



ALTAR SERVER INSTRUCTIONS

Transfiguration Catholic Church



APRIL 19, 2018

THE MINISTRY OF ALTAR SERVER

It is a great privilege to serve at the Altar of our God and therefore Servers are only chosen from among those who display a desire for a more intimate union with our Lord and God, Jesus Christ. Our loving Savior becomes present on the Altar as He was present at the Last Supper and at Calvary. Accordingly, Servers have a solemn responsibility to carry out their assigned duties with dignity and reverence. Transfiguration Catholic Church has Altar Servers, both boys and girls, who may start serving after their First Communion.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALTAR SERVERS

Altar Servers must be mindful of the sacredness of their duties at all times. Therefore, they should refrain from socializing and unnecessary talk before and during Mass. Quarreling or disputes over the assignment of duties are never appropriate and indicate that one is not ready to continue in this ministry. Servers must be on time for their assigned Mass. Servers who know in advance that they will be absent from an assigned Mass must recruit their substitutes from the list of Altar Servers and then inform the Director of Altar Servers of the substitution.

DRESS CODE FOR ALTAR SERVERS

Shoes: Dress shoes should be worn, preferably black or brown shoes for boys and brown, black or white for girls. Tennis shoes, sneakers and sandals are not right for the altar.

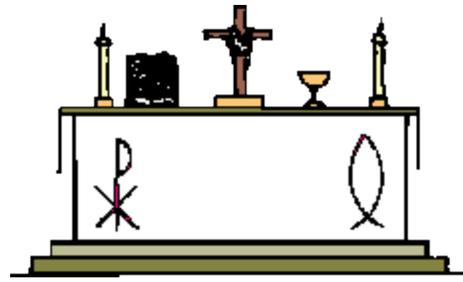
Hair: Hair should be neat and trimmed, appropriate for boys and girls.

Jewelry: Do not wear anything that will make noise or will be distracting or that will cause you to have problems serving.

No Electronic Devices: While serving, never carry in your pocket a cell phone or other electronic device which can make noise. Those should be turned off and left with a parent or family member.

Before Mass

Altar Servers should arrive **20 minutes** before the start of Mass and sign the Mass Assignment Schedule log located in the Sacristy.



Always Begin with Prayer

Since serving at the altar is a privilege, it is important to prepare yourself for this ministry before each Mass by praying for God's grace and assistance. Beginning with prayer will help you to remain focused on your sacred duties during Mass and to serve in a manner pleasing to God. An example of an Altar Servers' Prayer is provided on the next page of this manual.



Vesting

Go in the sacristy to the closet to put on your Altar Server vestments. Servers wear a black cassock with a white surplice over it. It is important that both be of appropriate length as shown in this photograph.

Please Note: Following Holy Mass, your cassocks and surplices must be carefully hung up on the correctly sized hanger from which they came. This will allow others to easily find the size they need.

Your vestments should never be left on the floor, nor on a shelf, nor anywhere else but on their proper hangers and hooks.

Prayer for Altar Servers



**Open my mouth, O Lord,
to bless your Holy Name.**

**Cleanse my heart from all evil
and distracting thoughts.**

**Enlighten my understanding
and inflame my will
That I may serve more worthily
at your holy altar.**

**O Mary, Mother of Christ the High Priest,
obtain for me the most important grace
of knowing my vocation in life.**

**Grant me a true spirit of faith
and humble obedience
so that I may ever behold the priest
as a representative of God
and be willing to follow him
in the Way, the Truth, and the Life of Christ.**

Amen.



Assignment of Duties by the Master Altar Server

A Master Altar Server will be designated for each Mass to assign the following duties to the other Altar Servers:

- Altar Candle Lighters to light and to snuff the Altar Candles
- Crucifer to be the Cross Bearer
- Candle Bearers to carry the Processional and Gospel candles
- Book Bearer to carry the Roman Missal to and from the priest and the Altar
- Bell Ringer to ring the bells at elevation of the Body and Blood of Christ
- Altar Table Servers to set the Altar and to assist with the washing of hands
- Thurifer to carry the Thurible for burning of Incense (when applicable)



Preparing the Church for Mass

- Carefully light all Altar Candles and the Processional and Gospel Candles.
- Make sure the Roman Missal is placed on the book stand beside Father's chair.
- Five minutes before Mass begins, all the Altar Servers should pray together and then process behind the processional cross to gather quietly in the center aisle at the rear of the church, lined up in the middle of the aisle in order to make room for the people to get by to go to their seats.

