

# *Ministry of Altar Server Prayer*



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 find joy in serving at your altar.

Help me find gladness in knowing  
and doing your will in all things.

Amen.

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MINISTRY OF ALTAR SERVER

## Liturgical Ministry Assignments

The Altar Server Ministry schedule is produced by a software program called *Ministry Scheduler Pro (MSP)*. This program was developed and is maintained by *Rotunda Software*. As most students are in grades three thru five when they first volunteer, at the training session for Altar Servers, parents will complete a form providing information needed to sign-up their child for this ministry and to designate their preference regarding weekend Masses at which to serve. After completing the training, it is necessary to log onto *MSP* to view the schedule for dates when the child has been assigned. Also, a reminder is sent by e-mail four days before the scheduled time. Finally, it is the responsibility of each volunteer to log onto *MSP* and make changes as needed to his/her personal profile or revise the list of Masses at which the person prefers to serve.

## Requesting Ministry Substitutes

Whenever they will not be available for ministry assignments, volunteers are responsible for logging onto *MSP* and requesting either a substitute from among those who are trained for the ministry or to make a trade with another volunteer to cover the assignment. When such a request is made, other volunteers are notified that a substitute is needed, and they can log onto *MSP* to indicate that they will substitute at the assigned time. If there is a 'last-minute' need for a substitute, it is helpful if the volunteer can call//ask someone before the assigned time to write 'need substitute' on the sign-up sheet next to his/her name. This will alert the ushers for that Mass, that a substitute must be found.

## Preparing for Attendance at Mass

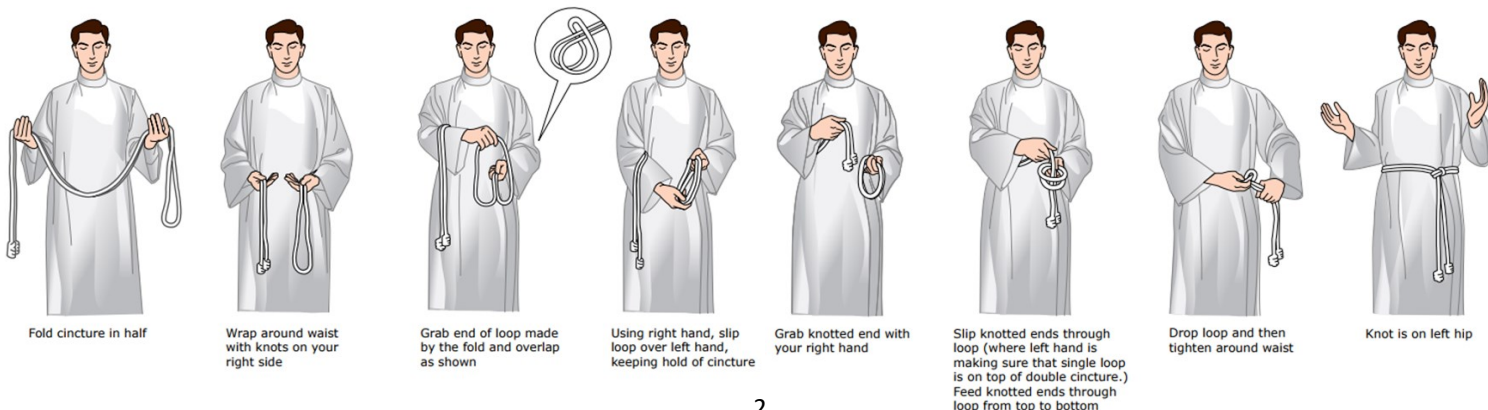
It is always appropriate to dress neatly and modestly when attending Mass, particularly for those who are serving as Liturgical Ministers. If possible, wear dress shoes rather than tennis shoes, and never wear sandals or 'flip-flops'. Avoid wearing t-shirts, shorts, or blue jeans. Be sure that hair is combed, fingernails are trimmed, and hands are clean.



