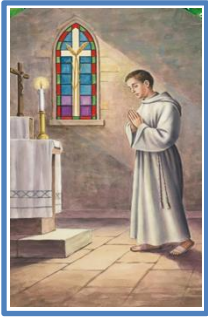




DIOCESE OF  
SAN JOSE

## **ALTAR SERVER COORDINATOR MINISTRY TRAINING**

- Altar Server's Prayer
- Diocesan Guidelines for Altar Servers
- Definition of Altar Servers
- Dress Code for Altar Servers
- Roles of Altar Servers
- Altar Server Guide
- Things to Remember
- Items and Vessels used during Mass



## ALTAR SERVER'S PRAYER

Loving Father, Creator of the universe, you call your people to worship, to be with you and each other at Mass. I thank You for having called me to assist others in their prayer to You. May I be worthy of the trust placed in me and, through my example and service, bring others closer to You. I ask this in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is Lord forever and ever. Amen.

## DIOCESAN GUIDELINES FOR ALTAR SERVERS

*The following guidelines were prepared by the Committee on the Liturgy and presented to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops for discussion at the June 1994 Special Assembly on Thursday, June 16, 1994. The suggested guidelines—which predate the Apostolic Letter motu proprio [Spiritus Domini](#) (2021), opening the instituted ministry of acolyte to women—have been slightly revised according to the third edition of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. They may be used as a basis for developing diocesan guidelines.*

1. Although institution into the ministry of acolyte is reserved to lay men, the diocesan bishop may permit the liturgical functions of the instituted acolyte to be carried out by altar servers, men and women, boys and girls. Such persons may carry out all the functions listed in no. 100 (with the exception of the distribution of Holy Communion) and nos. 187 - 190 and no. 193 of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*.

The determination that women and girls may function as servers in the liturgy should be made by the bishop on the diocesan level so that there might be a uniform diocesan policy.

2. No distinction should be made between the functions carried out in the sanctuary by men and boys and those carried out by women and girls. The term "altar boys" should be replaced by "servers". The term "server" should be used for those who carry out the functions of the instituted acolyte.
3. Servers should be mature enough to understand their responsibilities and to carry them out well and with appropriate reverence. They should have already received holy communion for the first time and normally receive the Eucharist whenever they participate in the liturgy.
4. Servers should receive proper formation before they begin to function. The formation should include instruction on the Mass and its parts and their meaning, the various objects used in the liturgy (their names and use), and the various functions of the server during the Mass and other liturgical celebrations. Servers should also receive appropriate guidance on maintaining proper decorum and attire when serving Mass and other functions.
5. Since the role of the server is integral to the normal celebration of the Mass, at least one server should assist the priest. On Sundays and other more important occasions, two or more servers should be employed to carry out the various functions normally entrusted to these ministers.
6. Acolytes, altar servers, readers, and other lay ministers may wear the alb or
7. Other suitable vesture or other appropriate or dignified clothing. (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no.339) All servers should wear the same liturgical vesture.
8. Servers carry the cross, the processional candles, hold the book for the priest celebrant when he is not at the altar, carry the incense and censer, present the bread, wine, and water to the priest during the preparation of the gifts or assist him when he receives the gifts from the people, wash the hands of the priest, assist the priest celebrant and deacon as necessary.

9. Servers respond to the prayers and dialogues of the priest along with the congregation. They also join in singing the hymns and other chants of the liturgy.
10. Servers should be seated in a place from which they can easily assist the priest celebrant and deacon. The place next to the priest is normally reserved for the deacon.
11. Servers may not distribute holy communion unless they have been mandated for this function by the bishop.
12. The *Order for the Blessing of Altar Servers, Sacristans, Musicians, and Ushers (Book of Blessings*, nos. 1847-1870) may be used before servers first begin to function in this ministry.

Resource link: <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/frequently-asked-questions/guidelines-for-altar-servers>

### **DEFINITION OF ALTAR SERVERS**

It is a great privilege to serve at the Altar of our God. Our loving Savior becomes present on the Altar, just as He was at the Last Supper. Therefore, servers have a solemn responsibility to do their assigned duties with dignity and reverence.

Altar Servers (boys and girls), who start after their first communion and continue for as long as we can keep them. All people of good faith are welcome, and those who think they may desire to serve are encouraged to do so. All that is required is a desire to serve at the Altar of Our Lord.

