

Ministry of Altar Server

Saint Christopher Catholic Church

APPEARANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL:

It goes without saying that the server should be clean and neat. Servers should always make sure their hands are freshly washed. Soap and water are provided in the sacristy if needed. Clothing may be casual but should always be conservative and neat in appearance. It should be evident that one has come prepared to serve at the altar of God.

ARRIVAL AND PREPARATION:

It is essential that the server arrive on time. There are several things the Server must accomplish before the beginning of Mass. In order to accomplish these things in a timely manner, it is necessary for the server be in attendance at least 10 minutes before Mass begins.

VESTMENTS:

Servers should take special care in choosing a cassock and surplice. The cassock hem should fall between the tops of the shoes and the ankles. Athletic shoes may be worn but they must be in good repair, clean, and the laces tied. The collar on shirts should be folded in so as not to stick out above the cassock. The servers closet must be kept in order and all vestments neatly returned to their proper place.

MOVEMENTS AND GESTURES:

One of the most important elements of liturgy is movement. A server's movements and actions communicate a great deal. A server's movements can be a great asset to the liturgy or a terrible distraction. Some of the most basic principles of liturgical movement are these:

- 1] All attention should be focused upon the liturgical action.
Never allow yourself to be distracted.
- 2] Always maintain correct posture.
Hands should be folded in a prayerful attitude. Sit with knees close together and both feet on the floor. Hands should rest on the lap. Kneel with the back straight and hands folded in a prayerful attitude. (When kneeling or rising maintain an upright posture.)
- 3] All movement should be smooth flowing.
Fast or jerking movement is a distraction. There should be no unnecessary movement at all. Absolutely no talking unless it is essential,
- 4] Movement should be confident and relaxed.
Avoid stiffness or rigidity. Move comfortably and confidently. Do not move at all unless you know where you are going and what you are going to do when you get there.
- 5] All movement should be in tandem.
If you are functioning as a team (two or more servers), do all things together. The first server prepared should wait for the other to be ready before the task begins.
- 6] Approach all things squarely.
Do not reach or stretch for an article. Do not push, pull, or drag a book or vessel across the altar or credence table. Approach closely enough to lift it or set it down with ease. (It is preferred that the altar be approached always from the back,)

SIGNS OF REVERENCE: In the celebration of Mass the altar is the central focus of attention. That is because we gather around the altar of God so that Jesus might be made manifest in the Holy Eucharist; the Eucharist we share in communion. The proper reverence for the Holy Eucharist is a genuflection.

Blessed Sacrament:

The proper sign of reverence for the Blessed Sacrament is a genuflection. At the beginning of Holy Mass when we first approach the altar and at the conclusion as we begin the procession we genuflect in reverence to the Blessed Sacrament which is located immediately behind the altar in our church. Also, whenever one approaches the tabernacle or passes in front of it, a genuflection is in order. The genuflection should be made slowly, smoothly, and completely.

The proper reverence for the altar is a bow. There are two ways to make a bow; Simple and profound.

The simple bow is made with the upper body only. The lower back is kept straight while the head and upper body are bowed forward. The hands (if empty) are folded in a prayerful posture. This bow is appropriate when reverencing another minister or reverencing the altar while carrying something, (i.e. candles, cross, vessels etc.)

The profound bow is made from the waist. The hands come together and fall to the knees. The usual reverence for the altar is a profound bow. If however the minister is carrying a book or candle Etc. a simple bow is required. The bow, both simple and profound, should be made slowly, smoothly, and comfortably,

RESPONSIBILITIES BEFORE MASS

1. Arrive at the sacristy at least 10 minutes before Mass.
2. Turn the lights on if necessary.
3. Wash hands if necessary.
4. Check the bulletin board for any special instructions.
5. Vest in your cassock and surplice immediately. Be sure to choose vestments of proper length. (The cassock should reach to below the ankles.) Remember to keep the servers closet neat and orderly.
6. Bring the processional cross and or candles into the narthex and prepare them for the procession. (Be careful with the processional cross when passing through doors.)
7. Light the candles; always using the brass candle lighters. [The order for lighting the candles (Always start with the right side candles):
1) Tabernacle, 2) altar 3) ambo - if the candles are not carried in procession and therefore remain stationed at the ambo. 4) sacred images]
8. The servers will wait for Father in the sacristy or narthex before Mass.
9. See to your responsibilities quietly, sound travels easily from the sacristy into the church.