## Vestments to Be Worn by Altar Servers

Arrive at the church at least 15 minutes before the start of Mass and sign-in on the roster of Liturgical Ministers kept on the table in the commons. Proceed to the vesting area for Altar Servers, which is also the waiting area near the confessionals. Albs and Cinctures are kept in the closet located in this area. Put on an Alb that reaches to the ankles, and tie a Cincture (cord) around the waist with loose ends hanging at the left side. A Saint Benedict Medallion (also in the closet) is to be worn around the neck.

### HOW TO TIE A ROPE CINCTURE



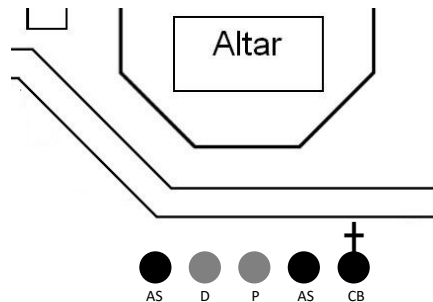
## Preparing to Enter the Church

When two or more Altar Servers are present, they must decide who will carry the Processional Cross and lead the Entrance Procession to the Altar. This Altar Server will also hold the Missal while the Priest reads the opening and closing prayers. Also to be decided is which Altar Server will ring the bells at the Consecration during the Mass. Altar Servers then join the Priest(s) and Deacon(s) near the entrance to the church, where they are led in prayer after which all enter the church and line-up for the Entrance Procession. At all times, except when carrying the Cross or holding other items used for the Mass, Altar Servers should keep their hands folded as in prayer. Remember that Priests and Deacons appreciate your service at the Mass, and they will readily answer any questions you may have regarding the duties of servers.



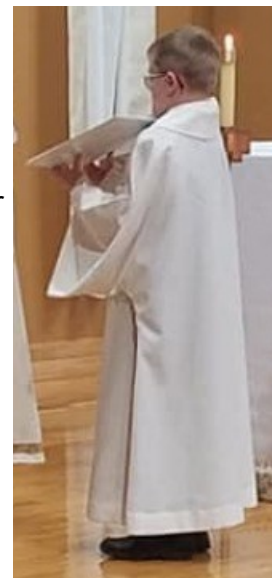
## Entrance Procession

The Altar Server carrying the Cross (Cross Bearer) leads the Entrance Procession slowly and reverently down the center aisle as the choir begins singing the opening hymn. Other servers follow (2x2 when 3 or more are present), with the Priest(s) and Deacon(s) coming last. When the procession arrives in front of the Altar, the servers move to either side leaving space at the center for the Priest(s) and Deacon(s). When all members of the procession are in line before the Altar, all genuflect (except the Cross Bearer, who bows). As the Priest(s) and Deacon(s) go up the stairs to the Altar, the servers proceed to chairs in front of the first pew and remain standing. The Cross Bearer places the Cross in the stand near the Priest's chair (making certain that the Body of Christ is facing the congregation), then joins the other servers.



## The Liturgy of the Word

The first part of the Mass, called the Liturgy of the Word, includes the Introductory Rite, Readings, Gospel, Homily (Sermon), Creed, and Prayers of the Faithful. Altar Servers remain standing during the Penitential Rite (Lord, have mercy....) and the Gloria. After the Gloria, the Altar Server who carried the Processional Cross brings forward the Missal and holds it open for the Priest who reads the Opening Prayer. When the prayer is completed, the Altar Server returns to his/her chair, and all Altar Servers are then seated for the First and Second Readings. The Altar Servers then stand for the reading of the Gospel, and are seated once again for the Homily. Following the Homily, the Altar Servers stand for the Creed and for the reading of the Prayers of the Faithful.



## Liturgy of the Eucharist

### Preparation of the Altar

After the reading of the Prayers of the Faithful, Altar Servers proceed to the front of the Altar, bow together facing the Altar, and go to the Credence Table (table where the Chalice, hosts, and wine are placed in preparation for the Mass). They bring items from the Credence Table to the Deacon at the Altar in this order:

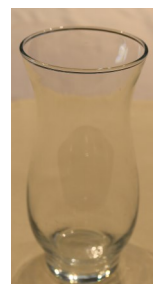
Chalice w/Purificator, Pall, Paten, and Corporal (pictures attached)

Missal stand

Missal

Cruet w/water (picture attached)

Additional chalices and ciboria (if needed)



When bringing these items to the Deacon servers should walk slowly and reverently. Do not place the items on the Altar, but remain at the step leading to the area behind the Altar and hand them to the Deacon. Altar Servers then stand near the Credence Table until the Procession with the Gifts.

