Altar Server Guidelines

General

1. When on duty for Mass always be there at least 15 or 20 minutes before Mass begins. If you cannot serve please make sure you have a substitute organised.
2. Before you come to Mass please make sure you are neatly & properly dressed.
3. Make sure that you hang up your robe after Mass and that belts are put away neatly. Robes should not be left on the floor.
4. The rule at all sacred functions is 'Silence is Golden'. Unless it is very necessary, do not talk before going to the Altar.
5. Altar servers should respond clearly and distinctly to the prayers and responses during Mass.
6. While serving on the Altar servers should carry out their duties in a graceful and careful manner. This does not mean in a slow or a hurried manner.
7. Serving on God's Altar takes team work, so it is important to help one another in the duties that take place. Older servers can be a great help to new comers.
8. It is important to learn off and to be familiar with all things needed at Mass.
9. A special Altar Servers Prayer is to be said before and after Mass. (Can be found at the back of this booklet).

General Information

Chalice:
The Chalice is the sacred cup used to hold the wine that will be turned into Jesus' blood.

Ciborium:
The Ciborium is used a Mass to hold the bread that will be turned into Jesus' body and given to the people at Holy Communion.

Cruets:
The Cruets are used at Mass to hold the water and wine.

Thurible:
The dish with a lid that hangs from a long chain. It is used at funerals and other holy days.

Incense Bowl:
This holds the incense and is kept with the thurible.

Sacristy:
The room where everything is prepared for the Mass and where the Priest gets ready.

Purificator:
The Purificator is a small linen towel which the Priest uses to clean the sacred vessels.

Paten:
The Paten is the dish upon which the Body of Jesus is placed and can be found on top of the chalice.

Pall:
The Pall is a small linen card used to cover the chalice.

Sprinkler / Aspergillum:
Used to hold and sprinkle the water.

Paschal Candle:
The tall candle at the Baptismal Font. It is lit for baptisms, funerals and certain holy days.

Credence / Gift Table:
The table on which the chalice, ciborium and cruets are left before being brought to the Altar. It is over at the choir side of the Altar.

Taper:
Wax stick used for lighting candles.

Before Sunday Mass

- Come to the Church at least 20 minutes before Mass begins.
- Sign the attendance book with your name, time & date you are serving and your group name.
- Put on your robe and make sure that it is not too long.
- Say the "Prayer before Mass".
- When all servers have arrived the Captain or Vice-Captain of the group will quietly give out the jobs that each server is to do.
- Talk quietly in the room as there will be people in the Church and voices carry.
- When you hear the bells line up for the procession at the beginning of the Mass.
- Whoever is taking the cross and candles are to come into the Sacristy to get them.
- When the Children's Liturgy Group are on you are to line up at the porch (11.30 am Mass on Sunday).

During Sunday Mass

- Don't talk to the other servers.
- Everyone should know what they are doing.
- At the procession the cross and candle bearers go first, followed by the other servers.
- Line up at the steps in front of the Altar. Cross and candle bearers to the right.
- Remember to leave room for the Priest in the middle.
- Bow your head.
- While the Priest kisses the Altar go to your places.

- Put the cross and candles into the stand and go to your stools.
- Stand beside your stool and sit down for the start of the First Reading.
- Sit on your stools during the readings.
- Candle bearers go to the Ambo. Bow while you pass the Altar.
- When the Gospel is finished take the candles back to the stand.
- All servers stand for the Gospel and sit for the homily.
- After the Prayers of the Faithful take the gifts over to the Altar. Chalice first, then cruets and last the ciborium.
- For 11.30 am Mass on Sunday (when the Children's Liturgy have an offertory) two servers are to stand beside the priest to collect the gifts that are brought up.
- When the Children's Liturgy Group is on a server is to go and knock on the kitchen door at the start of the Creed ('I believe in one God').
- The Cruets: Remove the tops and take the cruets out of their stops. Stand at the Altar and wait until the Priest gives the wine and water back to you. Place them in their stops, replace the tops, then bow and leave them back on the gift table.
- Take the bowl of water and the cloth for the priest to wash his hands. Stay at the Altar until he has washed and dried his hands, bow, then take them back to the ledge.
- Remain standing for the 'Holy, Holy'.
- Kneel for the Eucharistic Prayer.
- Ring the bell when the Priest raises the host and again when the Priest raises the Chalice.
- Stand for the 'Our Father', Sign of Peace and the 'Lamb of God'.
- Walk up to the Altar at the end of the 'Lamb of God;.
- Stand behind the Altar for Communion.
- When all the server have been given Communion turn right to face the tabernacle, bow and go back to your stool.
- After Communion take the cruet of water to the Altar. Remove the top. When the Priest has finished cleaning the vessels take them back to the gift table.
- Make sure that there are no vessels left on the Altar.
- Take the cruet of water back as well.
- Once everything is off the Altar whoever is on Newsletter should be coming down to the Sacristy to get them.
- The server holding the book will stand when the Priest stands for the Concluding Prayer (depending on which Priest is on Mass).
- If there is no book stand at your stool for the Concluding Prayer.
- After the blessing go down and stand in front of the Altar step.
- After the Priest has kissed the Altar wait for him to come down to the Altar step. Wait until the Priest is ready to bow and then all bow together.
- The server carrying the cross leads the way followed by the candles.

