to distribute communion.

CORPORAL - a white linen cloth, usually with a red cross or other design woven in, used to protect any particles of the Body and Blood of Jesus from falling to the altar cloth. It is always folded and unfolded to protect any particles from being lost.

CREDENCE TABLE - the table in the sanctuary where the cruets, chalices, and ciboriums are kept before and after the consecration.

CRUETS - the vessels containing the water and wine used at Mass.

MONSTRANCE - this is a large, ornate vessel used to hold the Blessed Sacrament for Adoration, Benediction, and solemn Eucharistic processions.

PASCHAL CANDLE - also called the Christ Candle or Easter Candle - blessed at the Easter vigil, used during the Easter season and baptisms, funerals, and other special events.

PATEN - a small plate made of precious metal that holds the Host.

PRESIDER'S CHAIR - the chair from which the priest leads the prayers and the rites of the church.

PROCESSIONAL CROSS - the crucifix mounted on a long pole that is carried at the front of the entrance and exit processions.

PURIFICATOR - a linen cloth used by the priest or deacon to dry the chalice after washing and purifying. Used PURIFICATORS must always be placed in the proper container for sacred cloths.

ROMAN MISSAL - the red book containing the prayers used by the priest during Mass.

SACRARIUM - a sink with its drain going directly into the ground, which is used for the disposal of the following: the sacred linen's wash and rinse water, used holy water, used baptismal water, consecrated wine, and blessed ashes.

SANCTUARY - space at the front of the church which is slightly elevated and is the place where most of the "action" takes place. The word means "holy place."

TABERNACLE - a small cupboard where the consecrated Body of Christ is kept for distribution to the sick. It is usually crafted of fine material such as precious metal and lined with fine linens to denote the dignity of the place.
The root word means the "Dwelling Place (of God)."

THURIBLE - the special vessel which holds burning charcoal and into which incense is placed. The container holding the incense is called the "**INCENSE BOAT.**" The one who carries them is called the **THURIFER.**