Designated members of the congregation (Gift Bearers) walk down the center aisle to the altar carrying the gifts which include the basket, book of prayer intentions, Cruet w/wine and Ciboria. Altar Servers then proceed to the area in front of the Altar with the Priest and/or Deacon to receive the gifts. The Altar Servers then carry these vessels to the Altar and hand them to the Deacon, except the basket which is placed at the foot of the Altar. After the Deacon has poured wine and water into the Chalice, Altar Servers return the cruets to the Credence Table. They then stand near the Credence Table until washing hands of the Priest.

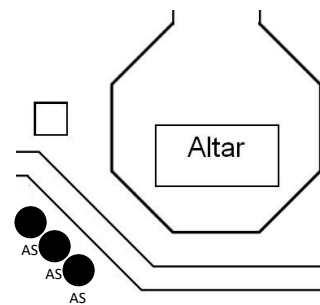


### Washing Hands of the Priest

For washing of the hands, two Altar Servers proceed from the Credence Table to the Altar, one carries the cruet w/water the other carries the bowl held under the hands when water is poured, and a small towel placed over his/her left arm. Altar Servers wait at the step near the Altar until the Priest approaches for the washing of hands; they then step up to a position behind the Altar. The Altar Server with the cruet pours a small amount of water over the hands, then offers the towel for the Priest to dry his hands. When the washing is completed, the Altar Servers bow to the Priest, then return all items to the Credence Table. The towel must be



folded and placed beside (not into) the bowl. Altar Servers then proceed to the base of the steps near the Ambo and remain standing during the Preface until the “Holy, Holy, Holy” has been sung, then kneel on the first step.



### Consecration of the Mass

As the Priest prepares to say the prayers of Consecration, he holds both hands outstretched over the bread and the wine while he prays. At this time the designated Altar Server rings the bells once.

The Priest holds the host in his hands and says the prayer of Consecration:

**“...this is My Body which will be given up for you.”**

As the Priest then raises the host for the congregation to adore, the Altar Server rings the bells three times.

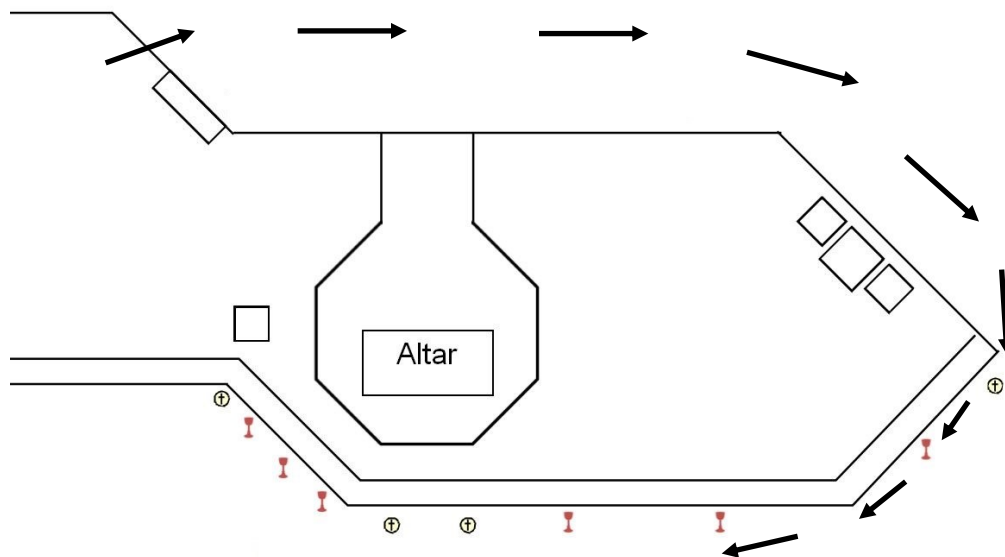
The Priest then holds the Chalice with the wine and says the prayer of Consecration:

**“Take this, all of you, and drink from it: this is the Chalice of My Blood,... Do this in memory of Me.”**

As the Priest then raises the Chalice for the congregation to adore, the Altar Server again rings the bells three times.