During Mass

Procession



Once the priest celebrant is in line and the music for the opening hymn has begun, the Crucifer or Cross Bearer should lead the procession up the center aisle at a normal walking pace. When all the servers take their first step into the sanctuary, they should pause for the celebrant to come forward and the Book of the Gospels to be placed on the altar. Then along with the celebrant they should bow to reverence the altar.

After bowing, they should wait for the celebrant to reverence the altar with a kiss and walk slowly to their places. The cross should be put on its stand. The Candle Bearers should put their candles on their stands on either side of the altar. All servers should remain standing at their places, with hands folded, with good posture, and a settled stance.

Opening Prayers



Just after the Gloria, the Book Bearer will retrieve the Roman Missal from its stand and then the Book Bearer will walk to and stand directly in front of the priest. The Book Bearer will hold the Roman Missal closed, with the binding against your chest, the top of the book under your chin with your fingers and both hands supporting the bottom of the book, presenting the ribbons edge to the priest.

The priest opens the Roman Missal. The Book Bearer holds it at the height convenient for the priest to read and to sing from it. All of the Altar Servers should join in the prayers and songs of this and of every part of the Mass, using their Hymnals and Song Sheets always found at their seats. The Book Bearer should be attentive to the priest to know when he has finished using the Missal. When the priest has finished, he will begin to close the book. That is the sign for the Altar Server to close the book and to take it back to its book stand. Then, all of the Altar Servers will sit and listen attentively to the readings and the homily.

The Liturgy of the Word

While the Scriptures are being proclaimed and the Priest or Deacon is preaching, all the Altar Servers should listen attentively to all that is said and they should join in the singing of the psalm and the various responses. When the celebrant stands for the Gospel acclamation, two Candle Bearers should retrieve their candles



from either side of the altar and stand on each side of the priest or deacon carrying the Book of the Gospels, facing the altar. When he bows to the altar, the Candle Bearers should do so as well; and walk with him to the Ambo and stand on each side of him. After the Gospel is read, the Candle Bearers return to altar center, bow, then return their lit candles to their stands and go to their seats. The other servers should wait to be seated with them. Full, reverent and attentive participation in the liturgy is the sacred duty of each server. Therefore, servers should always sing the Hymns, Responsorial Psalm and Gospel Acclamation along with everyone else. During the Profession of Faith, all stand and join in the reading of the Creed. At the words "...and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man" all bow.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

After the General Intercessions have been prayed, the celebrant will sit down. Now, there are **three functions** Altar Servers perform.



1. Preparation of the Altar

When everyone sits, two Altar Table Servers go to the credence table where the chalice and cups of unconsecrated wine, cruets, water pitcher, bowl and towel are kept. One server brings the chalice up to the Altar. The Book Bearer brings the Roman Missal and its book stand up to the altar placing it on the left side of the Altar. Then, the Altar Table Servers bring up the chalice and cups and purificators. If the celebrant is not yet ready to proceed, the servers return to their seats. But, the servers must always be attentive to and respond to the celebrant's needs and requests.

2. Presentation of the Gifts

After the Ushers begin to take up the First Collection, when they are half way up the center aisle, the Cross Bearer walks to the front of the altar and bows, then walks back the center aisle to the gifts of bread and wine. The Cross Bearer leads the gift bearers forward at a normal walking pace, returns the cross to its place, and returns to his or her seat. The other Altar Servers go to receive the gifts from the priest, take the bread and the wine to the Altar, and the Collection Basket to Mary's side of the sanctuary.



3. Preparation of the Gifts

When the priest or deacon goes to the altar table, the Servers bring to him the cruets of wine and water to be poured into the chalice.



When he hands the cruets back to the Altar Table Servers and bows to them, they should bow their heads to him, then walk back to the credence table. Then, the Altar Table Servers take the bowl, cruet of water, and towel to the priest. One server will pour the water over the priest's fingers. The other server will hand the priest the

towel to dry his hands. When finished, the Altar Table Servers bow to the priest and return the bowl, water, and towel to the credence table and they return to their seats.

