

# **ALTAR SERVING**

**Hello and welcome to the world of altar serving. If you are new this is a great way to learn what you need to learn. If you are a veteran altar server, this is a great way to refresh your memory of how to be an altar server.**

## **PREPARING FOR MASS**

**Remember to wear clothing that will be comfortable under the alb. Your legs and shoes will show so please avoid dirty or “ratty” shoes. Avoid flip-flops, high heels or any shoes that will make too much noise as you move to and from the altar.**

## **BEGINNING OF MASS**

**For the day that you are scheduled to altar serve you want to get to church about 20 minutes before Mass starts to get things set up. If you know you cannot be at that Mass, but you are scheduled, PLEASE GET A SUB.**

**If you arrive at Mass and there are only one or two altar servers, please step in to the sacristy and ask “do you need another altar server”. If they need your help, do the following steps as normal, only quicker.**

**When you get to church you will go to the back room (sacristy) and sign your name on the sign-in sheet.**

**Then you get a robe (alb)—make sure that it fits correctly so that it’s not too short or too long.**

**IMPORTANT: The colored coat-hangers represent what size the alb is. Blue for small, white for medium, and black for large. PLEASE put your alb back on the hanger you took it off of.**

**After that you need to tie a rope (cincture) around your waist—make sure that it’s not too long or too short also. In order to tie the rope, fold it in half and wrap it around your waist. Then take the non ends part and make a loop, fold it back, take the right half put it under the left half, take the two ends and pull them through the new loop and then tighten.**

**Next get one of the staffs (lucifers) from the far closet, or use the one on the stand next to where the altar-servers sit. Make sure the wick is out and then light the wick. Use the lit staff to light the candles up on the altar. Don’t light the big candle (Paschal candle), except for baptisms, funerals and during the Easter season. Pull the wick back down and up to put out the fire and then come back to the back room and put the staff back where you found it.**

**Lastly get the candles and cross from the altar and bring them back to the sacristy. Light the candles and get ready for the procession.**

*Please do not play with the matches/lighter.*

## **THE PROCESSION**

**This is when the Mass begins. The altar servers will line up behind the last pew with the cross and then the candles (the priest and minister(s) of the word are behind you). When the people begin to sing (not when the music begins!) you will lead up the aisle and then the person on the right with a candle will go to the right and the cross and the left candle will go to the left Father and the ministers should be between you.**

**Then when the priest/presider bows, you bow your head and head towards the stands and place the cross in the front one and the candles in the ones behind it. Then go over to the chairs on the side and remain standing.**

**Next the priest will start the Mass with all the usual things. When he says “let us pray” one of the servers will go over to the table and get the red book (Sacramentary) for him. You will carry the book to**

**him either by going up the stairs if Father is at his chair, or go around to the front if Father is in front. Then you will hold up the book for him as he reads out of it. When he is finished take the book back to the table and sit down with the other servers. Sometimes father carries the book with him, and says the prayer holding the book in his hands. In this case, the servers don't need to do anything.**

*In general, when one server is standing, all servers stand. You are a team so even if only one server is at the seating area, that person should remain standing until the other servers return to be seated.*

## **LITURGY OF THE WORD**

**During the readings, gospel, and homily, do what you would do if you weren't serving: stand, sit, and respond at the appropriate times. When the prayers of the faithful are being said, an altar server will walk around the congregation to the back of the church.**

## **GIFTS**

**During the presentation of gifts the two other altar servers set the table.**

**When setting the table you need to do five things:**

- 1. Remove the Gospel book holder from the top of the altar, and put it underneath the set-up table.**
- 2. Place the tablecloth (corporal) in the center of the side of the table facing the tabernacle. Unwrap the cloth and make sure the symbol on the cloth is facing towards you.**
- 3. Take the cup (chalice) and place the napkin (purificator) in front of it, to the right of the tablecloth.**

- 4. Take the book (Sacramentary) and place it on the table to the left of the tablecloth.**
- 5. If, and only if there are any pyxes in the brown wicker basket when you go to set the table before the gifts are presented, bring the basket up to the altar. Then head back to your seats and be seated, until Father stands.**

**If you are the person leading up the gifts wait in the back near the table that has the bread, wine and food basket. An usher will be there after the collection, but you can help get the people ready to bring up the gifts. You don't carry anything yourself.**

