



SAINT BASIL THE GREAT

ALTAR SERVER MANUAL

Prayers of an Altar Server

O God, You have graciously called me to serve You upon Your altar. Grant me the graces that I need to serve You faithfully and wholeheartedly. Grant too that while serving You, may I follow the example of St. Tarcisius, who died protecting the Eucharist, and walk the same path that led him to Heaven.

St. Tarcisius, pray for me and for all servers.

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. Help me, for You have called me also. Keep me prayerful and alert. Help me to help others in prayer. Thank you for the trust You've placed in me. Keep me true to that trust. I make my prayer in Jesus' name, who is with us in the Holy Spirit. Amen.

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS TOP SHEET IMMEDIATELY

To the Parent/ Guardian of _____(server):

Thank you for supporting your child in volunteering for this very important job as an Altar Server. Being an Altar Server is a great honor – and a responsibility.

Servers are responsible for:

- a) knowing when they are scheduled to serve, and
- b) finding their own coverage if they cannot attend. (email can help)

The schedule is emailed out, prior to when it begins. The schedule is available on the Church website, and published the week before in the Church Bulletin.

We have attached the, “St. Basil Altar Server Manual.” After your child attends the two server training sessions, he/she will most likely still feel unsure about the job – that’s OK. I will schedule your child with experienced servers for at least six months. Also, have your child review the Manual before serving, as a quick refresher.

Love cannot remain by itself --
it has no meaning. Love has to
be put into action,
and that action is service.
•Mother Teresa

Signature: _____(server)

_____(Parent/Guardian)

General Requirements for Altar Servers

Being an Altar Server is a great honor – and a responsibility. A server must know

- The principal prayers of the Mass: The Gloria, Our Father, Nicene Creed, Lamb of God, Lord, I am not worthy and Holy, Holy, Holy. A server should participate *out loud* in these prayers.
- The definitions of the liturgical items and their purposes. See the end of this manual.
- How to use of the “*tools of the trade*” such as matches, candle lighters, books and candles, processional cross, preparation of credence table, chalice, mass colors, etc.
- How to genuflect and bow.
- How to properly make the sign of the cross, kneel, stand and sit respectfully at attention, during Mass

Servers are responsible for

- Knowing when they are scheduled to serve
- Finding coverage if they cannot attend assigned Mass.
 - Assigned masses will emailed once per month, posted on Church website and Bulletin
 - ‘Reply all’ to email to ask for substitute
- If during mass, you ever feel strange or faint, go immediately to the sacristy and sit till you feel better.

Proper Dress

- What you wear underneath an alb will show through so avoid bold stripes and designs
- Recommended you wear solid colors, but white shirts and blouses would best
- Dress shoes should be worn. Sneakers and Old and tattered footwear, have no place on the Altar
- Servers must show respect for the Mass they attend at.
- It is understood if are ‘filling in’ because there were no servers, exceptions can be made
- Consult with either the priest or the ordo as to the mass colors
 - o Ordo information will usually be correct unless it is a special mass, e.g., a funeral mass.

A server is there to assist the priest.

- Server has duties Before, During and After the Mass.

DUTIES BEFORE MASS

The server’s duty is to set up for mass, so you must get to Church ~ 15 minutes early.

- Make sure your hands are clean.

Check to make sure all the proper items are set up for mass.

a) Credence table in the sanctuary should have:

1. The priest’s chalice, with the large host on the Paten and the Purificator in the Chalice.
 - Do not put the Chalice veil on top until it is fully *put together*.
2. Bowl and finger towel for washing the priest’s hands.
3. Usually one extra glass goblet with purificators for offertory wine.
4. Some Masses require extra chalices, wine cruets, or ciboria (for hosts)

b) Table in the back of the church for the offertory procession should be:

