

Church of the Infant Saviour  
Pine Bush, NY



Altar Server  
Training Manual

February, 2015

# Altar Server Training Agenda

## Prayer, Welcome and Introduction

History of the Ministry

Importance of Altar Servers to the Liturgy

## Attire and Posture

Need to blend in and not be a distraction

Teamwork (standing and sitting)

Attention of the Priest / Deacon / Acolyte

## Functions of the Server & Overview

Candle Bearers

Cross Bearer

Book Bearer

Thurifer & Boat (Incense... later training)

Vesting and pre-Mass responsibilities

Procession

Holding the Roman Missal

Receiving the Gifts and Preparing the Altar

Post Communion Responsibilities – Altar and Roman Missal

Recessional

After Mass – extinguish candles – neatly put away alb and cross

## Station Breakout and Practice

Procession / Recession / Gifts

Roman Missal / Preparing the Altar / After Communion

## Parent / Altar Server Wrap Up

Importance of Ministry / Scheduling, Substitutes, Communication / Review of Attire / Arrival Time / Attention on the Clergy-Sacristan / Shadowing / Turning in Data Form

**Thank you for your willingness to serve our parish community. Your role is very important to the Mass. The following are qualifications and guidelines to provide consistency and help you feel comfortable as you serve.**

## **Altar Server Qualifications before Training**

*(Additional Information included later in this manual...)*

- Altar Servers should be baptized Catholics, who have received their first Holy Communion.
- Minimum age 3rd grade, male or female. Altar Servers should be individuals who strive to live a moral and faithful life.
- Altar Servers should be mature enough to understand their responsibilities, and carry them out with appropriate reverence.
- Altar Servers should receive Holy Communion in the masses they serve, so they should go to regular confession.
- Altar Servers should be well instructed in what they are called to do, including proper behavior and attire.
- Altar Servers should be able to respond appropriately to the parts of the mass, both recited prayers and various sung parts of the mass.

## **Altar Server Guidelines**

**Proper Clothing:** Servers should come to Church dressed in pants, dresses, or skirts (preferably no jeans please). Please do not wear sneakers, unless they are clean “church shoes”.

**Vestments:** Albs are located in the Altar Server Room in the Church. Please choose one that is the appropriate length (to the top of your shoes).

**Arrival time:** Please arrive 15 to 20 minutes prior to the Mass. This allows you enough time to check in with the priest or deacon, vest, and perform the pre-mass duties of a server.

## **Sample Preparation Prayer Before Serving**

Father in Heaven, your Son, Jesus Christ, showed his love for you by serving his needy brothers and sisters. I now ask you to give me your help as I serve you and your people. Open my mouth to praise you in word and song. Open my ears to hear your word. Open my hands to do your work well. Take from my heart all distracting thoughts. Help me to know what I should do, and do it well. Help me to serve reverently at your holy altar, and so give you praise and glory, now and forever. Amen.

## Altar Server Procedures Before Mass

- If there is only one altar server present, then the candles should be lit on the Altar 5 minutes before Mass begins and the processional cross should be in the sacristy with the lone altar server.
- If there are two altar servers for the Mass, then the candles should be retrieved from the altar and checked to make sure there is enough lamp oil in them to sustain the candle flame for the entire Mass.
- If there are three altar servers, then both the first two points above apply.
- Check with the Mass Coordinator, Sacristan, Priest or deacon to see if your assistance is needed for any final preparations.

## Altar Server Duties

If there are 3 servers, this is how duties are divided

### Cross Bearer

- Carries the cross at the beginning of Mass
- Assists in setting the Altar by bringing the sacred vessels to the deacon if one is present or by placing them on the side corporal.
- Receives the gifts with the Priest
- Assists in clearing the Altar after communion
- Carries the cross at the end of Mass

### Candle Bearers (2)

- Carry the candles at the beginning of Mass
- Receives the gifts with the Priest
- Bring pitcher of water to the Priest and wash the Priest's hands
- Remove empty wine cruet
- Carry candles at the end of Mass
- Extinguish candles before removing altar server alb

# Altar Server Procedures During Mass

**Procession:** Cross bearer (1) leads followed by Servers 2 & 3 (candles). The Lector or Acolyte or Deacon follows. The Priest is the last to process.