Eucharistic Prayer

This is a most important prayer of the Mass. This is the time when the bread and wine are offered to become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. All of the Altar Servers should kneel as a sign of your reverence and faith. It is very important that you be still, pay attention, and not be a distraction. Do not play with your cincture, with your hair, with your fingernails, with anything. All such actions are distracting, first to yourself, then to the priest, and then to all of the people who are trying to pay attention to this prayer. The Bell Ringer should ring the bells with grace—ringing them one time during the epiclesis and three times at each one of the two elevations, first, of the Body of Christ and, second, of the Blood of Christ.



Holy Communion

To receive Holy Communion, the Altar Servers should stand up on the Altar platform in a semi-circle in front of the tabernacle and credence table.

During the Distribution of Holy Communion

The Book Bearer removes the Roman Missal and its book stand to the table behind the celebrant. When the celebrant reposes the Blessed Sacrament into the tabernacle, an Altar Table Server should bring water to be poured over the celebrant's fingertips into the ciborium. Then Altar Servers should stand ready at the Altar to return the purified and dried ciboria, cups, and priest's chalice to the credence table.



Prayer after Communion

After all the vessels are purified, and the celebrant at his chair says "Let us pray," immediately the Book Bearer brings the Roman Missal to the celebrant, and holds the book for the priest just as at the beginning of the Mass.

Concluding Rite

After the priest gives the final blessing, the Cross Bearer and Candle Bearers retrieve the cross and candles. They stand in front of the Altar. When the priest bows to the Altar, the servers bow. The servers then lead the procession at a normal walking pace back up the center aisle and to the rear of the church.

After Mass

While still vested, the Altar Candle Lighters reverently snuff (exhaust the oxygen and the fire) the candles, being careful not to squash the wicks. **All Altar Servers must hang their vestments (cassock and surplice), neatly on the hangers of the correct size and hang them in the altar server closet.**

Reminders

- Altar Servers participate in Mass by singing and praying—your most important duty. Your service is wasted if you do not participate in the Mass.
- Always arrive **20 minutes** before Mass. Always dress appropriately.
- Never leave the Altar except for an emergency.
- Better to use the restroom before the Mass begins.
- You are a visible example to the rest of the congregation on how to participate and behave during the Holy Mass.

THINGS ALL ALTAR SERVERS NEED TO KNOW

CATECHISM:

Q. What is the Mass?

A. For Catholics, nothing is more important than the Mass. It is the heart and soul of our worship of God. The Mass is our participation in the Last Supper when Jesus instituted the Eucharist and told his followers, “Do this in memory of me.” First and foremost, the Mass is a sacrifice. The Mass is a memorial. The Mass is also a sacred meal called the Eucharist, meaning “thanksgiving”.

Q. What are the parts of the Mass?

A. Introductory Rites
Liturgy of the Word
Liturgy of the Eucharist
Concluding Rite

ALTERNATE ALTAR SERVER PRAYER BEFORE MASS

Oh Jesus, my King and Lord,
by the grace of the heavenly Father
and the power of the Holy Spirit,
guide me in all righteousness
as I serve You today at the Altar
so that I may be always worthy of Your presence.
If I happen to make an error,
may it be a lesson
so that my service will be perfect tomorrow.
Jesus, I love you with all my heart.
Amen.

You should be able to recognize and to name the following commonly used vestments and vessels:



CASSOCK

A full-length black garment worn by Altar Servers, and others during church services.



SURPLICE

A hip length, loose white linen vestment worn over a cassock by altar servers and others during church services.



CHALICE

The large cup made of precious metals used at Mass



PATEN

A small plate that is large enough to cover the chalice. It holds the large Host that along with the small Hosts become the Body of Christ at the consecration.



CIBORIUM

A covered container used to hold the consecrated Hosts. It is made of precious metals and the interior is commonly gold or gold-plated.



CRUET

A glass vessel, usually either a pitcher or bottle-like container, which holds the unconsecrated wine as it is brought up in the offertory procession.



PURIFICATOR

A towel of white linen, used by the distributors of the Precious Blood, and by the priest to purify his fingers, the ciboria and the chalice and cups after Holy Communion. It has a cross embroidered in the center.



TOWEL

Used by the priest after washing his hands at the offertory.



CANDLE LIGHTER

It has two functions. The wick on the right side is used to light the unlit candles before the Mass. The bell on the left side is used to trap and to burn off the oxygen so as to smother the fire on the wicks of the lit candles, and never to squash those wicks.

PRAYERS TO KNOW

CONFITEOR (*Priest, Altar Servers, and People*)

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,
through my fault,
through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;
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.

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

(Servers)

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.

(Priest)

Deliver us, Lord, etc.

