



Altar Server Handbook

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Introduction

Welcome to the Altar Server ministry at Sacred Heart! Whether you are a new server or a “veteran”, we are glad to have you as a part of this important ministry. You should take this commitment seriously, while at the same time you have some fun and enjoy the experience.

The celebration of Mass is the center of the whole Christian life for the Church both universal and local, as well as for each of the faithful individually. In it is found the high point both of the action by which God sanctifies the world in Christ and of the worship that the human race offers to the Father, adoring him through Christ, the Son of God, in the Holy Spirit. As one of the closest persons to the altar and to the priest, the service of the altar server is extremely important.

Being a server means serving God and his people. That is what makes serving worth doing, and worth doing well. That is what makes good servers want to do their best. Part of the ministry of servers is to help lead the church’s prayer. What you do there and how you do it can help other people to understand the Mass better and make their love for God stronger. People will take more interest in the liturgy if they see you taking more interest in it while you serve.

Altar servers must have a desire to participate in the liturgy and be trained to perform their functions in a correct and orderly manner. As an altar server you have a special ministry in the Church. It is your privilege to assist the priest at the altar. This means that there is a certain way that is appropriate to behave.

The primary role of the altar server is to assist the priest in the celebration of the liturgy, the Mass, and other public prayer. This is done through specific actions, by setting an example for the congregation by active participation in the liturgy (hymns, responses, etc.), and by being alert.

Many thanks to all our altar servers and their families! You are a very significant part of the Church and our parish is enriched by your dedication and service.

Requirements, Expectations, and Dress Code

Basic requirements for altar servers

- A strong desire to serve at the altar
- Must be a baptized Catholic
- Be a registered, active member of the Sacred Heart parish community
- Must have received the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, and First Communion
- At least one parent of the candidate must read and sign the parent agreement

Characteristics of an altar server

- Is reliable, on-time, and generous in responding to serve
- Participates fully, actively, and consciously in the liturgy
- Thinks about what's going on; anticipates what might happen next
- Works together as a team, willing to learn, follow directions, and help each other and the priest

Expectations

- Punctuality and faithfulness to the monthly schedule
- Adherence to the dress code
- Follow the instructions of the clergy and senior altar servers.
- Be willing to become very familiar with the Mass. Servers will be expected to demonstrate their knowledge at various points in their training.
- Altar servers should not leave the sanctuary after the start of Mass for any reason except bathroom emergencies, illness, or when directed to do so by the priest.
- Be quiet and respectful when serving at the Altar, you are role models.
- Make sure that your cassock/alb is returned the way you found it or better.

Dress code

- Shoes - Dress shoes (preferably black, brown, or white) should be worn. They should be close-toed without a significant heel.
- Hair - Hair should be neat and trimmed, appropriate for boys and girls. Long hair should be pulled back out of the face.
- Clothes - When we participate at Mass, we want to make sure that our dress reflects the reverence we are giving God in prayer. Servers will have a cassock and surplice (for boys) or alb & cincture (for girls) over what they're wearing, which can be hot. So, while clothes worn by servers should be appropriate for Sunday Mass, they should also be comfortable and relatively cool. Practicality is more important than style.

Being an Altar Server

Scheduling

Altar Servers will be scheduled at each Mass. Servers may always volunteer to serve, even if they are not scheduled, though, it is possible they will serve in an apprentice role (observing only) if all duties are already covered by scheduled servers. If there are so many volunteers that the number of servers will be a distraction, you may be asked to wait until your next scheduled Mass.

When you registered as an altar server, you specified the Masses you prefer to serve. You will be scheduled through a scheduling app for the Masses you prefer. If you are available to substitute at another Mass, please let the Coordinator know. If you would like to serve at an extraordinary Mass (for example, Easter Vigil or Christmas Midnight) please let the Coordinator know.

Before each new schedule is made, you will be asked for the days that you are NON-AVAILABLE. Please enter these into the scheduling website/app. You can find a link on our church website.

If for some reason you cannot access the scheduling app, you may email the NON-AVAILABLE dates to the ministry coordinator. Please think carefully about your commitment to serving as well as family and school obligations. Making changes to the schedule can be difficult, but we do understand that emergencies happen and plans change. If a server cannot serve at the mass he/she is scheduled please contact the coordinator to request a sub.

We ask altar servers to be at church **at least fifteen** minutes (ideally 20 minutes) before any liturgy they are scheduled for. Once it is 10 minutes before the start time, we will start looking for replacement servers.

Training

Training will be scheduled regularly for all new altar servers. Once servers have completed the initial training, they will be able to begin serving as an Apprentice. After a server has qualified to serve, they will be added to the regular altar server schedule. All servers continue to participate in ongoing training through: 1) the server advancement process 2) training resources 3) regular practices.

Altar servers will be trained to handle all of the tasks assigned to each specific duty. Servers will be expected to memorize the prayer responses of the Mass, know the names of the vestments and vessels of the altar, and to learn the Order of Mass.

All servers will complete an open note quiz with the help of their parents to assess this information.

Practice

Practices will be held for special celebrations such as Holy Week, Sacraments, etc. If invited to serve you will be attending these special practices. A mandatory re-training session will be held each fall for all servers. Practices give every server the occasion to improve their current skills as well as the opportunity to learn new ones.