ASSISTING THE SACRISTANS

The sacristans will usually see to the following. You should make yourself available to assist the sacristans when possible.

- Turn on church lights.
- Place the following on the credence table,
 - + Priest's chalice with purificator, paten, and corporal.
 - + 2 Communion chalices with 2 purificators to the side.
 - + The lavabo dish and cruet of water with hand towel.
 - + A cruet filled with water for the mingling.
 - + The communion paten,

- + The missal on the missal stand,
- Place the following on the offertory table at the back of the church.
 - + The altar paten with small hosts and the priest's large host.
 - + The decanter filled with an appropriate amount of sacramental wine.
- Make sure the lectionary, book of the gospels, and intercessory prayers are in their proper place.

SERVING AT THE ALTAR

PROCESSION

The servers will gather with the priest in the sacristy. The candles will be lighted before the procession in the narthex.

At the direction of the priest, the procession begins to move down the center aisle. The order of procession:

Server(s) carrying the cross and/or candles

Reader

Priest

When the servers reach the step to the sanctuary they will together bow their heads in reverence. Neither the processional cross nor the candles should dip in making this sign of reverence. (If the cross and candles are not being carried in procession the servers make a genuflection.)

The server(s) will put the processional cross and/or candles in their stands. (Make sure the cross is not turned in the stand.) They will go to their seats but remain standing. One server will take his/her place on the left, (Blessed Mother side) next to the priest's chair. One server will take his/her place on the right (Saint Joseph side.) Servers will remain standing; facing the altar. Hands will be folded in prayer, All attention is placed upon the liturgical activity taking place,

In the recitation of the Gloria we bow our heads at the mention of the holy name of Jesus Christ.

LET US PRAY

When the opening prayer is introduced all will bow their heads. The server on the priest's side will take the missal from its stand on the table and hold it for the priest. The server will open the book to the proper place if this has not already been done. Hold the book steady for the priest to read the prayer. After the prayer, the server will return the missal to its stand. Take special care to hold the missal in front of the priest so that he may face the assembly when offering the prayer and not be turned to the side.

BE SEATED

After the prayer, servers will take their seats at the same time. Sit still and erect. Hands will be in laps. Knees close together. All attention will focus upon the liturgical activity taking place.

All stand for the proclamation of the Holy Gospel. Servers will turn toward the ambo with hands folded in prayer.

During the recitation of the creed we make a profound bow during the mention of the incarnation. "*By the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.*" (During the celebrations of Christmas and the Annunciation we genuflect.)

PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR

While the collection is being taken the two servers will go to the front of the altar. Make a solemn bow and proceed to the credence table,

+ L Server will take the the missal with its stand and place it on the left side of the altar facing the priest. Be sure to place it so that it may be easily read by the priest without adjustment. The R server will take the two corporals to the L server. Place the corporal in the center of the altar. (Take special care to place the corporal in the exact center and near the close edge. It should be laid on the altar, then unfolded.) . The second corporal is opened on the altar in the same way to the immediate right of the first.

+ The R server will take the priest's chalice and the 3 purificators to L server. Place the chalice on the forward center of first corporal. 1 purificator on the bottom right of the corporal.

+ The two communion cups are placed on the second corporal. They are to be neatly arranged. The purificators are to be stacked on the edge of the altar.

+ Both servers will go to the front of the altar, make a solemn bow, step to the side and wait for the priest to move to the front of the sanctuary to receive the gifts.

RECEIVING THE GIFTS

When the priest goes to the front of the altar and the gifts have been received, all reverence the gift bearers. The servers will then carry their gifts to the altar and hold them until the priest is ready to take them.

+ The paten of hosts is given to the priest first. The decanter of sacramental wine is placed on the right side of the altar with the top removed. This server will then go to the credence table to retrieve the water for the co-mingling and immediately return to the altar.