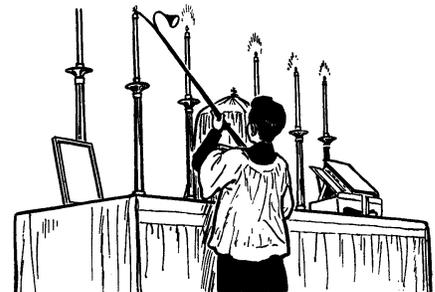
1. A cruet filled with water from the tap.
2. A cruet with altar wine.
3. The ciborium (with hosts for communion). If there are 2 empty ciboria, they both need to be filled.

c) Light the candles

1. Four at the Main Altar
2. From Easter Vigil Mass till Mass at Ascension Thursday, the Paschal candle should be lighted also

d) Crucifix

1. One server removes crucifix from stand and walks *down the side aisle* to the rear, in preparation for the procession



DUTIES DURING MASS

PROCESSION:

In a procession the cross-bearers will lead the procession into and from the sanctuary.

- Walk in a moderate, dignified pace, *with hands folded in prayer*.
- Hold the cross straight, with the corpus (Body of Christ) directly forward.

Other altar servers follow the cross-bearer in the procession.

- At the foot of Altar steps, bow to the altar when the priest does. (except for *server holding cross*).
- Then proceed to your assigned chair with the priest.

PENITENTIAL RITE:

During the *Glory to God in the Highest*, the server to Father's right must prepare to hold the Sacramentary (brown covered book) for the opening prayer.

- Wait for the priest to say, *Let us pray*.
- Server will proceed directly in front of the priest and hold the book open
 - 1) One hand supporting the book in the middle - so the priest can read
- Hold the book at the same height as received from the priest.
- Keep pages flat, fingers out of the text, and book still while the priest is reading.



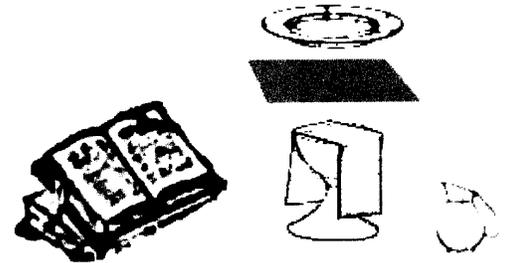
GENERAL INTERCESSIONS:

(Standing) - ... We unite with our community, the entire Church and all people, to pray for their needs ... and, after each intention is said, the congregation says: "Lord Hear Our Prayer."

When you hear the "Lord Hear Our Prayer" ... AFTER the Prayer of the Faithful (also known as the petitions) is concluded

—Cross bearer

- 1) Gets the crucifix and proceeds to the back of the church, by the *side aisle*
 - 2) Then leads the offertory procession from the back of the church to the altar.
- Server to the priest's right - Prepares the altar for communion - Preparation of the Gifts:
 - 1) Move the items from the credence table to the altar in the positions shown
 - 2) *Always carry Chalice with one hand on stem and other on top – so nothing falls.*
 - 3) Items to be arranged as shown, facing the congregation
 - 4) Note: the central figures represent the stacked items contained with the priest's chalice: the paten (with large host), corporal (actually white), purificator and chalice
 - 5) Left is the Sacramentary (Missal).
 - 6) Right is the glass goblet for Communion Wine
 - 7) Remove napkins from goblet and place it next to goblet



OFFERATORY:

Servers standing either side of the priest, proceed to the front of altar to accept the Gifts for Communion. The priest will accept the items for communion and hand them to the server.

- Servers should have the wine and water cruets ready for the priest to prepare the table.
- Server who "set the table" presents the water.
- The "bell-ringing" server presents the wine.
- Hold cruets in your right hand – handles turned toward the priest.
- Hold cruets at your chin level – high enough for priest to take it
- After cruets are returned, priest's hands are washed (symbolizes spiritual cleansing)
- "bell-ringing" server (with the wine cruet) goes back to the credence table to pick up the basin and finger towel (draped over the arm).
- Server with the water cruet continues to hold this cruet for the washing.
- Hold the basin high enough so that the priest need not stoop over.
 - 1) Be careful to trickle the water and not dump it.
 - 2) Priest is given a finger towel to wipe his hands, he folds towel, drapes it over server's arm
- Return all items back to credence table (place cruets on small tray so wine does not stain)



- Proceed down to your assigned positions in front of the altar.
- *Remain standing.*

ACCLAMATION (Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory...)