Care of Vesture

Servers should always hang-up their cassocks, surplices, and albs carefully after Mass. Coat hangers, jackets, and other personal items may not be left out in the sacristy. Vesture will be washed by parent volunteers on a rotating basis. Bleach should never be used on these vestments.

Advancement

As servers grow in their knowledge, their skill, and their maturity, they will be recognized through advancement in the Altar Server Program. Advancement through the levels of the program is not automatic, nor is it guaranteed. Altar Servers will prove themselves ready for promotion by demonstrating their knowledge and dedication. Information on how to advance between each level is listed in the section, "Advancement Manual".

Rules to Learn, Remember and Follow

- Remember that you can teach others by your example of reverence and attention at Mass. People are watching you, so give them a good example!
- When you are serving Mass, you ought to participate by saying, chanting, or singing the appropriate prayers and responses in a reverent manner.
- If you cannot pay attention, stay awake, or refrain from goofing off, please do not serve that day.
- You must be dressed appropriately to serve.
- Remember, you are obligated to keep the Eucharistic fast—which means no food or drink—except water—for at least an hour before receiving Holy Communion.
- Follow the directions of the priest and Lead Server(s).
- Any altar server who in any way acts uncharitably toward a fellow server risks having his privileges to serve taken away.
- If you cannot serve at your assigned Mass, please request a replacement at least 24 hours in advance.
- Be sure to take care of yourself: use the restroom and drink water before Mass begins. If you are feeling ill or faint, immediately sit down and let another server know so they can get assistance for you.

Altar Server Roles

BOOK –This person holds the book for Father to read the opening and closing prayers.

CRUCIFIX/CREDENCE – This person carries the crucifix at the beginning and end of Mass, assists in taking items to and from the credence table to the altar, and pours the water over Father’s hands prior to communion.

BELLS / CANDLE – This person carries a candle in at the beginning of mass and rings the bells at the elevation of the body and blood.

CREDENCE/CANDLE – This person carries a candle in at the beginning of mass, 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.

THURIFER (optional) –This person carries the thurible (when in use) in at the beginning of mass and brings it to Father when needed during mass.

INCENSE BOAT (optional) – This person stays with the altar server who is carrying the thurible (when in use) and has the container (boat) that contains the incense.

Altar Servers Step-By-Step Guide

BEFORE MASS:

1. Arrive and be dressed 15-20 minutes before the Mass begins. Make sure the cassock or alb is the RIGHT SIZE, the bottom should be about 2-3 inches above the tops of the shoes.
2. Check to make sure that everything is set up and light candles. (If there is a visiting priest, talk to him ahead of time to see if you need to do anything differently for him).
3. Proceed to the Narthex. Check with the Lead Server to determine who is doing what jobs. At 5 minutes prior to mass start, bring candles and crucifix to the narthex.
4. Stay close to the priest, lectors, and anyone else who will be in the entrance procession.

ENTRANCE PROCESSION:

1. After prayer, the altar servers will line up in the following order:
 - a. Thurifer & Boat – 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. 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; make sure to keep candles upright at all times – the wax is very hot and it is difficult to get out of fabrics.
 - d. Other altar servers – if there are other altar servers, then they will walk together in pairs behind the candles.
 - i. If there is only one server, the person will carry in the crucifix.
 - ii. If there are only two servers, then the first will carry the crucifix and no candles will be carried. The second server will line up behind the crucifix.
2. Once the opening hymn begins, the altar servers will begin the procession. Walk at a normal speed; do not rush or run down the aisle.
3. All servers holding an object bow their head upon approaching the altar, place their objects where they belong, and stand at their seat. Servers not holding an object genuflect before the altar before going to their seats and standing.
4. If incense is used, the thurifer will give the priest the thurible to incense the altar, then receive it back when the priest is done and return it to the stand.

5. Servers are to stand and sit with the congregation. While standing, servers should have their hands in the prayer position. When sitting, servers should sit quietly without fidgeting.

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 "Kyrie".
4. The Gloria will then be recited or sung (except during Advent/Lent). 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 to hold the book.
5. After the Gloria, the priest will say, "Let us pray..." and read the opening prayer.
6. After the priest is done with the prayer, the server will return the book to the stand on the credence table. Everyone will be seated to listen to the first reading, the psalm, and the second reading.

LITURGY OF THE WORD:

1. First Reading – The Lector will come forward to read the First Reading (No action is required by the altar servers).
2. The psalm will be recited or sung (No action is required by the altar servers).
3. Second Reading – The Lector will come forward to read the Second Reading (No action is required by the altar servers).
4. Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia) – When the choir begins to sing the Alleluia, the priest will move towards the ambo (lectern) to proclaim the Gospel reading. If incense is being used, the **thurifer** will proceed with the priest to the lectern. Other servers should stay in place.
5. The priest will proclaim the Gospel, then give his homily. Be seated for the homily.
6. After the Homily, the priest will go back to his seat and reflect for a moment. Then the priest will stand for the Profession of Faith. Everyone stands to recite the Nicene Creed.
7. The priest will start the Prayers of the Faithful, and the priest or lector will read the petitions of the church (Everyone responds "Lord, hear our prayer"). After the petitions, the priest will say a prayer. All will respond with "Amen," and the congregation will sit down.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST:

OFFERTORY COLLECTION – After everyone has been seated, the ushers will walk forward with the baskets to collect money.

