

Being an Altar Server



Historically men and boys have substituted as servers at worship when an instituted acolyte was not present.

The discipline of the Church, in view of the 1992 authoritative interpretation of Canon 2302 permits the diocesan bishop to entrust the functions of the instituted acolyte to females as well as to males. (Altar Servers Norms for the Diocese of Kalamazoo)

All parishioners are invited to be part of this ministry. Boys and girls fourth grade and up and men and women are also encouraged to be part of this ministry. Altar Servers help set up for mass and assist the priest during our liturgical celebrations. A training and formation period must be completed.

Adults who would like to be trained are invited to call Margie Lanko, Ministry Coordinator at 269-968-6645 or via mlanko@stphilipbc.org any time during the year and make arrangements with the trainer.

Initial Altar Server Training



Formation and training of servers is provided by the Pastor or his delegate before they begin this ministry. Their formation should awaken in them the spiritually motivated reason for serving and deepen their spiritual disposition. The instructions should also lead servers to understand the Mass (its parts and their meaning), the various objects used at liturgy

(their names and use), and the various functions of the server during Mass and other liturgical celebrations.

Servers should be instructed to be reverent at worship. It is their privilege to give a witness of reverence to the congregation. They should know how to handle sacred items in a respectful manner. Servers are trained to move around the worship space in a dignified and unobtrusive manner. Training for children, grades 4th through high school, to become new servers is scheduled twice a year.

Ongoing Server Training



Ongoing training is a very important part of being a good server and if our servers are to do well they must continue to learn all they can.

The clergy, and the people in the assembly, depend on them to do their jobs to the best of their ability. With this in mind we give each server an opportunity to continue that training. Knowing how busy everyone is, we have set up a up a training on this web site and our servers are encouraged to work on their training when it is convenient for them.

Church Colors

There are five different colors used for the different seasons and feasts and they are: White, Violet, Red, Green, Rose

White is a sign of joy. White is used during

- Masses for the Dead
- Christmas and Easter seasons
- Celebration of Christ the King
- Feasts of our Lord (except The Passion)
- Feasts of our Lady, angels and saints who are not martyrs
- Conversation of St. Paul (25 January)
- The Chair of St. Peter (22 February)
- John the Baptist (24 June)
- All Saints (1 November)
- John the Evangelist (27 December)

Red symbolizes both the blood of Christ and martyrs and the Holy Spirit. Red is used on:

- Palm Sunday
- Good Friday and for the Feast of the Passion of Our Lord
- Pentecost and for Masses of the Holy Spirit
- Feasts of Apostles, Evangelists and Martyrs such as St. Stephen

Green symbolizes growth and hope. Green is used: At Ordinary Times

Violet is a symbol of penance. Violet is used during:

- Advent
- Lent
- Sometimes used in Masses for the Dead

Rose indicates Joy. Rose is used on:

- Gaudete Sunday (3rd Sunday of Lent)
- Laetare Sunday (4th Sunday of Lent)

Postures that Servers Use

Your posture during the Mass is very important. It is how you carry yourself when you are serving at the Mass. A server has to carry out a number of different actions at Mass, and so there are a number of different postures.

Hands: Unless you are sitting down or carrying something (like a candle); your hands should be kept joined in front of your chest; either locked together, or palm to palm, fingers pointing upward. Keep your hands high up on your chest. If you are carrying something in one hand hold the other hand flat on your chest.

Bowing: When you bow to someone or something at mass, it should be a smooth forward inclining of your head and shoulders. When you bow to the altar, bow deeply at the waist and bring yourself slowly to your full height. When you bow to the priest, bow your head slowly and gracefully. Never walk and bow at the same time: stop before bowing. If passing in front of the altar with something in your hands a bow with your head is all that is needed.

Genuflecting: When you genuflect, keep your hands in front of your chest while you go down on your right knee. Keep your body straight. Do not wobble back and forth, or you may look like a new born lamb trying to walk. Be sure that your alb isn't going to trip you on the way down or up.

What is The Mass?

Mass is a time to give thanks and praise. Not only is the Mass a meal but most importantly it is a time when the people of God come together to give thanks and praise to God. All of us, you as a server and all the people in the assembly sing and praise God as a community. We thank and praise God for blessing us with his greatest gift, Jesus. At this special time Christ is present to us in two ways, in the Sacred Scripture and in the Eucharist.

- Christ is present in the Mass. Christ is present as we listen to God's word from Scripture. Christ is present when, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

- The Mass as a sacrifice. We respond to God's goodness by celebrating the Mass. Through the ministry of the priest, we are united with Christ in offering prayers of thanksgiving and praise to the Father. We also remember the sacrifice Jesus made to save us from our sins. We remember that he gave up his life for us. Then through the Holy Spirit our gifts of bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.
- The Mass is also a meal. Our Eucharistic celebration also takes the form of a meal. Just like at the time of the Last Supper when Jesus offered the bread and wine, we receive Jesus in the form of bread and wine at the Eucharistic meal as food for our journey in life.
- Server Should Be Reverent. The Mass is a meal, a sacrifice, and a prayer of thanksgiving to God, and because of the sacredness of the Mass it is very important to be reverent when you are serving. You can show this reverence by the way you move and how you handle the vessels used during the Mass. These are the different postures discussed above.