### Distribution of Holy Communion

Altar Servers remain kneeling on the step at the side of the Altar near the Ambo until they stand with the congregation to pray the Lord’s Prayer. The Altar Servers remain standing until they receive Holy Communion. After the Priest, Deacon, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion take their places and begin sharing the Body of Christ with the assembly, the Altar Servers will return to their chairs through the back sacristy. They remain seated while Holy Communion is being distributed. When the Deacon approaches the Altar the Altar Servers will go to the Altar through the back Sacristy, take the Missal and the Missal stand from the Deacon and place them on the credence table. They will return to their chairs, bowing to the Altar, and remain seated until the Altar is cleared, the Blessed Sacrament is reposed in the Tabernacle, and the Priest(s) and Deacon(s) are seated.



## Closing Prayer and Dismissal

When the Priest stands for the Closing Prayer, all servers stand and the Cross Bearer brings the Sacramentary forward and holds it open for the Priest to read the Prayer. When the prayer is completed, the server returns to his/her chair and stands with others for the Final Blessing. As the Priest(s) and Deacon(s) proceed to positions in front of the Altar, the Cross Bearer brings the Cross from the holder and bows when all other servers join in the final genuflection before the procession to the back of the church. When Priest(s), Deacon(s) and servers have reached the Commons, the Cross Bearer holds the Cross while all bow.

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN IDENTIFYING LITURGICAL ELEMENTS AND ACTIONS



1. Chalice for congregation



2. Fr. Brooks' Chalice



2. Fr. Porter's Chalice



3. Ciborium (pl. Ciboria)



4. Corporal



5. Cruet



6. Finger Towel



7. Flagon



9. Oblation Bowl



12. Fr. Brook's Pall



12. Fr. Porter's Pall



13. Paten w/5" host (Fr. Brooks)



13. Paten w/2" host (Fr. Porter)



14. Purificator



15. Missal

## Glossary of Terms Used in Identifying Liturgical Elements and Actions

1. **Chalice** = sacred vessel (cup) used to contain the wine that is consecrated to become the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ during the Mass.
2. **Celebrant's Chalice** = specific reference to the sacred vessel (cup) used to contain the Precious Blood consumed by the Celebrant (priest) during the Mass.
3. **Ciborium (pl. Ciboria)** = sacred vessel used to contain the hosts distributed at Holy Communion or reserved in the Tabernacle.
4. **Corporal** = square piece of linen cloth upon which the chalice and hosts are placed during the Consecration of the Mass.
5. **Cruet** = small vessel used to contain water and/or wine for use in the Mass.
6. **Finger Towel** = small towel used for drying the hands of the priest when they are washed at the Offertory of the Mass.
7. **Flagon** = glass vessel used to contain wine at the Mass, which is narrowed to form a 'neck' at the top for ease in pouring.
8. **Lectionary** = book containing the Sacred Scriptures that are read during the Mass.
9. **Oblation Bowl** = small bowl, usually made of glass, which contains water used to rinse/purify the fingers of clergy or lay Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.
10. **Offertory** = point during the Mass at which the priest offers up the gifts of bread and wine to God in preparation for the Consecration.
11. **Offertory Procession** = point during the Mass at which ushers or other members of the laity process to the altar carrying gifts of bread and wine for consecration.
12. **Pall** = square piece of cardboard covered with linen that used to cover the Celebrant's Chalice during the Mass.
13. **Paten** = small, round metal dish, on which is placed the celebrant host during the Consecration of the Mass.
14. **Purificator** = a small linen cloth used to purify sacred vessels, which is used to purify/wipe clean the Chalices, Paten, and Ciboria after they have been used at Communion.
15. **Missal** = book of Scriptures and other prayers read by the priest during the Mass.
16. **Tabernacle** = box-like container that is used for conserving (storing) consecrated host that have not been consumed during the Mass.