1. While the baskets are being passed, the **credence servers** will bring the chalice, ciborium, water cruet, lavabo & towel, and Roman Missal from the credence table and put it on the altar credence table. The servers will sit down and wait for the priest to stand and walk to accept the gifts.
2. When the priest proceeds to the front to receive the gifts, three (**2 credence servers + 1 additional**) servers will join him, one walking behind the priest to be on his right side.
 - i. The priest will hand the gifts to the servers as he receives him. Stay with the priest until all gifts are received and the priest turns to return the altar.
 - ii. The ciborium and wine cruet are taken to the altar credence table.
 - iii. The basket is placed in front of the altar.

PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

1. After the gifts have been received, the **two (2) credence servers** will proceed to the altar credence table
2. Servers will un-stopper the wine and water cruets and put the stoppers to the side
 - a. One server holds the wine cruet in their left hand with the handle facing Father. Their right hand will be flat across their heart.
 - b. The other server holds the water cruet in their left hand with the handle facing Father. Their right hand will be flat across their heart
 - c. Father will take the cruets to pour the wine and water and hand them back to the servers.
3. One server replaces the stopper in the wine cruet and returns it to the altar credence table.
4. One server prepares the lavabo and towel, hanging the towel over his left arm. The other server pours water over Father's hands. Father will take the towel and dry his hands. He will then bow to both servers and the servers bow in return.
5. The servers will then return their seats and remain standing, because the priest will then invite the congregation to stand as well to enter into the Eucharistic prayer.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER:

1. The priest then begins with the preface and then will enter the congregation into the Sanctus (HOLY HOLY), which will be sung or recited.
2. The congregation, along with the altar servers, will kneel. The altar servers approach the sanctuary and kneel on the step; their hands are folded reverently in prayer. You can use the cushions provided if you need to. Remember to try to stay still and not slump or fidget.
3. When the priest prays the Epiclesis he will extend his hands, palm down, over the gifts of the altar. When this occurs, **the bells server rings the bells quickly once**, and then places them back on the cushion to mute them.

4. The priest will first pick up the host, to be consecrated, by saying "...take this, all of you and eat of it; this is my body which will be given up for you." The priest will raise the Body of Christ above his head, and the server will **ring the bells three (3) times**. (1-2-3, pause, 1-2-3, pause 1-2-3)
5. The priest will genuflect and then pick up the chalice and say, "...take this, all of you, and drink from it: for this is the chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me." The priest will raise the chalice above his head, and the server will **ring the bells three (3) times**. (1-2-3, pause, 1-2-3, pause 1-2-3)
6. The priest will then proclaim the mystery of faith, which will be sung or recited.
7. The priest will then finish up the prayer by remembering the saints, all those who have departed before us, and chant or recite, "Through Him, with Him, and in Him..."
8. The Great Amen will be sung or recited. All stand and the Our Father will be recited. Servers do not leave their pew during the sign of peace.

COMMUNION:

1. The Lamb of God will either be sung by the choir or recited by the priest, and the congregation will join in. During this time, servers retrieve patens from the credence table and then return to kneel on the step. The lead server will determine who has patens.
2. The priest will distribute the Body of Christ to the Extraordinary Ministers and servers. The first server with a paten will hold it under their chin as they receive. They will then rise and assist Father with other communicants.
3. Servers with patens accompany the priest or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to their station. Remember, once you have used the paten, you must keep it **flat** so as not to drop any particles of the Holy Eucharist on the floor.
4. If you do not have a paten, return to your chairs once you receive Communion.
5. Once the Extraordinary Ministers or priest brings the ciborium which has carried the body of Christ back to the sanctuary, the two credence servers approach to assist the priest.
6. The Priest will combine all of the consecrated hosts into one (1) ciborium. The lid will go on top and the Priest will take it to the tabernacle. All servers will genuflect with the Priest towards the tabernacle.
7. The priest will purify the other vessels at the altar. The credence servers take turns retrieving an object and returning it to the side credence table until all objects are cleared. The final two items to be moved at the veiled chalice and book/stand. This can be done in unison, with a bow to the altar.

CONCLUDING RITE:

1. The priest will then stand to pray the prayer after communion. The priest will say, "Let us pray..." which is the cue for the **book** server to bring the book over. You should be prepared in advance with the book in your hands. There may also be a prayer over the people.

2. The priest may then present the announcements. The crucifix server should retrieve the crucifix near the end of the announcements.
3. The priest will then conclude the mass with the Sign of the Cross.
4. When the music begins, the crucifix will lead the way to the center aisle. The other servers will follow the crucifix. All process down the stairs and stand in front of the altar and wait for the priest. Make sure to allow enough space for the priest near the front.
5. The priest will come down and stand in front of the altar; after a verse of the hymn, he will bow and turn (the servers will bow at the same time as the priest and turn right to process out).
6. The servers will walk out of the church and gather in the lobby. The priest will say a blessing.
7. The servers can then put back the crucifix, extinguish the candles, and hang up their cassocks/albs in smallest to largest size order.

