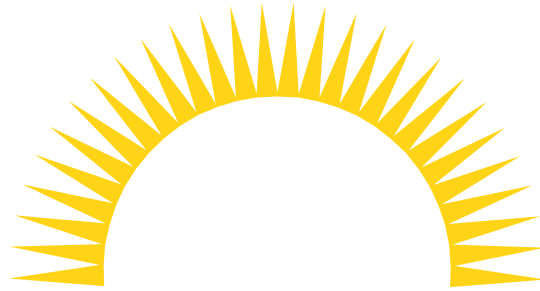




GOOD SHEPHERD CATHOLIC CHURCH
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HANDBOOK

FOR THE ALTAR SERVER GUILD

Revised August 31, 2016

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Introduction

To be an altar server is a special honor and a great privilege in the Catholic Church. Altar servers today can trace their roots to the order of Acolyte, a ministry that once was reserved only for those who were going to be ordained priests. Being an altar server is a special and unique ministry by which you, a young person, can help to spread the word and the love of Christ through your actions and words. Altar servers are not ordained; they are commissioned by their parish priest. The primary role of the altar server is to assist the priest and deacon in the celebration of the liturgy during Mass. This is done through specific actions and by setting an example to the congregation by active participation in the liturgy by your actions, singing of hymns, saying the responses of the people, looking alert and sitting or standing at the appropriate times.

It is important to be sure that you, as an altar server, are attentive and sensitive to the presence of God during the Mass, and afterwards. God calls us to respond to his great love and mercy with a sense of reverence, wonderment and gratefulness. We must all help each other remember to show reverence to God at all times, but most especially when you're serving.

By serving Mass, you play a necessary role in the celebration of our most important form of community worship, the Eucharistic Liturgy where our loving Savior becomes present on the Altar, just as He was at the Last Supper and at Calvary. Serving requires your attention, your reverence, and your recognition of the duties that need to be performed. Servers have a solemn responsibility to do their assigned duties with dignity and reverence.

Good Shepherd accepts boys and girls as Altar Servers who may start after their first communion and who have completed the third grade. They may continue even through college years. All people of good faith are welcome and those who think they may desire to serve are encouraged to do so. A desire to serve at the Altar of Our Lord is required.

Structure of the Altar Server Guild

- ❖ **PASTOR** Fr. Diosmar Natad, V.F.
- ❖ **CHAPLAIN** Fr. Jorge Carranza
- ❖ **ADVISORS** Mr. Tony Argento / Deacon Ralph LaMachia
- ❖ **COORDINATOR** Ms. Kenya Clemente
- ❖ **SERVER CAPTAINS** (laypersons who volunteer to welcome, encourage and assist Altar Servers)
These volunteers can also act as chaperones for meetings and/or trips for the Altar Servers.
- ❖ **VESTRYPERSONS** lay people who volunteer to sew and/or keep albs and cinctures or cassocks and surplices clean and in order
- ❖ **ALTAR SERVERS** members of the Altar Server Guild are assigned one of four ranks
 - NOVICE SERVERS
 - SKILLED SERVERS
 - MASTER SERVERS
 - SERVER ELITES

Altar Server Ranks

- **NOVICE SERVERS** are just starting out
 - A new server will remain at this rank for at least the first ten times of serving, as these beginners shadow and learn
 - No Novice Server will be scheduled to serve unless accompanied by at least one other server in the Skilled level or above.
- **SKILLED SERVERS** know the ropes
 - These servers will remain at this level until they have completed the fifth grade and will be required to pass a written and practical test to move on to the next rank.
 - Skilled Servers are typically young people who are still in elementary school but who have successfully served at least ten times.
- **MASTER SERVERS** are the more mature and experienced servers
 - These servers have passed the written and practical test and consistently exhibit competency in serving.
 - Master Servers have typically completed at least the fifth grade (i.e., they are usually in middle or high school).
- **SERVER ELITES** are handpicked leaders among leaders
 - Their rank is designated by a simple cross worn around their neck.
 - All Server Elites are in high school; they are chosen and challenged by the chaplain, and they have agreed to serve, at least until they graduate from high school.

General Requirements

- Altar Servers should be baptized Catholics, who have received their first Holy Communion.
- Altar Servers should be individuals who strive to live a moral and faithful life, and they should be persons who regularly receive the sacraments (especially the sacrament of reconciliation)
- Altar Servers can be male or female but should be mature enough to understand their responsibilities, and carry them out with appropriate reverence.
- Altar Servers should be able bodied individuals, capable of ascending steps and carrying precious vessels, and they should have no visible tattoos.
- Altar Servers should be well instructed in what they are called to do, including proper decorum and attire.
- They should receive Holy Communion at the Masses at which they serve, so they should go to confession regularly.
- They should be able to respond appropriately to the parts of the Mass, as well as sing the songs/chants of the liturgy.

Required Basic Knowledge of the Mass

- An Altar Server is required to know the principal prayers of the Mass: The Gloria, Our Father, Nicene Creed, Lamb of God, Lord, I am not worthy and Holy, Holy, Holy.
- Altar Servers should be able to recite the basic flow of the Mass. An Altar Server must learn this so as to later perform his/her tasks at the proper times.
- Altar Servers will be taught the use of all the liturgical items they will be handling and the purpose of each item. See the end of this manual for definitions.
- Altar Servers must demonstrate the knowledge, and ability to make use, of the *“tools of the trade”* such as matches, candle lighters, books and candles, processional cross, preparation of credence table, chalice, mass colors, etc.
- Altar Servers should know how to make the sign of the Cross and how to genuflect correctly.

Dress Code

- Dark (preferably black or brown) dress shoes for young men; black, brown or white during appropriate seasons for young ladies.
- No sandals, high heels, platform shoes or gym/tennis shoes.
- Do not wear anything (including jewelry) that will make noise and/or will be distracting or that will cause you to have problems serving. No visible high collars. Girls may wear “appropriate” earrings.
- Hair should be neatly cut and trimmed, appropriate for boys and girls. Ladies, kindly pull back long hair so it is not in your face.
- Gentlemen, your trousers should be dark. All Altar Servers should be careful of colored shirts, dresses, or garments with bold patterns or logos worn under the alb or cassock and surplice: they should not show through the alb or cassock and surplice.
- Servers should wear an appropriately sized Alb or cassock which should come to the top of your shoes.

Standards of Conduct

Altar Servers are expected to...

- Attend Altar Server Training Workshops, Retreats, and Days of Renewal and to learn the things needed to properly serve Mass.
- Serve at the Masses for which you are scheduled. If you are unable to serve when you are scheduled, please request a replacement as soon as possible by clicking on "request sub" in the Ministry Scheduler Program (don't wait until the night before!). Check your scheduled dates for serving often and be sure your parents know your serving schedule.
- Prepare for serving Mass. When you are scheduled to serve, please arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass. You'll need to sign-in, get vested, light candles and be in the hallway outside the Altar Server Vestry before beginning the procession. Be sure your parents know that you need to get to church early.
- When all servers have arrived and everything is prepared, enter the Altar Server Vestry and together pray the **Altar Server's Prayer**.
- When waiting before Mass, do not congregate in the nave, but quietly gather in the hallway near the narthex.
- Never run at anytime in Church, even when not serving. Remember that you are in God's house.
- Never chew gum in Church, even when not serving.
- Maintain a **quiet** reverence whenever in Church. Only speak when necessary. Remember that you are a role model for others in Church.
- Always do your best to sit up straight and stand straight when serving (No sitting in a slumped position).

- Refrain from swinging your legs when sitting. Sit still, be calm and settle your nerves. Your hands should rest comfortably on your lap with your palms on the corresponding thigh.
- Respond with the congregation at the appropriate times. This includes reciting prayers, responses and singing the hymns at Mass.
- Fold your hands when serving (unless you are carrying something or sitting). Believe it or not, what you do with your hands is very important! When you're standing or sitting and your hands are busy, or if you can't seem to sit or stand still, you will be a source of distraction for your friends and family in the pews, the other altar servers, and most surely, the priest. Your hands are to be "folded" during most parts of the Mass. What this means is to put your open hands together, palms facing each other, and fold your thumbs one over the other. Point your fingers up, not straight up, but at a slight angle that is comfortable. Also, you do not need to apply pressure on your palms and wrists. Just keep them together, comfortably. Placing your hands in this way is supposed to be a sign of prayer, not of tension. Remember, as altar servers, you are leading others to pray!
- Perform the duties assigned during Mass in the prescribed orderly manner. Be attentive to the deacon or priest. Respond immediately when asked for help and try to anticipate.
- When attending a Mass for which you are **not** scheduled, check with the Altar Server Captains or Sacristan and let them know that you could fill-in if there are not enough servers for that Mass.
- After Mass, make sure your alb and cincture, or cassock and surplice are returned the way you found them.

