St. Mary Cathedral

Cathedral School of St. Mary

Altar Server Training

serving the Mass

**Preparation for Mass**

Altar servers should arrive 20 minutes early to give them enough time to vest and finish the preparation for Mass. Each server will vest in a ***cassock*** and ***surplice***. Be sure that they fit- not too small or too large.

Make sure the vessels are prepared and on the ***Credence Table***. This includes the ***chalice*** with a ***purificator*** laid over the cup, the ***water cruet***, the lavabo pitcher, bowl and ***lavabo towel***, the ***Communion cups*** with their ***purificators***, and extra ***ciboria***. The books should be prepared by the celebrant. When they are ready, the ***Sacramentary*** is placed on the crucifier’s chair and the ***Lectionary*** on the ***ambo***.

Make sure the communion bells are placed on the right or outmost corner of the first step to the High Altar.

Make sure the altar candles and ambo candle are lit. During the Easter season, the Pascal candle is lit.

The celebrant may pray with you prior to the start of Mass.

It is important as you serve Mass, to understand and be familiar with all of the parts of the Mass. The following are a brief description on the parts of the Mass.

**Procession:**

The Mass begins with a procession from the ***Narthex*** (back of the Church) through the ***Nave***(the main body of the Church) ending at the ***Sanctuary*** (the apse or area where the altar of sacrifice is located.) The congregation stands and generally sings an entrance song.

What does the Altar server do during this part?

The procession is lead by the ***crucifer***, followed by the other altar servers. The celebrant is last- which may be a priest or the Bishop.

If it is a special Mass or a Sunday 12:00 PM Mass, the procession is lead by the ***thurifer,*** followed by the ***Crucifer***, and then the Deacon, Priest or Bishop.

The pace should be not too slow or not to fast- no need to rush down the aisle.

**Introductory Rite:**

The celebrant begins the Mass-“In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

The celebrant may introduce the Mass by saying a few introductory remarks.

The celebrant then begins the **Penitential Rite**, where we ask God to forgive us of all of our sins. The prayer, the *Confiteor* or “I confess to Almighty God, …” or the celebrant may say a formula such as, “Lord Jesus, you have shown us the way to the Father, Lord may mercy…”

During the Easter season, the Penitential Rite is often replaced with the **Sprinkling Rite**. The celebrant will bless water and the use the ***aspergillum*** to bless the people. The Holy water sprinkled over us reminds us of our Baptism and helps us renew the promises we made when we were baptized- to love God and our neighbor.

If it is a Feast Day or Sunday, we will sing the **Gloria,** a song of praise to God**.**

At the conclusion of the Gloria, the celebrant says, “Let us pray.” The opening prayer is then said.

The Altar server during the Introductory Rites says the prayers and responses with the people. The crucifer will hold the ***Sacramentary*** for the celebrant for the opening prayer.

**The Liturgy of the Word**

The readings from Sacred Scripture are read. The first reading is generally from the Old Testament. This is followed by a Responsorial Psalm. This is sung when possible. On feast days or Sundays, there will be a second reading, often from the New Testament- any book except the Gospels. At the conclusion of the Psalm or second reading, the Alleluia is sung. The Alleluia points to the importance of the Gospel. It is not sung during Lent.

At the Sunday 12:00 Noon Mass the priest or deacon will incense the Gospel book.

The celebrant then reads the Gospel and then gives the homily.

During the readings, the Altar server sits attentively and listens to what is being said. During the reading of the Gospel, they will stand with their hands in the prayer posture- together at the level of the chest. At the conclusion, they sit and listen to the homily.

At the conclusion of the homily the celebrant will sit for a few moments of silence.

On Sundays and High feast days, the Creed is recited, “We believe in one God the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen. …”

On other days, the celebrant will introduce the General intercessions or prayers of the faithful. When these are finished, the Liturgy of the Word is concluded.

