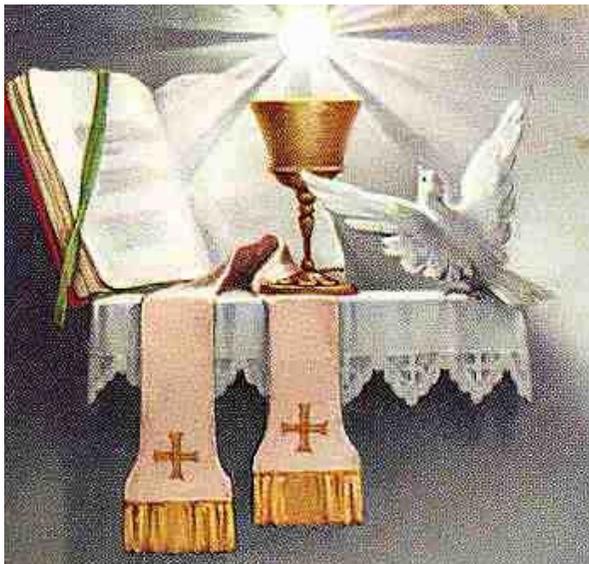


## *Altar Server's Prayer*

*Cord Jesus,  
thank you for the opportunity  
to serve You during the Holy Mass.  
In Your Sacred Presence,  
my heart is filled with joy and peace.  
May Your Spirit always guide me  
so I may grow in Your love  
by the grace of the Heavenly Father.  
Amen.*



## **Saint Lawrence Martyr**

2815 Jessup Road  
Jessup, Maryland 20794



**Handbook  
2014**

*Dear Altar Servers,*

*I want to personally thank you for your willingness to serve as an altar server at Saint Lawrence Martyr Parish. The ministry that you do is a great privilege. It is service to Christ Himself and to the People of God. Did you know that the ministry of Altar Server, sometimes called an acolyte, is among the earliest of all liturgical roles? Only the ministries of the presider (priest) and deacon have a longer history and a place closer to the altar during the celebration of the Eucharist. Apart from your specific duties, your reverence and the way you serve at the altar helps to create an atmosphere of worship for everyone at Mass. Without your help, our celebration of Holy Mass or the other sacraments might go less smoothly or be less solemn. All the members of Saint Lawrence Martyr Parish thank you, and we know that we can expect you to offer your very best to Jesus who becomes present on the altar. I could say a lot about serving, but instead, I'd like you to read what Saint John Paul II once said when he spoke to thousands of altar servers who gathered with him at the Vatican for World Youth Day 2001. May his words inspire you, as your service continues to inspire us. This booklet should help you to serve with joyful heart and well-trained hands. God bless you always.*

*Fr. Victor Scooco, O.S.S.T.*

*Pastor*

*Purificators:* The small towels that are used to clean the chalices during the distribution.



*Lectionary:* The large red book from which the lector proclaims the first and second reading.

*Evangelary:* The large red book that contains the Gospels to be proclaimed by the deacon or the priest.

*Roman Missal:* The large red book from which Father prays during Mass.



*Sacristy:* The portion of the Church building where the priests, deacons, and servers vest and prepare for Mass.

*Sanctuary:* The area of the Church that contains the altar and the ambo.

*Thurible:* A metal vessel for the ceremonial burning of incense. The thurible is also known as a censer.

*Thurifer:* The one who carries the thurible and boat when needed.

tion and other special occasions.

*Humeral Veil:* A short robe that the priest or deacon wears around his shoulders to hold a vessel containing the Eucharist or to cover his hands during Eucharistic Benediction.

*Monstrance:* A large display-like vessel used to hold the consecrated host during adoration and/or Eucharistic Benediction.

*Pyx:* A small round vessel which is the size of a small host which is used when a minister carries the consecrated host to the sick or homebound.



*Corporal:* A small cloth that sits on top of the altar where Father places the chalice, paten, and flagon. Its purpose is to catch any small crumbs of the Blessed Sacrament that may fall onto the altar.

*Credence Table :* The table that has the chalices, Communion bowls or patens, finger bowl, water cruet, and finger towel.

*Cruet :* The little pitcher that hold either water or wine for use during the Mass.