Note: If other Parishioners are included in the procession (ex: Baptism), they follow the Servers. When the people begin to sing, slowly process up the aisle. Servers should be reverent and should not sing as they process. Hands should be in the prayer position if you are not carrying something. Continue up just past the first row of seats. Pause briefly before the Altar waiting for all servers to arrive. The candles should flank the Cross and any additional servers should be on the outside of the torches. Everyone bows (except the cross bearer and the candle bearers). Proceed to your seat and remain standing, or place the candles and Cross in the stands (if you are carrying one) and then stand in front of your chair. While you are doing this, the Priest (and deacon if one is present) will bow before the Altar, reverence (kiss) the Altar and begin the Mass. After the opening prayers, the priest (and deacon if one is present) will go to his seat. Please sit when the priest sits.

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

**First and Second Readings:** Remain seated.

Gospel Acclamation: Remain standing until the homily.

**Prayer of the Faithful** (stand):

## LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

### Preparation of the Altar during the Offertory:

- If there is a Deacon, he may bring the chalice, purificator and corporal to the Altar from the credence table. If he does not bring it, you should. At Infant Saviour, it is the practice of the altar servers to bring the sacred vessels and linens to the deacon.
- The corporal is placed on the altar and unfolded.
- The chalice is placed on top of the corporal.
- The purificators are placed next to the chalice.
- If there is not a deacon, the Cross bearer should bring the corporal, the chalice and the purificator to the altar, placing the chalice on the corporal after you have unfolded it (see diagram).

**Processing with the Gift Bearers and Receiving the Gifts:**

- The priest (and deacon if one is present) comes to the center with the altar servers.
- Do not walk in front of the priest or deacon just meet him at the foot of the altar one on either side.
- Upon reaching the priest/deacon they should each take a side and wait to be given either the books or the bread and wine.
- If they are given the prayer book, it should be placed on the side of the altar on one of the stands.
- Please do not walk in front of the priest. If there is a need to be in a different location, walk behind him.

**Preparation of the Gifts:**

- After the Priest gives the servers the gifts, they all turn and face the Altar.
- Wait for the Priest to go first, then together Servers 1 and 2 go to the left of the Altar.
- Put the gifts on the Altar unless a Priest, Deacon or Acolyte is already behind the Altar (then you would hand the gifts to them).
- Go to the Credence table and Servers 2 & 3 get the water cruet (small pitcher) bowl and towel.
- The servers offer the Priest/Deacon the wine and the water and step back after he returns it and prays.
- The two servers step forward so the Priest can wash his hands.
- The server holding the water should pour it over the Priests hands into the bowl.
- After the Priest has washed his hands, the servers should bow their heads and leave.

**Eucharistic Prayer:**

- Stand as the Priest begins: “The Lord be with you... Lift up your hearts...”
- After the Holy, Holy, Holy, kneel at the foot of the Sanctuary.
- The Priest will pray... “Through him with him...”
- After this prayer, the servers stand for the “Our Father.”

**Sign of Peace:**

- Exchange the sign of peace with the other servers and clergy and go to your seats and remain standing.

**Communion:**

- Servers should kneel at their seats after the “Lamb of God”.
- The Extraordinary Ministers will line up in the aisle next to you to receive Communion.
- The Extraordinary Ministers will offer you Communion after they receive.
- After receiving the Eucharist, you will also be given an opportunity to receive the Precious Blood (if you wish).

**During Communion:**

- If there are any trays or linens or empty vessels on the Altar or on the credence table, a server should remove them and place them on the side credence table (cart).
- If there is a filled vessel on the Altar, do not remove it. Please let the Sacristan or Deacon know when they become available.

