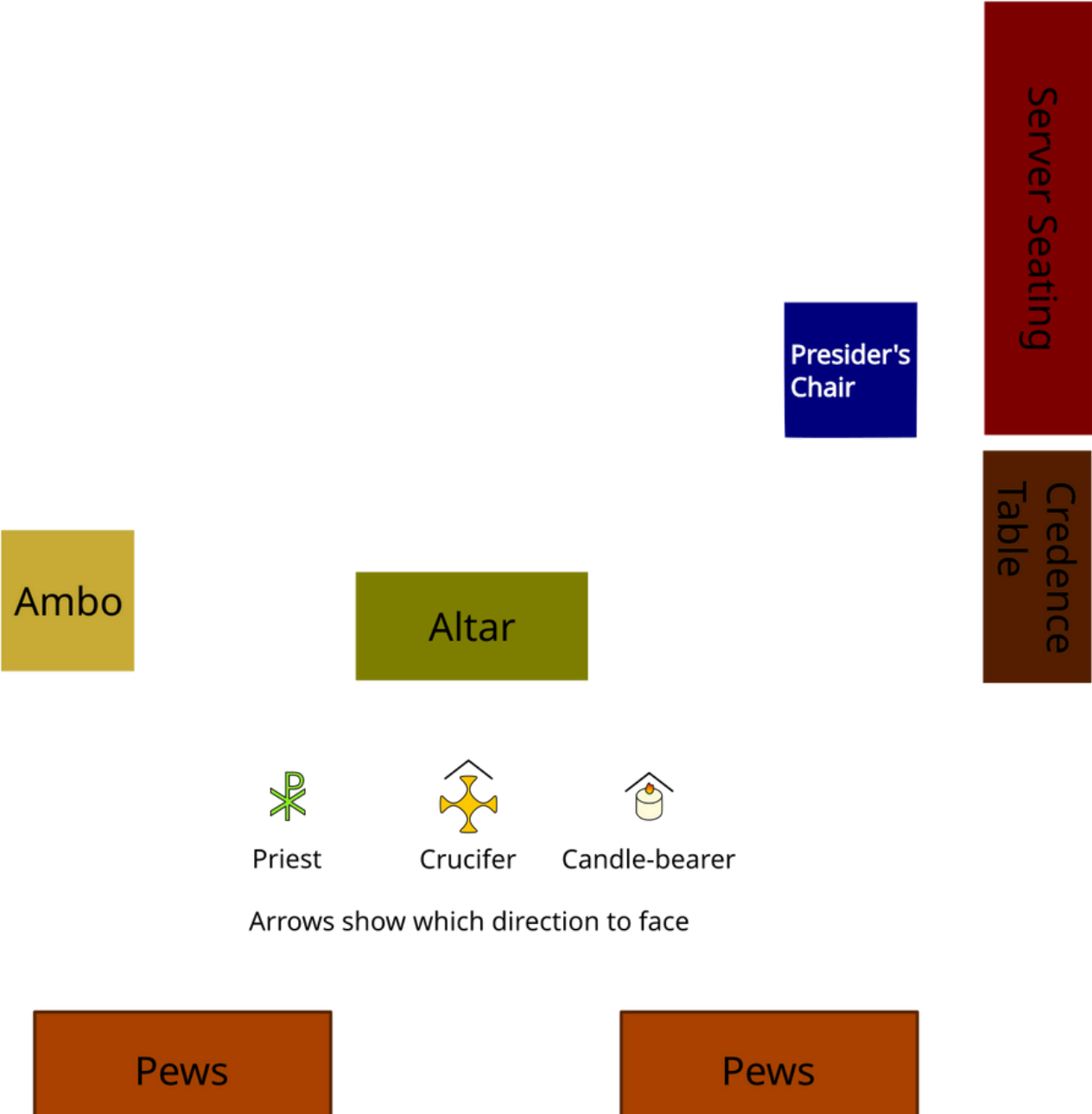


St. Mary Altar Serving

Orientation

The following diagram is a rough layout of St. Mary's. Below the altar are the icons that will be used throughout this manual.



This is a short list of items you will work with during Mass.



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Before Mass

- Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to Mass. Male servers should wear black pants, black socks, black shoes, and a shirt without a collar. Female servers should wear solid colors, white or black socks, and white or black close-toed shoes.
- As soon as possible on arrival, male servers should put on cassocks with surplices and female servers should put on albs with cinctures. Cassocks and albs should almost brush the top of your shoes. Surplices should come down to just above your knees.
- About 10 minutes before the start of Mass, one server should light the candles around the church with a brass candle-lighter.
- If incense is being used, the thurible should be cleaned out (dump cold ashes into the sacristy trash can) and two coals should be lit and placed in the thurible.
- The servers present decide how to divide the roles among themselves. One server must be the crucifer. If there are at least three servers, two more will candle-bearers.
- If there will be incense, one server will be the thurifer. If there is a fifth server, they should be the boatman. Otherwise, the thurifer will have to carry the boat (incense holder).
- One server will additionally hold the Roman Missal, and one server will ring the bells during the consecration. These duties can be assigned in addition to any others.
- If there is incense, the crucifer is responsible for ringing the bells.