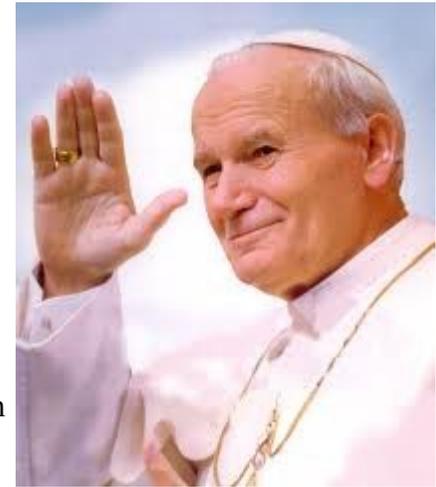
*Finger Towel :* A towel that Father will use to dry his hands.

*Flagon or Flask:* The large glass decanter that holds the wine at Mass.

*Paten:* A small dish or bowl that holds the bread that will be used during Mass.

Dear altar servers!

Your commitment to the altar is not only a duty, but a great honor, a genuine holy service. In connection with this service, I wish to propose some reflections to you.



The altar server's clothing is very special. It recalls the garment that each one puts on when he is welcomed in Jesus Christ in the community. I am referring to the baptismal gown, whose profound meaning Saint Paul clarifies: “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Galatians 3:27).

Even if you, dear altar servers, can no longer fit into your baptismal gown, you have put on [the clothing] of altar servers. Yes, baptism is the point of departure of your “authentic liturgical service,” which places you next to your bishops, priests, and deacons (see *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, No. 29).

The altar server occupies a privileged place in the liturgical celebration. He who serves at Mass, presents himself to a community. He experiences firsthand that Jesus Christ is present and active in every liturgical act. Jesus is present when the community comes together to pray and render praise to God. Jesus is present in the Word of sacred Scripture. Jesus is present above

all in the Eucharist under the signs of bread and wine. He acts through the priest who, in the person of Christ, celebrates the holy Mass and administers the sacraments.

Therefore, in the liturgy, you are much more than simple “helpers of the parish priest.” Above all, you are servers of Jesus Christ, of the eternal High Priest. Thus, you, altar servers, are called in particular to be young friends of Jesus. Be determined to go deeper and to cultivate this friendship with him. You will discover that in Jesus you have found a true friend for life.

The altar server often has a candlestick in his hand. How can one not think of that which Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount: “You are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14).”? Your service cannot be limited to the inside of a church. It must shine in everyday life: in school, in the family, and in different realms of society. Because, whoever wishes to serve Jesus Christ inside a church must be his witness everywhere.

Dear young people! Your contemporaries wait for the real “light of the world” (see John 1:9). Do not hold your candlestick only inside a church, but carry the light of the Gospel to all those who are in darkness and are living through a difficult time in their life.

I have spoken of friendship with Jesus. How happy I would be if something more sprang from this friendship! How beautiful it would be if some of you were to discover a vocation to the priesthood! Jesus Christ has urgent need of youths who will be at his disposition with generosity and no reservations. Moreover, might not the Lord also call one or two of you girls to embrace the consecrated life to serve the Church and the brothers and sisters? Even for those who wish to be united in marriage, the service of altar servers teaches that a real union must always include readiness for reciprocal and free service.

John Paul II

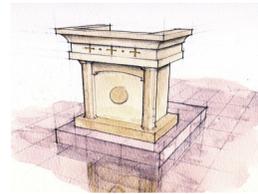
*Address at the General Audience, August 1, 2001*

## “What’s what”

*Alb:* The white gown that you will wear just as the priest and the deacon do.

*Scapular:* The apron-like piece of clothing which you wear over your alb.

*Cincture:* A belt made out of cloth worn around your waist; it acts like a belt.



*Ambo or Lectern:* Where the lector stands to read the Scripture readings and the deacon or the priest proclaims the Gospel

*Boat:* A small liturgical vessel containing the incense that will be used with the thurible.

*Chalice:* A cup that Father will use to consecrate the wine into the Blood of Christ.

*Ciborium:* A cup, which looks similar to a chalice, but is used to store consecrated hosts in the Tabernacle. A Ciborium has a lid whereas a chalice does not.



*Chasuble:* The vestment the priest wears at Mass

*Dalmatic:* Similar to the chasuble, the vestment that the deacon wears at Mass when fully vested. The dalmatic has sleeves, the chasuble does not.

*Cope:* A large cape worn by the priest or deacon for Benedic-

## PART 3

### CLOSING OF MASS

- A.. Bring the Roman Missal to the Celebrant when he says “Let us pray”. Hold the Roman Missal so that the Celebrant can read it.
- B. When the closing hymn begins, the Cross bearer should get the Cross, candle bearers should get the candles, thurifer gets incense (if used) and all servers should go to their places in the church aisle.
- C. Turn and face the Altar.
- D. When the Celebrant, Priests, and Deacons enter the aisle, wait for them to bow and then turn and process at a normal walking pace to the back of the church.
- E. The order of procession is: thurifer (if present), cross bearer, candle bearers, deacon and priest. The lector does not process out. If there is only one server, he or she should carry the cross.