Principal Prayers of the Mass: Must Learn

Introductory Rites

Penitential Rite

Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy

OR

I confess to almighty God,
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done,
and in what I have failed to do;
through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin,
all the angels and saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Señor, ten piedad
Cristo, ten piedad
Señor, ten piedad

O

Yo confieso ante Dios todopoderoso
y ante ustedes, hermanos,
que he pecado mucho
de pensamiento, palabra, obra y omisión.
Por mi culpa, por mi culpa, por mi gran culpa.
Por eso ruego a santa María, siempre Virgen,
a los ángeles, a los santos
y a ustedes, hermanos,
que interceden por mí ante Dios,
nuestro Señor.

Glory to God

**Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory.
Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

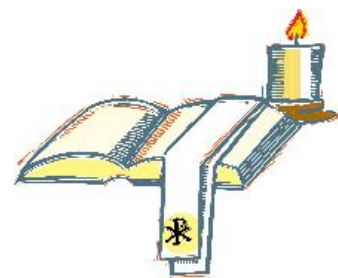
**Gloria a Dios en el cielo,
y en la tierra paz a los hombres
que ama el Señor
Por tu inmensa gloria
te alabamos, te bendecimos,
te adoramos, te glorificamos,
te damos gracias,
Señor Dios, Rey celestial,
Dios Padre todopoderoso.
Señor, Hijo único, Jesucristo.
Señor Dios, Cordero de Dios, Hijo del Padre,
tú que quitas el pecado del mundo,
ten piedad de nosotros;
tú que quitas el pecado del mundo,
atiende nuestra súplica;
tú que estás sentado a la derecha del Padre,
ten piedad de nosotros;
porque sólo tú eres Santo, sólo tú Señor,
sólo tú Altísimo, Jesucristo,
con el Espíritu Santo
en la gloria de Dios Padre. Amén.**

Liturgy of the Word

First & Second Readings from Sacred Scripture

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.



In Spanish Mass

Lector: Palabra de Dios.

Response: Te alabamos, Señor.

Gospel

Priest or deacon: The Lord be with you.

Response: And with your spirit.

In Spanish Mass

Priest or deacon: El Señor esté con ustedes.

Response: Y con tu espíritu.

In English Mass

Priest or deacon: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to...

Response: Glory to you, O Lord.

Priest or deacon: The Gospel of the Lord

Response: Praise to you Lord, Jesus Christ.

In Spanish Mass

Priest or deacon: Lectura del santo Evangelio según san **N**.

Response: Gloria a ti, Señor.

Priest or deacon: Palabra del Señor.

Response: Gloria a ti, Señor Jesús.

Creed

**I believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.**

**I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:**

*All bow during
these two lines:*

***and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.***

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.**

**He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
who with the Father and the Son he is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the Prophets.**

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and life of the world to come.
Amen.

In Spanish Mass

Creo en un solo Dios,
Padre todopoderoso, Creador del cielo y de la tierra,
de todo lo visible y lo invisible.
Creo en un solo Señor, Jesucristo, Hijo único de Dios,
nacido del Padre antes de todos los siglos:
Dios de Dios, Luz de Luz,
Dios verdadero de Dios verdadero,
engendrado, no creado,
de la misma naturaleza del Padre,
por quien todo fue hecho;
que por nosotros, los hombres,
y por nuestra salvación bajó del cielo,
y por obra del Espíritu Santo
se encarnó de María, la Virgen, y se hizo hombre;
y por nuestra causa fue crucificado
en tiempos de Poncio Pilato,
padeció y fue sepultado,
y resucitó al tercer día, según las Escrituras,
y subió al cielo, y está sentado a la derecha del Padre;
y de nuevo vendrá con gloria
para juzgar a vivos y muertos,
y su reino no tendrá fin.
Creo en el Espíritu Santo, Señor y dador de vida,
que procede del Padre y del Hijo,
que con el Padre y el Hijo
recibe una misma adoración y gloria,

todos se inclinan

y que habló por los profetas.
Creo en la Iglesia,
que es una, santa, católica y apostólica.
Confieso que hay un solo bautismo
para el perdón de los pecados.
Espero la resurrección de los muertos
y la vida del mundo futuro. Amén.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Prayer for Acceptance

Priest: Pray, brethren, that our sacrifice
May be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

Response: **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands
for the praise and glory of his name,
for our good, and the good of all his holy Church.**

In Spanish Mass

Priest: Oren, hermanos (hermanos y hermanas),
que este sacrificio mío y vuestro
puede ser aceptable a Dios, Padre todopoderoso.

Response: **El Señor reciba de tus manos este sacrificio,
para alabanza y gloria de su nombre,
para nuestro bien
y el de toda su santa Iglesia.**

Eucharistic Prayer

Priest: The Lord be with you.

Response: **And with your spirit.**

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

Response: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Response: **It is right and just.**



In Spanish Mass

Priest: El Señor esté con ustedes.

Response: Y con tu espíritu.

Priest: Levantemos el corazón.

Response: Lo tenemos levantado hacia el Señor.

Priest: Demos gracias al Señor, nuestro Dios.

Response: Es justo y necesario.

Holy, Holy, Holy

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

In Spanish Mass

Santo, Santo, Santo es el Señor,

Dios del Universo.

Llenos están el cielo y la tierra de tu gloria.

Hosanna en el cielo.

Bendito el que viene en nombre del Señor.

Hosanna en el cielo.

Memorial Acclamation

Priest: The mystery of faith:

Response: We proclaim your Death, O Lord,
and profess your resurrection
until you come again.

OR

Response: When we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim your death, O Lord,
until you come again.

OR

Response: Save us, Savior of the world,
for by your cross and resurrection
you have set us free.

Memorial Acclamation In Spanish Mass

Priest: Éste es el Sacramento de nuestra fe.

Response: Anunciamos tu muerte,
proclamamos tu resurrección.
¡Ven, Señor Jesús!

O

Response: Cada vez que comemos de este pan
y bebemos de este cáliz,
anunciamos tu muerte, Señor,
hasta que vuelvas.

O

Response: Por tu cruz y resurrección
nos has salvado, Señor.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Priest: Deliver us, Lord, we pray from every evil,
graciously grant peace in our days,
that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free
from sin and safe from all distress as we await the
blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Response: For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever.**

The Lord's Prayer In Spanish mass

**Padre nuestro, que estás en el cielo,
santificado sea tu Nombre;
venga a nosotros tu reino;
hágase tu voluntad en la tierra como en el cielo.
Danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día;
perdona nuestras ofensas,
como también nosotros perdonamos
a los que nos ofenden;
no nos dejes caer en la tentación,
y líbranos del mal.**

Priest: Líbranos de todos los males, Señor,
y concédenos la paz en nuestros días,
para que, ayudados por tu misericordia,
vivamos siempre libres de pecado
y protegidos de toda perturbación,
mientras esperamos la gloriosa venida
de nuestro Salvador Jesucristo.

Response: Tuyo es el reino,
tuyo el poder y la gloria, por siempre, Señor.

Lamb of God

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
grant us peace.**

In Spanish Mass

**Cordero de Dios, que quitas el pecado del mundo,
ten piedad de nosotros.**

**Cordero de Dios, que quitas el pecado del mundo,
ten piedad de nosotros.**

**Cordero de Dios, que quitas el pecado del mundo,
danos la paz.**



Invitation to Communion

Priest: Behold the Lamb of God
behold him who takes away the sins of the world.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Response: Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof,
but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Priest: Éste es el Cordero de Dios,
que quita el pecado del mundo.
Dichosos los invitados a la cena del Señor.

Response: Señor, no soy digno
de que entres en mi casa,
pero una palabra tuya
bastará para sanarme.