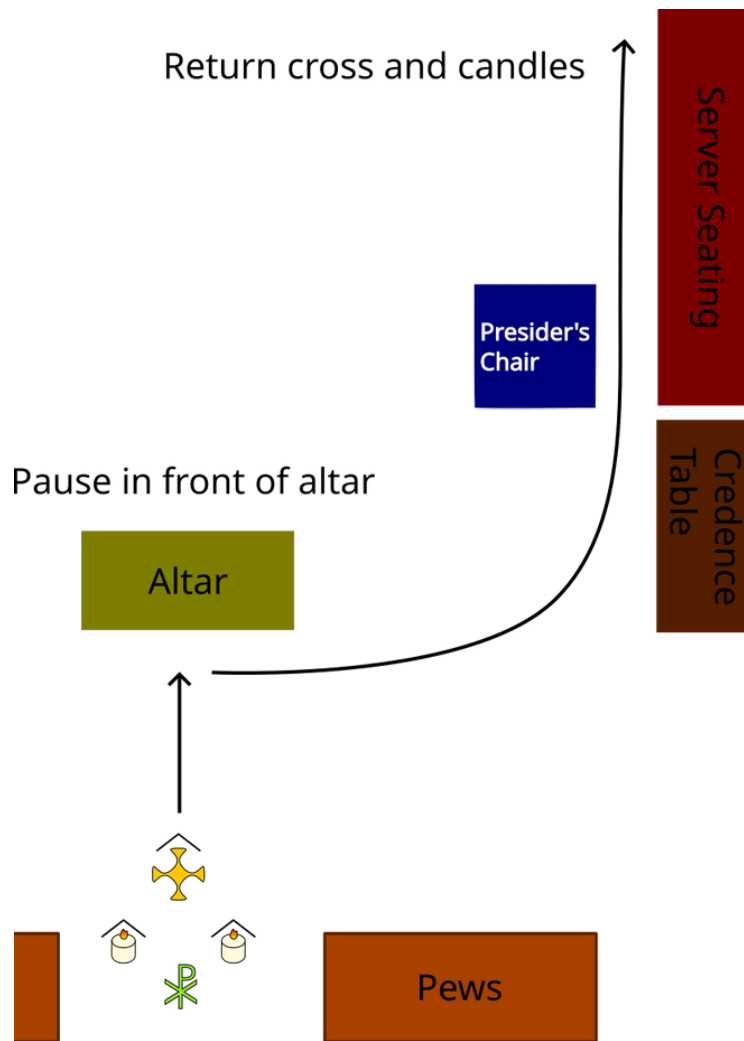
Behavior During Mass

- When not holding anything, fold your hands with your right thumb over your left thumb.
If you are holding something in one hand, place the other hand over your heart.
When seated, place your hands on your knees.
- When approaching or leaving the altar, bow. If you are carrying something, bow your head instead.
- When turning around, turn to your right. If there is another server next to you, turn towards them instead.

- Try not to speak unnecessarily or fidget. Remember to act respectfully at all times and to use good posture.
- When carrying the cross, rest it on your shoe instead of on the floor.
- When carrying the cross, make sure to carry it upright, Jesus forward, and spread your hands apart enough that you can hold it steady.
- Pay attention to the Mass, and also keep an eye on the priest so you can see any signals you might be given.

Introductory Rites

- Five minutes before Mass begins, the servers and the priest should pray together in the sacristy. Then, all servers should get their processional items (candles, crucifix, or thurible) and proceed to the narthex.
- The procession is led by the crucifer, with the two candle-bearers (if present) standing just behind and to either side of the crucifer. Any other servers stand behind the candle-bearers.
- If there is incense, the thurifer and boatman will approach the priest, who will put incense in the thurible. The thurifer and boatman will then go in front of the crucifer and lead the procession.
- The procession begins when the words to the entrance song start. The procession pauses as each server reaches the altar, giving a head bow (if carrying something) or a full bow to the altar before continuing around the right side.
- Servers should return their processional items to their places and take their seats. Note that the person responsible for the missal should sit next to the missal.
- If there is incense, instead of returning to their seats, the thurifer and boatman stand behind the altar. After reverencing the altar, the priest will take the thurible and incense the altar. When the thurible is returned to the thurifer, they should return the thurible to its stand and go to their seats.

