

Saint Mary-Holy Cross Parish
Altar Server Training



Thank you for volunteering to help the people of the Parish pray better at Mass as an Altar Server! Your help to me during Mass is important as you assist not only me, but all the people present at Mass as you help make things go more smoothly, helping us all pray and celebrate better.

Here is a list of the names of things you will use and need to know as a Server:

Cassock (sounds like cass-sock) – the long black robe with lots of buttons that you wear



Surplice (sounds like surplus) - the shorter white garment you wear over the cassock

Try on different sizes to get a **Cassock** that just reaches the top of your foot, and a surplice that reaches to your waist. Remember your size, and use larger sizes as you grow.

The Cross = Processional Cross - the wooden cross carried in procession and placed on the stand right behind where the readings are done. **Cross Bearer** – the server who carries the cross.



Candles - are carried by two servers in the Entrance Procession, placed in their stands beside the **Altar**, and are held by two servers at the **Ambo** while I read the Gospel.



Candle Bearers – the servers who carry the candles.

Sanctuary – the area at the front of the church up the steps, where the **Ambo** and **Altar** are



Ambo – the wooden stand where the readings are read, next to which the two candles are held by two servers when I read the Gospel



Altar – the table at the front of the church where the Liturgy of the Eucharist is celebrated

The Book = The Sacramentary – the small red book with gold symbols on the cover that I read the Mass prayers from; it is held by the **Book Bearer** server at the beginning of Mass when I pray from it, and placed on the **Altar** as the gifts of bread and wine, and the collection are brought forward.



Plates = Patens & Cups = Chalices - the vessels that hold the bread and the wine, which become the Body and Blood of Christ

Purificators – the small, neatly folded white cloths that are used to wipe the rim of the cups when we drink from them at communion

Finger towel – the white washcloth I use to dry my fingers when I wash them after preparing the gifts of bread and wine at the **Altar** as the second part of Mass begins

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The different times during Mass when you as servers do something are

Before Mass – Get vested (dressed) in your **Cassock** and **Surplice**



Bring the **Cross** and **Candles** from the **Sanctuary** and place them in the rack in the back of the church

The Entrance Procession – the **Cross** leads, and two servers with **Candles** follow. The procession begins when the people begin the second verse of the opening song.

When you get to the front of the church, pause before stepping up onto the first step, line up three in a row side by side, and bow to the **Altar**. After bowing, the **Cross** goes to the stand behind the **Ambo** and the **Cross Bearer** goes to the chair to the side of the **Sanctuary**, the **Candles** go into their stands beside the **Altar**, and the **Candle Bearers** go to their seats next to me, or at the other side of the **Sanctuary** from where the **Ambo** is.



The Opening Prayer – after the server to my right picks up the book and moves in front of me, to my right and at an angle facing me, holding **The Book** up toward me for me to pray the opening prayer from it.

Proclaiming the Gospel – when I (or Deacon Terry) go to read the Gospel, the two **Candle Bearers** go with me to the **Altar** (where I will get the Gospel Book), get the two **Processional Candles**, and go with me to the **Ambo** where you stand, one on each side of it while I proclaim the Gospel. Pay attention to each others' candles and keep their flames at the same height. After the reading of the Gospel, return the **Candles** to their stands and yourselves to your seats.

Receiving the Gifts and Preparing the Altar – When the gifts of bread and wine, and the collection are brought forward and I go down to receive them, the **Cross Bearer** will come with me to get the collection basket from me and put it on the floor in front of the **Altar**.

As the **Cross Bearer** and I go to receive the gifts, the other two servers prepare the **Altar**.

The **Book Bearer** places the **Sacramentary** on the **Altar** as indicated in the picture on the side table, and takes the **wooden stand**



off the **Altar** and puts it on the **side table** where the **Cups** and **Plates** are.

The other server goes directly to the side table to get the **Cups**, **Purificators**, and the **small pitcher of water** and takes them to the **Altar**, placing them there as indicated in the picture.



After placing the **Book**, **Cups**, and **Purificators** on the **Altar**, one server brings the **small pitcher of water** from the side table to the **Altar**, while the other brings the finger towel and small glass dish to wash my fingers, returning them to the side table when done.

The servers line up side by side on the side of the **Sanctuary** where the side table is for the Eucharistic Prayer, standing or kneeling in a row just in front of the side table and door to the **Sacristy** – the room off the **Sanctuary** where all the supplies are kept.

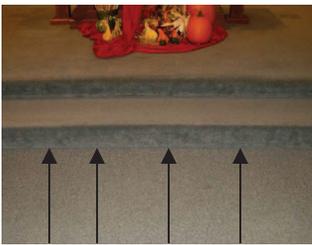


During the Our Father, you may join hands with one another and me, coming to the **Altar** to do so, then offering one another the Sign of Peace, before returning to your places to the side of the **Sanctuary**.

At Communion, I will bring the hosts to you. Receive the host in your hand, then wait until I receive my host to consume yours. One of the Communion Ministers will offer you the **Cup**, as you wish to receive from the **Cup**, or not. After you have received Communion, you may return to your seats.

The next time you need to do anything is when we leave the Sanctuary at the end of Mass, during the closing song.

All servers go directly out of the **Sanctuary**, down the steps, onto the main floor, turn around to face the **Altar**, stepping to each side to leave a space for me (and Deacon Jerry if present) to stand between you.



Together we bow to the **Altar**, then turn around and recess down the aisle, servers ahead of me.

Return your **Cassocks** and **Surplices** to the closet, hanging them neatly on the hangers, in order of size.

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Some other things to keep in mind and remember...

Because you are right up there in front, all dressed up and under the lights, everyone can see you very very well. So, it's very very important that you not be more of a distraction than a help to the people as they pray during Mass.

This means – don't make eyes or faces (or noses or ears) at people in the pews (like, your friends or brothers and sisters and parents). Stand and sit as still as you can, upright rather than slouching, and not picking or pulling at yourself in any way (hair, fingernails, clothes, and so on).

When sitting, keep both feet flat on the floor, and when standing, fold your hands together at your waist, or let them hang at your sides.

Wear your good clothes and shoes if possible, especially what will stick out or show from underneath your servers' vestments.

And, thank you again for volunteering to help the people of the Parish pray by your service as an Altar Server. I appreciate your help, and all the people of the Parish do too!

Fr. Dan