



Altar Server Training Guide

**St. Luke's Parish
Westborough, MA**

March 2018

Serving at Sunday Mass

1. BEFORE MASS:

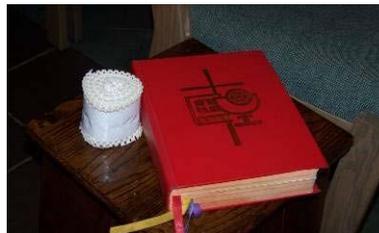
- a) Arrive at least 15 minutes early to be sure you have time to dress and properly prepare for the Mass. All servers should sign in at the Altar Server Bulletin Board.
- b) Team Leader should decide who is doing each job during Mass.
- c) Use the Pre-Mass Checklist to ensure everything is set up properly.
- d) Check the credence table to be sure everything is set out including chalice, purificator, pall, large corporal, 2 cups with two purificators, and 2 regular patens. Also include 1 small paten for the choir at 10:30 Mass.



- e) On the shelf under the credence table, there should be a pitcher with water and a bason and a towel.
- f) Team Leader must make sure candles at the altar are lit.



- g) Make sure that there is a Sacrementary on the small table near the servers' chairs. For Masses with Father Tim, there should also be a small foam pad to hold the book.
- h) Team Leader must select a family from the congregation who will bring up the gifts at the offering. Let them know before Mass that they will follow you when you go for the Offertory gifts during Mass.
- i) Check that the Offertory gifts (Paten with Hosts and Wine Cruet) are on the table at the back of church.



2. PROCESSION into church

- a) Candle Bearers get and light their candles. Cross Bearer gets the cross. All wait quietly in the back with the priest and the ministers until the priest indicates that he is ready to start the entrance Procession.
 - Candle Bearers should always be very cautious handling the lit candles because the hot wax can burn or splash on your cloths.
- b) Cross Bearers set the pace by walking very slowly and reverently.
 - Note: If it is a Mass where incense is used, the Priest will place some incense in the thurible before the procession begins. The server in charge of incense will lead the procession slowly while swinging the thurible as you proceed down the aisle.
- c) When you get to the front of the altar, all altar servers who are carrying something should pause, bow your head slightly and walk single file to the stands near the credence table and proceed to your seat in the front row. If you are not carrying anything, upon reaching the altar, you would pause, bow reverently to the waist and then proceed to your seat.

3. BOOK HOLDER

- a) As soon as the Book Holder hears the priest say the words “Let us pray” retrieve the book and bring it to him.
 - There are usually two times during the Mass when this happens – at the beginning before the readings and again at the end after communion.
 - Note: There are exceptions during special Masses which include baptisms etc but you will be told about the changes beforehand. Be alert and ready to hold the book whenever the priest motions to you that he needs the book, even if he has not yet said “Let us pray”.
- b) Hold the book exactly where the priest places it.
- c) When finished, bow your head (only) to the priest, and return the book to the table, and take your seat.

4. CANDLE BEARERS at the Gospel

- a) Immediately after the second reading, the Candle Bearers should get the candles for the reading of the Gospel. Don't have to wait for the priest to motion to you because he will be in prayer.
 - Note: In Masses where incense is used, Incense Bearer will get the thurible and boat and bring them to the priest while he is still seated. The priest will place some incense on the coals and then the server should proceed to a position just in front of the Crucifix near the candle bearers.
- b) Get up and retrieve your candles. Walk behind the baptismal font and the chair that the priest is sitting in and take your places on either side of the Crucifix. Wait until the priest gets the book from the altar.

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- c) As soon as he lifts the book up high, The Candle Bearers should begin to walk directly to the Ambo, leading the priest and the book.
- d) Stand on opposite sides of the ambo facing each other.
- e) After the priest finishes his reading, the priest will raise the book. When he sets the book back down, you should immediately begin walking back to the candle stands by taking the same path you came and take your seat.



5. SETTING THE ALTAR

- a) When the priest finishes the prayer of the faithful and sits down, the servers begin to prepare the altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
- b) The Book Holder brings the book to the altar and places it at the far left of the altar, leaving room in the middle for the Corporal to be placed. Then return to your seat.
- c) The other two servers go to the credence table and bring the Chalice, Corporal, Purificators, and extra cups to the altar.
- d) Unfold the Corporal and spread smoothly on the altar. Place on the Altar with the V-folds up so that any crumbs of the consecrated bread – the body of Christ – will be collected when the Corporal is refolded.
- e) Place the Chalice where the priest who is celebrating Mass prefers it. (see photos for priest placement preference)



Monsignor Michael Foley



Father Timothy O'Mara

- f) Place the cups on the upper corners of the Corporal.
- g) Remove the purificators, and place them, still folded, beside the cups as shown in the photo. For Fr. Tim, place the Pall and large purificator on the right side of the corporal. For Msgr. Mike, remove them and return them to the credence table.
- h) Then, take your seats while the ushers take up the collection.