**When the priest stands, the two altar servers move with him to the front step of the altar. The server leading the gifts heads down the aisle. When the gifts reach the priest, the one leading server also stands next to him. Father will take a gift and hand it to a server. If you get the bread place it on the tablecloth, the wine place it next to the chalice, food gifts and offerings go in front of the altar next to the children's offering basket.**

**When the gifts are prepared, two servers will go wash the priest's hands. One server will have the water the other will have the bowl and towel. The person with the bowl and towel will wait at the bottom of the stairs as the person with the water takes the water to Father. With the water, you will carry the pitcher with the handle facing father so he can take it easily, then he gives the pitcher back with the handle towards you and you will take it and hold it correctly again.**

**When the pitcher has been returned to the server, the other server with the bowl will join the server with the water at the edge of the top stair. When the priest turns towards you, you will both head towards Father and when he puts his hands in the bowl the person with the water will pour the water on his hands. When Father is**

**done, stop pouring the water. Father will dry his hands off, give you back the towel and you will head back towards the table and put the bowl and towel down. Then place the pitcher in the bowl and return to your seats and remain standing.**

## **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

**The congregation will then stand as you remain standing. After the “Holy, Holy, Holy” everyone will kneel including you three for the prayer. When the prayer is done and everyone stands you three will go up to the presider for the “Our Father.” Two will hold Father’s hands and one will hold a server’s hand. When the “Our Father” is done you will give a sign of peace to the priest and then get ready to set the table.**

## **SETTING THE TABLE (AGAIN)**

**Next all three servers will help set the table for Communion. One person will take all the bowls and set them out on the left side of the table, as the other two set the right side of the table with glasses and napkins (make sure that there is one napkin at each spot). When this is over all three of you will line up at the edge of the altar next to the Eucharistic ministers.**

## **COMMUNION**

**After the “Lamb of God” the priest will come to you and give you communion. Then you will each go up to the chalice (AKA Father’s cup) and either drink from it or pass by, bowing your head, then go back to you seats.**

## **AFTER COMMUNION**

**While the sacristan is placing the un-eaten hosts in the tabernacle, one altar server will go up and carefully re-fold the corporal and bring it down to the set-up table, also bringing down anything else on the altar.**

## **CLOSING**

**After clearing the altar, there will be a moment of silence. When Father stands and says, “Let us Pray”, one server will take bring the Sacramentary up to Father for the closing prayer. After holding it for Father and the prayer is finished, take the Sacramentary back down to the shelf at the credence table.**

**When people begin to sing the closing song, wait for Father to kiss the altar. When he does, go up and collect the cross and candles, two go to the left and one goes behind Father to the right. When Father bows, bow your head and lead back up the aisle. When you reach the back of the church, head right, to the sacristy. Put the cross in the holder and blow out the candles and put them in the holders. Finally, when the singing stops, one server take a staff (unlit) and puts out the front candles. Then all the servers get out of their albs and leave the church.**

## **SPECIAL THINGS**

**(READ THIS PART BECAUSE IT IS VERY IMPORTANT)**

**In the event of only two servers do the Mass regularly except don't bring up or back one of the candles or the cross. It is the priest's choice if a candle begins on the altar, or if the cross does, so ask.**

**In the case of a baptism, make sure that the Easter candle is lit (the big candle in the front). When the families come up to be blessed, all the servers come over to the edge of the stairs near the baptismal font. One of the servers brings a staff/lucifer (if there is going to be a baptism, make sure there is one near the table before Mass begins). The server with the staff/lucifer will light the wick from the Easter candle and help light the baptism candles. The others will follow Father's lead, helping with the towels and the oil (chrism). After the baptism is over head back to your seats.**

**In the event of only one server, the one server will need to go into the crowd and find a trained altar server to help serve. After that, do two server procedures.**

**If you are serving a funeral, you will need to talk with one of the servers there that has done a funeral or the sacristan to get special instructions.**

**This is a manual on altar serving at St.Louise created Kyle Wright, edited and updated by Conor Garand. If you have any questions ask any veteran server, the sacristan (person setting up for Mass) or even Father.**

**Thank you and enjoy your altar serving experience!!!**