Holy Mass Explained

The two most important parts of the Holy Mass are the Consecration and the Communion. But the Mass, as we know it, is made up of two principal parts - the **Liturgy of the Word** and the **Liturgy of the Eucharist**, plus introductory and concluding rites.

Introductory Rites:

- Entrance Procession
- Entrance Antiphon (recited) or Opening Hymn (sung)
- Greeting (by the priest)
- Penitential Rite [Penitential prayer (I confess to Almighty God...); the Rite of Blessing & Sprinkling or Kyrie (Lord, Have Mercy)]

- Gloria (Glory to God)
- Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word:

- First Reading, from the Old Testament, (usually by Layperson, man or woman trained as a lector)
- Responsorial Psalm (usually sung by a cantor, but can be recited by the lector)
- Second reading from a Letter (Epistle) of the New Testament, (usually by a Layperson, man or woman trained as a lector)
- Gospel Acclamation (“Alleluia” or, during Lent, “Praise to You Lord, Jesus Christ, King of Endless Glory”. Should always be sung.)
- Third Reading, from the Gospels, (usually by the Deacon or, in his absence, by the Priest)
- Homily, by the Priest or Deacon (a period of silent reflection may follow)
- Profession of Faith (Nicene Creed)
- General Intercessions (Prayer of the Faithful): For the Church, Public Authorities, Salvation of the World, Local Community... the sick, the poor...

Liturgy of the Eucharist:

- Preparation of the Altar (the Deacon, or in his absence, the Priest prepares the altar for the celebration of the Eucharist.)
- Offertory Collection & Procession with Presentation of the Gifts
- An offertory song is usually sung by the choir and/or led by the cantor.
- The priest prays over the bread and wine, and helps the assembly get ready for the tremendous Sacrifice that will take place.
- Preparation and presentation of the Bread
- Preparation and presentation of the Wine
- Washing of Hands
- Invitation to Prayer by the Priest for the people
- Prayer over the Gifts

Eucharistic Prayer:

- Introductory Dialogue
- Preface
- Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy – usually sung, but can be recited)

Roman Canon:

- Eucharistic Prayer
- Epiclesis - Invocation of the Holy Spirit to consecrate the Bread & Wine
- Consecration of the Bread with elevation and adoration of the Holy Host
- Consecration of the Wine with elevation and adoration of the Holy Chalice
- Memorial Acclamation
- Final Doxology [(Great Amen) Through Him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours Almighty Father, forever and ever.]

Communion Rite

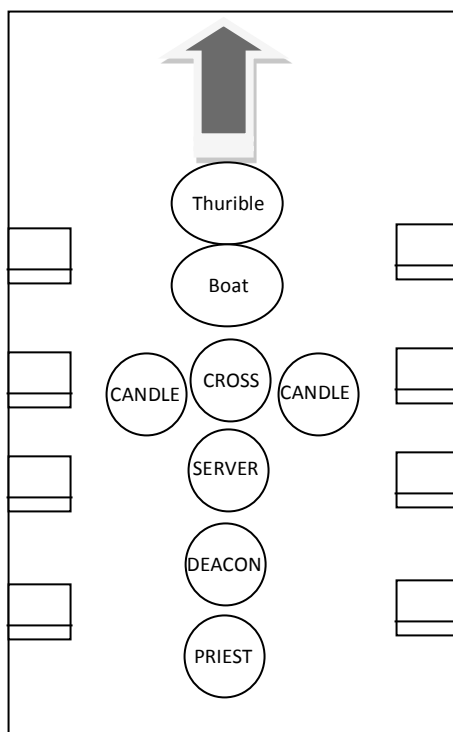
- The Lord's Prayer
- Rite of Peace (Sign of Peace)
- Fractioning Rite [Breaking of the Bread; Commingling: The priest places a small part of the Host into the Chalice; Lamb of God (Agnus Dei) usually sung, but can be recited]
- Communion of the Priest
- Communion of the Faithful
- Silent Meditative Prayer
- Prayer after Communion

Concluding Rite:

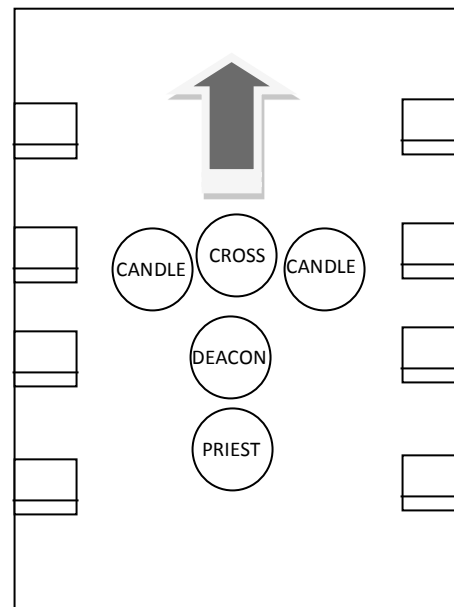
- Greeting (Just as the people were greeted at the beginning of the Mass, so now the Priest greets the people again and blesses them.)
- Blessing (a simple one, or at the discretion of the Priest, a more solemn Blessing)
- Dismissal (by the Deacon or, in his absence, by the Priest)
- Recessional Procession (with Recessional Hymn or, if no cantor or choir, in silence)

Order of Procession at Weekend Masses

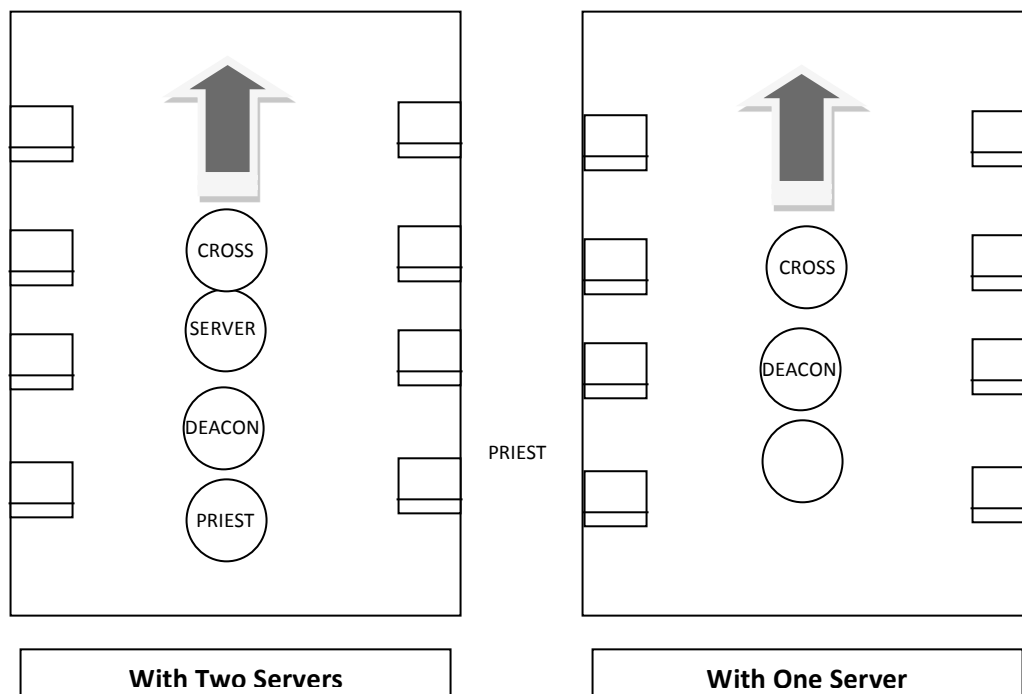
(When Altar Servers carry cross and candles)