Advancement Manual

Advancement Levels

Apprentice

An Apprentice is a candidate who is learning how to become an Altar Server. Apprentices will be scheduled at the Masses they wish to serve. At the discretion of the presiding priest, Apprentices may process in the opening and closing procession. Apprentices sit in reserved seats that allow them to be close enough to directly observe and learn from the Altar Servers. Altar serving can be a little scary at first. The apprentice program is a chance for new servers to get past being nervous and build the confidence that they need to enjoy service.

Junior Altar Server

Once an apprentice becomes certified, they are promoted to Junior Altar Server. Junior Altar Servers are learning new parts of the Mass and new responsibilities. In this first year, they are demonstrating to themselves and to the community that they are fully capable of service at all parts of the Mass. Junior servers will demonstrate their knowledge of each duty before being certified to perform it during the Mass.

Senior Altar Server

The main body of servers is made up of Senior Altar Servers. They are promoted to this position based on their proven track record of service. This includes:

- Fulfilling scheduled assignments
- Willingness to serve when asked to fill in at last minute
- Mastery of all duties of a junior altar server

They may learn new responsibilities for special services, but their competence at weekend Mass is well established.

Lead Altar Server

Some Senior Altar Servers will show a commitment to leadership in their service. They reach out to newer servers to help them learn. They drive their Altar Server teams to excel. These servers may be recognized as Lead Altar Servers, and given responsibilities beyond what other servers are asked or permitted to do.

- Has fulfilled all duties of previous levels of server
- Shows ability to help younger servers when appropriate
- Has been asked by Altar Server Coordinator to become a Senior Altar Server

Apprentice

The Apprentice Program gives new Altar Servers the opportunity to learn by closely watching experienced Altar Servers. The Apprentice's job is to watch and learn.

Apprentices dress in vesture and walk in procession with the regular Altar Servers. An apprentice will be assigned as an observer for their first Mass, at minimum. They will be assigned the position of book holder for a minimum of **three** (3) Masses.

REQUIREMENTS:

Persons meeting the requirements to become an Altar Server (see page 4) are admitted to the Apprentice level after attending a new Altar Server training.

Apprentice Altar Servers are expected to be familiar with the Order of Mass. They should know the Prayers of the Mass well enough to participate fully.

1) Apprentices should be able to recite the following prayers from memory:

- a. The Lord's Prayer
- b. Lamb of God (Agnus Dei) – we will practice these as a group, but please practice at home
- c. Holy, Holy, Holy (Sanctus) – we will practice these as a group, but please practice at home

2) Following training, Apprentices must be able to identify the following parts of the church:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| a. Altar | d. Sacristy |
| b. Ambo | e. Altar Server seating |
| c. Sanctuary | f. Presider's chair |

3) Following training, Apprentices must be able to identify the following Sacramentals:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| a. Roman Missal | c. Ciborium |
| b. Chalice | d. Cruets |

4) Must be able to show the following:

- a. Ability to sit/stand/kneel reverently
- b. Genuflection
- c. Willingness to follow the directions of the priest and other servers

After **four (4)** Masses serving as an Apprentice, the Altar Server may request to become certified as a Junior Altar Server.

Junior Altar Server

Junior Altar Servers are learning to master service at the Mass. They are competent in their duties, and are working to learn more about the various roles and responsibilities of the Altar Server.

REQUIREMENTS:

Served at least **four (4)** times as an apprentice, and attended two trainings/practices; or obtained the Altar Server coordinator's sign-off (for example, if they are transferring from a different parish).

1) Must meet all of the Apprentice requirements.

2) Should be able to recite the following prayers from memory:

- a. all of the Apprentice prayers
- b. Gloria
- c. "May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands..."
- d. At least one Memorial Acclamation (Mysterium Fidei) – we will practice this as a group, but please practice at home

3) Must be able to identify the following parts of the Church:

- a. Credence Table
- b. Nave

4) Must be able to identify the following Sacramentals:

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| a. All the Sacramentals from the Apprentice list | d. Corporal |
| b. Book of Gospels & Lectionary | e. Purificators |
| c. Lavabo | f. Pall |
| | g. Paten |

5) Must be able to show the following before performing each duty during Mass:

- | | |
|---|---|
| a. Profound Bow | f. How to use the lavabo with one server and with two servers |
| b. Head Bow | g. How/when to ring the bells |
| c. How to light & extinguish candles using the candle lighter | h. How to use a paten |
| d. How to carry the processional candles and cross safely | |
| e. How to receive the gifts | |

Senior Altar Server

Senior Altar Servers have demonstrated a high proficiency at regular service at the Mass. They have served at special occasions and are capable of fulfilling almost all of the needs of the Parish for Altar Service. They must be at least 12 years old.

REQUIREMENTS:

Served at least one calendar year as a Junior Altar Server, with a minimum of 10 Masses; Served in all positions; served at least one special Mass or service (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil, Christmas Midnight, etc).

1) Must meet all of the Junior Altar Server requirements.

