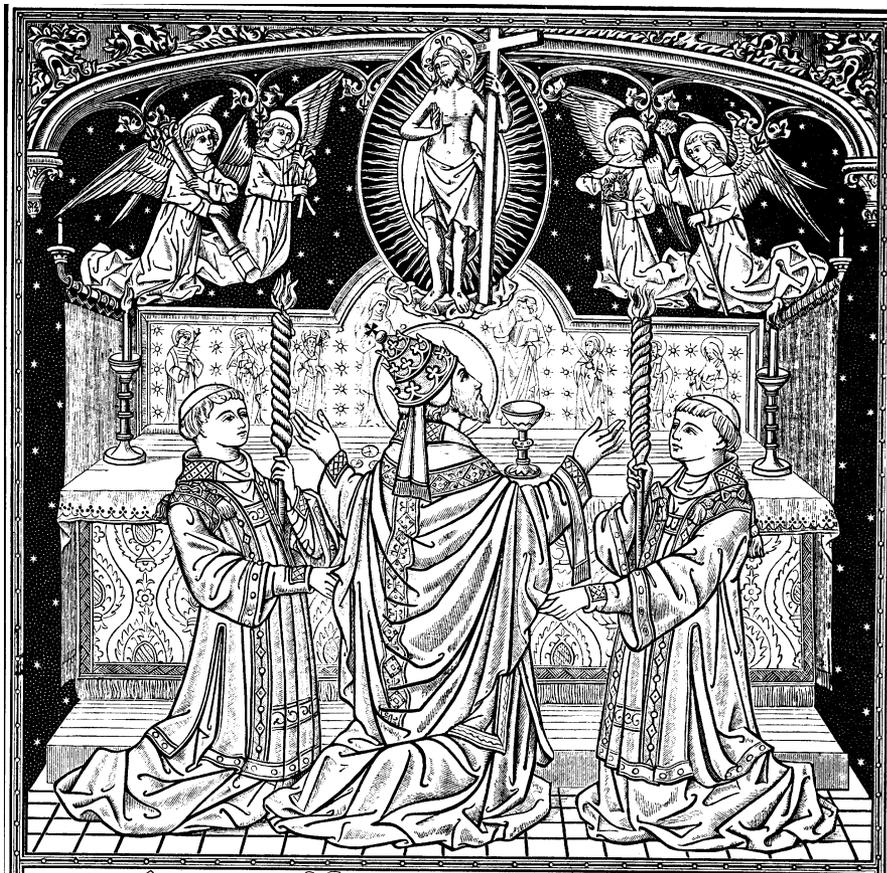


*Our Lady of the Lake*  
*A Guide for Altar Servers*



*Fall 2019*

## *A Guide for Altar Servers*

### *The Holy Eucharist*

On the night before he died, Jesus Christ celebrated a sacred meal. Through this meal, he promised he would remain with his disciples until the end of time. Not only do we receive heavenly nourishment, but we are also united in the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus through partaking of his body and blood. The Mass we celebrate today makes present these sacred realities. By prayerful meditation on these truths of our faith, we can grow ever more conscious of all the gifts God gives us in His son Jesus.

At the heart of the celebration of the Eucharist stands a particular call to service: we hear the word of God calling us to follow Jesus and be good to our fellow men and women; we see Jesus serving his disciples at the Last Supper; and we share in his self-giving communion. The specific ministers who lead the celebration are thus doing as Jesus did—giving themselves in service to the community.

The server at the altar is fulfilling a sacred role and giving an example for all to see. In carrying out their duties, servers help the priest and the people participate actively and fully in the very life of Jesus Christ.

With this understanding of the server as a worthy minister at the altar, our parish offers this guide for servers. May all those who wait on the Lord and the people of God at the sacred table imitate the mysteries they celebrate.