**Conclusion:**

- Stand when the Priest says "Let us pray..."
- After the final blessing, as the song begins, servers 1, 2 & 3 retrieve the Candles and Cross and move to the center aisle.
- The Cross is farthest down the aisle, then the candles. Any remaining servers should stand slightly behind the Priest and Deacon or Acolyte.
- They should bow to the Altar when the Priest does (all except the Cross bearer and candle bearers bow).
- Then turn and lead the Priest and Deacon or Acolyte down the aisle.
- The Priest normally waits for the second refrain to begin before departing.
- Once the group has reached the back of the church, the servers should return the Cross and candles to the front of the sanctuary (waiting for the song to be over).
- Server 4 should extinguish the candles on the altar.
- Once this is done, the servers should return their albs and crosses to the vesting area.
- Please hang them back on hangers neatly and make sure that the sleeves are pulled out.

# Prayers Recited at Mass

Every Altar Server must be able to recite the prayers of the Mass.

## **The Greeting:**

Priest: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Servers: Amen.

## **The Penitential Rite:**

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,

*And, striking their breast, they say:*

**through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault;**

*Then they continue:*

therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

## **The Glory to God:**

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, Almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

## **The Profession of Faith:**

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through Him all things were made. For us men and our salvation He came down from heaven,

**Server(s) bow here as you say**

and by the Power of the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

**Server(s) may now stop bowing**

For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**The Presentation:**

Priest: Blessed are you Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.

Server: Blessed be God forever.

Priest: Blessed are you Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become our spiritual drink.

Server: Blessed be God forever.

**The Prayer over Gifts:**

Priest: Pray, brethren, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

Server: May the Lord accept this sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of His Name, for our good, and the good of all his holy church.

**The Holy, Holy, Holy:**

Server: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

**The Lord's Prayer:**

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

The Lamb of God:

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.

**The Communion Prayer:**

Priest: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those who are called to the supper of the Lamb.

Server: Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

# Altar Server Scheduling

Please make sure we have your current email address and telephone number and notify us of any changes.

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.

If for any reason, you can no longer fulfill your commitment to the ministry, please let the priest or deacon know that you will no longer be serving. If they do not know, they will continue to schedule you thinking that you are still available to serve.

## Special Occasions

### Holy Days

Typically on Holy Days there is a 7:00pm Vigil Mass (Night before) and an 8:00am and 7:00pm Mass the actual Holy Day. These Masses are exceptionally difficult to schedule. If you can make either of the 7:00pm Masses, please let the priest or deacon know that you'll be available. It would be a great help to us.

### Christmas and Easter

These two Feast Days always require multiple Masses at Infant Saviour. Often we get requests to schedule an altar server at the more popular Masses, e.g. 5:00pm Christmas Eve. In fairness to everyone, we will try and rotate these Masses to accommodate everyone. If you are unavailable, please indicate such when the schedules are announced.

### Confirmation and First Communion

Typically, requests from brothers and sisters to serve for a sibling's First Holy Communion or Confirmation would be taken by the priest or deacon. If you are interested, get your name to the appropriate person as soon as possible.

# Liturgical Terms and Definitions

**Absolution** - In the sacrament of penance, the act by which a priest, having the necessary jurisdiction, remits the guilt and penalty due to sin.

**Advent** - A period of prayer in preparation for Christmas, including four Sundays, the first nearest the feast of St. Andrew, November 30. It is the beginning of the Church's liturgical year.



**Alb** - A full length white vestment worn over the clothes by priests, deacons and altar servers.

**Altar** - In Catholic churches the table on which the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered.

**Ambo** - Elevated pulpit or lectern from which the 1st and 2nd Readings and the Gospel are read. Referred to as the Liturgy of the Word.

**Archbishop** - A bishop who presides over one or more dioceses.



**Aspersory and Aspergillum** - The Aspersory is a container for holding Holy Water. The Aspergillum is a stick-shaped implement with holes in it to dip into the Aspersory and catch the Holy Water for sprinkling the people and things.

