

MINISTRY OF ALTAR SERVER

The Church of Saint Ann—Lawrenceville, New Jersey



Altar Server Procedures

1. Arriving at Church

- Arrive **at least 10 minutes** before Mass is scheduled to begin.
- Dress appropriately (no flip-flops)
- Use the vestment closet in the sacristy to dress in a white altar server's *alb* (robe) with *cincture* (belt) tied around your waist. The cross is also worn.
- Return the alb to hanger after mass (and fasten top button so that the robe doesn't fall off the hanger and onto the floor).

2. Preparing the Altar for Mass

- Check the altar to see if everything is out and prepared for Mass. Check credence table (next to choir section) for the following: Chalice, four cups and four *purificators* (small cloths), pitcher of water, bowl and towel (for washing priest's hands, small cruet of water (for priest to mix with wine). *Corporal* (white altar cloth) should be in the altar. Note that at the 7: 30 a.m. Mass we only need two cups.
- Stop and reverently bow to the altar on your way back to the front lobby.
- Light the two altar candles (and Paschal Candle when on the altar).
- Place *sacramentary* (red cover) Mass book on designated area.(table)
- Check offertory table at rear of church (just inside main entrance) for large bread plate with hosts (and one large host) and full wine decanter.

3. The Mass

We need three servers at each Mass—

Altar Server 1 – CROSS BEARER and SACRAMENTARY

Altar Server 2 – TORCH AND ALTAR PREP

Altar Server 3 – TORCH AND ALTAR PREP

Entrance Procession

- Carry the cross and torches and lead opening procession (cross is in front). Start moving down the aisle as the music begins. Always be sure the priest is ready and in the procession. Process slowly and reverently.
- Proceed to left of altar and place cross and torches in stand, then (server 1) move to the chair next to the priest (organ/choir side) and stand facing the congregation and (servers 2 and 3) can sit in the first pew, side aisle. If there are only two servers both can sit in the sanctuary area.

Opening Prayer from Sacramentary

- Hold the sacramentary ready to open. When priest says, “Let Us Pray”, step down but not in front of priest, face the priest and open the sacramentary to the first ribbon. Hold the sacramentary in front of priest with arms outstretched, so as not to block the priest from the view of the congregation. The priest will raise or lower the sacramentary to a comfortable height for him to read the prayers.
- When opening prayer is finished and congregation responds, “Amen”, return to your seat and place sacramentary on arm of your chair.

Offertory

- After the Prayer of the Faithful and the priest says, “Our ushers will now receive your gifts” (on Sundays), go to the credence table and begin to prepare the altar for the Eucharistic celebration.
- Bring the chalice and four cups (two cups at 7:30 a.m. Mass) from the credence table to the altar, carrying only two cups at a time; place the cups at the corner of the altar.
- Bring the sacramentary to the altar and place to the left of the corporal (unopened).
- After the altar is prepared, get the cross and torches and walk to the rear of the church to lead the Offertory Procession—you are escorting two people carrying the bread and wine.
- When the priest is positioned in front of the altar and signals, process slowly and reverently toward the priest and lead the procession. When you reach the priest move left and return the cross to its stand.
- Move to the credence table and get the water cruet and bring it to the priest; wait until the wine has been poured into each of the cups before stepping forward with the water cruet.

- If another server already brought the water cruet to the priest, then pick up the water pitcher/bowl or towel and wait for the priest's signal to approach him. If you are carrying the pitcher/bowl, pour water on the priest's fingers, using the bowl to catch the water. Hand the towel to the priest.

Communion

- After the Offertory, servers stand in a line facing the altar from the organ/choir side of the sanctuary; use pads for kneeling during the consecration.
- After receiving communion, wait until the priest and Eucharistic ministers have left the altar and then return to your seat. After communion, Server 2 or 3 is responsible for removing the corporal from the altar to the credence table.

Closing

- When the priest stands after communion and says, "Let us pray", open the sacramentary to the closing prayer and hold it open.
- After the blessing and the priest says, "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord", servers get the cross and the torches, move to the front of the altar and line up behind the priest facing the altar. The cross-bearer should be the furthest from the priest/altar followed by the torch-bearers.
- When the priest bows and turns toward the back of the church, turn and proceed slowly to the rear of the church and return the cross and torches to the stands in the church lobby.

4. After Mass

- After the closing hymn, extinguish the altar candles and check for anything else out of place on the altar.
- Then hang up your alb in the vestments closet in the sacristy and be sure it doesn't fall onto the floor (be sure to fasten top button after placing on hanger).

NOTE: If there is only one server, he or she carries in the processional cross and assists with everything. If there are only two servers at a Mass, then the second server does NOT carry a torch but walks with hands folded behind the cross and in front of the priest. Servers one and two would then work together to prep the altar, etc. If you are new (an apprentice), we ask that

you vest, sit up front in a pew and watch Masses before you are scheduled to serve, take time to lead the ministry before actively participating. Ask questions of the older servers, Deacon Jim, Father Gerard, Monsignor Casey and Sr. Pat if you are unsure.

Altar Server Scheduling At the Catholic Church of St. Ann:

Scheduling is done through software called **Ministry Scheduler Pro** which is found on the homepage of the Saint Ann website. Please make sure we have your current email address and notify us of any changes. Because of the number of Altar Servers we have, everyone cannot be assigned to serve at a mass every week nor can we guarantee that you will be assigned to the same mass each time. You do have the option with this software of specifying your preferences and the software will schedule accordingly. Finally, while emergencies happen, your schedule is available early enough to prevent last minute requests for substitutions. We depend on you. We depend on your parents as well to insure you fulfill your commitment.

ALTAR SERVERS PRAYER

Loving Father, creator of the universe, you call your people to worship, to be with you and one another at Mass. I thank you for having called me to assist others in their prayer to you. May I be worthy of the trust you have placed in me, and through my example and service today, help to bring others closer to you. I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who is Lord forever and ever. Amen.

PLEASE KNOW THAT YOUR SERVICE IS GREATLY APPRECIATED BY THE COMMUNITY OF ST. ANN CHURCH. YOUR REVERENT PARTICIPATION HELPS TO ENRICH OUR CELEBRATION OF THE MASS.