Solemn Mass With Six Servers



With Three Servers

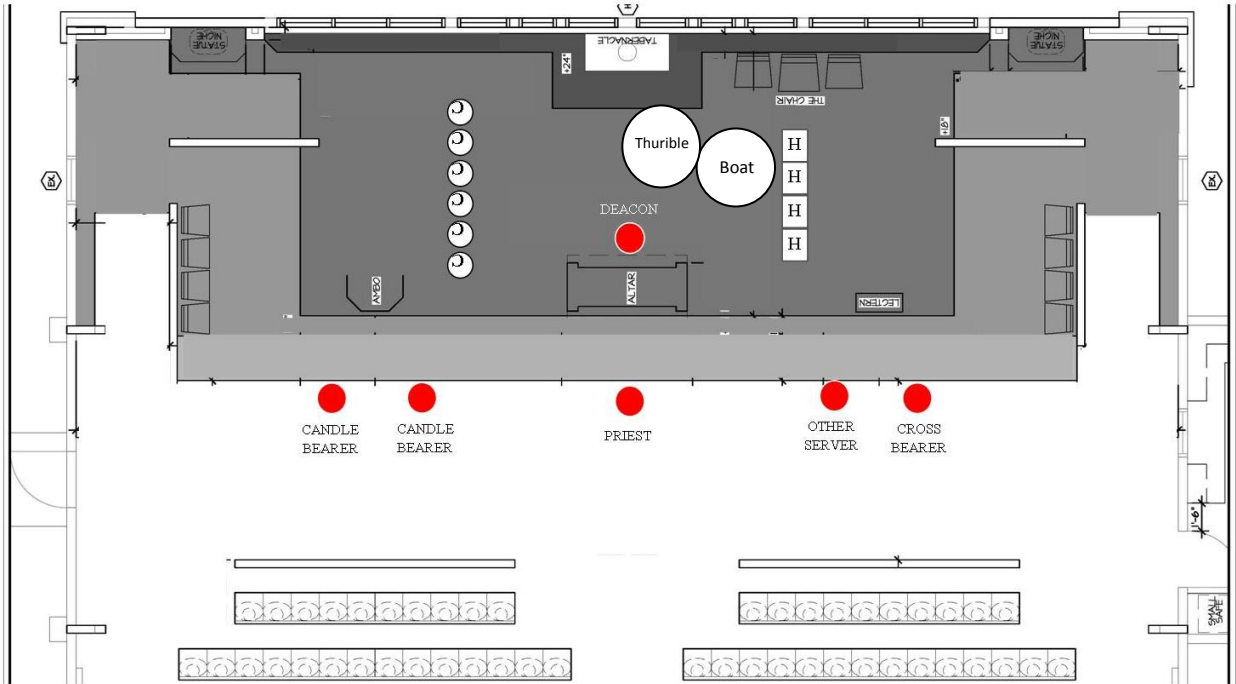


Entrance Procession at Weekend Masses

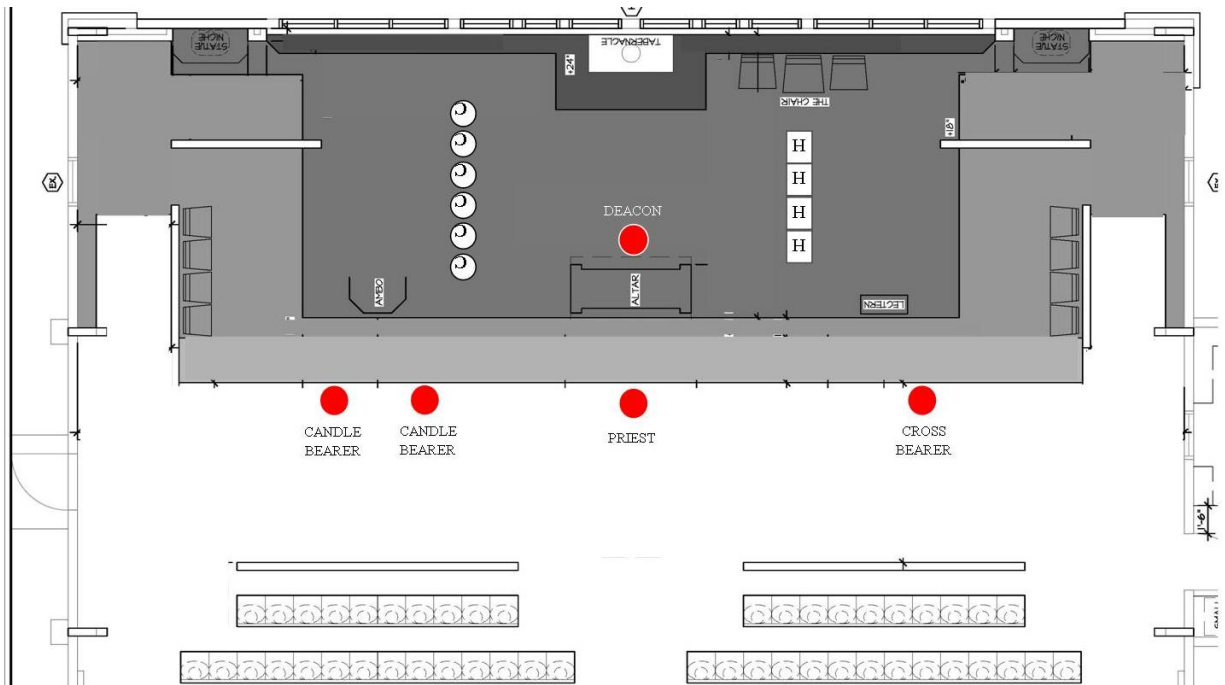
- The order of the procession is shown in the figures on the previous page.
- The procession begins when the people begin to sing the entrance hymn or recite the entrance antiphon.
- Walk up the aisle slowly, slower than you normally walk, but not at a snail's pace.
- The deacon, priest or sacristan will instruct you when to enter (usually after the announcements are read).
- Cross and candle bearers step up to the front of the altar steps with the Candle-bearers moving to the left and the Cross-bearer (and any other servers) moving to the right.

- Spread out (to make room for the priest and deacon) and stop. Wait for the priest and deacon.
- The priest and deacon will either bow or genuflect. As they do so, if you are not carrying the cross or candles, you bow or genuflect with the priest otherwise, if you are carrying the cross or candles, simply remain standing and do not genuflect or bow.
The rule is: if you're carrying something (like candles or cross), then you do not genuflect or bow at the waist.
- Once the priest genuflects or bows, Cross-bearer places the processional cross on the stand and candle-bearers move up the steps to place the candles on their appropriate stands. All servers then move to their seats and remain standing with hands folded for the greeting, penitential rite, Gloria and opening prayer.
- See the diagrams on the next few pages (pgs. 23-24) to determine where you should stand when you arrive at the altar steps after the entrance procession.

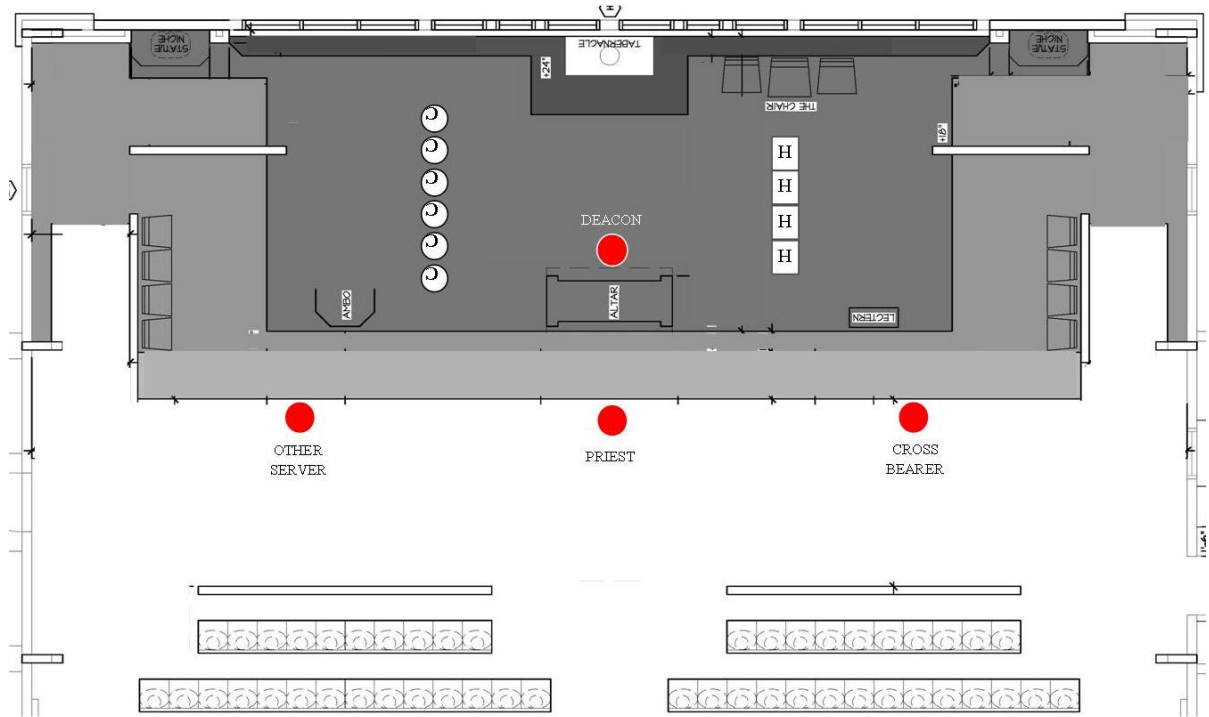
If the Altar Servers are carrying the candles and cross and there are **six** Altar Servers...



