

ALTAR SERVER TRAINING GUIDE

SERVE THE LORD WITH
REVERENCE, GLADNESS, AND JOY!



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome	1
Comments From Pope Francis	2
Ten Responsibilities of Altar Servers	3
What is/is not Altar Service	4
In the Sacristy.....	5
At the Altar	7
Vestments.....	9
Liturgical Colors & Books.....	11
Altar Server Prayers	13
Order of the Mass	Insert

The priests, deacons, and parishioners of St. Paul of the Cross thank you for your service at the altar of Christ. You have an important role to play in the Sacrifice of the Mass.

The goal of our training program is to provide you the necessary tools to be an extraordinary server at the altar. This training is comprised of several elements:

1. Provide you a better understanding of what the Mass is; what occurs during the Mass and why reverence at Mass is important.
2. On-site training. Walking you through a Mass and your tasks during Mass.
3. Provide tools to assist you during the Mass; such as this Altar Server Mass Guide.
4. Feedback – this is a two-way street. We will tell you how you are doing and we expect feedback from you – how we, as a team, can do better.

We understand the following pages are a tool and that there is nothing better than actually serving Mass. We will try to assure as many opportunities as we can with the understanding that St. Paul of the Cross is a large parish. We have over one hundred servers. It is critical that if you are assigned to serve at Mass it is your responsibility to make certain your assignment is fulfilled or to ensure someone else takes your place.

Some people say Mass is boring – guess what, it is if you do not understand what is happening. How much fun would a football or basketball game be if you had no idea what truly was occurring – not much. It is our goal to help you understand the great mystery of the Mass, given to us by Christ, and the honor it is to serve at the altar.

God Bless.

VATICAN CITY — Catholics are more fortunate than the Old Testament prophets were because in the Eucharist they experience Jesus' closeness and know that God is not far off on a lofty throne, Pope Francis told thousands of altar servers from across Europe, "In the Eucharist and in the other sacraments," the pope said, "you experience the intimate closeness of Jesus, the sweetness and power of His presence." Francis ended his three-week summer vacation at the evening meeting and prayer Aug. 4 with some 9,000 altar servers. The largest groups of young men and women came from Austria, Germany and Italy.

The pope thanked the young people for braving Rome's August heat, although they did find some relief before the pope arrived. They began gathering in St. Peter's Square about three hours earlier when the sun was still at its strongest. To deal with the high summer temperatures in the square, the young people stood under showers of cooling water provided by the hoses of the Vatican fire department.

The theme of the gathering was "Here I am! Send me" from the prophet Isaiah. "You are more fortunate today than the prophet Isaiah," Pope Francis told the youths. In the Eucharist, Jesus is not "placed on an inaccessibly high throne, but in the bread and wine."

Isaiah was purified and forgiven by God and sent to bring God's word to others, the pope said. "Isaiah realized that, by entrusting himself into the hands of the Lord, his whole existence would be transformed."

God's word, the pope said, "does not shake the doorposts, but rather caresses the strings of the heart."

Like Isaiah, Christians recognize that "it is always God who takes the lead, because it is He who created you and willed you into being," the pope said. "It is He who, in your baptism, has made you into a new creation; He is always patiently waiting for your response to His initiative, offering forgiveness to whoever asks Him in humility." "The closer you are to the altar," he told them, "the more you will remember to speak with Jesus in daily prayer; the more you will be nourished by the word and the body of the Lord, the better able you will be to go out to others, bringing them the gift that you have received, giving in turn with enthusiasm the joy you have received."