- *Kneel*

BELL RINGING:

- Three distinct rings each time to honor the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- First ringing - when priest places outstretched hands over the chalice invoking the Holy Spirit.
- Second ringing - when priest raises host high up in the air to the congregation at the Consecration.
- Third ringing - when priest raises the chalice to the congregation at the Consecration.



COMMUNION:

- After receiving communion, each server goes to the Credence Table and takes a paten.
- The Paten is held under the Priest's/Extraordinary Minister's hand while they give Communion.
- This is done to prevent the Host or crumbs from touching the ground if it should fall
- After Communion is finished keep holding the Paten flat so nothing could fall off
- Hand the Paten to the Priest, who will wipe it off.
- Return the Paten to the Credence table.

Assist with clearing the Altar:

- 1) Bringing water for the purification of the chalice and cups
- 2) Return the Missal, purified chalice, cups & empty ciborium to the credence table.

EXIT PROCESSION:

- Cross-bearer : pick up the processional cross when the priest kisses the altar at the end of Mass
- All Servers follow the priest as he walks to the altar front, pass around him and turning to face altar
- After the priest turns from bowing/genuflecting, slowly lead the procession out of church.
- All processions are always in order of rank. Cross bearer first, other servers, lector and the priest.

Altar Server Prayer (After Mass)

*Lord 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.

DUTIES AFTER MASS

- Return the cross to its stand in the sanctuary.
- Extinguish the candles by using the proper tool. Do not smash the wicks or blow out the candles.
- Clean up any messes you made on the credence and preparation tables.
- Take all remaining except the small tray, to the back of the reredos.

DEFINITIONS

Ablution cup - covered dish of water on the side of the tabernacle used by the priest, deacon or extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist to wash their fingers after distributing Communion.

Ambo - The platform, lectern or pulpit from which the reading and homily are given.

Burse - A square container for holding the corporal. It is selected for the liturgical color of the day. Used Corporals should always be placed in the proper container for sacred cloths after mass.

Chalice - A cup of precious metal, holds the wine which becomes the Blood of Jesus after the consecration. All chalices should be placed in their places after Mass. If the Chalices were left unpurified by the priest, deacon, or extraordinary minister for some reason, they should be left out on the presentation table for purification. Never put an unpurified chalice away.

Chalice veil - A cloth covering used to hide the chalice and paten up to the offertory and after Communion. It is selected by the liturgical color for the service.

Ciborium - A large cup or container of precious metal with a cover of the same material which will hold the Body of Jesus after the consecration for distribution of Holy Communion to the faithful.

Corporal - A white linen cloth, usually with a cross in the center, used to protect any particles of the Precious Body and Blood of Jesus from falling to the altar. It is always folded and unfolded as to protect any particles from being lost. The corporal is like the body winding sheet used to hold the crucified body or Our Lord in the tomb.

Credence Table - table in the sanctuary where cruets, chalices and ciborium are kept before and after the Consecration.

Lectionary - The book of reading used for the liturgy of the word. It usually contains all the biblical reading used for the three year Sunday cycle of reading and the two year daily Mass readings.

Paten - A small saucer shaped plate of precious metal that holds the Host. No layperson should ever touch the paten so be very careful when handling it in your official duties.

Purificator - A linen cloth used by the priest or deacon to dry the chalice after washing and purifying it. Used Purificators must always be placed in the proper container for sacred cloths.

Pall - A square piece of cardboard or plastic which is covered by linen and used to cover the chalice.