**The Liturgy of the Eucharist**

**Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts**

The Altar servers will go to the ***Credence table*** to begin the preparation. The Altar servers will set the Altar with the ***Chalice, the purificator, the communion cups and the Sacramentary***. The **chalice** is placed just to the ***right***of the ***Corporal***. The **Sacramentary** is placed on the ***left*** side of the **Corporal**. The ***Communion Cups*** are placed on the right side of the altar.

They will then go with the celebrant to the front of the Sanctuary to accept the gifts of bread and wine from the people. The collection will also be brought forward. The servers will be handed either the ***paten***, filled with hosts, or the ***flagon,*** filled with wine. Each server will take what they have received and place it on the Altar. The server with the collection basket will take it to the ***Sacristy***. The ***paten*** goes on the ***corporal,*** the ***flagon*** on the ***right*** side of the altar near the ***Communion cups.***

The servers then go back to the credence table and take the ***water cruet*** and immediately go to the right side of the altar. The celebrant or Deacon will then co-mingle or add a very small amount of water into the wine. The server will wait for the celebrant or Deacon and return the ***flagon*** back to the ***Credence table***.

The celebrant may say the offertory prayers silently if the congregation is still singing the Offertory hymn or out loud if he chooses.

On Sunday’s or special feast days, the incensation of the gifts takes place at this time.

The servers prepare for the next action- the ***Lavabo***- by picking up the pitcher of water and the small bowl and ***lavabo towel***. The servers then come forward for the ***Lavabo***, where the celebrant washes his hands. This is done by pouring water over the celebrant’s hands. The celebrant will dry his hands with the ***lavabo towel***. When this is finished, make a slight bow to the celebrant and return the pitcher, bowl and ***lavabo towel*** to the ***Credence table***.

At the conclusion of this, the celebrant will invite the congregation to stand, if they are not standing already. He then says the prayer over the gifts.

**The Eucharist Prayer**

The prayer begins with the Preface, which begins with the dialogue- “the Lord be with you.” At the conclusion, the *Sanctus* or Holy, Holy is sung. At the conclusion, all kneel.

The Altar servers will kneel on the first step to the High Altar. One server will prepare to ring the communion bells. The communion bells are rung at three different times.

**FIRST:** When the celebrant extends both of his hands over the gifts, the communion bells are rung once. On Sundays at 12:00 Noon or special feast days, the Church bells are rung at this time.

**SECOND:** When the celebrant holds up the consecrated Host, the communion bells are rung three times.

**THIRD:** When the celebrant holds up the consecrated Wine in the Chalice, the communion bells are rung three times.

The servers remain kneeling until the conclusion of the Great Amen at the end of the Eucharistic prayer.

**Communion Rite**

All stand and recite or sing the “Our Father.”

The sign of peace is then done, with a gesture, a hand shake with the words- “the peace of Christ be with you.”

The celebrant or Deacon will go to the ***Tabernacle*** to get additional consecrated Hosts for distribution. The servers will take from the ***Credence Table*** extra ***ciboria*** and place them on the right side of the Corporal.

They then recite or sing the Lamb of God. At the conclusion of this, all kneel on the first step.

After the celebrant has communicate himself, he will begin to communicate the ***Extra Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion*** and the Altar servers.

After the server has received Holy Communion, please return to the first step and kneel. The server can say a prayer of thanksgiving.

After Holy Communion, the vessels will be purified by the celebrant or Deacon. The minister may need the ***water cruet***, either to pour some water into a vessel or over the fingers into a vessel. All of the vessels will be brought back to the ***Credence Table***. When this is done, the servers returns their chairs.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist ends with the Prayer after Communion. The server will bring the ***Sacramentary*** to the celebrant.

The Mass concludes with the recessional hymn. At the start of the hymn, the ***crucifer*** will get the cross and go to the center aisle. The other servers follow the ***crucifer***. When the celebrant makes the genuflection, the servers genuflect together with him. Again, the pace is not too fast not too slow.

**After Mass**

Please assist in bringing the vessels back into the sacristy and put back into the cabinet.

Please hang up the cassock and surplice and place them in the closet.