TEN RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALTAR SERVERS

1. Punctuality – arrive at least fifteen minutes prior to the start of Mass
2. Dress appropriately:
 - At home – no gym shoes, hair combed, etc.
 - At church – wear proper fitting alb & surplice
3. Sign in prior to Mass
4. Be a team player
 - Assist newer servers
 - Ask the priest before Mass if there is anything you can do to help him
 - If you are attending Mass check to see if there are enough servers before Mass begins
5. Check the credence table and altar prior to Mass- Are the proper items on it?
 - The Chalice
 - The cruets with the water and wine
 - The Ciborium
 - Are the proper liturgical books out on the altar?
6. Ensure all candles are lit for Mass. Do they have enough oil to last during Mass?
7. Show reverence on the altar and tabernacle: kneel, bow, stand when appropriate. Act like Christ is on the altar with you – He is!!!
8. Know the “Order of the Mass” (see insert) and your role during each section. YOU are an important part of the liturgy.
9. Know your duties after Mass is over – put out the candles, take in liturgical books if this is the last Mass of the day, neatly hang up your alb and surplice, again ask the priest if there is anything else he needs.
10. Take your assigned Masses as an opportunity to come closer to Jesus Christ! What better time than when you are on the altar during Mass?

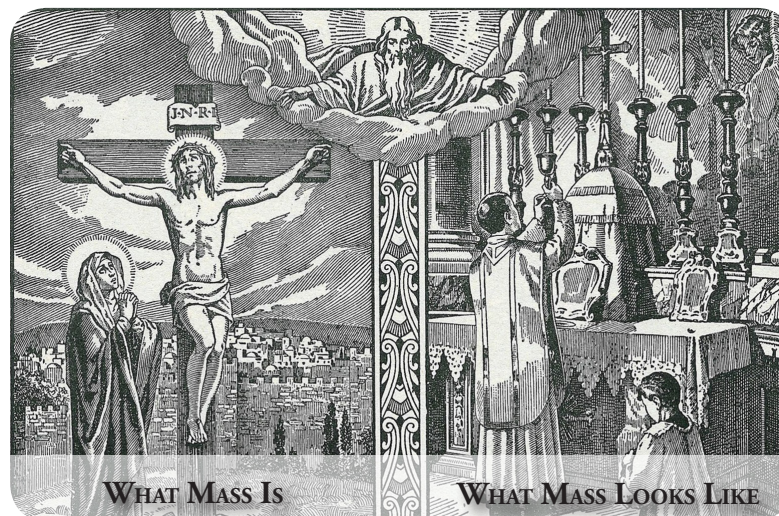
WHAT IS & IS NOT ALTAR SERVICE

What Altar Service Is

1. It is joyful – you should be joyful at Mass!
2. It is a mystery – do not fear if you do not understand; trust the words of Jesus!
3. It is the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist – Christ gave us His body to free us from sin. Read John 6.
4. It is the Last Supper and Calvary – we are truly present with Christ at the Last Supper and Calvary during the Mass.
5. It is crowded – we are there with all the angels in heaven and the communion of saints; all singing in full glory to God!

What Altar Service Is Not

1. It is not a forced task – you should want to serve the Lord!
2. It is not boring – if it is boring; do you really understand the Mass?
3. It is not time to socialize – Mass is a time for reverence!
4. It is not perfect service – we all make mistakes; learn from yours.
5. It is not the gym – dress appropriately; you are serving God.



IN THE SACRISTY



Many of the items listed here are kept in the walk-in safe that is in the sacristy. The safe is only open during Masses. You may be directed by a priest or deacon to retrieve an item from the safe or other area of the sacristy. It is important for you to be familiar with what these items are and where to find them.

All item descriptions with an asterisk (*) indicate that item is kept in the safe.



*** Priest's Chalice (CHAL-iss)**

The large cup used by the priest at Mass to hold the wine which becomes the Blood of Christ.



*** Communion Chalice (CHAL-iss)**

Vessels used at Communion when the people receive from the cup. During Mass they are kept on the Credence Table and brought to the Altar at Communion time.



*** Paten (PAT-en)**

A saucer-like plate the priest uses at Mass that holds the bread which becomes the Body of Christ.



*** Ciborium (si-BORE-ee-um)**

Vessel used during Communion and to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle.



*** Flagon (FLAG-en)**

Large glass pitcher used to hold the wine which will be Consecrated at Mass for the Communion of the people. It is placed on the gift table before Mass and brought forth with the gifts during Mass.