#### **Some General Guidelines**

1. The bishop of the Diocese of Jefferson City, Missouri, has indicated that he wishes the tradition of having lay ministers as servers at the altar. Boys and girls, women and men, may all participate fully in the ministry as outlined in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, with exception of the distribution of Holy Communion.
2. Servers normally begin their ministry in the 4th grade of elementary school. This ensures that they are of mature enough faith to understand the sacred mysteries to which they will be so close.
3. While all young people of our parish church receive a wonderful education in the faith, servers should receive extra instruction on the meaning of the Eucharist and the various parts of the Mass.
4. Since the role of server is integral to the normal celebration of the Mass, at least one server should assist the priest. On Sundays and other more important occasions, two or more servers should be employed to carry out the various functions normally entrusted to these ministers.
5. Altar servers may wear the alb or other suitable vesture or other appropriate or dignified clothing. All servers should wear the same

liturgical vesture. The normal dress for young servers is an alb. Adults who serve at Sunday Mass or on Solemnities should also wear an alb.

6. Servers carry the cross, the processional candles, hold the book for the priest celebrant when he is not at the altar, carry the incense and censer, present the bread, wine, and water to the priest during the preparation of the gifts or assist him when he receives the gifts from the people, wash the hands of the priest, assist the priest celebrant and deacon as necessary.
7. Servers respond to the prayers and dialogues of the priest along with the congregation. They also join in singing the hymns and other chants of the liturgy. They carry missals and song books and use them whenever possible.
8. Servers should be seated in a place from which they can easily assist the priest celebrant and deacon. The place next to the priest is normally reserved for the deacon.
9. The *Order for the Blessing of Altar Servers, Sacristans, Musicians, and Ushers* should be used before servers first begin to function in this ministry. On a convenient occasion after the servers have been sufficiently prepared, they should receive this blessing, either at Mass or at another suitable liturgy.
10. Altar servers have an important responsibility as ministers at mass; therefore they should develop an attitude of service that puts the needs of the community and the liturgy above their own preferences or convenience. They should be eager for any opportunity to serve.
11. Altar servers must be willing to serve at daily mass, funerals, solemnities and special occasions as need arises and when they are asked.

### ***Server before Mass Checklist***

1. The server should first be a person of prayer, therefore it is essential that servers arrive well before Mass so they may join the prayer of the ministers. The server should be aware of the particular nature of the celebration, whether it is a feast day or not. Arrive 15 minutes before mass and sign the book.
2. The mass coordinator and sacristans generally prepare for the mass, but after arriving, the server assists in ensuring that all is ready:
  - a. Lights — All on?
  - b. Sound system — On, power light on?

- c. Candles: The candles at the altar and ambo should be lit. If there is a baptism at the mass, if it is the Easter Season, or if it is a funeral Mass, the Easter candle also should be in position and lit.
- d. Books and hymnals for priest, deacon (if one), and yourself. The Roman Missal should be set with correct ribbon.
- e. Credence (Server's) table prepared: chalice, purificator, corporal, communion plates, water, bowl, towel, hosts, and wine (daily mass).
- f. Hosts and wine at the back for the offertory (Sunday, funerals, special masses, solemnities).
- g. Check with priest to see if anything special is happening at Mass that you might help with, for example, Holy Water pot and aspergillum, charcoal lit and incense filled.

### *Jobs During Mass*

#### 1. Entrance Procession:

- i. On Sundays and Solemnities: leave from the sacristy and go through the church with the priest, bringing your song books if not carrying candles, incense or cross. If there are no candles and cross and the lector is carrying the book of the Gospels, the lector goes first and servers follow side by side. If there are candles, cross and incense, then incense goes first, then cross, then candles, then Book of Gospels. If there is just a cross, then cross goes first. Proceed down the aisle at a deliberate and moderate pace, slower than normal walking. Proceed to the steps of the sanctuary: if you are carrying something, make a slight bow with your head to the altar and proceed. Incense steps to the side of the altar, cross goes to the sacristy, candles go on either side of the ambo. If you aren't carrying anything, step to either side of the center at the steps to the sanctuary and genuflect with the priest. Proceed to your chairs to the side of the sanctuary. Do not sit on the back wall behind the altar in the sanctuary.
- ii. Daily mass in chapel or in church: process in from the sacristy before the priest. Stop in front of the altar, leaving room for the celebrant, and bow to the altar. Go to chairs and await the celebrant, continuing to sing the opening song.

#### 2. Opening Prayer

- i. Sundays and Solemnities excluding Lent and Advent: The book server prepares the book for the opening prayer during the Glory to God and finds the correct ribbon for that celebration. When the congregation sings or says "with the Holy Spirit, in the Glory of God the Father", the book server goes to the priest and opens the book.