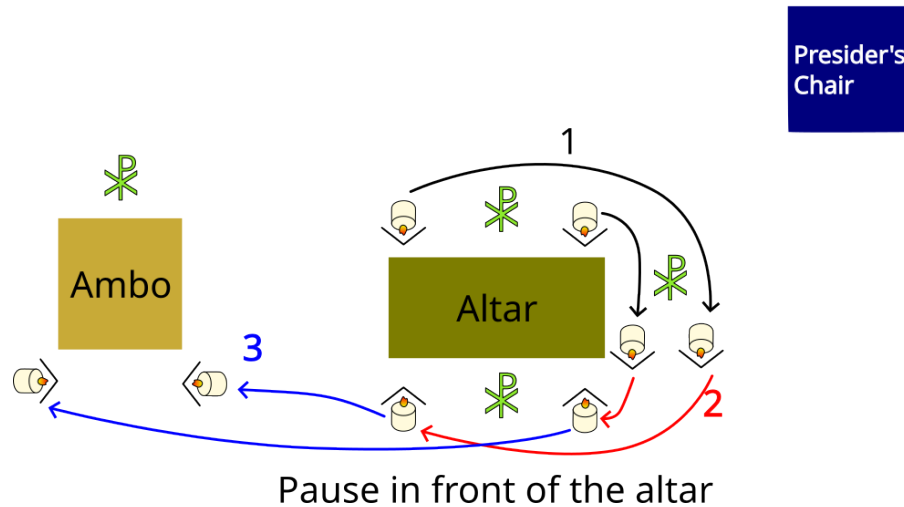


- The priest greets the people, we pray the Penitential Act and the Kyrie, and the Gloria is sung (if appropriate for the liturgical season).
- When the priest says "let us pray," the server designated to hold the missal should already be in front of the priest with the missal. This will require some judgement and foresight on the server's part! After the Amen, you may return to your seat.

The Liturgy of the Word

- The first and second readings are proclaimed.
- At the end of the second reading, the candle bearers should get the processional candles from the table in the back and bring them to their seats.
- When the music for the Alleluia starts, the candle bearers should go stand on either corner of the altar. The priest will come between them and pick up the book of the Gospels. The servers will then process around the altar (1), pausing to reverence it as they cross in front (2), and end standing on either corner of the ambo, facing each other (3).
- The servers continue to hold their candles until the priest has finished the reading, after which they should return the candles to the table in the back and go to their seats.
- If incense is being used, at the same time that the candle bearers move out, the thurifer and boatman should bring the thurible and boat to the celebrant's chair and kneel in front of the

priest. The priest will put incense in the thurible, after which the thurifer and boatman should go stand behind the ambo. When the priest arrives at the ambo with the book of the Gospels, he will take the thurible and incense the book.



The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparing the Altar

- The crucifer gets the processional cross and proceeds down a side aisle to the back of the church, meeting up with the people who will bring up the gifts. However, if the crucifer is the only one serving, they will have to stay and help set up the altar.
- Servers bring the following to the priest, in the order listed below. Except for the missal, the items should be handed to the priest and not just placed on the altar.
 - The priest's chalice
 - Any ciboria and chalices (with purificators)
 - The missal, on its stand
- The priest will move to the front of the altar to receive the gifts. One server will go stand on the priest's right side. This server will be given the vessel of wine. The crucifer will lead the gift bearers up the center aisle. Once the crucifer reaches the altar, they will bow their head, return the cross to its holder, and then go to the credence table to help set up the altar.
- The server with the vessel of wine will return to the credence table and unstopper the vessel. Another server will get the cruet of water from the credence table, and both servers will go stand at the back right edge of the altar. After the priest has filled all the chalices and both servers have their vessels back, they should return to the credence table.
- If there is incense, the thurifer and boatman should approach the priest, who will fill the thurible and incense the altar. He will then hand the thurible to the thurifer, who should incense the priest. If you are incensing a single person, do three sets of three swings directly at the person being incensed. If you are incensing a group, swing to the left, right, and center. The thurifer will then go incense any concelebrating priests, and then the congregation, in the same manner. The congregation should stand for the incensation; if they don't, the thurifer should gesture for them to stand.

- The server with the water should pick up the lavabo bowl. A second server should take the towel, and these two servers should go together and stand by the altar. Hold the towel open for the priest, and not draped over your hands. The priest will hold his hands over the bowl, and the server with the water should pour it over the priest's hands. Don't be shy! When the priest moves his hands, stop pouring. After the priest has dried his hands, both servers should return to the credence table.