### IV. AFTER MASS (CLEANING UP)

- A. Take the washbowl to the Sacristy and empty water into the sink, wipe the bowl dry, and return it to the table.
- B. Extinguish the candles.
- C. Help set up for the next Mass if there is one.
- D. Hang up your alb (neatly) and any others that may have fallen to the floor of the closet.

NOTE: If you cannot serve the Mass to which you are assigned, you must arrange for your own substitute.



# *Duties at Sunday Mass*

## I. PREPARATION

- A. Arrive for your scheduled Mass 15 minutes prior to the start of the Mass.
- B. Wear clean shoes, black shoes preferred. You may wear sandals , but no flip flops.
- C. Select your alb. The alb should be long enough to come to the top of your shoes. Remember your alb is a sacred vestment and should be treated as such.
- D. Make sure these items are in place for Mass.
  - 1. Roman Missal.
  - 2. Book stand on altar
  - 3. Water pitcher, bowl and hand towel on the table
  - 4. Cruet of water on table.
  - 5. Book stand in front of the altar for the Book of Gospel
  - 6. Unconsecrated hosts and wine on the table near the cry room.
- E. If incense is used, prepare the incense stand and light charcoals.
- F. If holy water will be used, be sure the holy water bucket and aspergillum (sprinkler) are where the priest may want them.
- G. Light candles. For Sunday Mass that means those on the altar and those on the high altar next to the tabernacle. If there are at least two servers, light the processional candles that you will carry.
- H. If you are the cross bearer (crucifer) get the cross and be ready to move to the back of the church with the priest and other servers.
- I. If you are carrying the thurible (incense) get it and be ready to move to the back of the church where you will lead the entrance procession.

## II. POSTURE AND REVERENCES

- A. The role of the Altar Server is to assist the Priest and the whole community in the celebration of the Mass. Posture and attitude is very important.
- B. Hold your hands together unless you are carrying something or sitting.
- C. Stand with your weight evenly placed on both feet.
- D. Sit straight.
- E. Pay attention to the Priest and the flow of the Mass.

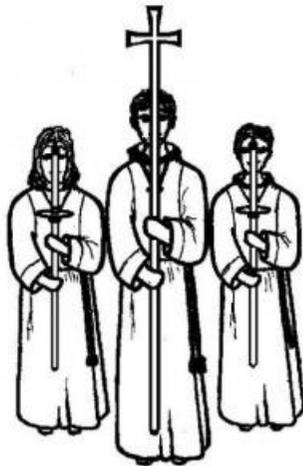
## III. THE MASS

### PART 1

BE WAITING AT THE BACK OF THE CHURCH WITH CROSS AND CANDLES FIVE MINUTES PRIOR TO THE START OF MASS

#### A. The Procession

- 1. Thurifer (incense bearer)
- 2. Cross and candle bearers
- 3. Lector
- 4. Deacon (if present)
- 5. Principal Celebrant



B. As the procession enters the sanctuary, and the priest bows, the Cross Bearer places the Cross in its stand. The candle bearers walk behind the Cross Bearer and place their candles in the proper place and then proceed to their seats and stand in front of their seats. If there is only one server, he or she should carry the cross.

C. At the opening Prayer when the Celebrant says “Let us pray”, bring the Roman Missal to him and hold it so that he can read it.

### PART 2

START THESE DUTIES WHEN THE COLLECTION BEGINS

- A. Offertory (After the General Intercessions when everyone sits down.)
  - 1. Place the Roman Missal on the altar.
  - 2. Bring the Chalice to the altar.
  - 3. Go with the Celebrant to receive the gifts.
  - 4. Bring the cruet of water to the Celebrant (or the Deacon).
  - 5. If incense is used:

The thurifer brings the thurible to the priest at the altar. After the priest puts incense in, the priest incenses the altar. The altar server steps back to allow the priest room to move and when the priest is finished incensing he gives the thurible back to the server who may then go to the front of the altar and incense the people before placing the thurible back on its stand. If a deacon is present, the deacon, not the server, incenses the people.

- 6. Bring the water pitcher, bowl, and towel to wash the Celebrant’s hands.
- 7. After washing the priest’s fingers, the servers meet in the center in front of the altar, face the altar, bow, and take their place kneeling at either side of the altar (or at the chairs, if there are more than two servers).
- 8. Ring the bells at the elevation of the host and precious blood.