- ii. Weekdays, Lent and Advent: during the Penitential Rite (Lord Have Mercy), the book server opens the Sacramentary to Opening Prayer (usually the first ribbon) and hold it for priest. Bring it after the “May almighty God have mercy on us...” but before he says “Let us pray”.
3. Preparation of the Altar: Normally the book and the altar server set altar up after the petitions are completed and the congregation sits. When there is a collection, they wait to set the altar up AFTER the ushers come down the center aisle and genuflect. Both servers go to behind the altar and bow deeply and reverently. If there is a deacon present, the servers assist him in setting up the altar.
    - i. Altar server brings chalice(s), purificator, and corporal to altar. Making sure corporal is in middle of altar, the server unfolds the cloths so that it can be refolded easily. Set chalices on right side of altar, toward the edge (not on the corporal!) and lay purificator next to them. Do Not Bring the extra communion plate with hosts if there is one at this time.
    - ii. The book server places the Roman Missal, open to the Prayer over the Gifts, on left side of altar above corporal. Check the placement of the altar microphone.
    - iii. Most of the time the priest will carry the hosts from the offertory procession. If he doesn't, the altar server presents the hosts to the priest when they have been carried in procession, never placing them on the altar. If there is no offertory procession, then the book server brings the bread to the priest.
    - iv. The altar server brings the wine and the book server brings the water **without stoppers** to altar. Wine should be on the right, water on the left. Wait for priest to take them from you and give them back. Both servers return together to the credence table.
    - v. When there is incense (solemnities and funerals), the thurifer brings the censer and boat to the priest at this time. The other servers wait by the credence table until the priest is done incensing the altar before coming to him to wash his hands.
    - vi. Both servers ready to wash the priest's hands. When the priest bows after offering the chalice, the book server brings water and finger bowl, standing on the right. The altar server brings the towel unfolded and holding in both hands open for the priest and stands to the left.
    - vii. Remember that after the genuflection to the tabernacle at the beginning of mass, the focus shifts to the altar of sacrifice. Bow whenever you pass in front of or behind the altar.
    - viii. Servers go north side of the sanctuary and stand at the steps to the sanctuary, facing the side of the altar.
    - ix. *If a priest requests the bells: The server who takes the position by the bells, usually the book server, rings the bells at three distinct occasions. First, a*

*little before the consecration of the bread, when the priest brings his hands together and takes up the bread, the server rings the bell one short, clear ring. Second, after the priest says "...this is my body which will be given up for you," and holds the host up for the consecration, the server rings the bell three distinct rings. Third, after the priest says "...do this in memory of me," and then holds up the cup, the server rings the bell three distinct rings.*

4. At the Lamb of God: After the priest breaks the hosts, server of the book takes the Roman Missal off altar. The altar server may assist the mass coordinator and brings extra plates. Go behind priest to left side of altar and lay them on the table.
5. After receiving communion, altar server goes to a chair by the credence table, book server returns to the normal seat. Leave corporal on altar until the Blessed Sacrament is put in the tabernacle at the end of communion.
6. At the end of communion, rise and face the Blessed Sacrament while it is being put away. Bow with the priest when the minister or priest reverences the tabernacle.
7. If necessary especially at daily mass, the altar server brings the cruet of water to the altar so the priest can purify the chalice and ciboria. Help clear away communion plates and chalice, if necessary, to the credence table. When there are two or more chalices, as soon as the first chalice is purified and set to the side of the altar, the server gets it and brings it to the credence table.
8. Bring the Roman Missal, open to the Closing Prayer, when the priest stands up but before he says "Let us pray". Sometimes the priest will give a special blessing, so wait until you get a clear sign that he is done with the book before leaving.
9. When the priest dismisses the congregation and goes to kiss the altar, the servers go to the main aisle of the church or chapel facing the altar and wait for the priest and bow with him. If there are more than two servers, the cross bear and incense take their positions ready for the recessional, then lead the procession out the center aisle in the order you came in, except the lector always goes after the servers if they choose to walk out since the Book of Gospels is left at the ambo.