**Baptismal Font** - A stone, metal, or wooden receptacle for holding baptismal water used in the solemn administration of the sacrament of Baptism.



**Boat** - the container which holds incense.

**Book of the Gospels** - The book from which the deacon reads the Gospel.

**Finger Bowl/Pitcher** - used for washing the priest's hands during the Preparation of the Gifts (The Offertory. At Infant Saviour this looks more like a dish than a bowl.)



**Cassock** – A black vestment like an alb except with buttons in the front running from the neck to the bottom. A white surplice is worn over the cassock.



**Chalice** - The cup-shaped vessel or goblet used at Mass to contain the Precious Blood of Christ. For centuries it was made of precious material; if it was not of gold, the interior of the cup was gold-plated.



**Chasuble** - the outer garment the priest wears whose color corresponds to the liturgical season.



**Corporal** - A square white linen cloth on which the Host and Chalice are placed during Mass. It is also used under the monstrance at Benediction or under the Blessed Sacrament at any time. (See "How to Fold" later in this manual)



**Ciborium (Ciboria)** - A covered container used to hold the consecrated small Hosts.



**Communion Cups** – other chalices containing the Precious Blood of Jesus used at communion.



**Credence Table** - Small table located near the altar that holds sacred vessels and books.

**Cruet** - small pitcher-like container used to hold water or unconsecrated wine at Mass.

**Deacon** - A man specially ordained to the service of the Church's ministry. The role of deacons is to assist priests in preaching, the conferral of baptism, performance of marriage, the administration of parishes, and similar duties.



**Finger Towel** - small white towel used for drying the priest's hands.



**Funeral Pall** - a large cloth used to cover the casket at funerals.

**Holy Water** - Sacramental water blessed by a priest, invoking God's blessing on all who use it.

**Host** -A victim of sacrifice, and therefore the consecrated Bread of the Eucharist considered as the sacrifice of the Body of Christ. The word is also used of the round wafers used for consecration.

**Incense** - Aromatic gum or resin in the form of powder or grains that give off a fragrant smoke when they are burned. It is used on solemn occasions



**Lectionary** - The book of Scripture Readings usually from which the Old and New Testament readings are read.



**Lector** - Person appointed to read the word of God in the liturgical assembly. Accordingly they read the lesson from Sacred Scripture, except the Gospel, in the Mass and in other sacred celebrations.

**Liturgical Seasons** - the various seasons of the church's year which begins the First Sunday of Advent each year. (See following pages)



**Monstrance** - The sacred vessel which contains the consecrated Host when exposed or carried in procession.

**Narthex** - The gathering area between the exterior doors of the church and the doors to the Nave (worship area).

**Nave** - the main body of the church reserved for worshippers, including the central and side aisles



**Paschal Candle** - A large candle in which five grains of incense have been incased as a symbol of Christ's wounds. It is blessed on Holy Saturday in a special service and is symbolic of the Risen Savior, Light of the World. It is then used in the blessing of baptismal water and remains during the Paschal season in the sanctuary, where it is lighted during liturgical services.

**Presider's Chair** - The chair in which the priest or celebrant sits.

**Procession during Gathering Song** - Normally the procession goes in this order:

- Processional Cross (1 server)
- Processional Candles (2 servers)
- Additional servers
- Lector
- Deacon
- Priest



**Processional Cross** - A crucifix mounted on a staff, carried in solemn services at the head of a procession of the clergy. Processional candles are torch-like candles which flank the processional cross.



**Purificator** - A small piece of white linen, marked with a cross, used by the priest in the celebration of Mass. It is folded in three layers and used by the priest to purify his fingers and the chalice after Holy Communion.



**Roman Missal** - The book that sits on the altar containing the prayers the priest uses for Mass.

**Sacristan** - A person appointed for the care of the sacristy, sacred vessels, vestments, and other articles required by the priest/deacon for any liturgical function.

