

Altar Server's Handbook - OLG

Start at home: dress with the intention of serving

Nice clean shoes – not dirty

No sandals without backs like flip flops or crocks – too likely to fall off or cause you to trip

Girls – long hair pulled back

Getting dressed in the sacristy:

Cassock should be ankle length – too long and you may trip

Surplice should be two sizes bigger than the cassock

After Mass hang up cassock and surplice neatly

Words to know

| | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Chalice | purificator | bells | cassock |
| Cruets | corporal | altar candles | surplice |
| Ciborium/Ciboria | wash bowl | candles | altar |
| Paten | wash towel | cross | cross bearer |
| Chalice pall | water pitcher | tabernacle | candle bearer |
| credence table | candle lighter & snuffer | | Roman Missal/Sacramentary |

Things to remember always:

- Help each other – you are a team
- Hold doors when processing out and into the church. The first one through the door holds it for everyone behind them
- Do not rush down the aisle during procession. Walk slow and steady
- Pay attention to what is going on during Mass. Anticipate what will happen next and be ready for it
- Always bow to the altar when you walk in front of it. If you have anything in your hand then just nod your head respectfully.
- Sign in by writing your full name, date, and Mass time
- Be 15 minutes early to the Mass you will be serving at to assist in preparation
- If you are unable to fulfill your serving schedule please find someone to replace you and do so early in the week; if you cannot find someone please call the office and let the priest know you will not be present at the assigned time.
- Always put up your cassock and surplus in a neat fashion in the closet
- Sit up straight in chairs with arms folded in prayer or at your lap
- When standing remember not to slouch but to stand erect with hands folded in prayer
- **be reverent at the altar**
- avoid drawing attention to oneself

To serve at the altar is a privilege that can be taken away if one does not act appropriately at the altar. Your actions and attitudes as you serve will be seen by all who attend Mass, please be respectful of your duty and fulfill it with great dignity. To serve requires much focus and attention. You must participate and serve in the Mass with much maturity. The way you serve will lead other people in prayer; this is a great honor. You, as a server, are very important to the worship of the congregation; please pray as you serve so that you may come to know Jesus a little better so as to serve him with much fervor loving Him more dearly and following Him more closely each and every day.

Cross bearer

- will carry the cross in the opening procession as well as closing recessional
- leads the procession during opening and recessional hymns
- brings the Missal (big red book) to the priest for the opening prayer and for the prayer after communion
- rings the bells during the consecration: when the bread is elevated and when the chalice is elevated
- the bells are to be rung with three consecutive rings during each elevation

Candle bearer

- will light the candles on the altar 10 minutes prior to the beginning of the Mass
- will light candle for procession 5 minutes before the beginning of Mass
- follow behind the cross bearer during the opening procession and the closing procession
- The candle bearer will hold the candle in the center of his/her body. Always hold the candle straight up and do not tilt it.

Both Altar Servers

- will bring the sacred vessels to the altar during the preparation of the altar before bringing up the gifts during the offertory procession
- will go in procession during the offertory to lead up the gifts. will bring the water and wine to the deacon or priest and assist at the altar as needed
- will bring the water bowl and towel to wash hands of priest
- after communion will help remove sacred vessels and place on credence table

After the Mass:

- make sure the candles at the Altar are extinguished **using the snuffer**
- bring the Sacred Vessels from the credence table back into the Sacristy
- put soiled linens in the proper place
- put wine and water cruets in refrigerator

THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

Sundays and Feast Days

- The procession will begin at the back of the church at the main doors and will proceed along the back to the center aisle at a slow and steady pace. There should be no more than two pew lengths between the cross bearer and the candle bearer and between the candle bearer and the Priest or Deacon.
- The cross bearer will lead the procession with the candle bearer directly behind him/her. The procession will begin with the first words of the entrance hymn unless otherwise mentioned by Father.
- When the procession reaches the altar, the cross bearer will stand in front of the altar to the right. The candle bearer will stand on the left of the altar, allowing space for the priest and the deacon to stand.
- After reverence of the altar (with a slow nod of the head, not bow with the body), the cross bearer will put the cross in its place on the right side of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The candle bearer will place the candle on the left side of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The servers are then to stand at their seats.
- The cross bearer will bring the Sacramentary to Father when he says "Let us pray." The cross bearer will carry the book straight up, flat and in line with his/her body, remembering to nod his/her head as he/she stops in front of the altar. Father will take the book and open it and place it where he wants it held. The cross bearer will move his/her hands to hold it in the position set by Father. During the prayer, the cross bearer will look at the book and watch what Father reads instead of looking all around or disinterested. After the prayer, Father will close the book and the cross bearer will return the book to its place carrying it in an upright manner as before. He/she will then sit and prepare to listen to the readings.
- After the prayers of the faithful, the altar servers will assist the Priest or Deacon in preparing the altar. They will first give him the chalice with the chalice pall. The cross bearer will give the Sacramentary to the Priest or Deacon to put on the altar.
- The altar servers will assist in the reception of the gifts in front of the altar. One on the left and one on the right.
- Once the ciborium is placed on the altar, the altar server will bring the water cruet to the altar and wait there with the other server who had the wine cruet until the Deacon or Priest gives it back. **It is handed with the handle facing the Deacon or Priest and the lid removed.**
- After the altar servers return to the table with the cruets, both will assist in washing Father's hands. One will take the pitcher of water. The other server will be responsible for carrying the bowl and having the towel draped on his/her arm. The bowl should be held high enough so that Father does not have to bend so low. After the washing of the hands, the servers nod their heads to Father and then turn to bring the pitcher, bowl and towel back to the credence table.
- After the washing of the hands, they will then return to the seats yet remain standing.
- After the Holy, Holy, Holy is sung, the servers are to kneel. The cross bearer will have the bells next to him/her.
- During the elevation of the host, the cross bearer will ring the bells to a count of three. During the elevation of the chalice, the cross bearer will again ring the bells to a count of three.
- After the Sign of Peace, the candle bearer will bring any other ciboria to the altar.
- After the Lamb of God, the servers will kneel.
- The servers will go to the center aisle to receive communion. Once they receive, they are to be seated.
- After Communion is completed, the altar servers will proceed to the credence table. The water cruet, with the lid off and handle facing outward, will be taken to the Deacon or Priest for the cleansing of the chalices and ciboria, if any. Both altar servers will remain at the altar to receive vessels as they are cleaned. Once all the items are removed from the altar and placed on the credence table and the Priest or Deacon has left the altar, then the altar servers can sit down together in their pew.
- The cross bearer will retrieve the Sacramentary from the Priest or Deacon and put it on the pew with him/her.

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- As soon as the music begins for the recessional hymn, the cross bearer is to get the cross and the candle bearer is to get the candle. When the Deacon and/or Priest proceed to the altar to reverence it with a kiss the servers then process to the front of the altar and find their places as they did when they processed in.
- After the final reverence of the altar (altar servers nodding their heads in reverence), the cross bearer will lead the procession down the center aisle with candle bearer directly behind and the Deacon and/or Priest following behind. The bearer should never be more than two pew lengths in front of those behind them. The pace should be slow and steady in a manner of reverence.
- After processing to the Priest Sacristy, the servers will put out the altar candles **using the snuffer**, never blowing them out. They will also retrieve from the credence table all the vessels and take them to the sacristy.
- Once that is done and everything is in its proper place, all the servers can go to the Server Sacristy to undress and neatly hang up their cassocks and surpluses.