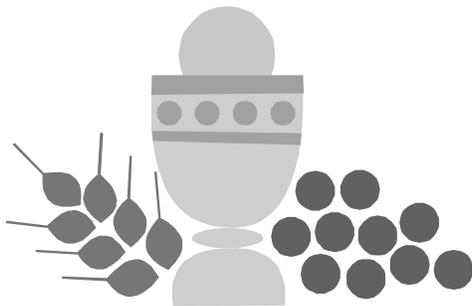


ALTAR SERVER HANDBOOK



ST. PETER CHURCH
MOUNT CLEMENS, MI

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Introduction
- II. Server's Prayer Before Practice
- III. General Information
- IV. Order of Mass
- V. Altar Server Duties
- VI. Dishwashing Procedure
- VII. Positions and Movements to Be Learned
- VIII. Candles
- IX. Prayers Used During Mass
- X. Familiar Objects and Diagrams

INTRODUCTION

The server is an important person. Every priest needs a server's help to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. A server is the celebrant's right hand helper. This manual has a two-fold purpose: first to train you to serve Mass and, secondly, to use as a reference whenever necessary.

As you will note, a server has much to do. Your training will not be complete until the manual has been mastered.

Servers have been with us a long time. There was Samuel who lived over a thousand years before Christ. Samuel was called by God, served in the Temple with a priest, and anointed the first King of the Hebrew people.

Being a server is an important calling. God is asking for special dedication and service from you. This manual should help you to function well during the ceremonies and, ultimately, to come closer to God.

SERVER'S PRAYER BEFORE PRACTICE

Jesus Most Holy,

We ask you to help us in learning our duties as servers so we may assist Your Ministers in celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Keep us, O Lord, ever aware of Your Eucharistic Presence.

Be our helper and strength both in word and example. Please show us how to be Your devoted servants all the days of our lives. We ask Your blessing, Lord.

Amen.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The following information applies to all active altar servers and those boys and girls who have expressed an interest in becoming altar servers.

All altar servers will be assigned to serve the weekend Masses. They will be scheduled on a rotating basis. Servers will serve approximately once a month, rotating between the 4:00 p.m. Mass on Saturday, 7:30 a.m., 10:00 a.m. or 12:00 noon Mass on Sunday. Altar servers are also expected to sign-up for and serve other liturgies during the year, which consist of Holy Days, funerals, weddings, the Christmas and Easter seasons including Stations of the Cross, and other special liturgies, which may take place at St. Peter Church.

The weekend schedule will be for a one year period beginning in January and will include the summer months. Servers will also be expected to serve at the 8:00 a.m. Mass during school vacation times (Christmas, Easter, and summer vacation). Separate schedules are prepared 2-3 months at a time for the daily 8:00 a.m. Mass during vacations, including summer, and special liturgies such as on-call for funerals, weddings, Holy Days, etc.

SPECIAL NOTE: Liturgies served during school hours do not fulfill your commitment if you are a student at St. Mary's School. **All St. Mary students are expected to serve both weekday masses and funerals during school hours, without exception.**

Servers should arrive to serve **no later than twenty (20) minutes** before his or her scheduled Mass begins. If a server arrives late, but no less than fifteen (15) minutes before Mass, they may vest and serve their scheduled Mass. If a server arrives too late to serve, and another server has volunteered to serve and is already vested, the scheduled server should note on the sign-in sheet that he or she was present but arrived late. Then the server will not be given an unexcused absence.

All servers must sign in on the sign-in sheet provided. This is the responsibility of the server. Signature must be legible. Failure to sign in could result in the server receiving a warning letter.

It is extremely important that a server obtain a substitute server when unable to serve their scheduled Mass. **THIS IS THE SERVER'S OBLIGATION!!!** Remember a brown cross must obtain a substitute that is a brown cross; check the roster sheet for which servers are brown or silver crosses. Please be considerate of the other servers on your team as well as the priest. It is also important that the substitute server sign in the correct space when serving for another server.

