

# St. Paul Parish Altar Servers Guide

Welcome to altar serving here at St. Paul Parish. You are now an integral member of our church community, with an important role each time you serve. You will be helping the priest with the celebration of the Mass and other liturgical rites. It is a privilege to be able to serve at the altar.

## General Guidelines

### Before Mass

1. Please arrive 15 minutes before the start of Mass.
2. Gather in the cry room to put on your alb, cincture and cross.
3. The small crosses are for junior servers who are in their first year of serving and the large crosses are for the senior servers who have served for more than 1 year.
4. Check to see if the cross and processional candles are ready before the procession.
5. Light the candles on the altar.
6. Arrange with one another on who will carry out each specific role or job.
7. Sign the attendance sheet each time you serve at the altar.
8. Familiarize yourself with the objects in the sacristy, and the objects used for the celebration of the Mass and where they are all stored in case you are asked to collect an item.
  - Items may include: hosts, wine, chalice, ciborium, candles, sacramentary, purificator and corporal.

### Posture and Reverence

The role of the altar server is to assist the Priest and the whole community in the celebration of the Mass. Therefore posture and attitude are very important.

1. Hold your hands together unless you are carrying something or sitting.
2. While sitting hold, your hands flat on your knees, fingers together, elbows bent in a relaxed way. Alternately rest them folded. Sit tall and straight. Feet on the floor.
3. When standing, stand tall, with your weight evenly placed on both feet.
4. Do not talk to the other altar servers.
5. Watch the Priest for signals to do something.
6. Follow and participate in all aspects of the mass. Prayers, songs etc.

### Entrance Procession and Opening

1. Participate in the prayer in the sacristy with the Priest and other ministers assisting with Mass.
2. Gather for the procession at the back of the church.
  - Thurible (if used), cross, candles, additional altar servers in pairs, other ministers.
3. At the priest's gesture, lead the procession with a slow steady pace. **(The cross is carried with the corpus facing the altar and never touches the ground.)**
4. When the cross bearer and the candle holders arrive at the front of the church, proceed directly to the place each in their proper places. **DO NOT BOW** when carrying the cross or candles.
5. At the Priest's gesture, hold the book if needed (sacramentary).

### Collection, Offertory and Eucharistic Prayer

1. After the stewardship prayer, altar servers bring the chalices, water, and purificators from the credence table and place on to right side of the altar. Place hands on items to prevent sliding when carrying.

2. Go with the Presider to receive the gifts from the gift bearers.
3. Place the collection basket on the stand provided.
4. Bring the paten and ciborium of hosts to the altar and place them on the corporal in the center of the altar.
5. Bring the wine to the altar and place it on the right side of the altar.
6. One person should wait on the left side of the altar to return the empty wine cruet to the credence table.
7. Prepare for the washing of the hands. Be ready with the basin, water and cloth and wait for the Presider. Move close to the altar when the Presider turns to you.
8. Do not sit down until communion time.

### **“HOLY, HOLY, HOLY” and Consecration**

- The altar servers kneel after the Holy, Holy, Holy, during the Eucharistic Prayer, until the Memorial Great Amen. (The choir sings this.)
- The server rings the bells when the Presider raises the host and continues until the host is lowered, then again when he raises the chalice until it is lowered.

### **Sign of Peace**

1. Share the sign of peace with the presider and other altar servers. Do not leave the sanctuary.
2. After the sign of peace remain near the altar to receive communion. Then return to your seat.

### **After Communion**

1. Bring the water cruet to the altar for purification of the chalice.
2. Be ready at the left of the altar, to assist in returning all articles to the credence table (chalices, paten, water cruet, purificators) after the presider purifies the chalice.

### **Recessional**

1. Wait for the gesture from the Presider, (usually after 1 or 2 verses of the hymn), then pick up the cross and the candles and go down to the front of the altar.
2. If available, a server who is not carrying the cross or candle should blow out the altar candles. Other wise blow out these candles before proceeding to pick up the two procession candles.
3. Leave the sanctuary and stand by the first row of chairs and face the altar.
4. Do not bow if holding a cross or candles.
5. After the Presider, readers and extra altar servers bow, and turn, the cross bearer will lead the recession to the sacristy.
6. Once in the sacristy blow out the candles.
7. Return candles to the entronement table.

### **After Mass**

1. Return the alb to cupboard in the cry-room, hanging it up carefully.
2. Remember to always treat church property and sacristy items with great care and respect.
3. Ask Father if there is anything else that you can do.
4. Tell him goodbye and don't forget to thank him; like you, his work is appreciated by all.