**Sacristy** - One or more rooms attached to a church, usually near the altar, where the clergy vest for Mass and where there is storage for sacred vessels, vestments, and other articles needed for liturgical use.

**Sanctuary** - The part of a church containing the altar.



**Stole** - A liturgical vestment composed of a strip of material, several inches wide, and worn around the neck by priests and bishops; at the left shoulder like a sash by deacons, for the celebration of Mass, administration of the sacraments, and ceremonies of the Blessed Sacrament.



**Surplice** – A white garment that goes over a cassock.



**Tabernacle** - A cupboard or boxlike receptacle for the exclusive reservation of the Blessed Sacrament.



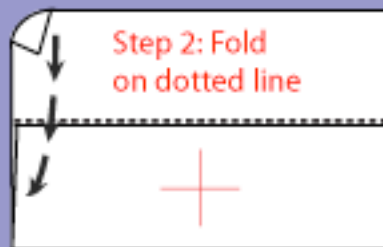
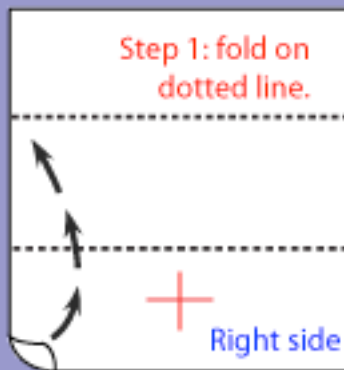
**Thurible** - The censer or vessel in which incense is burned at liturgical services. It consists of a cup-shaped metal body for holding charcoal and incense, with a separate lid for controlling the smoke and fire, and a chain, or chains, allowing the censer to swing safely without spilling its contents.

**Vesting Room** - The room where the clergy vest for Mass.

+++

## How to fold a Corporal

### Folding Instructions:



# Liturgical Seasons

There are six (6) basic Liturgical Seasons:

- (1) Advent,
- (2) Christmas,
- (3) Lent,
- (4) Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday),
- (5) Easter, and
- (6) Ordinary Time.

Broken down a little further, the church calendar follows this schedule:

Advent

Christmas (birth of Christ)  
Holy Family  
Mary the Mother of God (New Year's Day)  
Epiphany  
Baptism of the Lord

Ordinary Time I

Lent  
Ash Wednesday  
Passion (Palm) Sunday

Easter Sacred Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday.)

Easter Vigil (The Resurrection)  
Easter (Celebrate the Resurrection at Masses - The greatest Feast of the year.)  
Second to Sixth Sundays of Easter  
Ascension  
Pentecost

Ordinary Time II

Trinity Sunday  
Body and Blood of Christ  
Ordinary Time II (continued...)  
Solemnity of Christ the King

# Liturgical Colors

**WHITE** - signifies light, innocence, purity, joy, triumph, glory

Season of Christmas

Season of Easter

Feasts of the Lord, other than of His passion

Feasts of Mary, the angels, and saints who were not martyrs

All Saints (1 November)

Feasts of the Apostles

Nuptial Masses

Masses for the dead (Requiem Masses) when the deceased is a baptized child who died before the age of reason

Note: White is the color of Popes' non-liturgical dress. White can be replaced by Silver.

**RED** - signifies the Passion, blood, fire, God's Love, martyrdom

Feasts of the Lord's passion, Blood, and Cross

Feasts of the martyrs

Palm Sunday

Pentecost

Note: Red is the color of Cardinals' non-liturgical dress

**GREEN** - signifies the Holy Ghost, life eternal, hope

Used for Ordinary Time

Time After Epiphany

Time After Pentecost

**VIOLET** - signifies penance, humility, melancholy

Season of Advent

Season of Lent

Good Friday

Note: Violet is the color of Bishops' and Archbishops' non-liturgical dress.

**ROSE** - signifies joy

Gaudete Sunday (Third Sunday of Advent)

Laetare Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent)

**GOLD** - signifies joy

Gold can replace white, red, or green (but not violet)