Cruets (CREW-ets)

Glass bottles used to hold the water and wine which will be Consecrated at Mass. The wine is placed on the gift table before Mass and is brought forward with the gifts.



*** Bag of Hosts (non-consecrated)**

The supply of hosts that are Consecrated at Mass are kept in boxes inside the safe. You may be asked to retrieve a bag of hosts during Mass if the presiding priest thinks he will need more than he has at the altar.



Candlelighter/ Extinguisher

This is kept in the sacristy and should be used to light the candles in the sanctuary before Mass and to properly extinguish them after Mass. Candles should not be blown out as that often distributes hot, melted wax on the altar linens, floor, etc.



*** Monstrance (MON-strence)**

A sacred vessel designed to expose the Consecrated Host to the congregation either for adoration in church, or carrying in procession, particularly on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ.



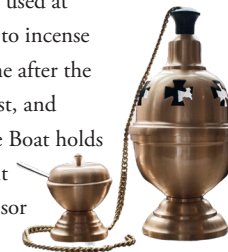
*** Sprinkler & Bowl**

Also known as the Aspergillum this item contains holy water and is used by the priest during Mass to bless the congregation, or the casket during funerals.



Finger Towel

A white, linen cloth used by the priest, during Mass before the Consecration, to dry his hands after he washes them.



Censor & Incense Boat

The Censor, also known as the Thurible, is used at solemn occasions to incense the bread and wine after the offertory, the priest, and congregation. The Boat holds the incense until it is placed in the censor by the celebrant.



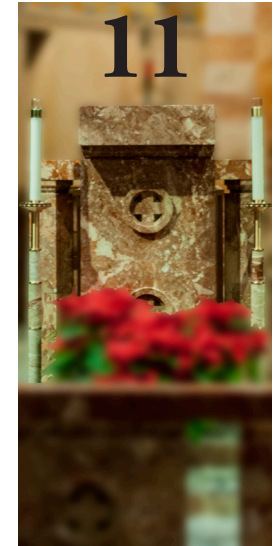
Purificator

A white, linen cloth used by the priest during Mass to cleanse the chalice after Communion.

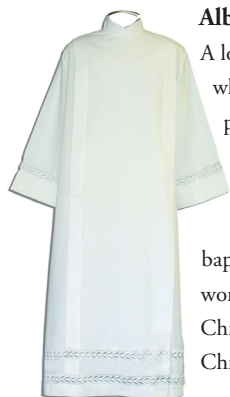
AT THE ALTAR

In the same way that it is important for you to be familiar with the items that are used at the altar and where to find them, it is also important that you know the furnishings around the altar and what they are called. This is important because a priest or deacon may direct you to do something like "light the Paschal Candle" and you should be able to respond to that request without additional direction about what the Paschal Candle is and where to find it.

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|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. The Sanctuary | 7. Processional Crucifix |
| 2. The Presider's Chair & Table | 8. Altar Table & Altar Candles |
| 3. The Credence Table | 9. Paschal Candle |
| 4. The Gift Table | 10. Sanctuary Lamp |
| 5. Mass Bells | 11. Ambo & Candles |
| 6. Tabernacle | |



VESTMENTS



Alb
A long white garment which can be used by priests and deacons under the chasuble or dalmatic. It is a reminder of the baptismal garment worn when the new Christian "Put on Christ."



Priest's Stole
A long cloth that hangs around the neck which is one of the marks of the Office of the Priesthood.



Cincture (SINK-chur)

A long cord used for fastening albs at the waist. It holds the loose-fitting type of alb in place and is used to adjust it to proper length. It is usually white, although the liturgical color of the day may be used.



Humeral Veil (HUME-er-al)

This is a long narrow shawl-like vestment used when the priest or deacon raises the monstrances containing the Blessed Sacrament during processions or Benediction.



Dalmatic (dahl-MAT-ik)

A loose-fitting robe with open sides and wide sleeves worn by deacons. It takes its color from the proper liturgical feast of the day and will match the priest's chasuble.