+ Immediately this server goes to the credence table to prepare for the washing of hands. After the priest has offered the prayer of blessing for the gifts of bread and wine, he will then turn for the washing of hands. Water will be poured over the priest's hands. The server will position him/herself so the washing of hands may be visible to the assembly. After the washing the server will reverence the priest with a simple bow. The server will return to the credence table, retrieve the decanter of sacramental wine from the altar to the credence table and afterward take his/her place at the kneeler.

CONSECRATION

Always kneel with back straight and hands folded. The bells will be rung three times. When the priest extends his hands over the paten, at the elevation of the host, and at the elevation of the chalice. Care should be taken to allow the bells to produce a pleasant sound.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

The servers are to offer this prayer with hands folded.

THE SIGN OF PEACE

The servers may offer only the person next to them the sign of peace.

COMMUNION

HOW TO RECEIVE: The priest will present to you the consecrated species. Your eyes will focus upon the host. The priest will proclaim to you that it is "the Body of Christ." You will make a bow of the head in reverence before the Blessed Sacrament. Upon rising your head say in a clear and distinct voice; "Amen" and receive the sacred host. *[If you receive in the hand you will hold your left hand out with palm open flat, Your other hand will be positioned beneath it as a support. Receive the*

host in your palm. With the supporting hand you will take the host with your two fingers and place it upon your tongue and consume it immediately.] Bow your head in a prayerful posture to await the precious blood of our Lord. When the chalice is presented to you, you will look upon the cup. The minister will proclaim to you that it is "the Blood of Christ." Make a bow of the head in reverence before the Blessed Sacrament. Upon rising your head you will say in a clear and distinct voice; "Amen," You will then take the chalice into your own hands and sip from the precious blood of our Lord. Bow your head in a prayerful posture. [Please note. The eyes of many are upon you as you receive the precious body and blood of our Lord. You serve as an example to all as to how to receive communion in a holy and reverent manner.]

After receiving Holy Communion, the R server will retrieve the communion paten from the kneeler and will proceed to his/her communion station to the left of the priest in front of the altar. The servers will turn slightly to face the liturgical action holding the patens flat and unmoving at chest level. The paten should be held in the "outside" hand, while the "inside" hand is held over the breast. After communion the server will proceed to the kneeler to replace the patens. (If a communion host has been drooped and placed upon the paten, the server will proceed directly to the altar and place the paten with the host on the corporal.

After communion and the purifications that follow, the servers will clear the altar. (The corporal is folded while laying flat on the altar and placed upon the paten so that no crumb may be spilled.) The servers will go to the front of the altar, make a solemn bow in reverence and return to their places on each side of the altar. The servers will remain standing until all are seated with the priest.

LET US PRAY

After the communion meditation, the priest will say, "Let us pray". The server with the missal will turn to the priest and hold the book steady for the priest to read. After the prayer, the server will step back to the chair still holding the missal. After the announcements the priest will invite the assembly to stand for the blessing. The server will once again stand before the priest and hold the book for the blessing. Then the server will return the missal to the table.

DISMISSAL

When the recessional hymn begins, the R server will retrieve the cross for the final procession. They will proceed to the center aisle and stand facing the altar.

The priest reverences the altar with a kiss and then moves to the front of the altar for the genuflection. When the priest genuflects, the servers will also genuflect then turn to process down the aisle. When the servers enter the narthex. They will turn to face the priest. A simple reverence will be made toward each other. The servers are then dismissed to see to their duties.

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INCENSATION

Thurification or incensation is an expression of reverence and of prayer, as is signified in Sacred Scripture (cf. Ps 141:2, Rev 8:3). [#276-GIRM]

When Incense is used at Mass:

Usually, one server will carry the thurible (censer) and another server will carry the boat (container with the granules of incense.) The boat will be handed to the priest. the censer will be lifted up and held open with a finger on the chain to allow the priest to put the incense in and bless it. The server closes the censer and hands it to the priest. Both servers will step back to allow room for the incensation. Afterwards the server will retrieve the censer and both servers will go to the sacristy. If the censer will be used again in the ceremony, another charcoal is added.