2) Should be able to recite the following prayers from memory:

- a. all of the Junior Altar Server prayers
- b. Nicene Creed
- c. Confiteor ("I confess to almighty God...")
- d. all other acclamations of the Mass

3) Must be able to identify the following parts of the Church:

- a. all of the parts of the church required of Junior Altar Servers
- b. Ambry
- c. Narthex
- d. Sacramentum
- e. Tabernacle

4) Must be able to identify the following Sacramentals:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| a. all the Sacramentals from the | e. Lunette |
| Apprentice list | f. Monstrance |
| b. Aspergillum | g. Pyx |
| c. Aspersorium | h. Thurible |
| d. Boat | |

5) Must be able to show the following:

- a. All of the postures and duties at Mass
- b. How to serve with only one or two servers
- c. How to hold, lift, and swing the thurible

6) Must directly participate in the direct training of a more junior server

Master of Ceremonies (MC)

A Master of Ceremonies must have at least two full years of experience as an Altar Server. They have mastered service of the regular Mass and have participated in multiple special occasion Masses. They are the Peer Leaders of the Ministry. They help train other servers, particularly Apprentices. They advise the Altar Server coordinator in the conduct of the ministry. Not all servers will qualify as MCs. Those who aspire to higher dedication in their service should discuss their intentions with the Altar Server Coordinator.

Liturgical Vocabulary

	<u>Alb</u>: full-length white vestments worn by our female altar servers
	<u>Burse</u>: a flat, square, fabric-covered case in which a folded corporal is carried to and from the altar
	<u>Cassock & surplice</u>: the black cassock and white surplice are the vestments worn by our male altar servers
	<u>Chalice</u>: the cup that holds the wine for Consecration and Communion
	<u>Ciborium</u>: a special vessel used to hold the breads for Communion of the people. It has a lid or cover.
	<u>Cincture</u>: rope or cord worn around the waist over the alb
	<u>Corporal</u>: a white cloth that is spread upon the altar during Mass to hold the chalice, paten and ciboria.
	<u>Credence table</u>: name for the side table in the sanctuary where the wine and water cruets, communion patens, etc., are kept during Mass when they are not being used

	<u>Cruets</u>: the small jars that contain the water and wine to be used at Mass. Cruets are usually made of glass or ceramic, with a handle
	<u>Extinguisher</u>: the tool used to light and put out the candles in the sanctuary
	<u>Incense boat</u>: a covered container, with a spoon, for the incense that will be burned in the censer
	<u>Lavabo & Towel</u>: the glass bowl in which the priest washes his hands during Mass and the towel with which the priest dries his hands.
	<u>Lectionary</u>: the large book containing the Bible readings arranged for the celebration of Mass
	<u>Lunette</u>: a thin, circular receptacle with a glass face that holds the Consecrated Host used at Adoration/Benediction. It slides into the monstrance.
	<u>Monstrance</u>: large, standing vessel used to show people the holy bread that is the Body of Christ
	<u>Ordo</u>: Each year the Secretariat of Divine Worship of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops publishes the Liturgical Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States of America and other grouped local dioceses. This

	<u>Pall</u>: a small, square, protective cover of stiffened cloth placed on the chalice during Mass.
	<u>Paten</u>: plate that holds the breads for consecration and communion
	<u>Purificator</u>: a white linen cloth which the priest or deacon uses to wipe out the chalice during Mass
	<u>Pyx</u>: a small, closing, golden vessel this is used to carry small amounts of unconsecrated hosts and low gluten hosts, and the Blessed Sacrament
	<u>Roman Missal</u>: large book used by the priest when standing at his chair and at the altar during Mass
	<u>Sacrarium</u>: a drain in the sacristy the flows directly into the earth and is used for respectfully disposing of holy water, blessed ashes, and other such blessed things
	<u>Tabernacle</u>: the large, ornate safe in which consecrated Eucharistic Bread is kept for the Communion of the Sick and for adoration by the people outside of Mass. The tabernacle key, when not in use, is kept in a safe place,
	<u>Thurible</u>: metal container on a chain in which incense is burned on a piece of charcoal

How to Tie a Cincture



CM ALMY HOW TO TIE A ROPE CINCTURE



Fold cincture in half



Wrap around waist
with knots on your
right side



Grab end of loop made
by the fold and overlap
as shown



Using right hand, slip
loop over left hand,
keeping hold of cincture



Grab knotted end with
your right hand



Slip knotted ends through
loop (where left hand is
making sure that single loop
is on top of double cincture.)
Feed knotted ends through
loop from top to bottom



Drop loop and then
tighten around waist



Knot is on left hip

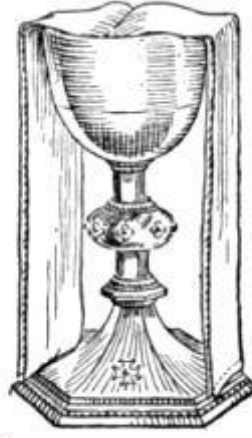
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Guide to Dressing the Chalice