Procedures for Serving at the Mass

ENTRANCE PROCESSION:

- Two Servers flank the Crucifer.
- Walk at the same pace as the Crucifer.
- Servers step up on the sanctuary floor together and turn to the right walking single file.
- Crucifer goes to the first step in front of the tabernacle, and servers go to their spots at the altar.
- When the Deacon (or Lector) arrives, servers place candles at the same time that the Deacon (or Lector) places the Book on the altar.
- Servers step back (Servers 2 steps, Deacon 4 steps); Servers bow to altar and turn right.
- Servers go to chairs. Deacon waits for priest (on his right) and they will venerate the altar together.

INTRODUCTORY RITES:

- Servers stand through the entire introductory rite. (Remember: fold your hands in front of you when not holding something.)
- During the Gloria (or during the Penitential Rite at Lent), pick up the Sacramentary and go stand to the right of the Deacon (open to Opening Prayer).
- At the end of the Gloria, stand in front of Father with the book open.

LITURGY of the WORD:

- Sit (simultaneously) after your partner replaces Sacramentary on Credence Table.
- Remain seated during the first reading, Psalm, and 2nd Reading.
- When Priest stands for the Gospel Procession, go to altar and stand by your candle. When Priest (or Deacon) reaches for Book of Gospels, Servers reach for candles.

- Priest steps back and Server on left steps back and turns to the left. Server on right moves up to be by their partner; they proceed SLOWLY shoulder to shoulder to ambo and take their proper places in front of the ambo facing the priest or deacon. At the end of the Gospel reading, Servers wait for enthronement of the Book of Gospels, and then they return (single-file) to the Credence Table, blow out the candles and then sit for the homily.
- Stand for the Creed and Intercessions. [Remember to bow at "by the power of the Holy Spirit".

LITURGY of the EUCHARIST:

- When the assembly sits (for the collection), set the Altar.
- Hand everything to the Deacon.
 - Or in the absence of a Deacon:
 - Remove wooden book stand.
 - Place the chalice to the right of corporal.
 - Place the tray of cups on the right edge of the altar.
 - Place Sacramentary to left of the main corporal.
 - Return to chairs until Priest gets up to receive the gifts.
- When Priest gets up, go to wherever he is, a Server should be on each side of him.
- Take the cruets or the Ciborium bowl from the Priest; go to the left side of the Altar and stand (facing the piano).
- Give to the Priest (or Deacon) what you hold, as needed. He will take the bread first.
- Return the water cruet to the Credence Table, and get the Lavabo.
- Bring the Lavabo up on the black marble and pour for hand washing.
- When completed, take the Lavabo to the sacristy and return to your chairs as soon as possible.
- Head server or other server will take the tray after Father or Deacon fills the cups.
- Head server will stand ready to take the wine cruet when the Deacon or Priest is finished.
- Go to the back of your chairs and stand.
 - And kneel after the Holy, Holy, Holy (Preface Acclamation).
 - Bow your head at the Consecration when priest genuflects.
 - After the concluding acclamation stand and go to the front of your chair.

Altar Vessels

CHALICE: The large cup used at Mass to hold the wine which becomes the Blood of Christ.

PATEN: The saucer-like dish which usually matches the chalice and with which it is used. It holds the bread which becomes the Body of Christ.

CIBORIUM: A cup-like vessel (usually large) with a lid. It contains the hosts that will be used for communion. It is also used to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.

CIBORIUM PLATE or LARGE PATEN: Because of the sign value, it is becoming more common to use a large paten or ciborium plate in place of the traditional ciborium. On this are placed the breads which will be consecrated for communion. This paten/plate/bowl is ordinarily brought up in procession at the presentation of the gifts. It may be the duty of a Server to see that this vessel (with its breads) is brought to the back of the church before mass. If this task falls to you, be careful not to spill any breads while going down the aisle.

CRUET(s): The small pitcher-like vessels used to hold the water and wine which will be consecrated at mass for the communion of the people. (Note: when large assemblies are present a larger "decanter" may be used for the wine.) The cruets are filled before mass and brought to the back of the church for the procession that will bring the gifts forward.

PALL: The stiff, square, white cover that is placed over the chalice during mass to protect its contents.

PURIFICATOR: A triple-folded, rectangular, white cloth used to cleanse the chalice and to dry the celebrant's fingers after the last ablution (washing). When setting up the chalice, the purificator is placed over the mouth of the chalice, beneath the paten.

LAVABO: The bowl and pitcher used for washing the hands of the Presider. The name comes from the Latin verb "Lavare" which means "to wash".

SANCTUARY: The space at the front of the church within which most of the action of the mass takes place. The word means "holy place". In most churches this space is somewhat elevated. There are many things in the sanctuary with which you should be familiar.

ALTAR of SACRIFICE ...or ... MAIN ALTAR: The large, high table usually located in the middle of the sanctuary. Most of the action of the Liturgy of the Eucharist takes place near the main altar.

ALTAR OF the WORD, AMBO (pulpit), or LECTERN: The place from which the Scripture readings are done, the Gospel is proclaimed, and the homily is given.

CREDENCE TABLE: A rather small table on which are kept the things (books, bread, wine, water, lavabo, sacred vessels) that are used during mass.

CANDLES: At least two large candles are kept burning throughout the mass as a sign of Christ, the Light of the world. Other candles include:

- Servers' candles
- Sanctuary candle
- Ambo candle
- Paschal candle
- and perhaps candelabra

TABERNACLE: A Latin word which means "tent". A small box, usually with special decorations, in which the Blessed Sacrament is kept when mass is not being celebrated. It is a place that should be given particular reverence. It is located in various places in different churches.