Peplum - A cloth covering used to hide the chalice and paten up to the offertory and after Communion. It is selected by the liturgical color for the service.

Piscina - A sink with it drain going directly into the ground usually fitted with a cover and lock which is used for the disposal of the following: The sacred linen wash and rinse water, used holy water, used baptismal water and blessed ashes. No other use is allowed.

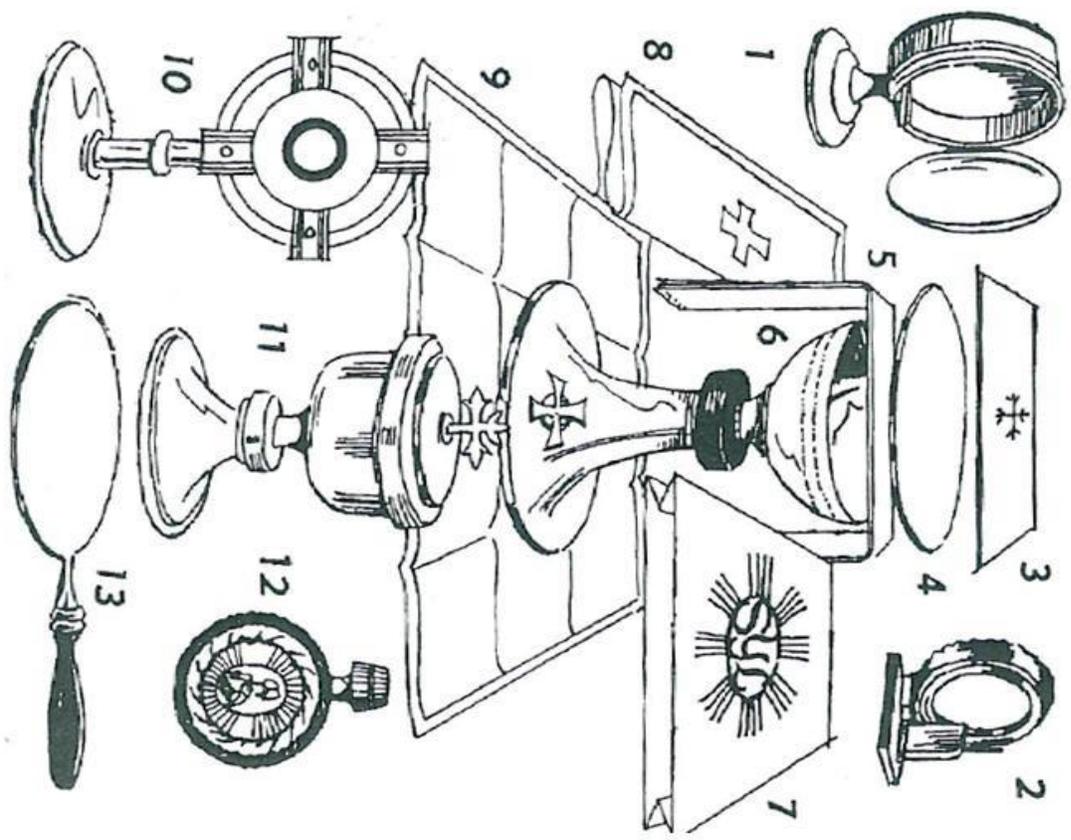
Sacramentary - The book containing the prayers said by the priest during the Mass.

Sacrarium - A sink with it drain going directly into the ground usually fitted with a cover and lock which is used for the disposal of the following: The sacred linen wash and rinse water, used holy water, used baptismal water and blessed ashes. No other use is allowed.

Stock - metal containers used to hold the oil of the catechumen, the oil of chrism and the oil for anointing the sick.