Consecration

- If there is incense, servers will go stand in front of the altar at the middle of the *Holy, Holy*. The candle-bearers will get their candles and flank the rest of the servers. The thurifer should be in the middle with the thurible, and the boatman should be on one side of the thurifer with the boat. The crucifer should be on the other side of the thurifer. The server responsible for the bells will have to bring the bells to the front of the altar.
- At the end of the *Holy, Holy*, all servers kneel (either in front of the altar or on the kneeler in front of the server seating).
- When the priest extends his hands over the chalice (the epiclesis), the server with the bells rings them once (for about three counts).
- If there is incense, the boatman should (quickly!) spoon incense into the thurible at this point.
- When the priest elevates the Host, the server with the bells rings them three times (allow the sound of the bells to fade somewhat before starting to ring them again).
- If there is incense, the thurifer should incense in three sets of three (three swings, a break, repeat three times). The server with the bells should try to synchronize with the thurifer.
- The same thing should be done when the priest elevates the Chalice.
- After the elevation of the Chalice, if the servers are at the front of the altar, they should stand and return to the credence table. The candle-bearers should return their candles, and the thurifer and boatman should return the thurible and boat. Then all servers should go to the back of the altar and kneel in the same way as in a Mass without incense.
- Servers should stand for the Our Father. The servers join the EMHCs to receive the Eucharist.
- After the priest and EMHCs have gone to distribute communion, one or two servers should retrieve the missal from the altar and return it to the credence table.
- All servers return to the kneelers and kneel until the Eucharist has been distributed to everyone.

Clearing the Altar

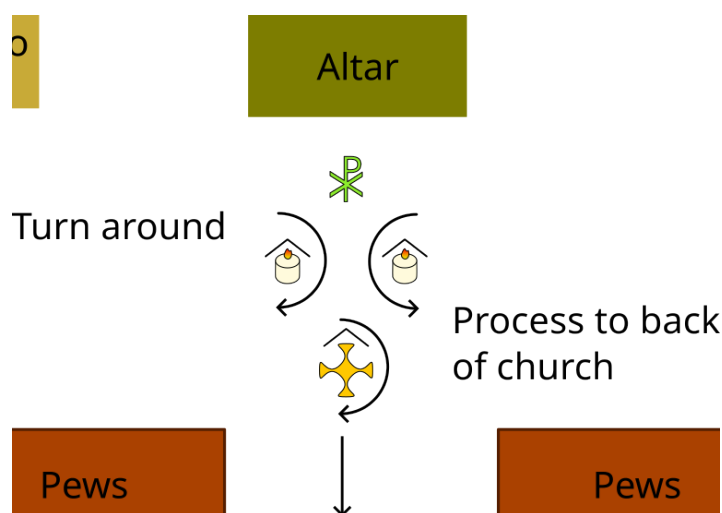
- Once the musicians have begun to receive communion, the candle bearers should go to the credence table and prepare to bring the cruet of water to the priest. If there are no candle bearers, send any two servers (or if there is only one server, they'll have to go!).
- The priest will face the credence table, holding the chalice. A server should then bring the cruet of water and pour it into the chalice, over the priest's fingers. The priest will signal when you should stop pouring.

- The priest will then purify the chalices and ciboria. Servers should stand by the altar, ready to receive purified vessels and return them to the credence table.
- After all ciboria and communal chalices have been removed from the altar, one server should take the pall for the priest's chalice to the altar. After the priest has finished assembling the chalice, the server should take it back to the credence table.
- Once the altar is clear, all servers should return to their seats. Any servers still kneeling at their seats should stand to meet the returning servers, then all servers should be seated together.

Concluding Rites

- The server responsible for the missal should prepare to bring it up to the priest. Again, you should reach the priest with the missal before the priest says “let us pray”. After the Amen, the server can return to their seat.
- When the music starts for the final song, the crucifer should get the crucifix and the candle bearers should get their candles. They then process to the main aisle, led by the crucifer. All servers should be facing the altar. When the priest bows to the altar, all servers bow as well. Then all servers turn around in unison and process out into the narthex. All servers should immediately kneel to receive a blessing from the priest.

Usually, the thurifer does not process out with the thurible.



After Mass

- Once there is enough room for the servers to get back into the church, they should return the candles and cross to their proper places before returning to the sacristy.
- Before removing their cassock or alb, one server should take the brass candle lighter and extinguish all the candles in the church.
- After candles have been extinguished, all servers may remove their cassocks and surplices or albs and cinctures and hang them up on the rack. If any garments are dirty or damaged, place them in the designated pile and notify the sacristan.

- Unless the servers have any other duties, they are free to go once they have hung up their garments.

Written by Alex Gestwicki. Images by Alex Gestwicki and Caroline Brumley, unless otherwise noted.