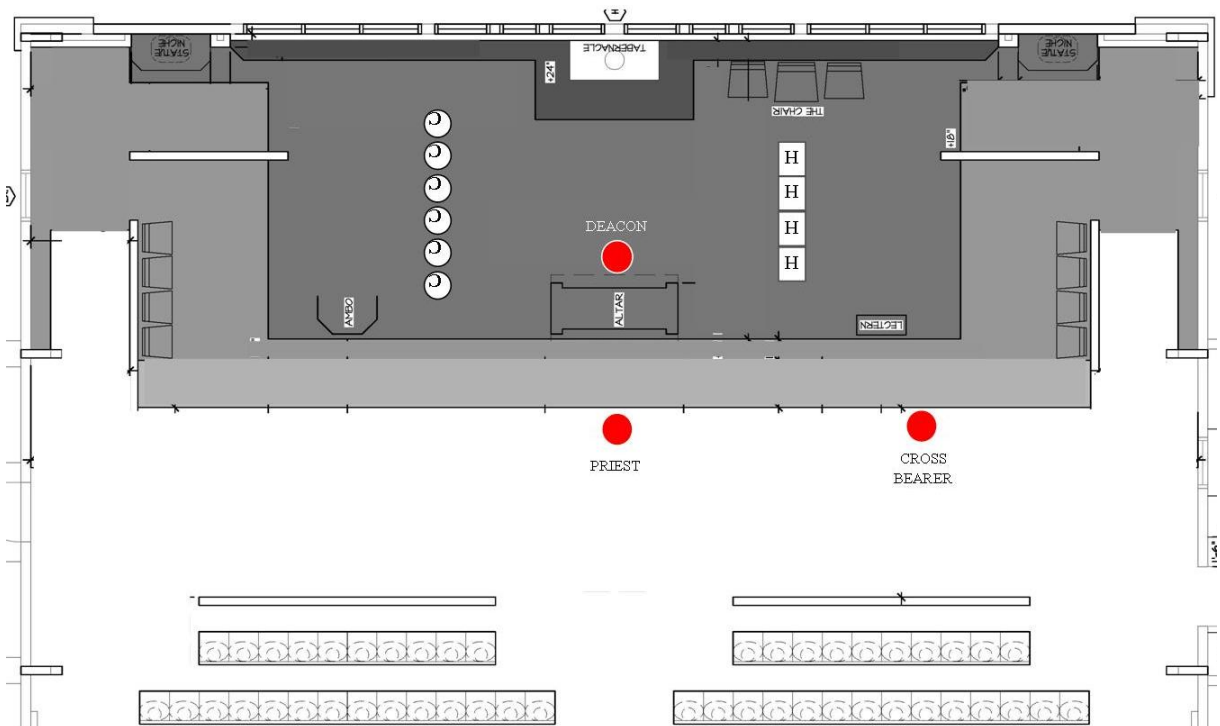
If the Altar Servers are carrying the candles and cross and there are **three** Altar Servers...



If there are only **two** Altar Servers and one is carrying the Processional Cross ...



If there is only **one** Altar Server and no one else to carry the candles...



Detailed Steps to Serving at Mass

Introductory Rites:

- Entrance Procession [refer to “Order of Procession” and “Entrance Procession at Weekend Masses” on previous pages (pgs. 21-25)]. If there is incense for the mass, the skilled or master server has Thurible on hand and he or she leads the procession up to the altar. Right behind, the other altar server carrying the boat follows the Thurible carrying the incense.
- During the Entrance Antiphon or Opening Hymn you should be standing at your seat with a copy of the “Breaking Bread Hymnal” or song sheet to join the congregation in reciting the Entrance Antiphon or singing the Opening Hymn. (If there is incense being used for the Mass, the Thurible and boat does not bow and ascends to the altar and stands on the side of the deacon until the priest finishes incensing the altar. Then, the Thurible and boat return to their seats singing). When the hymn or antiphon is ended, return the hymnal or song sheet to your seat, stand facing the priest and fold your hands.
- During the Greeting by the priest, make the sign of the cross at the appropriate time and then fold your hands again during the Penitential Rite. One server should hold the binder for the priest during the Penitential Rite and the Glory to God.
- Join in singing or reciting the Gloria (Glory to God) and a server should be prepared to move into the sanctuary to hold the book (Roman Missal) for the priest to say the Opening Prayer. During Advent and Lent, the Gloria (Glory to God is not said or sung so you must be prepared to hold the Roman Missal immediately after the Penitential Rite. Return the Roman Missal to the stand on the Credence table.
- After the Gloria (or if there is no Gloria, after the Penitential Rite), sit in your seat and place your hands comfortably on your lap. Focus on the action in the sanctuary: always look at the person who is speaking.

Liturgy of the Word:

- Remain seated with your hands on your lap during the First Reading.
- Recite or try to sing the Responsorial Psalm (you may use the “Breaking Bread Hymnal” or song sheet if you need to).
- Remain seated for the Second Reading
- When the priest and/or deacon stands for the Gospel Acclamation (“Alleluia” or, during Lent, “Praise to You Lord, Jesus Christ, King of Endless Glory”), stand with your hands folded. (If there is incense being used, the Thurible and boat immediately go over to the deacon; the altar server carrying the boat gives it to the deacon. The deacon gives the boat to the priest, and the priest places the incense inside the Thurible. Once the priest finishes blessing the incense, the Thurible walks directly towards the ambo for Deacon to incense the Gospel. When the deacon moves to receive a blessing from the priest, (or, in his absence, when the priest moves from his chair to proclaim the Gospel), two servers will also move together to the foot of the sanctuary in front of the ambo. As soon as Deacon or priest finishes incensing the Gospel, the Thurible remains standing moving the Thurible at hand until the Deacon finishes proclaiming the Gospel. As for the candle bearers, move up the steps together to get the candles. Once you have the candles, together, move back down to the first step in front of the ambo and face each other during the reading of the Gospel.
- When the proclamation of the Gospel is finished, together replace the candles to their stands; move together and return together to your seats. Be seated with your hands comfortably on your laps for the homily. Again, focus your attention on the priest or deacon who is preaching
- The Profession of Faith (Nicene Creed) follows the homily. When the homilist returns to his seat, a server should again come forward to hold the binder for the presider for both the Creed and the Prayer of the Faithful. The remaining servers should stand at their place with their hands folded and say the prayer with the rest of the congregation.
- Remain standing for the General Intercessions (Prayers of the Faithful)

Liturgy of the Eucharist:

- Preparation of the Altar: When the General Intercessions are finished, you will bring the chalice, the Roman Missal, the communion cups, and the cruet of water to the altar (in that order). The deacon (or, in his absence, the priest) will prepare the altar. Also, the Thurible and boat should be ready after the offertory.
- Offertory Collection & Procession with Presentation of the Gifts: Once the altar is prepared, two servers need to be ready to move to the center on either side of the priest to receive the offertory gifts. If there is a cross-bearer, she/he gets the cross and, going down the side aisle, leads the procession of gifts up the center aisle to the altar steps and returns the processional cross to its stand. As soon as the servers receive the gifts, they move up the steps to the altar to hand the gifts to the deacon or priest. Do not wait for the priest – (sometimes Father thanks the family who brought the gifts and sometimes he gives them a short blessing before he moves to the altar). The Deacon, or in his absence, the Priest prepares the altar for the celebration of the Eucharist.
- When the deacon or priest has taken the bread and wine from you, return to the credence table and get the Lavabo Bowl, Pitcher and towel and return to the sanctuary so Father can wash his hands. When the washing of the hands is finished, return to the bottom of the steps in front of your seat. (This procedure can vary slightly depending on the number of servers present at the Mass). (When Incense is being used, after the prayers over the bread wine are finished, the Thurible/ boat approached the Deacon to give to Father to incense the gifts, altar, and crucifix. Once finishing incensing, Father continues the normal procedure of washing his hands and beginning the Eucharistic Prayer.