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The Chalice



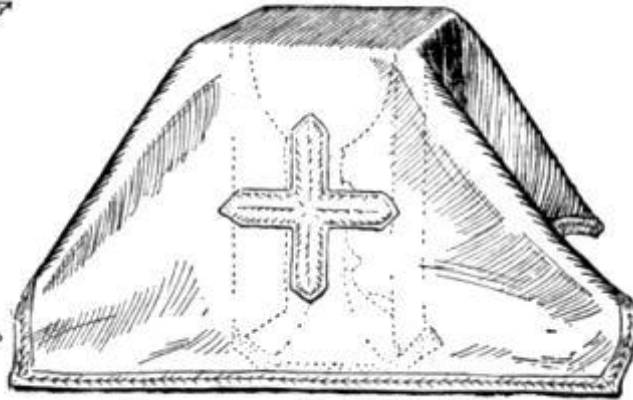
Chalice and Purificator



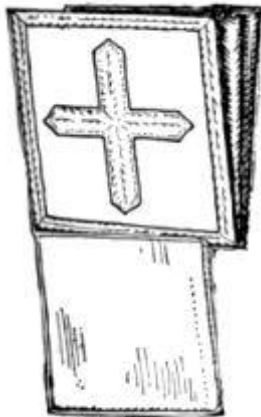
Chalice, Purificator,
Paten with Host



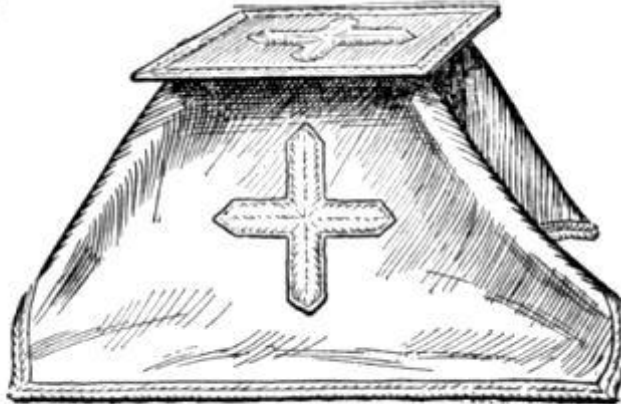
Chalice, Purificator,
Paten and Pall



All now covered by Chalice Veil –
note the different parts under the Veil



The Burse
and the Corporal

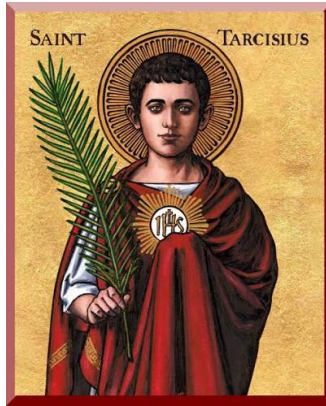


The Chalice completely covered

Patron Saints for Altar Servers

ST. TARCISIUS

Patron Saint of First Communicants and Altar Servers



Tarcisus was a twelve-year-old acolyte during one of the fierce Roman persecutions of the third century, probably during that of Valerian. Each day, from a secret meeting place in the catacombs where Christians gathered for Mass, a deacon would be sent to the prisons to carry the Eucharist to those Christians condemned to die. At one point, there was no deacon to send and so St. Tarcisus, an acolyte, was sent carrying the "Holy Mysteries" to those in prison.

On the way, he was stopped by boys his own age who were not Christians but knew him as a playmate and lover of games. He was asked to join their games, but this time he refused and the crowd of boys noticed that he was carrying something. Somehow, he was also recognized as a Christian, and the small gang of boys, anxious to view the Christian "Mysteries," became a mob and turned upon Tarcisus with fury. He went down under the blows, and it is believed that a fellow Christian drove off the mob and rescued the young acolyte.

The mangled body of Tarcisus was carried back to the catacombs, but the boy died on the way from his injuries. He was buried in the cemetery of St. Callistus, and his relics are claimed by the church of San Silvestro in Capite.

In the fourth century, Pope St. Damasus wrote a poem about this "boy-martyr of the Eucharist" and says that, like another St. Stephen, he suffered a violent death at the hands of a mob rather than give up the Sacred Body to "raging dogs." His story became well known when Cardinal Wiseman made it a part of his novel *Fabiola*, in which the story of the young acolyte is dramatized and a very moving account given of his martyrdom and death.

Tarcisus always been an example of youthful courage and devotion, and his story was one that was told again and again to urge others to a like heroism in suffering for their faith. In the *Passion of Pope Stephen*, written in the sixth century, Tarcisus is said to be an acolyte of the pope himself and, if so, this explains the great veneration in which he was held and the reason why he was chosen for so difficult a mission.

His feast day is celebrated on August 15.

ST. PHILOMENA

Patron Saint of Infants, Babies, and the Youth



St. Philomena was a Greek princess who became a virgin martyr and died at 13-years-old.

The bones of a young girl of thirteen were discovered in a vial containing a liquid believed to be the blood of the Saint in May 1802 at the Catacombs of Priscilla on the Via Salaria Nova with three terracotta tiles reading “PAX TECUM FILUMENA”, that is, “Peace be with you, Philomena.”