(Servers)

*For the kingdom, the power and the glory are
yours, now and forever.*

LAMB OF GOD *(Servers)*

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.

OR

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

(Priest)

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

(Servers)

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

STOLE

A Liturgical vestment that is several inches wide, about eighty inches long and is worn around the neck by priests and bishops. Deacons wear it over their left shoulders. It is worn during the celebration of Mass, the administration of the sacraments, and other ceremonies of the Sacred Liturgy.

worn



folded





hanging



extended

CHASUBLE

A sleeveless garment worn by a bishop or priest at Mass over all other vestments. It is usually decorated with symbols and its main color matches the liturgical season and day.



PYX

It is a small round metal case, usually gold-plated, used to carry the Blessed Sacrament when communion is taken to the sick.



PALL

A sacred covering for the chalice at Mass. It is usually a stiff cardboard square covered with linen.



unfolded



folded

CORPORAL

A square white linen cloth placed on the Altar to hold the Blessed Sacrament and the Precious Blood. It is also used under the monstrance at Benediction and under the Blessed Sacrament at any time.



ASPERGILLUM

A metal encased sponge used for sprinkling holy water during the liturgical services.



PRAYERS TO KNOW

GLORIA

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.

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,
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 for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

**(*bowing here*) and by the Holy Spirit
was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.**

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, the 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.



DALMATIC

An outer liturgical garment worn by a deacon at Mass and in solemn processions. It has wide short sleeves, reaches to the knees, and is open at the sides. It is of the same material and color as the vestments of the priest celebrant.



Front



Back



COPE

A floor length cape, open in front and fastened on the breast with a clasp. It is worn by deacons, priests and bishops in processions, at Benediction, and at other solemn offices, but not at Mass.



Worn



Folded

BENEDICTION HUMERAL VEIL

This is an elongated vestment worn over the shoulders and covering the hands of the priest or deacon as he gives the blessing with the Blessed Sacrament carried in the monstrance at Benediction. It is also used when the Blessed Sacrament is carried from one tabernacle to another or in procession.



MONSTRANCE

The sacred vessel that demonstrates the Blessed Sacrament when it is exposed or carried in procession.



Front

Side

LUNETTE or LUNA

A circular sacred vessel with glass face, circled with gilded metal, to hold the Blessed Sacrament in the Monstrance.



Hanging
closed



Hanging
open

THURIBLE OR CENSER

A metal pot for holding burning charcoal and burning incense. It has a lid to control the fire and it is suspended on chains so that it can be safely swung in order to diffuse the smoke and the scent of the burning incense.



BOAT

A small covered vessel, with spoon, that holds incense before it is put into the thurible, the censer.

PRAYERS TO KNOW

MAY THE LORD ACCEPT (*Servers*)

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands
for the praise and glory of his name, for our good
and the good of all his holy Church.

Priest: The mystery of faith.

People:

- A. We proclaim your death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.

- B. When we eat this Bread
and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your death, O Lord,
until you come again.

- C. Save us, Savior of the world,
for by your Cross
and Resurrection,
you have set us free.

THURIFERS AND BOAT BEARERS

INCENSE

The fragrant smoke of incense symbolizes our prayers rising up to Heaven and the purification of all that the smoke touches. The incense is kept in a covered liturgical vessel called a "boat," usually made of bronze or brass. It comes with a spoon for placing the incense in the incense burner, called a "thurible" or "censer." The thurible holds burning charcoal to burn the incense; and it hangs on chains so that it may be swung by the priest when incensing objects or people and may be easily carried by the thurifer -- the altar server who carries the thurible.



Incense may be used (1) after the entrance procession - to incense the **Altar of the Sacrifice of the Mass**; (2) after the Gospel procession - to incense the **Book of the Gospels of Jesus Christ**; (3) after the offertory procession - to incense our **Gifts** of bread and wine, yet to be consecrated, **and the Altar, the Priest and the People**; and (4) after the consecration - at the two elevations of and to incense both **the Blessed Sacrament and the Precious Blood**. And, at Funeral Masses, (5) after the Communion Rite - the priest will incense the **Body of the Deceased** in the coffin or in the urn, both as a sign of honor to the Deceased, who became the temple of the Holy Spirit in Baptism, and as a sign of our prayers for the Deceased rising up to God in heaven.