### *After Mass*

1. Put away wine and water. Refill if necessary. If chalice and ciborium need to be purified, bring them to the priest in the back sacristy.
2. Put out candles. Please don't blow them out. Use snuffer.
3. Bring wine and water, chalice and plates and cloths to the back sacristy if a communion minister has not done so already. Rinse out wine carafe or cruet. Put sacred vessels and tabernacle key in the cupboards.

4. Turn off sound system.
5. Turn off all lights.
6. Put away alb and cincture neatly and try to leave sacristy and sanctuary neat.

### *Thurifer's Duties*

1. Light charcoal at least five minutes before mass. Use the torch if necessary. Two coals are needed for Sundays, Solemnities and funerals.
2. Make sure that the boat has incense in it.
3. The thurifer leads the procession when incense is used.(except at the beginning of funerals). Incense is used at the beginning of the mass (except at funerals), the Gospel and at the offertory. It is used during the song of farewell at the end of a funeral mass.
4. When incense is used at a solemnity or on a Sunday, the thurifer goes into the sanctuary and stands behind and to the side of the altar. He or she goes to the celebrant after he kisses the altar and holds the censer while it is filled with incense. Hand the censor to the celebrant and step back while he incenses the altar. Face the cross when the celebrant bows to the cross in the sanctuary, and bow with him. Return the censer and incense to the stand at the side of the sanctuary.
  - a. Immediately after the psalm is finished, go to the incense stand. When the second reading is finished, immediately proceed directly to the celebrant so that he may load the incense. Do NOT wait for a signal. Stand in front of the priest while he loads and blesses the incense. Step back with the censer and follow him to the ambo, bowing with him at the altar. Step to his right side while he introduces the gospel and hand the censer to him when he turns for it. Depending upon the instructions of the priest, the thurifer may remain in the sanctuary a few steps behind the priest, gently swinging the censer at full length of chain, or return to the sacristy.
  - b. When the bread and wine are placed on the altar, the thurifer goes to the sacristy and readies the censor and boat. As soon as the celebrant bows after placing the wine on the altar, the thurifer proceeds immediately to him. Step back while the celebrant incenses the gifts and the altar. Reverence the sanctuary cross with the priest. Return the incense to the sacristy. On certain liturgies of high solemnity, the thurifer incenses the celebrant, con-celebrating priests and the people.
  - c. At funeral masses, the thurifer goes to the side and gets the censer and boat immediately after the closing prayer while the acolytes get their candles and the cross-bearer the cross. The thurifer takes his station by the Easter Candle, a few steps to the right of the

celebrant. After the celebrant incenses the casket, the thurifer goes to lead the procession out of the church in front of the cross-bearer. It is his or her duty to pause as necessary to accommodate the different people as they join the procession.

## **GLOSSARY**

**ACOLYTE** — A ministry to which a person is specially appointed by the Church to assist the deacon and to minister to the priest. His duty is to attend to the service of the altar and to assist as needed in the celebration of the Mass. He may carry the cross, candles, and similar functions.

**ALB** — A full-length white linen vestment secured with a cincture used at Mass. It symbolizes the garment in which Christ was clothed by Herod and the purity of the soul with which the Sacrifice of the Mass should be offered.

**ALTAR** — A table or stand on which sacrifice is offered. In Catholic churches the table on which the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered.

**ALTAR SERVER** — Server at the altar at Mass, Vespers, and other liturgical functions. Also called acolyte. At our parish the altar server would carry the cross on Sundays and set up the altar on Sundays and weekdays.

**ASPERGES** — The ceremony of sprinkling the people with holy water.

**BENEDICTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT** — A Eucharistic devotion in the Catholic Church of the Latin Rite. In its traditional form, the consecrated Host is placed in the ostensorium, or monstrance, for veneration of the faithful.

**BLESSED SACRAMENT** — The Eucharist as one of the seven sacraments instituted by Christ to be received by the faithful. Unlike the other sacraments, however, the Eucharist is not only a sacrament to be received, but also a sacrament to be adored before, during, and after reception. It is therefore a permanent sacrament, since Christ remains in the Eucharist as long as the physical properties of the species of bread and wine remain essentially unchanged. It particularly refers also to the host after it has been consecrated at Mass.

