

Saint Paul the Apostle Parish

Instructions for Altar Servers



Serving at the Lord's Table

Revised September 2015

Altar Server Instructions

Before Mass

- Dress appropriately for Mass. You should be dressed neat and tidy with clothing reflecting the holiness of the Mass.
- Servers should arrive at least **15 minutes** before Mass is scheduled to begin. If you are not present 15 minutes before Mass start time, someone may be asked to fill in for you.
- Remember... If you are unable to serve when assigned you must get a replacement server to take your place
- Upon arrival, go into the Church, kneel down and say a prayer asking God to help you serve well
- If you are not scheduled to serve, please check in at the sacristy to see if there are enough servers present. You may be asked to “fill in” and serve.
- Put on your cassock and surplice, making sure they fit and look neat. Be sure your hands are clean and your hair is combed
- Ask Father if anything needs to be done to get ready for Mass
- Determine who will be Cross Bearer (1), Candle Bearers (who will serve the priest at the altar) (2), Book Bearer (1)
- Cross Bearer get the cross and Candle Bearers light the candles
- Father may lead the ministers and servers in prayer either in the sacristy or at the back of the church before the entrance procession starts.

Entrance Procession

- when the congregation starts to sing, Father will signal the cross bearer to slowly lead the procession to the sanctuary. Candle bearers will follow the cross, and book bearer will follow the candle bearers.
- at the sanctuary: cross bearer, one candle bearer and book bearer move to the left side of the aisle – second candle bearer to the right side of the aisle to allow Father to come to the front of the altar
- when Father genuflects, if you are holding something, bow your head toward the Tabernacle, otherwise, genuflect with Father
- AFTER Father proceeds to the altar, the cross bearer puts the cross on the stand and the candle bearers put the candles in the stands on each side of the altar
- all servers proceed to their seats passing behind the Presiders Chair if needed.
- Book bearer presents book to the priest when he says, “Let us pray.” [*move into place at the end of the Gloria*]

Offertory

- as the choir begins singing the offertory hymn, cross bearer picks up the cross and proceeds down the center aisle and stops at the Baptism Font at the back of the church to meet the gift presenters.
- the book bearer obtains the book with the stand, and places it on the altar and returns to his or her seat, the other servers bring the priest's chalice, the other chalices and the purificators and place them on the altar. The priest or the deacon will arrange the altar.
- After reaching the sanctuary, the cross bearer puts the cross in the stand and returns to his or her seat.
- when the priest receives the gifts, the two candle bearers will assist him, the wine cruet will be handed to one of the servers, who will then take it to the credence table.
- the other server will receive the ciboria (container of hosts) and take them to altar. As the priest or deacon arranges the altar take the lids from him and place them on the credence table. This may take more than one trip.
- The two candle bearers will bring the wine and the water to the priest for him (or the deacon) to prepare the chalices.
- They will then take the bowl of water and towel to the priest for him to wash his hands.

Eucharistic Prayer

- after the Holy, Holy, Holy is sung, the servers go to the steps by the altar and kneel
- when the Priest elevates the Host, the cross bearer rings the bell, one ring
- when the Priest elevates the Chalice, the acolyte rings the bell, one ring

Communion

- after receiving Communion, all the servers return to their seats.
- when Father returns to the altar from distributing Holy Communion, the acolytes IMMEDIATELY go to the credence table, they obtain the lids of the ciboria and bring them back to the altar.
- then one gets the cruet of water and stands at the edge of the altar to assist Father in purifying the holy vessels.
- carefully, the candle bearers take the sacred vessels from the altar to the credence table as Father purifies them. The priest's chalice is always carried in two hands.
- The book remains on the altar; when the priest stands after a moment of silence the Book Bearer, holds the book for the priest.

Recessional

- after Father has revered the Altar and moved to the front of the sanctuary, the cross bearer and candle bearers go and get the cross and candles and stand at the front of the sanctuary facing the altar. Do not block or get in the way of Father or the Deacons.
- the book bearer joins the procession standing in front of the altar
- when Father genuflects, all the servers genuflect with Father unless you have something in your hands, then just bow your head
- after the genuflection, all turn and slowly begin to proceed up the aisle to the baptism font where Father will give all the Ministers a final blessing

After Mass

- put away the cross and candle and then, take off your vestments being careful to hang them back on the appropriate hangers in a tidy manner
- be sure to say a prayer before leaving Church to thank God for the great privilege of serving Him and His people!

If you have questions about the schedule or the role of Altar Server you can inquire via the St. Paul the Apostle Altar Server email address: stpaulservers@gmail.com

Additionally schedules are emailed to all servers, posted in the sacristy and are available via the parish website under the Parish Ministries tab.