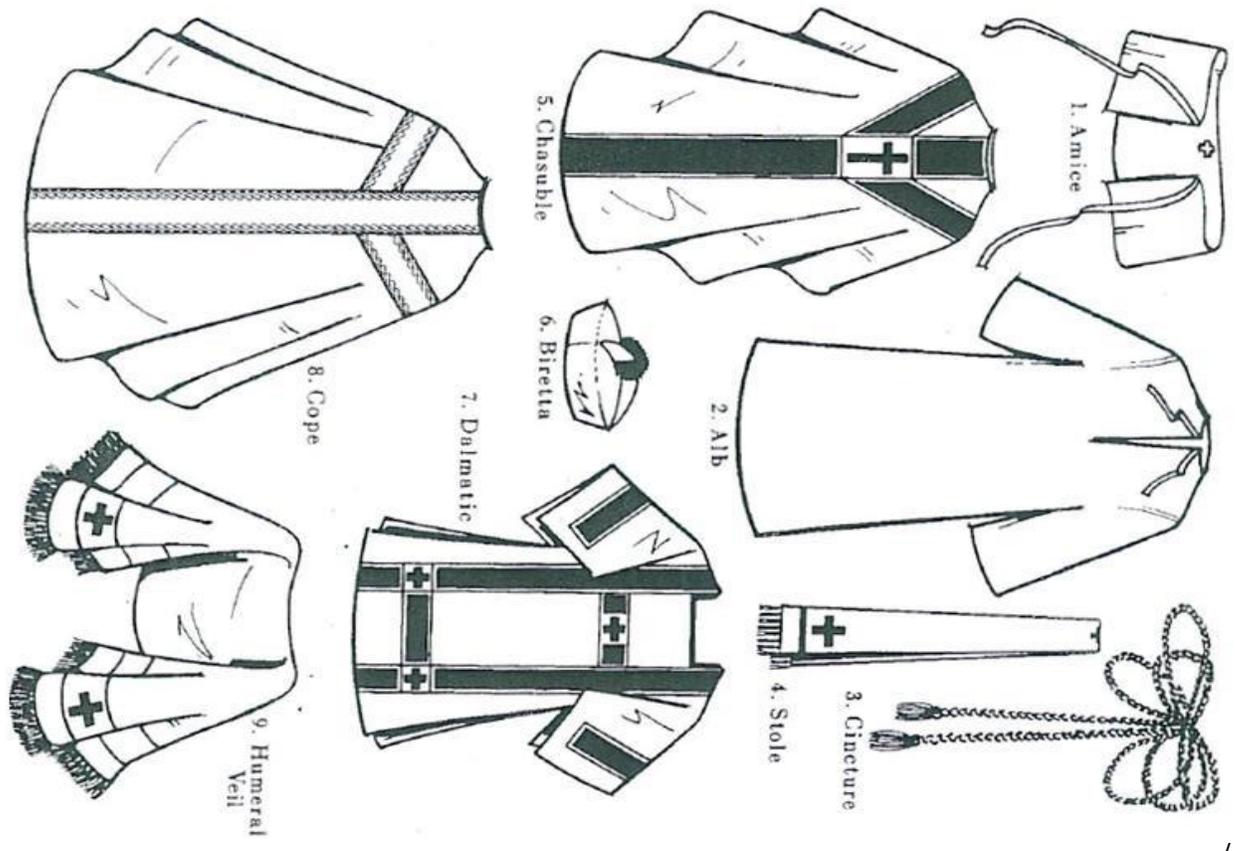
Thaborstand - ornate stand used to support the Monstrance during exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

SACRED VESSELS & APPOINTMENTS



1. Custodia.
2. Lunette or Lunula.
3. Pall.
4. Paten.
5. Purificator.
6. Chalice.
7. Burse.
8. Chalice Veil.
9. Corporal.
10. Ostensorium.
11. Ciborium.
12. Pyx.
13. Communion Paten.

CLERICAL VESTMENTS



1. Amice
2. Alb
3. Stole
4. Cope
5. Chasuble
6. Biretta
7. Dalmatic
8. Humeral Veil

**ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
GUIDELINES FOR ALTAR SERVERS**

Pastors are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to include female servers. Pastors, after consulting with the Parish Pastoral Council, are to determine the appropriate means of preparing for the catechesis and implementation of these guidelines, with respect to local circumstances.