**BOAT** — The vessel which contains that incense grains for use at the mass. The thurifer always carries the boat and a little spoon with him or her.

**BOOK OF THE GOSPELS** — A special lectionary that contains only the gospel readings for Mass. It alone is properly carried up in the procession. When it is left on the altar at the beginning of Mass, a small procession with candles and incense escort the deacon or priest carrying the Book of the Gospels.

**BOOK SERVER** — Servers whose function it is to open and hold the book for the priest at the times of prayer. Assists the altar server in setting up the altar.

**CANDLES** — an essential furnishing of every Mass, reminding us of the light of Christ. At least two candles should be burning near the altar at every Mass. For

solemnities, six candles can be lit by the altar to signify the special nature of the celebration.

**CASSOCK** — A long black garment with buttons or a zipper down the front, that is worn by a priest, deacon, seminarian or altar server at liturgies. It can be of different colors.

**CHASUBLE** — The celebrants wear a poncho-like garment of the different liturgical colors as the topmost garment in celebrating the mass. Its shape is ancient and it means “little house”.

**CHALICE** — The cup that the priest uses to hold the wine that becomes the precious Blood of Christ. It is to be made of precious metal and of a sturdy construction. It is blessed and set aside for use at the Eucharist only.

**CENSER** — The metal pot with a lid, held by a chain, in which incense is burned upon lighted charcoal at the liturgy. Also called a thurible.

**CIBORIUM (CIBORIA pl.)** — The metal vessel, usually tall, shaped like a cup, but with a tight fitting lid where the hosts/blessed sacrament are kept. Communion plates can also be called ciboria.

**CINCTURE** — A belt or rope that is tied around the waist of an alb.

**COPE** — A long, wide cape, usually white, but also of different colors, that the priest or deacon wears over for special liturgical actions: Procession on Palm Sunday, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, A Communal Recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours on Sundays or feast days.

**CORPORAL** — A square cloth of white linen and cotton and a red cross stitched upon it. It is used to contain any particles of the Blessed Sacrament that may fall during Mass or Benediction. It is folded in a special way so that the particles remain contain, with seams down when open, good side up.

**COMMUNION PLATE** --- Shallow bowl that is used to distribute holy communion.

**CRUET** — Small glass vessel that holds the wine or water for use at the Eucharist.

**FINGER TOWEL** — The plain white cloth, usually of terry cloth like a towel, that the priests uses to dry his hands at the offertory.

**FLAGON** — Large glass or metal container that holds larger quantities of wine for consecrating at Mass.

**HUMERAL VEIL** — A long rectangular cloth that matches the cope which is worn over the priest or deacon’s shoulders and is used to transfer the blessed sacrament in solemn procession or used to hold the monstrance at benediction.

**LECTIONARY** — The present lectionary was introduced March 22, 1970, and recently revised. It contains a three-year cycle of readings for Sundays and solemn feasts, a two-year weekday cycle, and a one-year cycle for the feasts of saints. Moreover, it contains readings for a large variety of other Masses. There are also

responsorial psalms that follow the first readings for each Mass, along with Gospel or Alleluia verses to follow the second readings.

**LECTOR** — One of the ministries adapted to present day needs in the Latin Church, otherwise known as reader. They read the lesson from Sacred Scripture, except the Gospel, in the Mass and in other sacred celebrations; recite the psalms between the readings in the absence of the psalmist; presents the intentions for general intercessions when the deacon is absent; and also may direct the congregation in the singing.

**LITURGICAL YEAR** — The annual cycle of the mysteries of Christ, the Blessed Virgin, angels, and saints, which the Church commemorates in the Mass, the Divine Office, and other forms of public worship. The liturgical year begins with the first Sunday of Advent and closes with the thirty-fourth week “through the year.”

**LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST** — The most solemn part of the Mass, from the Presentation of the Gifts to the Post-communion included. The Church has arranged this part of the Mass so that its several parts correspond to the words and actions of Christ at the Last Supper, and specifically in three stages: in the Presentation of the Gifts are brought the bread, wine, and water, even as Christ took these elements into his hands; in the Eucharistic prayer God is thanked for the whole work of redemption and the gifts become the body and blood of Christ; in the Breaking of the one Bread the unity of the faithful is signified, and in Communion they receive the same Christ who gave himself on Holy Thursday to his Apostles.