AFTER A SERVER HAS OBTAINED A SUBSTITUTE, IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE SERVER TO CALL OR EMAIL THE COORDINATORS AND REPORT THE DAY, TIME AND NAME OF THE SUBSTITUTE SERVER. Please remember if you do not call and your substitute does not show up the absence goes on your record. This procedure is necessary to keep the schedule running smoothly. Servers will be sent or called with warnings for unexcused absences. After three unexcused absences, the server will be suspended from serving and removed from the Altar Server roster.

UPON ARRIVAL AT CHURCH, SERVERS SHOULD CHECK IN THE SACRISTY TO SEE IF A MASS HAS ENOUGH SERVERS. IF A MASS IS SHORT SERVERS, PLEASE VOLUNTEER TO SERVE. Once in a while a team might only have three servers or a server gets sick at the last minute, so please volunteer. You may vest and quietly slip out on the altar after Mass has started.

Altar servers are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. Upon arrival in the Sacristy, they are to begin the important task at hand, readying themselves and the altar for the liturgy. Servers are expected to be an example to others. They should be listening, with hands folded properly (as taught in the training) at all times. Remember, servers are part of the liturgy. **Servers are to respond to the prayers and hymns along with the congregation.**

Inappropriate and unacceptable behavior will not be tolerated. Talking during Mass will not be tolerated. You could be told to leave the altar and not return. Once the Mass has started, servers are not to leave the altar. If you leave the altar for any reason (for example, blow your nose, get a drink, go to the bathroom, feel ill) do not return for the remainder of the Mass. The exception to this would be a request from the priest. Conduct unbecoming an altar server could result in your dismissal from the St. Peter Altar Server roster. **Cell phones should be turned off before vesting. At no time should an altar server use a cell phone while on the altar.**

Each server on a team is responsible to help with preparing the altar for Mass. You may be asked to set up for the next Mass. You are also expected to help clean up after Mass (washing of dishes, Sacristy left in good order, robes hung up, etc.). Servers are reminded that clean up begins after Mass has ended and the priest and servers have proceeded out. This means servers are not to leave the altar to put things away while the Eucharist is being distributed to the congregation.

Servers need to dress appropriately when you are serving; no jeans, shorts, sandals, flip flops, tennis shoes, and for the girls no shoes with a heel of 1" or more. Hair should be neat and pulled back for the girls. Safety with long hair and candles is always an issue. Should you forget, hair ties are usually available near the crosses, please feel free to take one and then keep it.

To be an altar server is a privilege and honor not to be taken lightly. Along with this privilege and honor comes the responsibility and commitment for both parents and students.

Thank you for this very special service of our Lord and your parish family.

ORDER OF MASS

PROCESSION IN

STAND: Sign of the Cross
Greeting
Penitential Rite
Lord Have Mercy
Gloria
Book bearer brings book up for Father
Opening Prayer

SIT: First Reading
Responsorial Psalm
Second Reading

STAND: Gospel

SIT: Homily

STAND: Profession of Faith
Prayers of the Faithful

SIT: Collection (**Cross and book place book, ciboria & chalice on altar**)
2 candle bearers go to the communion rail for the offertory
Prayer over the gifts

STAND: Preface Dialogue

KNEEL: Holy, Holy
Eucharistic Prayer
Consecration
Memorial Acclamation
Doxology
Great Amen

STAND: Our Father
Sign of Peace (**Server go to center of altar & give greeting to priest & readers; then go down to the communion rail & face each other; once EMEs come to altar, face altar & take one step back**)
Lamb of God
Response to invitation to Communion
Communion
Book clears only the book from the altar

KNEEL: During Communion
Cross brings water to Father when he comes back from Communion if asked

STAND: **Book brings Father the book**
Final Blessing

PROCESSION OUT OF CHURCH

ALTAR SERVER DUTIES

Before Mass Begins:

1. Arrive no later than 20 minutes before Mass begins.
2. Sign in and vest immediately.
3. Turn on lights and microphone.
4. Prepare the offertory table: wine, water, and paten for Sundays and weekdays; chalice for weddings and funerals.
5. Prepare the credence table: extra cups, chalice (except weddings and funerals), and any full ciboria.
6. Place tabernacle key on altar in its holder.
7. Ask Father to check the Sacramentary and Lectionary. On weekends an adult will take the Lectionary to the podium. On weekdays you will need to take this to the podium. Place the Sacramentary on its stool.
8. Light candles approximately 10 minutes before Mass.
9. Light candles to be carried in the procession.
10. Do not stand in doorway that leads to the altar. Keep voices low. Use this time for quiet prayer.