Eucharistic Prayer:

- After the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy) kneel down on the kneeler pads on the step and keep your hands folded.

Roman Canon:

- At the Consecration of the Bread, when Father elevates the Host, ring the bells
- You will do the same at the Consecration of the Wine when Father elevates the Cup of The Precious Blood
- At the conclusion of the Final Doxology [(Great Amen) *Through Him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours Almighty Father, forever and ever*], answer (in word or song) **“Amen”** and then stand with your hands folded.

Communion Rite

- The Lord's Prayer: Remain standing with your hands folded through the Lord's Prayer (Our Father).
- At the Sign of Peace, exchange a handshake with the other servers and, if approached, with the deacon and/or priest. Do **NOT** step up into the sanctuary to approach the deacon or priest to give a sign of peace and do **NOT** extend the sign to others. As soon as you have shared the sign of peace, bring any extra communion plates to the altar. Hand them to the deacon or priest if possible or, if not, place them quietly and carefully on the altar.
- Communion of the Faithful: After the priest takes communion, the deacon has received, and Extraordinary Ministers have entered the sanctuary, step into the center aisle in pairs to receive Holy Communion.
- After receiving Communion, return to the kneelers for a brief period of silent prayer.
- After a brief time of prayer, remove the Roman Missal from the altar and place it on the credence table. Bring a small cruet of water to the altar for the priest to purify his chalice. Return to your kneeling position until the remaining hosts are collected, placed in the tabernacle and the door to the tabernacle is closed. You may then return to your seats.

- After the priest or deacon returns to the altar, help to remove any articles left on the altar, such as the communion plates, etc. and place them on the credence table
- Once all the items are put back, be seated with your hands comfortably on your lap but keep your eyes on the deacon and/or priest.

Concluding Rite:

- When Father stands or says, “Let us pray” a server will step up into the sanctuary to hold the Roman Missal for the priest to say the Prayer after Communion. Sometimes Father will say a special “Solemn Blessing” which he might need to read from the Roman Missal after the closing prayer. Be attentive. You might have to stand there a bit longer than usual before returning to your seat. When the Prayer after Communion is finished, return the book to the stand and move back to stand in front of your seat with your hands folded.
- After the final blessing and the Dismissal, Thurible and boat will get their items, the cross-bearer will get the cross; the candle-bearers will get the processional candles and will move to the center aisle to prepare for the Recessional Procession. If you carried the cross or candles in the Entrance Procession, move up the steps to get them for the Recessional Procession. When Father genuflects or bows, if you are not carrying anything (other than a hymnal or song sheet), genuflect with him then turn and process out following the order used on the way in.
- When you get to the back row of the Church, return the Thurible and Boat, extinguish the candles, return them to the holder, wait until all singing has ended and then, being courteous to those who are coming out, use the side aisle and move to the credence tables to help get anything that has to be brought back to the sacristy.
- When you’ve finished, return your alb and cincture, or cassock and surplice to their proper place and say a quiet prayer of thanksgiving to God on the way out.

A Guide To Church Terms

Altar Vessels & Other Items for Mass

Ablution Cup



The Ablution Cup, filled with water, is typically a small bowl-like container, located near the tabernacle or on the credence table. It is used to cleanse the fingers after distributing Communion.

Altar



The table on which the Eucharistic sacrifice is re-presented and from which the Eucharist banquet is shared.

Altar Bells



A set of four small bells placed on the steps near the credence table. These bells are rung at the elevation of the Sacred Host and the Chalice of the Precious Blood at the consecration.

Altar Candles



At least two candles must be used for the celebration of Mass and they need to be placed on the altar or near it.

Ambo



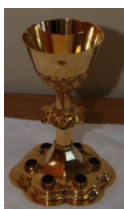
The pulpit from which the Scriptures are read and homilies are delivered.

Book of the Gospels



The Gospels have always been accorded special treatment in the liturgy. The "Book of the Gospels" is a special book in which all the Gospel texts used in the liturgy are arranged for liturgical proclamation. If a deacon is present, he will carry the Book of the Gospels in the entrance procession and place it upon the altar until it is time for the proclamation of the Gospel.

Chalice



The large cup or goblet used by the priest at Mass to consecrate the wine that becomes the Precious Blood of Christ.

Ciborium



A cup-like or bowl-like vessel with a lid. It contains hosts that will be used for communion. It is also used to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.

Communion Cups



Cups that are used to give Communion (the Sacred Blood of Jesus) to the faithful.

Communion Plates



Gold dish-like containers that hold the consecrated hosts and are used to distribute Communion.

Corporal



A large square piece of linen placed in the center of the altar upon which the Eucharist is consecrated. It is folded into nine squares. Everything placed on the corporal on the altar during Mass should be consecrated. On one side of the altar is another rectangular corporal for the people's Communion cups. It is also used at Adoration and Benediction.

Credence Table



A table near the altar, which holds the objects necessary for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Cruets



A set of little vessels with a small neck and handles. See "Ampulla". Generally, "ampullae" (plural) refers to the wine and water cruets.

Flagons (Carafes)



Large "pitcher-like" containers that hold the wine which will become the Blood of Christ during the Mass.



Lavabo Bowl This bowl is used in washing the priest's hands after he has offered the bread and wine to the Lord and before the consecration of the Mass.

Lavabo Pitcher A small pitcher/container that holds water with which the priest's hands are washed. Different from a flagon or cruet.

Lavabo Towel



A piece of white terry cloth used to dry the priest's hands after he has washed them. (not a purificator)

Lectionary (Sunday)



The book containing the collection of Scriptural readings which are proclaimed by the deacon or a lector during Masses on Sundays and special Holy Days

Paten



A plate-like, gold or brass-colored dish that holds the priest's "host" that will become the Body of Christ.

Pall



A linen cloth or a square cloth-covered piece of cardboard used to cover a chalice.

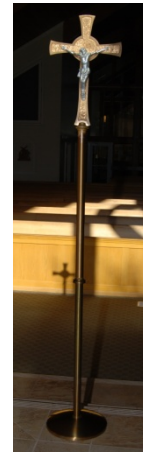
Processional Candles



A pair of candles used in procession. At Good Shepherd Church they are placed on stands near the ambo when the candle-bearers arrive at the Sanctuary.

Processional Cross

A crucifix mounted on a staff, carried at Mass and other solemn services at the head of a procession of the clergy.



Purificator



A folded piece of rectangular white linen that is used to purify the chalice and paten when Communion is over. Ours have a small red cross embroidered on them, and the Communion ministers use them to wipe the Communion cup after the communicants use it.

Roman Missal



Tabernacle



The special book which contains the prayers and directives for Mass, and a number of sacramental formulas, but does not include the readings of the Mass.

A large "safe-like" container in the church that holds the Reserved Sacrament of the Body of Christ. The Lord Jesus lives in the tabernacle. Ours is the large green cabinet-like container with the gold door in the sanctuary behind the altar.

Other Liturgical Items

Altar Cloth

The white cloth covering the top of the altar and made from linen or hemp.



Aspergillum



The liturgical instrument used to sprinkle people and objects with holy water.

Aspersorium



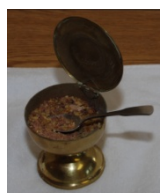
The small metal or glass bucket (with a handle) that holds the holy water in which the aspergillum (sprinkler) is dipped to sprinkle during liturgies and blessings.

Baptismal Font



A large basin-like receptacle, usually ornamented, for holding baptismal water used in the solemn administration of the sacrament.

Boat



The small metal container that holds the incense to be put into the thurible. It has a cover and comes with a small spoon. Sometimes shaped like a boat, it is a symbol of the church.

Candelabra



The Candelabra is used as a support for candles, made with several arms or branches. It is most often used during Eucharistic Adoration.