INCENSE INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALTAR SERVERS

1. You must arrive 20 minutes before Mass is scheduled to begin. Light the charcoal before you vest in your cassock and surplice.
2. To light the charcoal, use tongs, holding the charcoal with star side down and away from your body. Use the wax wicks for the actual lighting of the charcoal. Use the matches to light the wicks. Light the charcoal from underneath, using the yellow tip of the flame of the wick, and holding it there until the edges of the charcoal begin to turn white, as the self-starting chemical burns off of the charcoal. Then, place the charcoal star side up into the thurible. Always light two charcoals and place them into the thurible.
3. Place the incense stand with its thurible near to the server's chairs on Mary's side of the sanctuary, leaving adequate space for all servers to pass.

FIRST: For the Altar of the Sacrifice of the Mass

4. For the Entrance Procession, carry the thurible and the incense boat to the priest at the entrance to the Church. Father will put some incense on the hot charcoal before the Entrance Procession begins.
5. The thurifer with the thurible leads the Entrance Procession up to the Altar of Sacrifice. Walk at a normal pace, gently swinging the thurible backward and forward as you go along.
6. After our bow at the foot of the altar, as Father goes to the altar to reverence it with a kiss, the thurifer with the boat approaches Father at the usual service corner of the altar. While Father is incensing the **Altar of Sacrifice**, you stand back a little always ready to assist further.
7. After Father incenses the Altar, he will give the thurible back to you. Place both it and the boat on the incense stand and return to your seat.

SECOND: For the Book of the Gospels of Jesus Christ

8. After the Second Reading, and during the silence, retrieve the thurible and boat and go to Father's chair. Hand him the boat. Open the thurible for Father to place incense onto the burning charcoals.

9. Then, you, with thurible, lead Father back to the center of the Altar. Wait while Father picks up the Book of Gospels. Then lead Father to the Ambo, and stand on Father's left hand side, so that you are facing Father, ready to hand the thurible to him.

10. After Father incenses the **Book of Gospels**, wait until he finishes reading the Gospel, then place the thurible and boat on the incense stand.

11. During the homily, place a new charcoal star side down so that it lights and place it into the thurible. Then return the thurible to the incense stand and immediately return to your seat to hear the homily.

THIRD: For the Gifts. The Altar, the Priests and the People

12. After the servers have led the Offertory Procession to the altar, and while the deacon and the priest are preparing the Gifts at the altar, retrieve the thurible and the boat and, before the washing of Father's hands, approach Father at the usual service corner of the altar. Hand him the boat. Open the thurible for Father to place incense onto the burning charcoals. Hand Father the thurible and then you stand back a little.

13. After Father incenses the **Altar, the Priests and the People**, Father will hand the thurible back to you, and you will remain near the credence table and will continue to hold in your hands both the thurible and the boat.

FOURTH: For the Blessed Sacrament and the Precious Blood

14. At the Preface of the Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass, after Father says “The Lord be with you,” you place one spoon of incense onto the burning charcoals in the thurible. You continue to stand near the credence table until the “Holy, Holy, Holy ... Hosanna in the highest” is finished.

15. Then, with the thurible in hand, but not the boat, walk around to the front and center of the altar, and kneel down on the first step of the altar, along with all the people.

16. After the Consecration, when the priest elevates the Blessed Sacrament, in the host, you incense the Body of Christ with three sets of three swings each (3 x 3). When the priest elevates the Precious Blood, in the chalice, you incense the Blood of Christ with three sets of three swings each (3 x 3).

17. After the Great Amen is sung, you stand, and walk to place the thurible on the incense stand. Return immediately to your chair. You are done!

FIFTH: For the Body of the Deceased — during a Funeral Mass Only

18. After the Prayer after Communion, retrieve the thurible and boat and go to Father at the coffin or urn. Hand him the boat. Open the thurible for Father to place incense onto the burning charcoals. Hand Father the thurible, and you stand back a little, as Father circles the coffin incensing the **Body of the Deceased**. Take the thurible back from Father; and you go to the other end of the coffin to prepare to lead the Final Procession out of the Church. Wait outside the Church with the cross bearer and the servers to honor the body to be placed in the hearse.

19. **For all Masses, OTHER than Funeral Masses**, the thurible and boat are NOT to be carried in the Final Procession.

20. **After EVERY Mass**, take the boat and the thurible outside the front door of the Church, go to the curb at the driveway, and clean the ashes from the thurible out on to the pavement of the driveway. Be sure that everything is put away where it belongs.