After Mass:

1. Remove the Sacramentary and Lectionary and place on table in Sacristy.
2. Pour any water in finger bowl in a plant and then wipe out bowl, replace finger towel and place on credence table.
3. Extinguish the candles on the altar.
4. Refill the cruets that were used during Mass. Place wine-filled cruet in refrigerator. Do not put water cruet in refrigerator.
5. Unvest.
6. Take the chalice and cups to the back to be washed. Wash and dry chalice cups, ciboria and paten. Assist with refilling the paten and setting up the tray of cups if asked. Place these items on their shelves in the safe. Replace tabernacle key in safe.
7. Turn off lights and microphone.

DISHWASHING PROCEDURE

All altar servers on team are to stay until all tasks are completed.

1. Take all dishes into small room with sink/counter off sacristy
2. Fill rectangular pan to line with water and turn each cup or ciborium three times in the pan
3. Fill sink with hot water and one large squirt of soap, place a clean towel on counter
4. Wash each cup or ciborium inside and out and rinse under running hot water
5. Dry each cup or ciborium with a clean towel
6. Place all cups and ciboria back in safe
7. Take pan to sacrarium sink, empty and rinse thoroughly
8. Take pan back to sink and wash, rinse and dry

POSITIONS AND MOVEMENTS TO BE LEARNED

1. STANDING



The altar server at the left has the proper standing position: head straight, body relaxed but erect, shoulders back feet together, hands folded finger-to-finger (thumbs should be crossed) and pointing out from the chest. Hands are always to be kept in this position, even when walking. When you walk, **walk slowly**, dignified and deliberately. Know where you are going and then walk there with your head straight, shoulders back, hands held properly, and slowly. The server who does not have the proper position and walk becomes a distraction on the altar. Practice the correct postures at home in front of a mirror.

2. GENUFLECTING

In genuflecting on one knee:

- a. Stand tall and keep your hands folded and in front of your chest
- b. Slowly bend the right knee to the front keeping it next to your left heel. Make sure your back is straight.
- c. After your knee touches the floor, rise slowly, and straighten up. Do not be leaning over, or wobble. Make the action smooth and even.



In genuflecting on both knees (in front of the exposed Eucharist):

- a. Follow the same procedures as given for one knee, except that after your right knee touches the floor, bend the left knee next to it.
- b. Make a shoulder bow.
- c. Then rise slowly bringing your left first, then rise straight up. Make the action smooth and deliberate. Practice at home a number of times.



3. SIGN OF THE CROSS

To do it properly, unfold your hands from their folded position at your chest, **placing the left hand on your chest.** Keeping the right hand fingers closely together and fully extended, thumb in palm, trace the sign in a broad and full movement. Do not bring your right hand below the left, and be sure you touch the end of each shoulder. Then reclasp your hands.



4. GOSPEL SIGN



To make the Gospel sign, first, disjoin the hands and place your left hand on your chest. Keeping the right hand flat, use the inside of the thumb and make a small sign of the cross on the forehead, on the closed lips, and the chest.

5. WALKING IN THE SANCTUARY

Never walk too quickly during the Mass or other church functions. The sacred rites and actions have a particular speed which must be learned.