### **DRESS CODE FOR ALTAR SERVERS**

Dress appropriately, including your shoes:

- **Shoes** – dress shoes (preferably black or brown shoes for boys and brown, black, or white for girls) should be worn. No open toe shoes.
- **Hair** – Hair should be neat and trimmed, appropriate for boys and girls. Girls should have their hair tied back so that it is not in their face.
- **Jewelry** – Do not wear anything that will make noise or will be distracting, or that will cause you to have problems serving. Girls may wear “appropriate” earrings to serve.
- **Vestments** – The servers wear white Albs.

### **ROLES OF ALTAR SERVERS**

- **Cross Bearer** – Server carries the processional Cross or crucifix at the beginning and ending of Mass.
- **Book Bearer** – Server holds the Roman Missal, other ritual books, or ritual binders for the celebrant during Mass, and removes them from the altar during communion.
- **Candle Bearer** – Server carries a candle during the procession at the beginning and ending of Mass.
- **Bells** – The bells are rung at the Epiclesis and at the elevation of the body and blood. This person also pours the water over Father’s hands before communion.
- **Prepare the Altar** – Two servers can function as altar assistants. Servers prepare the altar with the corporal, the Roman Missal, the chalice, Communion cups, and purificators; another server holds the lavabo (bowl) and towel that Father washes his hands in prior to communion and assists in taking items to and from the credence table

to the altar.

- **Incensor (Thurible)** – Only used on special occasions. The server carries the incense in at the beginning of Mass and brings it to the celebrant when needed during Mass.

## **ALTAR SERVER'S GUIDE**

### **BEFORE MASS:**

1. Arrive at least 20 minutes early and be dressed before the Mass begins. Make sure the alb is the right size; the bottom of the alb should be about 2-3 inches above the tops of the shoes.
2. Get vested and proceed to the Narthex and WELCOME the Congregation. Decide with the other servers who will be doing which jobs 5 minutes before the mass begins.
3. Stay close to the priest and lectors during the entrance procession.

### **ENTRANCE PROCESSION:**

1. After prayer, the altar servers will line up in the following order:
  - a. Incensor and Incensor Boat – only used on special occasions, and when used, these altar servers will line up side by side and in front of the crucifix. When used, these altar servers will start the procession.
  - b. Cross / Crucifix – most often the first altar server to start the procession.
  - c. Candles – walk directly behind the Crucifix and walk side by side of each other.
  - d. Other altar servers – if there are other altar servers, then they will walk together in pairs behind the candles. If there is only one server, the person will carry the crucifix.
2. Once the choir has begun to sing, the altar servers will begin the procession. Walk at a normal speed; do not rush.
3. All servers will stand in front of the altar on either side and wait for the presider to arrive in the center. When the presider bows, all altar servers bow with him. Then proceed to complete their function and to sit.
4. The Crucifix will go in the stand. The candles will be placed on the front corners of the altar. The servers will go to their chairs.

### **GREETING:**

1. The priest begins the Mass with the Sign of the Cross.
2. The priest then has an introduction explaining the readings or welcoming people to the mass.
3. Penitential Rite-the priest asks us to recall our sins and ask God for forgiveness, we then respond with the “Lord Have Mercy, Christ Have Mercy, Lord Have Mercy,” which could be sung.
4. The Gloria will then be recited or sung. When the words, “For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord...” are said/sung, the Book server should walk towards the priest or deacon to hold the book.

- After the priest is done with the prayer, the server will close the book. Everyone will be seated to listen to the first reading, the psalm, and the second reading.

## THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Arrive at least 20 minutes before the Mass starts to get dressed
- Check in with your altar coordinator
- Vest in your alb
- Know your responsibilities and perform the duties assigned during the mass in the prescribed orderly manner.
- Be sure you know what you are doing and when and how to do it before Mass begins.
- Maintain a prayerful posture at all times in the Sacristy.
- Be quiet and respectful when on the Altar.
- Be attentive and respond immediately when the priest asks for help.
- Take some time to pray before Mass, and always participate fully during Mass.
- Make sure that your alb is returned the way you found it or better.

## ITEMS AND VESSELS USED DURING MASS

1		2		3		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Roman Missal</li> <li>2. President's Chalice</li> <li>3. Communion Cups &amp; Bowls</li> </ol>
4		6		7		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Water basin &amp; towel Water cruet</li> <li>5. Gospel</li> <li>6. Alb</li> <li>7. President's Binder</li> </ol>
5		8		9		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Ambo</li> <li>9. Cincture</li> </ol>
10		11		12		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Glass bowl &amp; Aspergillum (for holy water)</li> <li>11. Purificator</li> <li>12. Corporal</li> </ol>