Candle Lighter



Candle Lighter-Snuffer (Extinguisher)

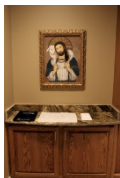


Celebrant's Chair



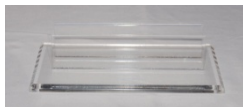
The presider's chair is arranged so that the priest is seen to be a member of the worshipping community with a special office to perform.

Sacristan's Counter



A cabinet and shelf, on which are placed the gifts of bread and wine to be brought forward to the priest during the Offertory of the Mass.

Holder for Book of Gospels



The clear plastic stand which holds the Book of Gospels in a vertical position when placed on the Altar.

Host



The consecrated Bread of the Eucharist considered as the sacrifice of the Body of Christ.

Hymnal



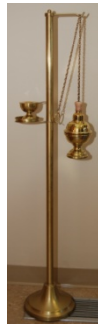
Book of hymns and texts used by the people at Mass.

Incense



Granulated or powdered aromatic resin which, when sprinkled on glowing coals in a thurible (censer), becomes a fragrant cloud of smoke used to symbolize prayer rising to God and to honor sacred persons and things in the context of liturgical worship.

Incense Stand



Kneeler Pads



Lectionary (Daily)



The book containing the collection of Scriptural readings which are proclaimed by the deacon or a lector during Masses on weekdays.

Paschal Candle

The special large candle lit from the new fire at the Easter Vigil symbolizing the resurrection of Christ. It is lighted in the sanctuary during the Easter Season until Pentecost. During the year it is kept near the baptismal font unless it is brought out for special ceremonies (eg. Funerals).



Thurible (Censer)



The censer or vessel in which incense is burned at liturgical services. It consists of a cup-shaped metal body for holding charcoal and incense, with a separate lid for controlling the smoke and fire, and a chain, or chains, allowing the censer to swing safely without spilling its contents.

Vestments

Alb



A long, white, dress-like vestment worn for all liturgical functions by ministers of the altar (eg. Priest, deacon, altar server).

Amice



A rectangular piece of cloth with two long ribbons attached to the top corners. The priest or deacon puts it over his shoulders, tucking it in around his neck to hide his collar. It is tied around his waist.

Cassock



The black robe worn by clerics, seminarians and accomplished altar servers. Usually worn with a white surplice.

Chasuble



The chasuble is the sleeveless outer vestment, slipped over the head, hanging down from the shoulders and covering the stole (sometimes) and alb. It is the proper Mass vestment of the priest and its color varies according to the feast or liturgical season.

Cincture



A long cord is used for fastening some albs at the waist. It holds loose fitting albs in place and is used to adjust the proper length. The cincture is usually white.

Dalmatic



A loose-fitting robe with open sides and wide sleeves worn by the deacon. The color varies according to the liturgical feast or season of the liturgical year.

Cope



A cape-like vestment that is put on over the shoulders and hangs to the ankles, it is open at the front and clasped at the neck. The priest or deacon wears this at Benediction and in certain processions. Copes can be of any liturgical color.

Humeral Veil



This is a long, narrow, shawl-like vestment used at Benediction and in processions when the Blessed Sacrament is carried.

Stole

A liturgical vestment composed of a strip of material, several inches wide, worn by clergy for the celebration of Mass, administration of the sacraments, and ceremonies of the Blessed Sacrament.

Priest Stole



Worn around the neck by priests and bishops

Deacon Stole



Worn at the left by shoulder like a sash by deacons

Surplice



An outer white garment worn over a cassock by clerics, seminarians and accomplished altar servers.

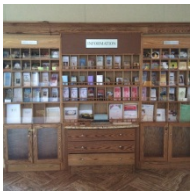
Places in the Church

Aisle



The passage between rows of pews or chairs.

Information Kiosk



The area in the Narthex of the Church where Catholic CD's, Information pamphlets and various parish forms are displayed for parishioners and guests

Narthex



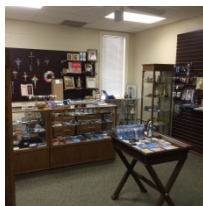
The entrance or lobby area, located at the end of the nave, at the opposite end from the church's main altar. (The foyer).

Nave



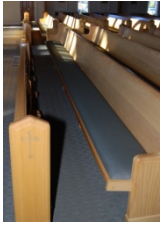
The central open space in a church, the main body separate from the sanctuary. It refers to the part of the church reserved for worshippers, including the central and side aisles.

Gift Shop



A service of the Good Shepherd Council of Catholic Women, the parish gift shop provides an inventory of religious articles and gifts for Parishioners and visitors to purchase.

Pew



The benches or seats for worshippers in church

Reconciliation Rooms



Two small rooms in the nave of the church designed for the individual celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Working Sacristy



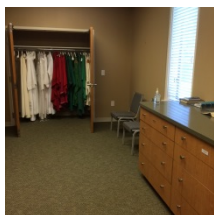
A room in the church where the clergy vest for ecclesiastical functions. The sacristy affords storage for sacred vessels, vestments, and other articles needed for liturgical use. The sacarium is located there.

Sanctuary



The part of the church, which contains the altar, the celebrant's chair, the tabernacle, the ambo, etc. The "holiest" part of the church building. This area is where the Lord Jesus makes himself present to us.

Clergy Vestry



A place where clergy vestments are stored. A place where the clergy put on and remove the vestments used for liturgical functions

Servers' Vestry



A place where altar server albs, cassocks and surplices are stored and where altar servers dress for Mass.

Minister's Room



A place where liturgical books (such as lectionaries, missals, etc.) and other implements for liturgy are stored. Also where information pertinent to liturgical ministers is found including schedules and special instructions.

Ministers of the Church

Boat Bearer

The Altar Server responsible for carrying the boat for incense.

Candle Bearer (Luxifer)

The Altar Server(s) or other minister(s) responsible for carrying candles.

Cantor

The chief singer of a choir who leads the singing.

Choir

The organized body of singers who perform or lead the musical part of a church service

Clergy

Those specially ordained for Divine Service as deacons, priests, or bishops.

Cross Bearer (Crucifer)

The Altar Server or other minister responsible for carrying the processional cross in procession.

Deacon

A man specially ordained to the service of the Church's Ministry especially of charity. The role of deacons also includes assisting priests in preaching, the conferral of baptism, witnessing of marriage, the administration of parishes, and similar duties.

| | |
|---|--|
| Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion | If a sufficient number of priests and/or deacons (the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion) are not present, extraordinary ministers (properly trained lay persons) can be called to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion. |
| Lector | One of the ministries in the Church, otherwise known as reader. The lector is appointed to read the word of God in the liturgical assembly, except the Gospel. |
| Information Attendant | <i>This ministry position is still being developed</i> |
| Music Director | Ms. Nancy Smith is our current Director of Liturgical Music. Her obligation is to train and direct the choir and to lead the congregation in prayer through music to see that music and the liturgy are integrated in ways that suit both the nature of liturgical rituals and the spiritual needs of parish communities. |
| Priest | Men who are specially ordained within the Church to consecrate and offer the body and blood of Christ in the Mass. The Apostles were the first ordained priests. All priests and bishops trace their ordination to the Apostles. Their second essential priestly power, to forgive sins, was conferred by Christ on Easter Sunday. |
| Sacristan | A person appointed for the care of the sacristy, sacred vessels, vestments, and other articles required by the ceremonial for any liturgical function. |
| Thurifer | The Altar Server who is in charge of the thurible (censer) when incense is used in a liturgy. |
| Usher | Ushers provide the service of hospitality; greeting, seating, assisting and collections. Ushers may also be asked to handle emergency situations with courage and composure. |

Other Items Associated with Church

Ambry



A special area in the wall in which the holy oils are kept and displayed in Church.

Ampulla



“Ampule” also refers to the oil stocks containing the Sacred Oils housed in the ambry.

Chrism

A mixture of oil and balsam (perfume) used for liturgical anointing (Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, the blessing of an altar). Blessed during Holy Week at the Chrism Mass by the (arch)bishop.

Funeral Pall



a cloth for spreading over a coffin at a funeral liturgy

Holy Water Fonts Receptacles at the entrance of the church containing holy water so that, upon entering, the faithful can dip their fingers into the font and bless themselves by making the sign of the cross.