Deacon's Stole

A long cloth that hangs around the left shoulder and is fastened at the right side so it crosses the torso. Along with the dalmatic it is one of the marks of the Office of the Diaconate.



Chasuble (CHAZ-uh-ble)

The sleeveless outer garment, slipped over the head, hanging down from the shoulders covering the alb and stole of the priest. It is the proper Mass vestment for the main celebrant and its color varies according to the feast.



Cope

A cape-like garment which is put over the shoulders and hangs to the ankles, it is open in the front and worn by a priest or deacon primarily in processions and during Benediction.



Altar Server Alb

A long, red garment worn by altar servers for Mass. It should cover all clothing underneath and stop at the ankle just above the shoes. This garment, along with the surplice, should be properly placed on the hanger and put back neatly after Mass.



Surplice (SIR-plis)

This is a white garment with wide-sleeves that is slipped over the head and covers the shoulders. It is worn over the altar server alb and should end about where your fingertips are when your arms are straight by your side. This garment, along with the altar server alb, should be properly placed on the hanger and put back in the closet neatly after Mass.

LITURGICAL COLORS & BOOKS

GREEN

Worn during "Ordinary Time." Ordinary does not mean ordinary in the sense of common or normal. Ordinary means counting, as in the 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

RED

Worn on Passion (Palm) Sunday, Good Friday, Pentecost Sunday, and on the Feast Days of Martyrs including the Apostles and Evangelists.

VIOLET

Worn during Advent and Lent or at Masses for the dead.

WHITE

Worn during the Christmas, Easter seasons and celebrations of Mary, the Angels, Saints who were not martyrs, All Saints, Birth of John the Baptist, Chair of Peter, Conversion of Paul, St. John the Evangelist and is the preferred color for Masses for the dead.

ROSE

Worn on the 3rd Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) and the 4th Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday).

BLACK

Was traditionally worn at Masses for the dead. The preferred color is now White or Violet.



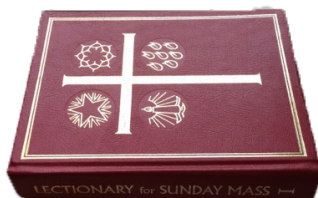
ROMAN MISSAL

Used by the priest, the Roman Missal contains the opening prayer, prayer over the gifts, prayer after Communion, and solemn blessings, Eucharistic prayers and prefaces for all of the Masses, including special occasions.



BOOK OF THE GOSPELS

Used by the priest or deacon at weekend Masses, this book contains the Gospel reading for each Sunday of the three-year cycle, plus all solemnities, feasts, and ritual Masses that are celebrated throughout the liturgical year. It is carried in procession by the deacon or first lector.



LECTIONARY

Used by the lectors at Mass, the lectionary contains the scripture readings for Mass. It is placed on the ambo.



MISSALETTE

Used by the congregation, the missalette contains all the parts of the Mass for a specific season in the liturgical year including instructions on when to stand, sit, or kneel.

ALTAR SERVER PRAYERS

Oh Jesus, my King and Lord,
by the grace of the Heavenly Father
and the power of the Holy Spirit,
guide me in all righteousness
as I serve You today at the Altar
so I may be always worthy of Your presence.
If I happen to make an error,
may it be a lesson so my service will be perfect tomorrow.
Jesus, I love you with all my heart. Amen.

ST. JOHN BERCHMANS, PATRON SAINT OF ALTAR SERVERS
FEAST DAY NOVEMBER 26

PRAYER BEFORE MASS

Go before us, O Lord,
in this our sacrifice of prayer and praise,
and grant that what we say and sing
with our lips we may believe in our hearts,
and practice and show forth in our daily lives.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER AFTER MASS

Bless, O Lord, our hearts and minds,
and grant that as we leave Your house,
we may continue to be aware of Your presence.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO READ:

- Exodus 12:21-24
- John 1:36
- John 6: 51-59
- Corinthians 11:26-31



ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS

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AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE WE WILL SERVE THE LORD

JOSHUA 24:15