All that is known about St. Philomena’s life comes from a Neapolitan nun’s vision. Sister Maria Luisa di Gesu claims St. Philomena came to her and told her she was the daughter of a Greek king who converted to Christianity. When Philomena was 13-years-old, she consecrated herself to God and took a vow of perpetual virginity.

After her father took his family to Rome to make peace, Emperor Diocletian lusted after Philomena. When she refused to marry him, she was subjected to a series of tortures. St. Philomena was scourged, drowned with an anchor attached to her, and shot with arrows. Each time she was attacked angels took to her side and healed her through prayer. Finally, the Emperor had Philomena decapitated. According to the story, her death came on a Friday at three in the afternoon, the same as Jesus.

Two anchors, three arrows, a palm symbol of martyrdom, and a flower were found on the tiles in her tomb, interpreted as symbols of her martyrdom, belonging to those Christian martyrs of the early ages. The nun’s account states Philomena was born on January 10 and was killed on August 10.

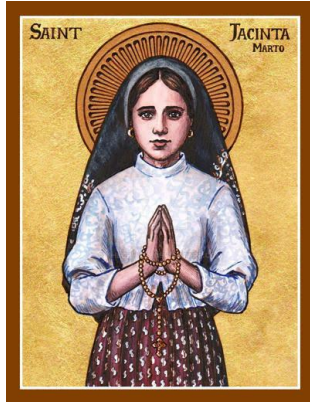
Devotion for Philomena began to spread once her bones were exhumed and miracles began to occur. Canon Francesco De Lucia of Mugnano del Cardinale received relics of St. Philomena and had them placed in the Church of Our Lady of Grace in Mugnano, Italy. Soon after her relics were enshrined, cancers were cured, wounds were healed and the Miracle of Mugnano, when Venerable Pauline Jaricot was cured of a severe heart issue overnight, were all attributed to St. Philomena.

Other Saints began to venerate Philomena and attributing miracles in their lives to the young martyr, including St. John Marie Vianney and St. Peter Louis Marie Chanel. The “dear little saint” of the Curé d’Ars, as St. Vianney called St. Philomena. Saint Pio of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio) called her the “little princess of Paradise,” and to those who dared question her existence, he replied that doubts were the fruit of the demon. Padre Pio said, “You can say that she was not called Philomena -- but this saint has worked miracles, and it was not the name that did them!”

Her feast day is celebrated on August 11.

ST. JACINTA MARTO of FATIMA

Patron Saint of Children, the Sick, Prisoners, and those Ridiculed for Their Piety



Jacinta was born on 11th March, 1910, the younger sister of Francisco and cousin to Lucia, who she regarded as an elder sister. She was pretty, sweet, and energetic, loved to dance, and sometimes willfully, she would pout when she did not get her way. A sensitive child, she cried bitterly at the age of five when she heard the Passion being read out, resolving not to make Our Lord suffer any more. She called the moon 'Our Lady's Lamp.'

In the spring of 1916, as the children watched their sheep, an Angel appeared to them in an olive grove. He asked the children to pray with him. He appeared again in midsummer at a well in Lucia's garden, urging them to offer sacrifice to God in reparation for sinners. In a final appearance, at the end of the summer, the Angel held a bleeding Host over a chalice, from which he communicated the children. This experience separated them from their playmates and prepared them for the apparitions to come.

It was sometime later, on May 13, 1917, that the Blessed Mother first appeared to them. Our Lady urged them to sacrifice so that souls might be saved, and she asked them to say the Rosary daily. She asked that they come back the thirteenth of each month. People soon learned of these apparitions. Though many ridiculed the children or did not believe them, many came to watch the kids on those days. More than 70,000 people gathered for Mary's final apparition on October 13, 1917, witnessing the "Miracle of the Sun."

Both Marto children and most of their family were struck by the flu epidemic in 1918, and Jacinta told Lucia the Blessed Mother had said that Francisco would go to Heaven soon. When Mary asked if Jacinta was willing to convert more souls before her own death, the little girl said 'yes'. Shortly before Francisco's death, Jacinta went to his side and asked him to tell the Lord and Mary that she was willing to suffer further.

Jacinta's final months were difficult. She had two ribs removed without being fully anesthetized. She was moved first to one hospital, then another. Three weeks before her tenth birthday, the girl who had spent a third of her life in the limelight was alone when she died. Her body came to rest in the Sanctuary built at the Cova da Iria, where Our Lady had appeared to her.

In 1930 the Church recognized the apparitions as worthy of belief, clearing the way for public devotions to Our Lady of Fátima. Her canonization was approved by Pope Francis in 2017 on the one hundredth anniversary of Our Lady's first appearance, making her one of the youngest non-martyr saints in the Catholic Church.

Her feast day is celebrated on February 20.

ST. JOSÉ SANCHEZ DEL RÍO

Patron Saint of Children, Adolescents, and Persecuted Christians



José was born in 1913 in Sahuayo, Michoacán, México. He was the third of four children. José loved his faith and grew up with a strong devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe. When José was 12-years-old, the “Cristero Wars” began in Mexico. During this period in history the Mexican government attempted to extinguish the influence of the Catholic Church throughout the country. It persecuted the Catholic Church by seizing property, closing religious schools and convents, and executing Catholic priests. In defense of the Church, the peasants of many of the central and western states in Mexico rebelled against the government. Even though he was too young to join the rebellion, José desperately wanted to be a Cristero and stand up for his faith. He begged his mother to let him join. After much pleading and a visit to a Cristero officer, don Macario and doña Maria gave José their parental blessing. José was overjoyed, but also aware of the suffering he would endure. Before departing, he declared: “For Jesus Christ, I will do everything.”

