

ALTAR SERVERS GUIDELINES

PREPARATIONS

1. Be dignified in appearance and posture.
2. Maintain good hygiene. Wash hands before the start of mass.
3. Check that two cruets filled with water and wine, finger bowl, finger towel, Ciboria, communion cups, and purificators are on the credence table.
4. Check the credence table that the Pall is on the Paten containing two altar hosts (one for the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament if there is one) on top of the chalice with a purificator on it.
5. Check that a corporal is on the altar.
6. Check that the Sacramentary with stand is nearby the credence table.
7. Check that the procession and altar candles are lighted and the microphone is switched on. Check that a corporal is on the altar.
8. Check the ten (10) Communion Cups are filled with wines.
9. Avoid unnecessary conversation; rather, devote time to prayerful reflection.
10. Put on a server's alb with a cord around the waist.
11. Place on the gift table at the middle end of the church for the offertory procession a cruet with wine a ciborium filled with hosts.
12. Assemble for prayerful preparation together with other Liturgical Ministers fifteen minutes before the Mass at the Vestibule.

ENTRANCE PROCESSION

The entrance procession is formed in the back of the church center aisle facing to the altar. It may consist of a cross-bearer, candle-bearers, and other servers may be added. Liturgical Ministers may also take part with the Ordained Ministers.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

FOLDED HANDS

When the hands are not in use, they should be folded – except when the server is seated*.

Put palm against palm.

Put the left thumb over the right knuckle.

Put the right thumb over the left thumb to form an X.

Keep the elbows near the body.

Make sure that the hands are held in front of the breast with fingers pointing up at a 45 degree angle.

Hands should be folded in this manner whenever you are walking, genuflecting, or kneeling.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

Begin with folded hands.

Place the left hand on the breast. As you say:

“In the name of the Father” with right hand straight, touch your forehead with the fingers of the right hand;

“and of the Son” with your right hand touch your breast just above your left hand.

“and of the Holy...” touch your fingers to your left shoulder.

“...Spirit.” Touch your right shoulder with the fingers of your right hand.

“Amen.” Return your hands to the folded position.

The Sign of the Cross is made during Mass at the beginning of Mass after the entrance song, the absolution following the penance rite, and the blessing at the end of Mass.

The Sign of the Cross is not made if you are carrying something.

SMALL SIGN OF THE CROSS

The small Sign of the Cross is made at the announcement of the Gospel and follows the action of the priest or deacon. To make it, the right hand is closed loosely in a fist, thumb on top. The thumb traces the Sign of the Cross on the forehead, lips, and breast.

BOWS

Bow of the Head (or Simple Bow)

This bow is a slow nod. It is made when the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are named together and at the name of Jesus, Mary, or the saint in whose honor the Mass is celebrated.

Bows of the head are made whenever the server approaches or leaves the celebrant. For example, when bringing the wine and water, the servers approach the minister, stop when they reach him, bow the head, and then proceed with the action.

Bow of the Body (or Profound Bow)

A body bow is made from the waist with hands folded. In this bow the shoulders and head are bent forward at about a 30 degree angle. It should be made slowly and reverently.

A body bow is made:

Before the altar if the Blessed Sacrament is not present.

At the elevations of the consecration.

In the Profession of Faith (Creed) at the words “by the power of the Holy Spirit”

When several servers are bowing at the same time, care should be taken that the angle of the bow is the same for each.

WALKING

Walking should be done with grace and smoothness. When ministers are walking together, an impression of unison should be given. The pace should not be rushed but deliberate. Hands should be folded and the body not allowed slouching.

A cross-bearer or anyone who leads a procession must remember that he sets the pace for all.

When walking in pairs, keep abreast, act in unison, doing the same thing at the same time. When turning – for instance, after giving the minister the wine and water – turn in toward each other, not away.

CARRYING THE CROSS

A cross-bearer should be one of the taller servers who is better able to keep the cross balanced. The aim should be to carry the cross pole at a right angle to the floor and keep it from swaying in any direction.

The cross-bearer always leads the procession cross; the bottom of the pole should be about knee high. The right hand holds the pole about throat level and the left hand is placed about a foot below. The corpus (figure of Christ) always faces outward. When carrying the cross, the cross-bearer does not genuflect or bow.

CARRYING CANDLES

When the cross is carried in procession, there are usually two candle-bearers who walk on each side of the cross. Candle-bearers are also used at the solemn singing of the Gospel and at other ceremonies. Since candle-bearers work in pairs, they should be matched in size so that candles will be held evenly. When carrying the candles, the candle-bearer does not genuflect or bow.

To hold a candle correctly, the left hand goes under the base; the right hand is around the knob. This places the right hand about opposite the breast, and the cup to catch the wax about opposite the chin. However, when candle-bearers go in pairs, the outside hand goes at the knob and the inside hand at the base.

Candles should be held at a right angle to the floor. It is important to keep them straight so that melted wax does not drip on the floor or carpet.

SILENCE

Except for making the proper responses, silence is kept at all times. Nothing is more distracting to the priest or people than to see altar servers whispering together. The arrangement of the liturgy is such that silence is observed at designated times as part of the celebration. At the penitential rite, after the invitation to pray at the prayers, each should become recollected and join his thoughts to the minister's. After receiving Communion, the Server should praise God in his heart and pray.

***SITTING**

Sit erect with palms of your hands flat against your legs and the edge of the fingers close to your knees.

STANDING

Do not slouch. Stand erect with hands properly folded. Heels should be separated slightly with the toes pointing somewhat to the sides.

The cross-bearer, flanked by servers with candles and other servers, leads the way at the second verse of the entrance song to the altar.

Walking should be done with grace and smoothness. When altar servers are walking together, an impression of unison should be given. The pace should not be rushed but deliberate. The body not allowed slouching.

When walking in pairs, keep abreast, act in unison, doing the same thing at the same time.

RECESSIONAL PROCESSION

The recessional procession is formed during the recessional song. All go down and line up in the center aisle in pairs facing to the altar. Bow in unison whenever the priest bows. When the priest leaves the altar and walks down toward the center aisle, turn toward each other and walk down the aisle in unison leading the procession to the sacristy.