Liturgical Colors those specific colors which are used for vestments and hangings within the context of Catholic liturgy. (See pgs. 45-46)

Liturgical Cycles In each cycle of the Liturgical Calendar, you will find six Seasons: (1) Advent, (2) Christmas, (3) Lent, (4) Triduum, (5) Easter, and (6) Ordinary Time. (See pg. 47)

Luna (lunette)



A special pyx made of gold with two glass faces which is used for holding the Host in an upright position and inserted into the monstrance when exposed for adoration or during benediction.

Monstrance



An elaborate “sunburst-shaped” gold vessel for displaying the Sacred Host. In the center of the sunburst, the monstrance normally has a small round glass (Luna) the size of a Host, through which the Blessed Sacrament can be seen.

Oil of Catechumens

One of the three holy oils for the administration of the sacraments. It is used in the ceremonies of baptism, from which its name is derived, the catechumen being the person about to receive the sacrament. It is also used in the consecration of churches, in the blessing of altars, ordination of priests, and has been used in the coronation of Catholic monarchs.

Oil of the Sick

The olive oil blessed by the bishop of a diocese for use in the sacrament of anointing of the sick.

Ordo



An ordo is also a small book with an annual calendar containing abbreviated directions for each day's Mass. Every diocese, or group of dioceses, and every religious order or congregation has its own ordo.

Prie Dieu (Kneeler)



A type of prayer desk primarily intended for private devotional use. It is a small ornamental wooden desk furnished with a sloping shelf with a padded arm rest, and a cushioned pad on which to kneel.

Pyx



A small container that is used to take Communion to the sick and those confined to their homes.

Sacrarium



The "sink" next to the regular sink in the sacristy that allows blessed and sacred items to go into the earth under the church rather than into the sewer system.

Sanctuary Lamp



A wax candle, generally in a red glass container, kept burning day and night wherever the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in Catholic churches or chapels.

Tabor

Liturgical Postures and Movements

Bowing

- Simple Bow** The simple bow is a bending of the head only, not the shoulders or waist.
- Profound Bow** The profound bow is made from the waist (so that you could touch your knees with your hands)

Folding Hands To fold your hands, join your hands palm to palm, not merely fingers to fingers. Fully extend your fingers and hold them together comfortably, crossing the thumbs over each other in the form of a cross. Fingers should point slightly upward, not toward the ground or straight out. Hold your elbows close to the body and keep hands more or less at the height of your chest.

Genuflecting Bending of the knee as an act of reverence. Customary when passing before the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, entering the pew for divine worship, and during certain ceremonies to the Cross. When making a simple genuflection, touch the right knee to the ground, close to the heel of the left foot. Do not bow your head or touch your hand to the floor. Hold your head and your body steady and straight and keep your hands folded at your chest throughout the genuflection.

Kneeling Resting on bent knees as a mark of reverence.

Sitting The posture prescribed liturgically for certain parts of the Mass. The faithful are to be seated during the First Reading, the Responsorial Psalm, and the Second Reading; during the Homily; during the Offertory; and during the period of Silence after Communion

Sign of the Cross Made by saying, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," its action takes the form of a cross. One touches the forehead, the chest, and the left and right shoulders with the right hand as the words are recited. The prayer ends with "Amen" and is regularly made with holy water as a person enters a church.

Standing A posture for various parts of the Eucharistic liturgy. Standing has been customary during the reading of the Gospel and the recitation or singing of the Creed, the Preface, and Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy).

Walking When walking, hold yourself straight with your shoulders back and your head straight. Directly face the point to which you are headed and avoid looking around. Unless you carrying something, keep your hands folded on your chest.

Liturgical Colors



White *light, innocence, purity, joy, triumph, glory*

- Season of Christmas
- Season of Easter
- Feasts of the Lord, other than of His passion
- Feasts of Mary, the angels, and saints who were not martyrs
- All Saints (1 November)
- Feasts of the Apostles
- Nuptial Masses
- Masses for the dead



Red *the Passion, blood, fire, God's Love, martyrdom*

- Feasts of the Lord's passion, Blood, and Cross
- Feasts of the martyrs
- Palm Sunday
- Pentecost



Green *the Holy Ghost, life eternal, hope*

- Ordinary Time
- Time After Epiphany
- Time After Pentecost



Violet / Purple *penance, humility, melancholy*

- Season of Advent
- Season of Septuagesima
- Season of Lent
- Rogation Days
- Ember Days (except for Pentecost Ember Days)
- Vigils except for Ascension and Pentecost
- Good Friday



Rose *joy*

- Gaudete Sunday (Third Sunday of Advent)
- Laetare Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent)



Gold *joy*

- Gold can replace white, red, or green (but not violet or black)



Black *mourning, sorrow* **(NOT CURRENTLY IN USE)**

- All Souls Day
- Masses for the dead, except for baptized children who've died before the age of reason

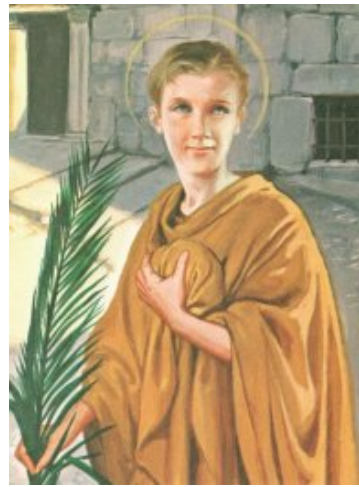
Liturgical Seasons

- Advent:** The liturgical year begins with the first Sunday of Advent, which introduces a season of four weeks with the theme of expectation of the coming of Christ. Advent has four Sundays.
- Christmas Season:** The Christmas season begins with the vigil of Christmas and lasts until the Sunday after Jan. 6.
- Lent:** The penitential season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which occurs between Feb. 4 and Mar. 11, depending on the date of Easter, and lasts until the Mass of the Lord's Supper (Holy Thursday). It has six Sundays. The sixth Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week and is known as Passion (formerly called Palm) Sunday.
- Easter Triduum:** The Easter Triduum begins with evening Mass of the Lord's Supper and ends with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday.
- Easter Season:** The Easter season lasts for 50 days, from Easter to Pentecost. Easter, the first Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox, occurs between Mar. 22 and Apr. 25.
- Ordinary Time:** The season of Ordinary Time begins on Monday (or Tuesday if the feast of the Baptism of the Lord is celebrated on that Monday) after the Sunday following Jan. 6 and continues until the day before Ash Wednesday, inclusive. It begins again on the Monday after Pentecost and ends on the Saturday before the first Sunday of Advent. It consists of 33 or 34 weeks. The last Sunday is celebrated as the Solemnity of Christ the King.

ST. TARCISIUS, MARTYR

Third Century

**Patron of
Altar Servers and First Communicants**



A tradition dating from the sixth century says that St. Tarcisius was an acolyte whose fidelity and courage so impressed the leaders of the Church during the persecution of Valerian that he was entrusted with taking the Blessed Sacrament secretly to the Christians who awaited martyrdom in prison. This custom arose when the priests who ministered to the prisoners would be easily discovered, while the acolytes were less known to the heathens. The Roman Martyrology, based on the fourth-century poem of Pope St. Damasus, gives the story of the "boy martyr of the Eucharist" in these words: "At Rome, on the Appian way, the passion of St. Tarcisius the acolyte, whom pagans met carrying the sacrament of the Body of Christ and asked him what it was he was carrying. He deemed it a shameful thing to cast pearls before the swine, and so was assaulted by them for a long time with clubs and stones until he gave up the ghost. When they turned over his body, the sacrilegious assailants could find no trace of Christ's Sacrament either in his hands or in his clothing. The Christians took up the body of the martyr and buried it with honor in the cemetery of Callistus." In his poem Pope Damasus compares St. Tarcisius with St. Stephen who was stoned by the Jews, and praises the martyr for suffering a cruel death rather than surrender "the divine Body to raging dogs." The body of St. Tarcisius was most probably laid to rest with those of Pope St. Zephyrinus and others in the Basilica of St. Sixtus and Cecilia, but at present it is said to be in the Church of San Silvestro in Capite. St. Tarcisius is venerated as a model for altar boys and as an example of loving and heroic devotion to our Lord in the Holy Eucharist.

Taken from "A Saint A Day" by Berchmans Bittle, O.F.M.Cap., published by The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee (c) 1958