**LITURGY OF THE WORD** — The first part of the Mass, during which the faithful are instructed in the revealed word of God. It consists of readings from Sacred Scripture and the songs occurring between them. The homily, profession of faith, and the prayer of the faithful develop and conclude the Liturgy of the Word.

**MASS** — The Sacrifice of the Eucharist as the central act of worship of the Catholic Church. The English word “mass” comes from the Latin words at the end of the Eucharist: “Ite, Missa Est”(Go forth and be sent). The faithful are sent to put into practice what they have learned and use the graces they have received in the Eucharistic liturgy.

**MONSTRANCE** — A large metal object that is used during devotions to the Blessed Sacrament to show the host to the public. It is an ornate stand that has a center cut-out so that the pyx containing the host can be easily seen.

**PALL** — The white cloth covering, ornamented or plain, placed over the coffin at funeral Masses. It is also a cloth covered cardboard square that is used in some locations to cover the chalice so that insects do not fly into the chalice.

**PATEN** — A saucer-like dish of the same material as the chalice that holds the bread to be consecrated, and later on the Sacred Host.

**PRIE-DIEU** — A kneeling bench mainly intended for private devotions. Also called a kneeler.

**PURIFICATOR** — A small, rectangular piece of white linen or cotton, marked with a cross in the center, used by the priest in the celebration of Mass. It is folded in three layers and used by the priest to purify his fingers and the chalice and paten after Holy Communion. Good side is folded out like a napkin.

**PYX** — Any metal box or vessel in which the Blessed Sacrament is kept or carried. The term usually applies to the small round metal case (usually gold-plated) used to carry hosts on visitations to the sick.

**ROMAN MISSAL** — The large red book which contains the prayers that the priest uses in celebrating the Eucharist. It is divided up into sections. The first part contains the collects special to the Sundays and weeks of the Year, beginning with Advent. The second part contains the prayers said at every Mass, such as the Eucharistic Prayers. The third part contains the prayers for feast days and other special masses. Ribbons are used to mark which prayers should be done at any particular Mass.

**SACRISTY** — A room in the Church where the vessels and furnishings for Mass are prepared. The back sacristy at our Church is where the priests and the servers vest.

**SACRARIUM** — A special sink that drains directly to the ground and not to any wastewater system. The water used to rinse the altar linens is poured down the sacrarium.

**SANCTUARY** — The part of a church containing the altar. It is the center of liturgical ceremony, clearly distinct from the main body of the church and is generally raised up. One should always genuflect outside of mass when entering the sanctuary.

**SANCTUARY LAMP** — A wax candle, generally in a red glass container, kept burning day and night wherever the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in Catholic churches or chapels. It is an emblem of Christ's abiding love and a reminder to the faithful to respond with loving adoration in return.

**SURPLICE** — A white shirt with wide sleeves, an open neck that is worn like a smock over a cassock.

**STOLE** — A liturgical vestment composed of a strip of material from two to four inches wide and about eighty inches long, worn around the priest's neck. It is usually worn under the chasuble. It represents the apron that servants would wear when serving table and hence is a sign of service.

**TABERNACLE** — A cupboard or boxlike receptacle for the exclusive reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. Tabernacles may be round or rectangular and made of wood, stone, or metal. They are sometimes covered with a veil and lined with precious metal or silk, with a corporal beneath the ciboria or other sacred vessels. It remains locked, with the **tabernacle key** available during the mass.

- 1) Procession
- 2) Penitential Rite
- 3) Glory to God
- 4) Collect (Opening Prayer)
- 5) 1<sup>st</sup> Reading
- 6) Psalm
- 7) 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading
- 8) Alleluia
- 9) Gospel
- 10) Creed
- 11) Petitions
- 12) Collection
- 13) Offertory
- 14) Prayer over the Offerings
- 15) Preface
- 16) Eucharistic Prayer
- 17) Consecration
- 18) Our Father
- 19) Sign of Peace
- 20) Lamb of God
- 21) Priest's Communion
- 22) People's Communion
- 23) Prayer after Communion
- 24) Final Blessing
- 25) Recessional