José and a friend, Trinidad Flores, set off to a Cristero camp. They presented themselves to the officer in charge and were given tasks: carry water, prepare the fire, serve food and coffee, wash dishes, feed the horses, and clean rifles. José enthusiastically went about the chores, and the soldiers quickly became fond of him. He fervently attended daily Mass and prayed the Rosary with the soldiers every evening. José learned how to play the bugle for battle and was put under the care of General Luis Guizar Morfín who, with the intention of protecting the lad, gave him the duty of standard flag bearer.

On January 25, 1928, General Mendoza’s horse was killed during heavy fighting. José gave his horse up for the general so that the fight could continue. José sought cover, firing at the enemy troops until he ran out of ammunition. He was captured and was asked to deny his faith and the Cristero cause. José refused and was tortured terribly. Refusing to renounce his faith angered the government soldiers so much that they cut off the bottom of his feet. As José was forced to walk through town, he recited the rosary, prayed for his enemies, sang songs to Our Lady of Guadalupe, and proclaimed, “I will never give in. Viva Cristo Rey y Santa Maria de Guadalupe!” At the age of 14, St. José Luis Sánchez del Río died as a martyr for his Lord. His remains are enshrined above a side altar in the Church of Saint James the Apostle in his hometown, Sahuayo.

St. José Luis Sánchez del Río was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI on November 20, 2005 through the Cardinal-Prefect of the Congregation of the Causes of Saints. On January 21, 2016, Pope Francis approved a miracle attributed to him and he was officially canonized on October 16, 2016.

His feast day is celebrated on February 10.

PRAYERS FOR ALTAR SERVERS

PREPARATION PRAYER BEFORE MASS

Heavenly Father, as I prepare to assist You at Your altar, I declare my faith in You. At this Mass, keep me from distractions. Let me remember that in assisting the priest I am assisting Jesus in offering You the merits of His passion and death. I thank You for allowing me the opportunity to give my service to You. At this Mass, I join with your Priest in offering You the sacred Body and Blood of my Savior, Jesus Christ, Your Son. May my sharing the Divine Food in Holy Communion bring me eternal salvation.

Father in Heaven, your Son, Jesus Christ, showed His love for You by serving His brothers and sisters in need. 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 evil and 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.

THANKSGIVING PRAYER AFTER MASS

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the eternal High Priest. You lead all Your saints in heaven and Your people on earth in praising God, our Father. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for letting me come before Your altar, so that, with Your help, I can praise my Father in heaven as His server. Help me to find joy in serving at Your altar. Help me to find gladness in knowing and doing Your will in all things. Glory to You, Lord Jesus, and to the Father and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.

Amen.

VESTING PRAYERS FOR ALTAR SERVERS

ALB

Dealba me, Domine, et munda cor meum; ut, in sanguine Agni dealbatus, gaudiis perfruare sempiternis.

Make me clean, O Lord, and cleanse my heart; that being made white in the Blood of the Lamb I may deserve an eternal reward. Amen.

CINCTURE

Præcinge me, Domine, cingulo puritatis, et extingue in lumbis meis humorem libidinis; ut maneat in me virtus continentia et castitatis.

Gird me, O Lord, with the cincture of purity, and quench in my heart the fire of concupiscence, that the virtue of continence and chastity may abide in me. Amen.

CASSOCK

Dominus, pars hereditatis meae et calicis mei, tu es qui restitues hereditatem meam.

O Lord, the portion of my inheritance and my chalice, You are He who will restore my inheritance. Amen.

SURPLICE

Indue me, Domine, novum hominem, qui secundum Deum creatus est in iustitia et sanctitate veritatis.

Invest me, O Lord, as a new man, who was created by God in justice and the holiness of truth. Amen.

Altar Server Parent/Guardian Agreement

Altar serving is an important ministry of the Church in which children can become more actively engaged in the Mass. By volunteering to be an altar server your child is taking a more active role in his or her faith. This commitment is a responsibility that he or she will need your support to fulfill.

Altar Servers need to be at Church at least 15 minutes early on the day that they are serving Mass. If an altar server knows in advance that he or she cannot make his or her scheduled time it is up to that individual to find a substitute.

By signing below, I agree that my child has permission to be trained as an altar server.

I affirm that my child has received their First Communion and possesses the maturity to fulfill the duties of an altar server.

I agree to support my child in this ministry by ensuring his or her prompt arrival to Mass (at least 15 minutes prior to the Mass that he or she is scheduled to serve).

In the event my child is unable to serve at a Mass they have been scheduled for, I will help them request a substitute by contacting the server coordinator.

Child's Name: _____ Child's Date of Birth: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

Mass Preference (check all that apply):

- ☐ Saturday 5:00pm
- ☐ Sunday 8:00am
- ☐ Sunday 10:30am