After Sunday Mass

- After Mass the chalice, cruets and empty ciborium are to be taken to the Sacristy.
- After Saturday evening Mass all pink hymn books are to be collected.
- After 9.30 am Mass on Sunday all the green hymn books are to be put out.
- After 11.30 am Mass on Sunday all the green hymn books are to be collected.
- Don't put hymn books in the crying room
- Make sure that the Altar candles are blown out after all Masses.
- You might be asked to light the Baptismal Candle after 11.30 am if there is a Baptism.

- Make sure that your robes are hung up neatly. There are hangers for all robes. Robes are not to be left on the floor. Leave the belts neatly in their baskets.

How to serve a Wedding Mass

- A Wedding Mass is like the weekend Mass with a few small differences.
- Only two servers are needed for a wedding.
- The cross will already have been left up.
- Servers go up with the candles.
- Go to the Baptismal side.
- If the couple have candles to be lit, the Priest will ask them to come forward at the beginning of the Mass. Go and stand at each side of the Altar. There will be a taper there. Light it from the Altar Candles and hand it to the bride/bridegroom. They will light a candle and hand the taper back. Put the taper down and go back to your stool.
- Bring candles over for the Gospel.
- After the Gospel cross over and sit at the choir side.
- After the Homily go down with the priest to the stool at the front of the Altar. On the stool will be the sprinkler and a glass dish for the rings to be put on. One server holds the dish and the other holds the sprinkler. The Priest might also ask one of you to hold the hand-held mike while he is doing the Rite of Marriage.
- When finished put the dish, sprinkler and microphone back on the stool and go back to your stool at the choir side.
- The Priest will ask the married couple to come up and light a candle together. One server comes over and lights the taper from the Altar candle and hands it to the couple. When they give you back the taper go back to your stool.
- For the Offertory stand beside the priest.
- Make sure the chalice is brought over from the table to the Altar before you go and stand beside the priest.
- Cruets and Ciborium are brought up for the offertory.
- Sometimes you might be asked to go down to the table at the back of the Church with the candles and the people who are bringing up the gifts for the Offertory are to follow you. (You will be told at the start of Mass if you have to go down). If this is done put the candles back in the stand and go to the stand beside the priest to receive the gifts (cruets and ciborium).
- Mass continues as normal from then on.
- After the Priest has given the final blessing go over and get the candles and come down the side aisle.

How to serve a Funeral Mass

- If possible there will be four servers at a Funeral Mass.
- When the remains arrive at the Church one server is to go out to the porch with the priest. Take the sprinkler with you. The Priest will sprinkle the Holy Water on the coffin. Walk back beside

the Priest to the front of the Altar and leave the sprinkler on the top step. Come back into the Sacristy and get ready for the beginning of Mass.

- NB: Whoever is looking after the thurible should have it lit at least 15 minutes before Mass starts. Put in two charcoal at the start. The thurible is to be left up at he step on the choir side.
- Mass then continues as normal.
- After the Prayers of the Faithful two servers are to come down the centre aisle for the Offertory Procession. Wait until all those taking part in the Offertory have taken the gifts off the table before you come back up. The other two servers are to stand beside the priest.
- Mass then continues as normal.
- Put another two charcoal in the thurible during communion.
- After the Concluding Rite the Priest will invite people to stand for the final prayers of Commendation. The cross bearer takes the cross and goes to stand in front of the coffin (facing the coffin about 3 seats down the main aisle). The candle bearers stand at each side of the coffin (front seat of the main aisle). Make sure there is enough room for the priest to walk around the coffin.
- The server with the thurible should be at the top step of the Altar next to the Priest. The Priest will then sprinkle the coffin with Holy Water. Then he will come over for the thurible. Open the thurible and the Priest will put the incense in. *Always make sure that you have the incense with you.* Close the thurible. The Priest will take it from you and go and incense the coffin. He will then hand it back to you. Come down and stand next to the cross bearer.
- The Priest will then come down. Wait until the coffin is turned and members of the family are ready. The cross bearer then turns and starts to walk down the aisle slowly.
- Go out to the main door. All stand on the left hand side.
- After the coffin is placed in the hearse come in the side door of the sacristy.
- NB: When remains are already in the Church there is no need to go to the porch. The Holy Water will already be up a the top step.

NB: When there are not four servers for a funeral whoever is doing the thurible is to have it back on the stand after the priest has given it back to you at the final prayers.

Altar Server's Prayers

Prayer Before Serving
Go before us, O Lord, in this our sacrifice of prayer and praise, and grant that what we say and sing with our lips we may believe in our hearts, and that what we believe in our hearts may we practise and show forth in our daily live.
Through Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Prayer After Serving
Bless, O Lord, our hearts and minds, and grant that as we leave your house, we may continue to be aware of your presence.
Amen.