6. RECEIVING THE GIFTS

- a) When the ushers are two thirds of the way to the back of the church taking up the collection, the Cross Bearer should retrieve the cross and proceed to the back of the church.
 - Note: if the priest tells you that there is a second collection, please wait until the ushers are taking up the second collection.
- b) The other servers follow the priest to the front of the altar. Do not walk in front of the priest as you take your places on either side of the priest to receive the gifts from the gift bearers.
- c) The Cross Bearer escorts the gift bearers to the front of the church with the gifts and returns the cross to the stand.
- d) Depending on which gift you are handed by the priest you do one of the following:
 - Server who is handed the wine cruet, proceeds directly to the credence table and also picks up the water cruet and waits until the Priest is has set the host on the Altar.
 - Server who is handed the collection basket places it underneath the right front side of the altar and proceeds to the credence table.

7. PREPARING FOR THE CONSECRATION

- a) As the Priest is praying at the Altar, one Server brings the cruets of water and wine to the altar.
- b) When the priest has finished pouring out the wine and water, he will return them to you. Bow reverently to the priest, and return the cruets to the credence table.
 - Note: During Masses when incense is used, the priest will now use the incense over the gifts. Server who is in charge of incense should be ready and waiting to hand him the thurible at this time.
- c) The other two servers should bring the bowl and pitcher and towel to allow the priest to wash his hands. Drape the towel over one arm and hold the pitcher and bowl to pour just a small amount of water over the priest's fingers and pause while he wipes his hands. Then bow to the priest and return the bowl, pitcher and towel to the credence table. Take your seats once again.

8. RINGING OF THE BELLS

- NOTE: In most Sunday Masses, the Ringing of the Bells will be handled by the music ministry. The directions below are only used for Masses when the Priest asks you to ring the bells.
- a) Upon reciting the Holy, Holy, Holy prayer, all servers kneel along with the congregation. When the priest holds up the host and finishes the solemn words of Jesus..."which will be given up for you"...the server in charge of the bells will do a very short ringing of the bells, or the gong, if instructed.
 - b) Then, when the priest lifts the cup and concludes the words of Jesus, once again, a very short ringing of the bells, or gong.

9. THE SIGN OF PEACE

- a) Upon the conclusion of the Eucharistic prayer, the priest holds up both the bread and cup and says the concluding prayer to which we all respond AMEN.
- b) We stand and recite the Our Father.
- c) When the priest calls for an exchange of Sign of Peace, we greet each other as well as the priest and then immediately proceed to the credence table to retrieve all the patens needed for the distribution of Holy Communion.
- d) Set the patens on the altar in the locations preferred by the priest as shown in the photos. Please walk behind Fr. Tim to set the paten on the right side of the altar.

Small Paten for
the 10:30
Mass only



Monsignor Michael Foley



Father Timothy O'Mara

- e) While two servers are getting the patens, the Book Holder will retrieve the book and holder from the altar and place them on the table by their seat.

10. CONSECRATION and COMMUNION

- a) Upon completing these tasks, all servers return to your places and kneel down after the Lamb of God prayer.
- b) After the priest consumes the body and the blood of Jesus, the servers should immediately stand up and take their place beside the Extraordinary Ministers to receive communion.
- c) After receiving communion, one server will wait to clear the altar while the others are requested to return to kneeling during the distribution of communion.
 - The distribution of Holy Communion is a very holy time and the Altar Servers (and the congregation) should kneel at this time.
- d) While clearing the Altar, be careful to fold the Corporal inward to contain anything that may be fallen on it during the consecration. Place the Pall and the folded Corporal on the Chalice as shown in the picture and place all of these on the Credence Table.
- e) When distribution of communion is completed and the hosts have been returned to the Tabernacle, you can take your seats.



11. CONCLUSION and RECESSIONAL

- a) After a few moments of meditation, the priest will say “let us pray” at which point the book bearer brings him the book [as discussed in section 3].
- b) Upon the concluding prayer, return the book to its place and go back to your seat.
- c) When the priest motions for you to begin the recessional. Get the cross and candles.
 - Note: Do not carry the incense out at this time.
- d) The Cross Bearer goes to the second pew and turns toward the altar.
- e) The Candle Bearers stop at the first pew and turn toward the altar.
- f) If there are additional Altar Servers, they stop in front of the Candle Holders and also turn toward the altar.
- g) The Priest and Eucharistic Ministers will line up in front of the Altar Servers.
- h) When the Priest genuflects, any Altar Server with something in their hands should bow their head only. Other Altar Servers should bow to the waist.
- i) All turn and process slowly to the back of church.
- j) Extinguish the candles and return them and the cross to stands in the back of the church.