CANDLES

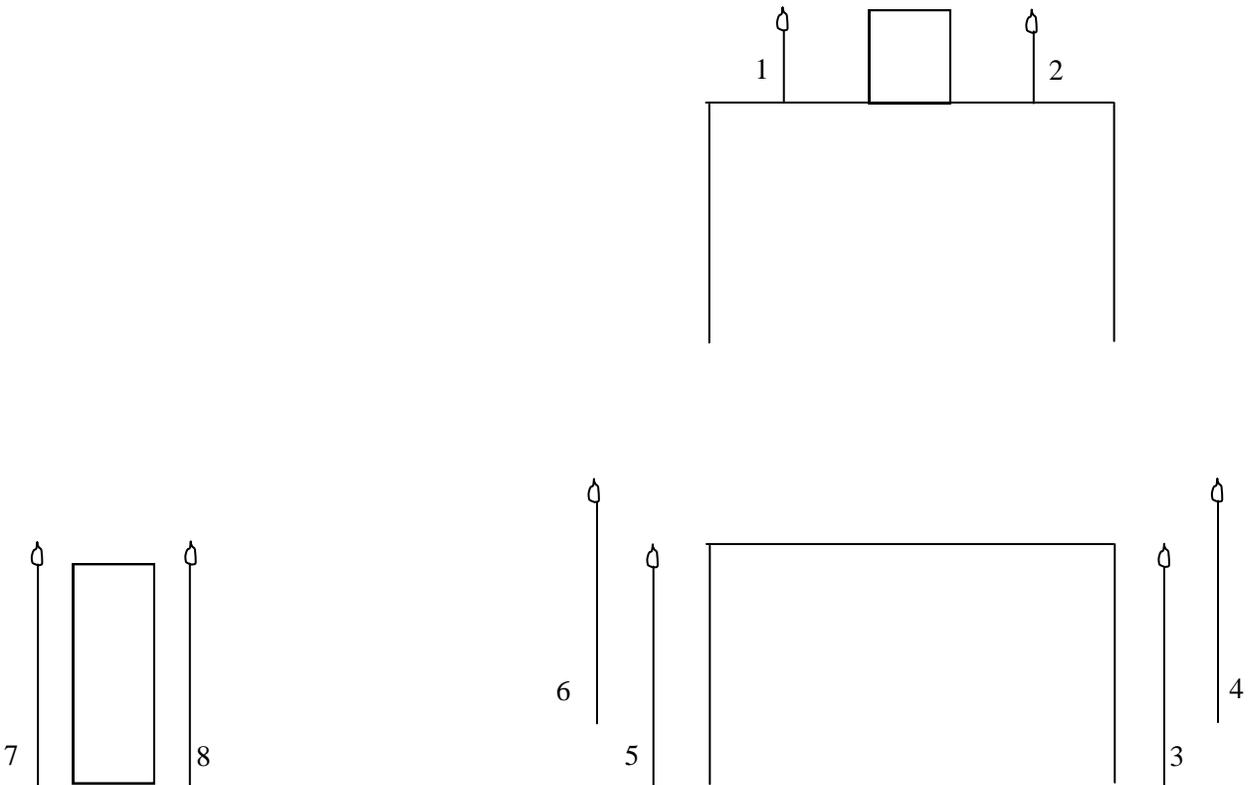
Candelighters

Take a long arm candlelighter/extinguisher and expose about one half of taper. Light the taper with the lighter at the table near the Sacristy door.

Candle Lighting Procedure

Light the candles ten minutes before Mass begins. First genuflect in front of the tabernacle and light those candles which flank the tabernacle, extending the rod if necessary. If you are having trouble lighting these candles, you must ask a Sacristan for help. Next, light the candles on each side of the altar, lighting those closest to the congregation first. Finally, light the two candles on each side of the pulpit. Genuflect when passing the tabernacle and replace the candle extinguisher.

Diagram for the Order of Lighting Candles



PRAYERS USED DURING THE MASS

Penitential Rite

I confess to almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and what I have failed to do; through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore, I ask Blessed Mary, every virgin, all the angels and saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God. Amen.

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly king, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sin of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Nicene Creed (STAND)

I believe in One God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the power of the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and His kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and life in the world to come. Amen.

Apostles' Creed (STAND)

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended into hell; on the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Holy, Holy, Holy

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Lamb of God

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Hymnals have been provided for your use. You are expected to fully participate during all hymns and responses during Mass.

FAMILIAR OBJECTS AND DIAGRAMMS



Chalice



Chalice with
Purificator



Ciborium



Boat and
Censer



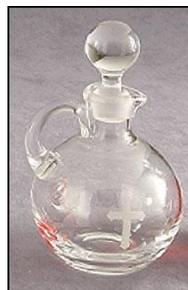
Bowl



Finger Towel



Pyx



Water Cruet



Wine Cruet



Altar –
Weekday Mass



Altar –
Weekend Mass



Credence Table



← Offertory Table -
Funeral

Offertory Table -
Mass →

