

Altar Server Guidelines



Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish

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Welcome . . .

... to the elite group of Altar Servers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish. You are a valuable member of the team of parishioners who serve Mass. Always remember that is an honor and a privilege to serve at Mass. Thank you for deciding to become an Altar Server.

This booklet will help you with the things you need to know to serve Mass at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish. Please read this information carefully, study it, and keep it as a handy reference. You must know the steps of how to serve Mass to do a good job, so please learn these steps well.

Also included in this booklet are some “vocabulary words” (terms and words for the various items used at Mass), and some guidelines for how to serve Mass. Please **MEMORIZE** the terms so that you know what the things are in the church. Read and familiarize yourself with the guidelines too.

Thank you again,

Fr. Joseph Ruggieri

Father Joseph Ruggieri
Pastor

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- During Mass, hands should be folded unless you are singing from the song books or helping Father. Please do participate in the Mass by praying and singing. *ALWAYS PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT IS GOING ON.*
- After you put your alb and cincture on, make sure the candles are lighted and that you have everything you need at the ledge.
- When lighting and extinguishing candles, please use the candle snuffer so that wax does not fall on the carpet.
- Be EXTRA careful in handling all of the cups and plates. They are expensive and delicate. However, if you should break something by accident . . . *DO NOT WORRY*, but be sure to tell Father.
- Do not wear dirty, old, gym shoes when serving, nor shoes with blinking lights. If you have dress shoes, wear those.
- If Mass has started and there is only one server, go into the sacristy, get dressed and walk up the side aisle and take a seat with the other server.

PLEASE NOTE: It is your responsibility to be present at any and all liturgies you are scheduled for. If you are unable to serve when you're scheduled, it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to find a substitute from the servers' list.

Things in the Church:

- T SANCTUARY - The raised area where the Altar, the Ambo and the Presidential Chair are located.
- T ALTAR - The central object of the Church. The table on which the offerings [the sacrifice] of the Mass are consecrated.
- T AMBO/PULPIT - The place from where the Scriptures are proclaimed and the homily is given.
- T PRESIDENTIAL / PRESIDER'S CHAIR - The chair where the priest sits.
- T TABERNACLE - The gold "safe" in which the Blessed Sacrament (Consecrated hosts) is stored.
- T CREDENCE TABLE - The shelf by the Tabernacle in the Sanctuary on which the cups, plates, chalice and water bowl are placed before Mass begins.
- T SACRISTY - The room next to the Sanctuary where the priests, Altar servers and other ministers prepare for Mass.
- T VESTIBULE - The back of the Church where the main entrance doors to the Church are located. Where the Entrance procession usually starts from.
- T PEWS - The bench-like seats in the main body of the Church.
- T GIFT TABLE - The table in the back of the center aisle where the bread and wine are placed before Mass begins.
- T BAPTISMAL FONT - The "pool" of Holy Water by the Vestibule doors used for baptisms and blessing ourselves when we come into the church.
- T ADORATION CHAPEL - The room next to the Sanctuary for private prayer to Jesus is the Eucharist.
- T STATUES - images of people or events in of faith history that remind us of what we believe or of holy people from the past.

Things Used for Mass:

ALB: the white robe that the priest and servers wear.

CINCTURE: rope “belt” that is tied around the alb.

STOLE: the thin “scarf-like” part of the priest’s vestment.

CHASUBLE: the large colored garment worn by the priest over his alb. [the different colors are for the different “Seasons” of the Church’s year]

CORPORAL: the square “place mat” placed on the Altar by the priest when preparing the gifts.

CHALICE: a cup used for the distribution of the consecrated wine [“the Blood of Christ”].

CIBORIUM: a plate or bowl used for the distribution of the communion bread [“the Body of Christ”].

PURIFICATOR: a small white cloth used to wipe off the communion cups.

CRUETS: small containers used for water and wine.

CARAFE - Larger “pitchers” used to hold the water and wine.

SACRAMENTARY: the big, red book used by the priest for the various prayers.

LECTIONARY: the large book carried by the Lector used for the Scripture readings. This book is always on the pulpit/ambo.

PROCESSIONAL CROSS: a cross or crucifix carried by the server in the procession in and out.

THURIBLE: used for incense [looks like a decorated bowl on a long chain].



How to Serve Mass:

STEP 1: BEFORE MASS

1. Be in Church 10 to 15 minutes before Mass.
2. Get dressed in your “uniform” . . . put on an Alb and cincture.
3. Light candles on the Altar using the candle-lighter.
4. Ask the priest if there is anything special to do at the Mass.

STEP 2: THE BEGINNING OF MASS

1. Gather in the Vestibule of the church in preparation for the entrance procession.
2. When the opening song starts, walk down the center aisle, leading the procession.
3. Spread out in front of the Altar with the other ministers.
4. When priest bows to the Altar, servers bow.
5. Go to your seat.
6. Remain at your seats, paying attention to the Mass, until the collection is taken [or as directed by the priest].

STEP 3: AT THE COLLECTION TIME:

1. When the ushers begin to take the collection, servers go to the credence table and bring the chalices, purificators, the corporal, the towel, bowl, and water pitcher to the Altar. Then return to their seats.
2. The priest will go to Altar to set things up. When he moves toward the center aisle to get the collection servers join him.
3. Servers are to take:
 - a. the plates of bread and place them on the left side of the Altar top.
 - b. the carafe of wine and place it on the Altar near the chalices.
4. After placing the wine on the Altar, one server takes the bowl and the towel, and the other takes the pitcher of water. They wait to wash the priests hands.

5. Father will turn toward the servers to have his hands washed. Pour the water over his hands and into the bowl. Feel free to use lots of water. Then hand him the towel.
6. After washing Father's hands, take the towel, bowl and pitcher back to the ledge.
7. One server returns to the Altar bringing the glass of water for Father and retrieves the empty wine carafe.
8. Servers then return to their seats and participate in the Mass with the rest of the assembly, kneeling and standing at the appropriate times.

STEP 4: AT THE SIGN OF PEACE:

1. After the "Our Father," give the "Sign of Peace" to Father and to the Cantor.
2. One server brings the other communion plates from the ledge to the Altar. Another retrieves the Sacramentary from the Altar as directed by Father.
3. Servers then line up with the Eucharistic Ministers and prepare to receive Communion.
4. When the other Ministers go down to distribute Communion to the Assembly, the servers clear off the rest of the Altar in this way:
 - a. Takes the priest's chalice and purificator back to the ledge.
 - b. Fold the Corporal and bring it to the ledge
 - c. Take Father's glass of water back to the ledge
 - d. There should be nothing left on the Altar that wasn't there when Mass began.
 - e. Return to your seats.

STEP 5: AT THE END OF MASS:

1. When Father walks to the center aisle, servers join him.
2. Servers bow and lead the procession down center aisle and out.

STEP 6: AFTER MASS

1. Hang up your alb and cincture.
2. Extinguish the candles by the Altar.
3. Ask the priest or other ministers if there is anything else you can do to help.
4. Go home and enjoy the rest of your day with your family and friends!! (

Provided to you by:

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