I. Selection and Requirements of Servers

- 1) Servers are members of the assembly who assist the priest and the deacon during the Eucharist and other liturgical rites.
- 2) Servers are to be Catholics who have received the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist and who faithfully practice and live their Catholic faith. They should be mature enough to understand their responsibilities and to carry them out well and with appropriate reverence. Pastors are to determine the age at which youth begin this service in the parish. Recommended minimum age is fourth grade.
- 3) Servers are to be active and full participants in the liturgy. They fulfill their roles and encourage the assembly by singing, responding to the prayers, performing the various rituals and assisting the presider.
- 4) Servers should be willing to offer their time and talents to the liturgical celebrations of their parish or Newman Center. They are to be properly prepared through formation and training that includes a basic knowledge of the Mass and other liturgical rites, and the functions of the altar servers.
- 5) Both males and females who fulfill the requirements stated in these guidelines and complete the appropriate formation and training are to be accepted for service at the altar. The term "altar boys" should be replaced by "servers."
- 6) Pastors should strive for an appropriate balance between male and female servers.

II. Responsibilities

The server fulfills some of the tasks assigned to the acolyte in the various rites. Among these duties are the following:

- 1) Prepare the altar and sacred vessels before Mass.
- 2) Prepare the corporal, chalice, purificator and Sacramentary immediately before the procession of the gifts.
- 3) Assist the priest and deacon in receiving the bread and wine at the procession of the gifts.
- 4) Present the wine and water to the priest and assist in the washing of the priest's hands during the offertory of the Mass and for the purification after communion, if necessary.
- 5) Carry the cross or candles in procession and assist with the incense.
- 6) Hold the Sacramentary for the priest as needed.
- 7) Servers should be seated in a place from which they can easily assist the priest celebrant and the deacon. The place next to the priest is normally reserved for the deacon.

III. Vesture

- 1) All servers are to be vested in the same liturgical vesture, namely the alb.
 - a) If adults are called upon to serve, albs may be worn; otherwise, they should dress with decorum befitting the celebration of the Mass.
- 2) At all celebrations, servers should be neat, clean and simply dressed.

IV. Formation and Training

Pastors are responsible for the formation and training of altar servers. This process should be adapted to the educational level of those who are participating.

Formation

- 1) Servers should come to appreciate that the liturgy celebrates the Paschal Mystery in which we are freed from sin and incorporated into the Body of Christ through the Holy Spirit.
- 2) They should have a basic understanding that the Mass, the other sacraments and the Liturgical Year are the ways in which we renew our relationship with God and are strengthened to live our faith.
- 3) Servers should see their role as a service to the parish or Newman Center. They should be encouraged to participate in the other liturgical rites as they grow older.
- 4) Service at the altar has traditionally been a source of vocations in the Church. Pastors are to stress this vocational dimension of serving. Please encourage the boys to consider seriously if Christ is calling them to serve the Church as priests or religious brothers; and encourage the girls to seriously consider if Christ is calling them to service as religious sisters.

Training

- 1) Servers should have a basic understanding of
 - a) Mass: theology and structure.
 - b) Types and roles of liturgical ministry.
 - c) Names and descriptions of books, vessels, vestments, areas of the church, seasons of the year and basic liturgical vocabulary.
- 2) Servers should be familiar with these procedures:
 - a) Before the liturgy: Expectations for the server when arriving, arrival time, preparations, vesture.
 - b) During the liturgy: Posture, reverence, participation in the rite, order of procession, parts of the Mass or the liturgy.
 - c) Following the liturgy: Responsibilities for seeing to the general good order of the sanctuary and sacristy.
 - d) Other liturgies: Weddings, funerals, baptisms, morning and evening prayer, benediction of the Eucharist and devotions.